

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION -OFFICE OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS
DECEMBER 2, 2008**

ITEM 8

SUBJECT

INFORMATION ITEM ON THE INITIAL REPORT OF THE CALIFORNIA WATER QUALITY MONITORING COUNCIL TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY AND THE RESOURCES AGENCY.

DISCUSSION

Wise water management requires access to timely water quality information. Although hundreds of entities throughout the state monitor water quality and conduct assessments at different spatial and temporal scales, access to that information is difficult, if not impossible. But it does not need to be this way. There is an urgent need to create a water quality information system that is easy to discover, access, query, and contribute data on all facets of water quality and ecosystem health.

In November 2007, the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) and the Resources Agency signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that established the California Water Quality Monitoring Council, as required by Senate Bill (SB) 1070 (Kehoe, statutes of 2006). The State Water Board has the responsibility to administer the Monitoring Council. The statute directs the Monitoring Council to review existing water quality monitoring, assessment and reporting efforts and by December 1, 2008 to report to both agencies its recommendations for maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of existing water quality data collection and dissemination, and for ensuring that collected data are maintained and available for use by decision-makers and the public. Staff will present the Monitoring Council's initial report and recommendations.

SB 1070 finds that SWRCB funding for ambient surface water monitoring is inadequate to ensure the assessment of all waters, and that monitoring efforts underway could be enhanced significantly with increased coordination of the many separate monitoring activities that are going on at the local, state, and federal levels. It was enacted to better orchestrate and enhance the many efforts already in progress within the state and to make that process more visible to the public and to the entities committed to the protection, monitoring, and supply of water to all its users. It provides for the creation of a structure to allow the public to access available water quality data, current methods and research, as well as current regulations and enforcement actions. The legislation and MOU create the Monitoring Council to connect the myriad activities throughout the state in a more cohesive and sensible manner, with the ability to provide direction to reduce redundancies, fill gaps, prioritize actions, and recommend funding necessary to provide the critical information necessary to protect California's water quality. Ultimately, the Monitoring Council will prepare recommendations for the development of a cost-effective, coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive statewide network to collect and disseminate water quality information, ongoing assessments of the health of the state's waters, and the effectiveness of programs to protect and improve the quality of those waters.

On September 2, 2008 in [Resolution 2008-0063](#), the State Water Board adopted the Strategic Plan Update 2008-2012. Efforts of the Monitoring Council support Goal 5, Objective 5.2 to enhance the Water Boards' water quality data systems, and the accessibility of water body and facility data and information on the Internet, Objective 5.3 to develop recommendations for a publicly-accessible, statewide network to comprehensively display all water quality data used for planning and decision-making purposes within the State, and Objective 5.4 to create a portal for the public to access web-based water quality information for surface, ground and coastal waters that will communicate to the public the quality of the State's waters. Monitoring Council efforts also support Goal 7, Objective 7.3 to ensure that information is easily accessible by staff to achieve optimal job performance, and Objective 7.4 to leverage resources and expertise through innovative approaches and teams across Water Board programs and regions, and through partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations, to enhance existing workforce capacity and field presence, and provide information to help target Water Board efforts.

POLICY ISSUE

None at this time – information item

FISCAL IMPACT

None at this time – information item

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

None at this time – information item

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

None at this time – information item

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

None at this time – information item