STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – LOS ANGELES REGIONAL WATER BOARD
DECEMBER 6, 2022

ITEM 9

SUBJECT

CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE LOS ANGELES REGION (BASIN PLAN) TO INCORPORATE A TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) FOR INDICATOR BACTERIA IN LOS CERRITOS CHANNEL AND ESTUARY, ALAMITOS BAY, AND COLORADO LAGOON, AND TO SUSPEND THE RECREATIONAL USES IN LOS CERRITOS CHANNEL DURING UNSAFE WET WEATHER CONDITIONS.

DISCUSSION

On March 10, 2022, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Los Angeles Water Board) adopted Resolution No. R22-002 amending the Los Angeles Region's Basin Plan to incorporate a Total Maximum Daily Load for indicator bacteria in Los Cerritos Channel and Estuary, Alamitos Bay, and Colorado Lagoon (Bacteria TMDL), and to suspend the recreational uses in Los Cerritos Channel during unsafe wet weather conditions.

The goal of the Bacteria TMDL is to address the impairment of water quality due to elevated bacteria densities. Recreating in waters with elevated bacterial indicator densities has long been associated with adverse human health effects. The Bacteria TMDL addresses federal Clean Water Act (CWA) section 303(d) listings for indicator bacteria in the Los Cerritos Channel watershed. The Bacteria TMDL establishes numeric targets based on the objectives in the Statewide Bacteria Provisions and waste load allocations (WLAs) and load allocations (LAs) for sources of bacteria within the watershed that are protective of the designated water contact recreation use and specifies a program of implementation.

Until 2018, bacteria objectives in the Los Angeles Region included a Single Sample Maximum (SSM) objective and a geometric mean objective. The previous bacteria TMDLs in the Los Angeles Region were developed with these objectives and have used a "reference system/antidegradation" approach, which allowed a waterbody a certain number of exceedances of the SSM. The number of exceedances allowed was based on the number of exceedances at a reference waterbody. On August 7, 2018, the State Water Board adopted Statewide Bacteria Provisions with new bacteria objectives including a geometric mean objective and a corresponding statistical threshold value (STV).

The Los Cerritos Channel and Estuary, Alamitos Bay, and Colorado Lagoon Bacteria TMDL is the first bacteria TMDL developed by the Los Angeles Water Board using the Statewide Bacteria Provisions. Due to the differences in the expression between the STV objectives in the Statewide Bacteria Provisions and the prior SSM objectives, the

reference system/antidegradation approach used in other TMDLs was not used for this TMDL. Bacteria TMDLs in other regions have also been established based on the Statewide Bacteria Provisions without using a reference system approach, including the Russian River Watershed Bacteria TMDL in the North Coast Region and the Petaluma River Bacteria TMDL and Pillar Point Harbor and Venice Beach Bacteria TMDL in the San Francisco Bay Region.

The High Flow Suspension (HFS) included in the Los Angeles Region's Basin Plan, suspends the recreational beneficial uses in engineered channels during days with rainfall greater than or equal to 0.5 inches and the 24 hours following the end of the 0.5-inch or greater rain event. These flow conditions physically prevent the use of a waterbody for recreation. In 2003, the Los Angeles Water Board adopted the HFS for certain waterbodies in the region. The HFS was based on a categorical Use Attainability Analysis (UAA) for all engineered flood control channels. Engineered channels are defined as inland, flowing surface water bodies with a box, V-shaped or trapezoidal configuration that have been lined on the sides and, in some cases, the bottom with concrete.

Los Cerritos Channel is not currently included as a waterbody subject to the HFS in the Basin Plan. However, Los Cerritos Channel (above Atherton Street) is an engineered channel that meets the criteria for suspension of recreational uses in the categorical UAA. As a result, the REC-1 and REC-2 uses are not fully attainable during and immediately following high-flow storm events in Los Cerritos Channel (above Atherton Street.). Therefore, the Los Angeles Water Board also adopted a Basin Plan amendment to include Los Cerritos Channel (above Atherton Street) as a waterbody subject to HFS.

POLICY ISSUE

The proposed resolution approves amendments to the Los Angeles Water Board's Basin Plan including the Bacteria TMDL and an HFS for Los Cerritos Channel (above Atherton Street) during unsafe wet weather conditions

FISCAL IMPACT

The Los Angeles Water Board and State Water Board staff work associated with or resulting from this action will be addressed with existing and future budgeted resources.

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

Yes, approval of this resolution will amend the Los Angeles Water Board's Basin Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Los Angeles Water Board staff recommends that the State Water Board approve the proposed resolution.