

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING SESSION – CENTRAL VALLEY REGIONAL WATER BOARD  
NOVEMBER 7, 2023**

**ITEM 5**

**SUBJECT**

CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSED RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE TULARE LAKE BASIN TO REMOVE THE MUNICIPAL AND DOMESTIC SUPPLY (MUN) AND AGRICULTURAL SUPPLY (AGR) BENEFICIAL USES FROM GROUNDWATER WITHIN A DESIGNATED HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL PORTION OF THE SOUTHERN REGION OF THE LOST HILLS OILFIELD.

**DISCUSSION**

On June 10, 2022, the Regional Water Quality Control Board for the Central Valley Region (Central Valley Water Board) adopted [Resolution R5-2022-0035](#), an amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin (Basin Plan Amendment), to remove MUN and AGR beneficial uses from groundwater within a designated horizontal and vertical portion of the southern region of the Lost Hills Oilfield.

State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) [Resolution No. 88-63](#), the Sources of Drinking Water Policy, contains an exception for the MUN beneficial use that applies to water bodies where the total dissolved solids (TDS) exceed 3,000 milligrams per liter (mg/L) (which equates to 5,000 microsiemens per centimeter (µS/cm) as electrical conductivity (EC)) provided that the water body is not expected to supply a public water system. Groundwater quality in the portion of the southern region of the Lost Hills Oilfield proposed for removal of the MUN beneficial use meets this exception criteria. The Central Valley Water Board removed MUN beneficial use consistent with the Sources of Drinking Water Policy with the proposed Basin Plan Amendment.

The Tulare Lake Basin Plan also allows for removal of the AGR beneficial use if the water cannot support the agricultural use due to contamination but does not include numeric objective. Central Valley Water Board staff conducted a review of widely accepted and peer-reviewed literature related to salinity impacts on both irrigation and stock watering. Central Valley Water Board staff identified guidance from the National Research Committee of the National Academy of Science (NRC) that recommends a maximum Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) limit of 5,000 mg/L for stock watering for all classes of livestock and utilized this threshold to define the boundary proposed for the AGR beneficial use removal.

## **POLICY ISSUE**

Should the State Water Board approve the Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin adopted under Central Valley Water Board Resolution R5-2022-0035 (including the associated Executive Officer Corrections Memorandum dated August 11, 2023)?

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Central Valley Water Board staff 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 Central Valley Water Board's Tulare Lake Basin Plan.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That the State Water Board:

1. Approve the Amendment to the Tulare Lake Basin Plan adopted under Central Valley Water Board Resolution R5-2022-0035 (including the associated Executive Officer Corrections Memorandum dated August 11, 2023).
2. Authorize the Executive Director or designee to submit the Basin Plan Amendment adopted under Central Valley Water Board Resolution R5-2022-0035 (including the associated Executive Officer Corrections Memorandum dated August 11, 2023) as approved and the administrative record for this action to the Office of Administrative Law for approval.

State Water Board action on this item will assist the Central Valley Water Board in their need to evaluate the appropriateness of designated beneficial uses within their region, a priority in their 2014 Triennial Review. Approval of this item will assist in fulfilling the need to evaluate appropriate beneficial use designation for both MUN and AGR uses related to salinity in an area where existing groundwater quality is extremely poor, has not supported these uses in the past, does not currently support these uses, and is not anticipated to support these uses in the future.