California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin Region

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ATTACHMENT

Final Draft 2007 Triennial Review List
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Issues under consideration for Basin Plan review and update:

- **Beneficial Use Designation of Surface Waters:**
  Conduct region-wide surface water survey to evaluate beneficial uses and water quality objectives. Identify water quality objectives that require revision, and reaffirm suitable water quality objectives that require no revision. Revise Basin Plan as necessary. This process is part of the reaffirmation requirements for current water quality objectives.

- **Beneficial Use Designation of Aquifers:**
  Review available groundwater data to evaluate beneficial uses and water quality objectives. Identify beneficial uses of individual aquifers within hydrologic units. Beneficial uses of groundwater in the Colorado River Basin Region are currently based on hydrologic units. Revise Basin Plan as necessary.

- **Basin Plan Amendment to Address the Applicability of Bacteriological Water Quality Objectives and Associated Monitoring Requirements:**
  The Basin Plan establishes pathogen water quality objectives for all surface waters within the Region by using three bacteria indicator organisms: fecal coliforms, E. coli, and enterococci. These water quality objectives are established mainly for the protection of water contact (REC-I) and water non-contact (REC-II) recreation in surface waters. The Basin Plan will be revised to: 1) rectify the current limitations of having three bacteria indicator organisms; 2) clarify which indicator organisms apply to which surface waters of the Region; and, as necessary 3) provide for the development of site-specific objectives.

- **Develop a Policy Statement or Basin Plan Amendment to Recognize Critical Flow Rates in the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSC) and their Temporal Impact on Certain Beneficial Uses of the Channel:**
  Certain precipitation events in the Coachella Valley may trigger extreme flow conditions in the CVSC and its tributaries. These events generate precipitation runoff that goes into the CVSC and poses a hazard to public health and safety. As a result of these events, certain beneficial uses of CVSC, including water contact and non-contact recreation, are temporarily not attained. The Basin Plan should be revised to address this situation.

- **Develop Region-wide Policy to Address Discharges of Agricultural Wastewater:**
  For any person proposing to discharge waste, or who is discharging waste which could affect the quality of the waters of the State, the Regional Board may, under California Water Code Section 13269, waive one, or both, of the requirements to: 1) file a Report of Waste Discharge, and 2) prescribe Waste Discharge Requirements for the discharge. Such waivers are conditional, however, and can only be considered if the Regional Board, after any necessary public meeting, determines that the waiver is consistent with any applicable State or Regional Water Quality Control Plan and is in the public interest. To make this determination, the Regional Board must first evaluate the manner in which a waste should be regulated. Thus, with respect to agricultural wastewater, the Regional Board must determine whether to regulate discharges of wastes (e.g., agricultural runoff) from agricultural sources through issuance of: 1) Waste Discharge Requirements, 2) a conditional waiver of requirements, or 3) a prohibition against any discharge. Discharges of agricultural return flows in the Coachella Valley and Bard Valley fail to comply with Section 13269 in that existing waivers issued for such discharges have since expired. Pursuant to and consistent with California Water Code Section 13269, the Regional Board must develop water quality control policy to address the potential and/or actual impacts that these discharges have on the waters of the Region.

- **Guidance in the Application of the State Antidegradation Policy, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Resolution No. 68-18, "Statement of Policy with Respect to Maintaining High Quality of Waters in California" for NPDES Permits:**
  The Regional Board should develop guidance regarding how to apply the State Water Resources Control Board's antidegradation policy for discharges of pollutants into effluent dominated waters in the Region.

- **General Waste Discharge Requirements for On-Site Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Systems for Mobile Home and Recreational Vehicle Parks and Other Similar Facilities (Board Order No. 97-500):**
  Board Order No. 97-500, which also applies to shopping centers, restaurants, residential developments, schools, camps and other commercial facilities, is inconsistent with current State regulations and Board polices. It also fails to effectively address the threat that discharges of wastes from septic systems pose to water quality, particularly in the areas of Yucca Valley, Twentynine Palms, Coachella Valley, Joshua Tree, Colorado River communities and Pinyon Pines. The Order should be revised and/or updated to address these deficiencies.

- **Policy Regarding Potential Sprawl of Package Plants in the High Desert Area of the Region:**
  During the last eight years, the Town of Yucca Valley, City of Twentynine Palms, and community of Joshua Tree have experienced unprecedented growth. These communities rely on local groundwater for municipal/domestic purposes, but each of them lacks a municipal sewage collection and treatment system (SCTS). Essentially, wastewater treatment and disposal in these communities is accomplished via septic tank-leachfield systems, which pose a significant threat to groundwater quality, and at least with respect to the Town of Yucca Valley, have already contributed to nitrate contamination of groundwater. The Town of Yucca Valley and High Desert Water District have made building such a municipal SCTS a priority and expect to complete construction of the system within a couple of years. The City of Twentynine Palms is exploring the possibility of working with the United States Marine Corps Base near Twentynine Palms to build a municipal system that would service both the Base and the City. Further, the community of Joshua Tree is conducting a hydrogeologic study with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to determine the appropriate density of septic systems its community can have without adversely impacting local groundwater quality. The Regional Board does not have a waiver of requirements for discharges of wastes from septic systems in the Region. The Regional Board has adopted Waste Discharge Requirements for discharges of wastes from wastewater treatment package plants that service commercial and residential developments in the Town of Yucca Valley and City of Twentynine Palms. The Regional Board should develop and adopt policy to: 1) address the proliferation of package plants in these areas; and 2) develop and adopt interim policy to address discharges of wastes from proposed septic systems in these communities while: a) the Town of Yucca Valley and Twentynine Palms build their municipal SCTS; and b) the community of Joshua Tree completes its USGS study and begins to implement controls on individual systems in Joshua Tree.

- **Correct Errors and Outdated Information, and Include Referenced Policies:**
  Correct errors and outdated information in the Basin Plan. The updates include, but are not limited to:
    - Incorporating 2004 SWRCB policy to implement and enforce the Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program;
    - Expanding discussion of state antidegradation policy;
    - Replacing “wastewater” with “waste” in the general surface water quality criterion for temperature;
    - Attaching policies referenced in Section 5 of the 2002 Basin Plan;
    - Review current policy for addressing pollution in the New River at the International Boundary; and
    - Re-evaluate policy and guidelines developed to protect water quality in the Salton Sea and Colorado River.

- Update paragraphs 5 and 6 of Chapter 1, Section V.C. to indicate that seepage from zones of high groundwater is one of the sources of flow in agricultural drains in the Coachella Valley.
- Update Chapter 1, Section VI.C.2 to acknowledge relevant groundwater recharge projects in the Coachella Valley Ground Water Basin.
- Update Chapter 3, Section III.N to indicate Maximum Contaminant Levels of organic and inorganic chemicals.
- Update Chapter 4, Section II.F to reflect stormwater Phase II MS4 requirements.
- Update Chapter 4, Section IV to reflect completion of the Las Arenitas WWTP (Mexicali II) and the discharge forcemain for Pumping Plant No. 4.

- **Sediment and Turbidity Water Quality Objective Implementation:**
  Develop guidance to implement and enforce water quality standards for sediment and turbidity for surface waters without sediment TMDLs, and incorporate guidance into the Basin Plan. Implementation procedures for sediment and turbidity as they apply to TMDLs are outlined in Chapter 4 of the Basin Plan.

- **Develop Water Quality Objectives for Ammonia:**
  Review water quality criteria for ammonia and develop Basin Plan water quality objectives in accordance with current U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance.

- **Develop Water Quality Objectives for Residual Chlorine:**
  Review water quality criteria for residual chlorine and develop Basin Plan water quality objectives in accordance with current U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance.

- **Develop Water Quality Objectives for Biocriteria:**
  Evaluate the need for criteria for biological objectives, and to develop Basin Plan water quality objectives in accordance with current U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance.