# Proposed Basin Plan Amendment – Chlorine Water Quality Objectives and Total Residual Chlorine Effluent Limitations for Wastewater Discharges

## Background

Currently, most wastewater discharges in the San Francisco Bay region are subject to a technology-based effluent limitation of 0.0 milligrams per liter for total residual chlorine (TRC), which refers to the sum of free and combined chlorine formed after chlorine-based products are added to disinfect wastewater. TRC is toxic to aquatic organisms at very low concentrations. To ensure compliance with this stringent effluent limitation, wastewater treatment plant operators have routinely added excess dechlorination chemicals, normally sodium bisulfite, to neutralize any remaining total residual chlorine in the wastewater. This use of excess chemicals results in extra operational cost and potential water quality concerns without providing environmental benefits.

This proposed amendment would add chlorine water quality objectives to the Basin Plan and replace the technology-based TRC effluent limitation with water quality-based effluent limitations derived from the chlorine objectives. The proposed water quality objectives and effluent limitations would protect beneficial uses and provide economic and environmental benefits by minimizing the need for excess sodium bisulfate use.

The proposed amendment also includes some minor non-regulatory updates needed to harmonize the Basin Plan with the mercury water quality objectives included in the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California and to correct previous errors.

Project Documents and Notices

August 18, 2020 Notice of Public Review and Hearing of the Draft Basin Plan Amendment and Staff Report

August 18, 2020 Draft Basin Plan Amendment and staff report

Links

U.S. EPA Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Chlorine webpage <https://www.epa.gov/wqc/ambient-water-quality-criteria-chlorine>

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