

## **ANTIDegradation POLICY**

The Antidegradation Policy, State Board Resolution No. 68-16, requires that the Water Boards maintain high quality waters of the state unless they determine that any authorized degradation is a) consistent with maximum benefit to the people of the state, b) will not unreasonably affect present and anticipated beneficial uses, and c) will not result in water quality less than that prescribed in state and regional policies.

The Antidegradation Policy does not provide specific direction on what elements must be included in an order, but it does provide direction on receiving water quality that must be protected through an order.

Under the Antidegradation Policy the baseline receiving water quality is generally defined as the best quality that has existed since 1968, or a lower subsequent water quality if previous degradation was permitted consistent with the policy. If there are high quality waters impacted by the permitting action, the board must apply the policy. If the board allows lowering of the quality of a high-quality water through the permitting action, the requirements of that permit or order must result in the best practicable treatment or control (BPTC) of wastes, and any degradation of high quality waters that occurs must be found to be consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the state. In no case may degradation be permitted below the water quality objectives.