



California Regional Water Quality Control Board

Central Coast Region



Alan C. Lloyd, Ph.D.
Agency Secretary

Internet Address: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast>
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101, San Luis Obispo, California 93401-7906
Phone (805) 549-3147 • FAX (805) 543-0397

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

January 18, 2006

Mike Chrisman, Secretary for Resources
Chair, Ocean Protection Council

Secretary Chrisman:

OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL MEETING, JANUARY 13, 2006

The Central Coast Water Board appreciates the Ocean Protection Council's efforts to help protect marine resources. The Water Board's main responsibility is to reduce pollutant loading to terrestrial and marine waters, and to protect habitat that is critical to water quality (riparian areas and wetlands). We are setting precedents in these areas. We are establishing requirements for Low Impact Development design standards, implementing requirements for irrigated agriculture, and we are amending our Basin Plan to establish protection for critical habitat. We are also developing performance monitoring to measure our progress. These efforts are related to some of your January 13, 2006 agenda items, and we offer this information as follow up to your session.

The greatest threat to marine waters is our accelerating coastal development and its associated pollutant loading and habitat degradation (PEW Ocean Commission). Municipalities must implement Low Impact Develop design standards to prevent this degradation. We are using financial incentives and regulations to make this fundamental change on the Central Coast.

We are also working with the farming community to reduce pollutant loading from irrigated agricultural land. We established requirements for approximately 2,500 farmers on the Central Coast, including requirements to implement best management practices and to conduct performance monitoring to demonstrate pollutant reductions.

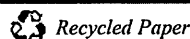
We are updating our Basin Plan to provide long-term physical protection for critical habitat (riparian areas and wetlands). This is implementation of the Ecosystem Based Management approach. Our Basin Plan amendment will be based on defining and protecting functioning ecosystems, and directly measuring these functioning systems over time.

All of our above-mentioned efforts are consistent with Ecosystem Based Management, and the first broad objective in the Morro Bay Ecosystem Based Management proposal (on your agenda):

To develop and monitor relevant physical/chemical, biological, and socioeconomic indicators across the ecosystem and to determine how the various components are interconnected and how they affect one another

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FEBRUARY 9-10, 2006 MEETING
LTR TO OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL
DATED 1/18/06

California Environmental Protection Agency



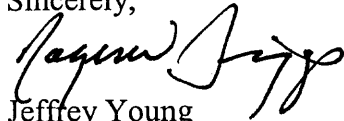
Also, we note your agenda includes consideration of priorities for State Water Resources Control Board Prop 50 Funds, and that staff recommendations include funding for water quality protection and monitoring in Areas of Special Biological Significance and adjacent Critical Coastal Areas. Staff recommendations also include consideration for other areas that do not have these special designated protections. We agree that other areas should be considered because Areas of Special Biological Significance and adjacent Critical Coastal Areas are in good shape due to the special protections they have. Most importantly, we recommend that you not direct funding toward monitoring efforts that do little or nothing to inform decision-making. Many marine monitoring efforts have little value because they are not capable of detecting changes caused by some event (cause and effect). For a good write-up on this national problem, see *Managing Troubled Waters: The Role Of Marine Environmental Monitoring*, National Research Council, 1990. This text describes our problem of spending very large sums of money on ineffective marine monitoring programs.

Another excellent reference is *Detecting Ecological Impacts, Concepts and Applications in Coastal Habitats*, Russell J Schmidt and Craig W. Osenberg, 1996. This text describes the challenges inherent in designing monitoring programs that will detect changes caused by an event (like a discharge). Many monitoring efforts, regardless of expense, are not designed for this purpose, and therefore have little or no value. This is a fundamental problem, and is exacerbated by the entrenched perception that monitoring, any monitoring, must be "good."

In summary, our resources are far better spent on efforts to reduce pollution and protect habitat. We should do *performance monitoring* to measure our effectiveness. We need to set specific, measurable goals, and then do specific monitoring to see if we are achieving the goals. This is fundamentally different than collecting ambient data and hoping that we can deduce something from it (or lay some claim to success). The Central Coast Regional Water Board is developing tangible goals regarding the priority issues noted above (urbanization, agriculture, critical habitat) and we are developing the specific monitoring needed to evaluate our effectiveness in achieving the goals. The purpose is to realize a vision for our watersheds and our marine resources. We encourage the Council to focus on actions that will produce tangible improvements in marine resources.

We look forward to working with the Council on our mutual goals. Please contact our Executive Officer Roger Briggs at (805) 549-3140, or Assistant Executive Officer Michael Thomas at (805) 542-4623 if you wish to discuss these issues.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Young
Chair

cc : Dr. Lloyd, Secretary Cal/EPA
Celeste Cantu, Executive Director, SWRCB
Susan Kennedy, Governor's Chief of Staff

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