

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: Workshop on Drought Impact on Regional Programs

BOARD ACTION: Information Item Only

BACKGROUND: According to the Department of Water Resources the current water year (October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014) has been one of the driest in decades and follows two consecutive dry years throughout the state. The water equivalent of the 2014 statewide snowpack in late April was below 5 inches, compared to the historic average of about 25 inches. Rainfall at eight Northern California stations has been only about 60 percent of normal for late April. The precipitation for San Joaquin stations indicated less than 50 percent of normal precipitation from October 1 to late April.

On January 17 2014, Governor Brown issued an Executive Order declaring a drought and providing guidance for state agencies on actions to address the drought.. On April 25, the Governor issued a second executive order, which expanded on the prior Order.

To address drought issues, the State Water Board has thus far focused on water rights issues, including curtailments of water diversions to junior rights holders. Additionally, the State Board will be considering a general order for water recycling on June 3, 2014.

In the Central Valley, a continued drought may have numerous implications for our programs, permits and regulations. Impacts in the Valley may include: less dilution, reduced aquatic habitat, increased erosion and sedimentation, increased wildfires, warmer surface water temperatures, lower groundwater levels, increased salt concentrations in discharges. These impacts may affect many dischargers and citizens in the Central Valley.

The purpose of this workshop is to provide the Board information on the drought and how it impacts the Central Valley. It will include representatives from Department of Water Resources, the State and Regional Water Boards and UC Davis, who will present background information on scientific underpinning of the drought, and the aquatic habitat and water quality impacts and regulatory concerns related to the current drought. Stakeholders from POTWs, the agricultural community and representatives of disadvantaged communities will address the Board on the potential impacts to people, businesses and governments in the Region. Participants will include Vicky Whitney and Barbara Evoy heads of the Divisions of Water Quality and Water Rights respectively at the State Water Board, Jay Lund Director of the Center for Watershed Sciences at UC Davis, Debbie Webster Executive Officer of CVCWA and Sandy Schubert Undersecretary of the CDFA. There will also be a representative from the Department of Water Resources, Community Water Center, and participants representing Northern and Southern Valley agriculture concerns.

RECOMMENDATION Not applicable – Informational Item Only

Mgmt. Review _____
Legal Review _____
June 5/6, 2014
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