Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

Minutes of September 19, 2001 Board Meeting/Workshop held at
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
700 North Alameda Street, Los Angeles, California

INTRODUCTION

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nahai at 9:25 a.m.

Board Members Present

Susan Cloke, Francine Diamond, Bradley Mindlin, Robert Miller, H. David Nahai, Christopher Pak, and Tomothy Shaheen

Board Members Absent

None

Staff Present


Others Present

Leslie Minte, Heal the Bay
Jacqy Gamble, Las Virgenes MWD
Jay Golida, Richards, Watson, and Gershon
Richard Watson, Richard Watson & Associates
Louis Celsa, City of Monrovia
John Hunter, H-K
Zhetonia Piluso, Friends of the Los Angeles River
Steve Williams, Earth Tech
Ken Alva, Engineered Safety Products
Mark W. Smith, Charles Abbott Associates
Carlos D. Santos, City of Glendale
Clay Rumbaoe, Burns & McDonnell
Lial Tischler, Tischler/Kocurek
A. Lussman, Whitcomb Plating

Jason Wen, So. California Water Company
Tom Leary, City of Long Beach
Roger Collins, Fluid Systems
John Harris, Richards, Watson, & Gershon
Teaford, City of Burbank
Michael Moore City of Pico Rivera
Brian Johnson, City of Santa Monica
Scott Pomrehn, City of Lakewood
Tony Martinez, Engineered Safety Products
Bob Wu, Caltrans District 07
Phyllis Papen, Alliance for Water Quality
Jim Lamm, Ballona Creek Renaissance
S.B. Sheth, Whitcomb Plating
Bob Zmuda, Port of Los Angeles
Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Nahai spoke regarding the events of September 11, 2001 and asked for all in attendance to observe a minute of silence. Board Member Susan Cloke read a letter of sympathy and purpose from the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board to Mayor Rudolf Giuliani of New York and invited all in attendance to sign the letter.

1. Roll Call

A roll call was taken.

2. Order of Agenda.

The Executive Officer, Dennis Dickerson recommended the following changes to the Agenda.

- Item 7.2 will be heard at a future meeting.
- Item 7.3 will be heard at a future meeting.
- Item 8.2 will be heard at a future meeting.
- Item 11 removed, Eppink has been issued a revised penalty.
- Item 12 removed.
- Item 14 has waived their right to a hearing.
- Items 15 and 16 will be the first items to be heard on the Agenda following public comment.
- The Uncontested Items Calendar will be heard after the lunch break.
MOTION: By Mr. Mindlin, seconded by Mr. Shaheen and approved on a voice vote.


MOTION: By Ms. Diamond, seconded by Mr. Shaheen and approved on a voice vote.

4. Board Member Ex Parte Communication Disclosure.

Board Member Bradley Mindlin stated he had received a phone call from a person regarding Trancas PCH asking him to call back for any information. Mr. Mindlin did not return the call.

Chairman Nahai stated that he and Dennis Dickerson had lunch with Mary Jane Forester and James Stall from Los Angeles County Sanitation district but that the conversation was restricted and the meeting was of a social nature.

5. Public Forum.

Jason Wen, Southern California Water Company commended Board members and staff for their timely resolution of his general NPDES permit issues and suggested that a new general permit be created to address discharges from the drinking water industry.

Waden Kirkpatrick, Engineered Safety Products informed the board of treatment products related to the trash TMDL.

Board Member Bradley Mindlin asked that Mr. Kirkpatrick leave his company’s brochure with the Board.

BASIN PLANNING/TMDL

15. Consideration of a Basin Plan Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan, to incorporate the Los Angeles River TMDL for trash in the L.A. River.

Jonathan Bishop, Chief, Regional Programs section began the presentation by clarifying changes that were made to the proposed TMDL on pages 15-36, 15-53, and 15-63. He then reviewed the technical aspects of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), and summarized the comments that were received, stating that all comments from the January 25, 2001 meeting were incorporated into the revised TMDL and should not be repeated. He submitted a copy of a letter with a summary of comments that the USEPA would have made had they been able to attend.

Mas Dojiri, City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation made comments approved by the Los Angeles City Council. He expressed concern over the zero target and possible resulting enforcement action (e.g., third party lawsuit over one piece of trash). He also
stated that TMDL limits could conflict with SUSUMP limits. He asked that the Board conduct an assimilative study for trash and adjust the target after 5 years if appropriate.

Desi Alvarez, LA County permitees spoke against the zero target and asked for an assimilative study as well.

Richard Watson, Coalition for Practical Regulation asked the Board to postpone the Ballona TMDL and rescind the LA River TMDL under 1367 authority requiring monitoring to establish standards and to instead adopt a federally approved technical TMDL without implementation guidelines required by the state.

Tom Leary, City of Long Beach objected to the zero numeric target and thanked the Board for their work on the TMDLs.

David Beckman, National Resources Defense Council responded to objections by stating that SUSUMPs are technology based and TMDLs are water based and therefore there is no conflict between the two. He stated that TMDLs are intended to be numeric and the zero target is appropriate, and that third party lawsuits over one piece of trash would be unlikely and impractical.

Mark Gold, Heal the Bay expressed concern about the current slow pace of the TMDL process and urged the board to not reopen TMDLs and reminded the board of the 90 other TMDLs that must be completed in the next 11 years under consent decree. He stated that TMDLs would not conflict with SUSUMPs, and urged the board to require the Executive Officer to meet with all stakeholders before changing monitoring schemes.

Steve Fleischli, Santa Monica Baykeeper, urged the Board to go forward with the TMDLs.

Zhetonia Piluso, Friends of the LA River, supports the TMDL and spoke on behalf of Captain Charles Moore of the Algalita Marine Research, presenting his findings of low plastic to plankton ratios in the San Gabriel River.

Board Member Francine Diamond asked if there have been any previous assimilative studies for trash or if an assimilative trash study had been performed for the LA City anti litter law.

Mas Dojiri replied no to both questions

Mark Gold replied that there have been no assimilative studies because as a physical object there would be no assimilative thresholds for trash.

Board Member Francine Diamond asked if the Executive Officer would be willing to meet with all stakeholders before changing monitoring requirements and if this would need to be added as a change or amendment to the TMDL.
Dennis Dickerson replied that he would be willing to meet with stakeholders and that meetings could be held at the discretion of the Board without an amendment. He added later that he was comfortable with the responsibility of changing monitoring requirements and was confident that staff had a good review of the technical issues.

Board Member Susan Cloke asked if Mark Gold or David Beckman had the opportunity to discuss DGR and third party lawsuit concerns with the city council. She was concerned that the city council had not had the opportunity to understand TMDL issues, due to the comment letter they submitted to the board.

David Beckman responded by stating that he believed the city council's position on water quality regulation has hardened since the consent decree and that they don't want to hear from NRDC.

Steve Fleischli added that he is in communication with council members regularly and thought that their views had changed recently with the approval of a 60% trash reduction goal by year 5.

Mark Gold responded to the DGR question by saying that he had met with council members and the board on the issue of DGRs and that reasonable compliance alternatives would be difficult given the variable nature of trash. He recommended that the Board pass the TMDL now and address DGR later and to allow for monitoring changes as the EO sees fit along the lines of NPDES permitting.

Board Member Susan Cloke asked how unfinished mapping of storm drain system would affect the trash TMDL.

Jon Bishop replied that knowledge of individual outlet locations and what they are draining is not critical to the trash TMDL because of the zero target. He added that mapping submittals are taken care of in the MS4 permits.

Chairman Nahai asked why Long Beach was showing reservations about the TMDL when they had supported it in January.

Tom Leary replied that his reading was procedural and that Long Beach still supports the TMDL, but is concerned about the black and white lettering in the document.

Chairman Nahai asked numerous questions of staff regarding the definition of zero target, the definition of full capture, the assumption that the assimilative capacity for trash is zero, and if this assumption is sufficient for TMDL development.

Jonathan Bishop responded to Chairman Nahai’s questions and stated that the staff interpreted the basin plan to require a target of zero and that this was clear.
in the TMDL language and the revisions. He then read the EPA statement that the proposed TMDL met all requirements under the Clean Water Act.

Michael Lauffer, Staff Council, State Water Resources Control Board added that under federal requirements, an assimilative capacity finding is not necessary for TMDL development and that it is at the Board’s discretion.

Board Member Bradley Mindlin asked if the reopener was mandatory or at the stakeholder’s request.

Jon Bishop replied that it was mandatory.

The following exhibits were submitted during this item:
A - Letter given to Board Member Cloke, City of LA – Mas Dojiri
B – Testimony, Dezi Alvarez
C – Testimony, Richard A. Watson, Consultant

There was a motion by Chairman Nahai, to adopt the staff recommendation with the following corrections:
Page 15-36, blank page
Page 15-53, change table, waste load allocation should be “strike-out”
Page 15-63, strike text “or 5% of baseline” to “Long Beach Harbor.”

MOTION: By Chairman Nahai, seconded by Susan Cloke, and approved on a voice vote. No votes in opposition.

16. Consideration of a Basin Plan Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan, to incorporate the Ballona Creek Trash TMDL

Jonathon Bishop began the staff presentation by incorporating the entire record for the LA River TMDL into the record for the Ballona Creek TMDL. Mr. Bishop gave a background of the problem and the affected watershed, gave the Board the technical aspects of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), and outlined the Trash Reduction Schedule.

The cities asked that their comments regarding the LA River TMDL be incorporated into the record for the Ballona Creek TMDL.

Paul Ahuja and Leslie Minte, Heal the Bay gave a presentation on the effects of trash in Ballona Creek and the Santa Monica Bay and presented statistics on trash collected during Heal the Bay sponsored coastal cleanup days.

Mark Gold stated that trash in Ballona creek sediments was making removal and disposal of contaminated sediments difficult.

Steve Fleischli stated that Santa Monica Baykeeper supports the zero limit for trash in Ballona Creek.
Board Member Christopher Pak asked if Baykeeper was involved in the lagoon.

Steve Fleischli responded that Vista del Mar was in support of the TMDL but that Baykeeper was not as involved in the lagoon. He presented a letter from various environmental groups supporting the TMDL.

David Beckman asked that when the TMDL is reopened in 2 years, discussions be limited to waste load allocations and not other issues.

Captain Angus Alexander, Los Angeles County Fire Department supports the Ballona Creek TMDL.

Roger Collins, Fluid Systems, representing Fresh Creek Technologies supports TMDLs and stated that his company can provide BMPs with 100% capture efficiency for trash.

Marianne Yamaguchi, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project, spoke on behalf of the Bay Watershed Council and read a resolution passed by the council in support of the Ballona Creek TMDL.

Board Member Bradley Mindlin asked if the increase in trash collected over the years was due to increased trash or variability in number of volunteers and methods.

Mark Gold replied that variability makes it difficult to determine if the amount of trash is increasing but that based on personal experience, he believed the trash levels were staying constant.

There was much discussion about whether or not the reopening of the TMDL after two years would be limited to adjusting waste load allocations.

Michael Lauffer advised the board that they could not make a decision now on whether or not future boards can limit what is discussed in the reopener.

Chairman Nahai asked if comments made today by the County of Los Angeles Storm Water Permit EAC represented the views of Culver City, Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, Inglewood, Santa Monica, and unincorporated parts of LA County.

Jon Bishop replied that the EAC includes all of the above mentioned cities.

Chairman Nahai asked why, if Ballona Creek is a smaller watershed than LA River, does it have the same implementation schedule.

Jon Bishop replied that the two rivers were always dealt with together in stakeholder meetings and their schedules should therefore be consistent.

Exhibits submitted during this item:
A – Change Sheet for Ballona Creek Trash TMDL, Staff
WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS

7.1 ExxonMobil Oil Corporation

Mark Pumford, Chief, Watershed Regulatory section, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board gave the staff presentation. He described the facility and gave an overview of the discharge and compliance history. He addressed the various comments that were received and stated that most issues were resolved. Unresolved issues include TMDL based compliance schedule, mass limits, and fecal coliform limits. Staff recommended that the Board adopt the permit with the change sheet.

Stan Holm, ExxonMobil gave a brief introduction and commented that neither discharge drain at the facility accepts wastewater on a regular basis and that the last discharge was in 1998.

Lial Tischler, Tischler/Kocurek requested that the language on page 7.75 “less than” be changed to “does not exceed.” He also requested a provision for cooperative group sampling, summarized the need for a TMDL compliance schedule, expressed concern for fecal coliform standards without baseline monitoring data, and disagreed with the mass and concentration based standards.

Katherine Wagner, Downey, Brand, Seymour, and Rohwer expressed concern that both mass and concentration based limits could cause a double violation. She supports a TMDL based implementation plan exceeding 5 years. She also mentioned ExxonMobil’s contribution to the development of the TMDL for Dominguez Channel.

Anita Mangels, Alliance for Water Quality supported comments made by ExxonMobil and shared her concern that permit provisions be scientifically sound and cost effective.

Mark Gold, Heal the Bay disagrees with the lack of water quality limits for PAHs in the permit. He pointed out that the Dominguez Channel is the most polluted receiving water in Los Angeles and Orange County. DC is impaired for PAHs, PAHs are the product of combustion, and that the SIP allows for such additional information in establishing permit limits.

Chairman Nahai asked staff if the Board would be departing from the Tosco decision in setting mass and concentration based limits.
Mark Pumford replied that the large volume of water discharged to the receiving water (30 million gallons in 1998) requires that a mass based limit be set for high flow conditions. A concentration based limit would allow too many toxics to be emitted at that high of a discharge volume. He stated that standards would be different under two schemes, one set for low flow conditions and one set for high flow conditions.

Chairman Nahai stated that the board could not agree to a TMDL based compliance schedule longer than 5 years because it would contradict the SIP and the Basin Plan.

There was much discussion about whether or not to include PAH limits in the permit. Staff pointed out that the Board’s Tosco decision ruled that arbitrary limits could not be set without monitoring data and that the staff must find reasonable potential. Staff stated that storm water data did not confirm the presence of PAHs due to high detection limits. Staff did confirm that the Dominguez channel was impaired for PAHs. Staff also pointed out that the Board is not regulating process waste, which would be the likely source of PAHs from the refinery.

Board Member Francine Diamond asked if there was a legal problem with setting PAH limits without having a reasonable potential.

Michael Lauffer stated that the board is not able to establish effluent limits without reasonable potential. However, he pointed out that if a specific PAH is regulated under CTR, it is within the discretion of the permit writer to whether or not to include it.

Chairman Nahai asked for the timeframe to establish PAH limits if future monitoring data showed the presence of PAHs in the storm water and if the Executive Officer could impose limits on an expedient basis.

Dennis Dickerson pointed out that it was conceivable that there would be no storm water discharge during the life of the permit since the last storm water discharge was in 1998 during an el niño year. He stated that it would take 60 to 90 days from the receipt of monitoring data to amend the permit to include PAH limits.

Michael Lauffer added that the Executive Officer could not impose new limits without the approval of the board and a permit amendment.

Chairman Nahai asked for Michael Lauffer to make a recommendation after a short break.

Michael Lauffer stated that he thought the Board should accept Staff’s recommendation and to make a precedent of finding reasonable potential before establishing effluent limits.

The following exhibits were submitted during this item:
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California Environmental Protection Agency

Chairman Nahai moved to adopt the staff recommendation including the change sheet with the following changes:

Page 16 #6 – does not exceed 1.0 TOC
Page 77.50, Delete “less than” and replace with “not to exceed”
Page 7.1-252(c)(2), replace “year” with “18 months” in the first line, delete “years” in the last subsection.

MOTION: By Chairman Nahai, seconded by Board Member Francine Diamond, and approved on a voice vote.

The Board voted to move the contested items calendar to the end and to add 8.5 and 17

Board Member Rober Miller left the meeting at 6 pm.

8.3 Trancas PCH

Ken Ehrlich, representing the Trancas Property Owners Association and Pam Healy, Malibu West Swimming Club requested a continuance because they had not received the revised WDR in time to prepare for the meeting.

Alan Bloch, representing Trancas PCH, requested that the hearing go forward.

Dennis Dasker stated that the WDRs were sent out in adequate time, and that the revisions were minor and included no technical changes.

MOTION TO DENY A CONTINUANCE: By Board Member Francine Diamond, seconded by Board Member Bradley Mindlin, and approved on a voice vote. There were no votes in opposition

Paula Rasmussen, Enforcement and Groundwater Permitting Section Chief, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board gave the staff presentation including background, description of the site, description of the proposed septic systems, and beneficial uses. She mentioned significant comments that were included in the staff revision (rescind 79-109) and recommended that the board adopt the revised tentative WDRs.

Alan Bloch, representing Trancas PCH asked that the Board approve the WDRs and stated that he believed the opposition did not oppose the WDRs but the applicant’s ability to comply with them.

Norman Hantzsche, Questa Engineering Corporation described the wastewater treatment system and spoke on behalf of the applicant.
Sally McCraven, Todd Engineers described the groundwater hydrology studies and modeling that were performed and stated that there were insignificant impacts based on conservative assumptions.

Others who spoke on behalf of the applicant:

Malissa Hathaway McKeith, Loeb & Loeb
David K. Todd, Todd Engineers
Scott Simmons, Gorian and Associates
Ernest M. Weber, Todd Engineers

Ken Erlich spoke against the adoption of WDR and expressed concern that Staff did not take into consideration the 1979 and 1985 CEQA documents when writing the revised WDRs.

Walt Hamann, Rincon Consultants, spoke against the WDR and stated that the groundwater elevation modeling and its effect on systems down gradient should have been based on a worst case scenario.

Pam Healy spoke against the adoption of the WDR and expressed concern over rise in groundwater at Broad Beach.

Board Member Bradley Mindlin asked if Staff wanted to add any changes to the revised WDR after hearing verbal comments.

Paula Rasmussen stated that a staff geologist ran a worst case scenario based on data provided by the applicant and found that impacts on groundwater height were still minimal. She stated that the WDRs were fairly stringent and did not have any changes.

Board Member Francine Diamond asked about lots 13 and 14, which were exceptions to the proposed treatment due to different setbacks.

Paula Rasmussen stated that lots 13 and 14 were also included in worst case scenario calculations and would not have a significant impact.

There was some discussion about the issue of daylighting and 100% replacement. Staff stated that information provided by the discharger showed no threat of daylighting. Staff studied information provided by the discharger regarding 100% replacement and confirmed the data.

Sally McCraver went over cross section drawings of the site showing the unlikelihood of daylight.

Board Member Susan Cloke asked if the nitrate and fecal coliform levels in the WDR would affect TMDL development and implementation.
Paula Rasmussen replied that when the TMDL is developed, the WDR and its design specifications would be changed if necessary.

Chairman Nahai asked if the homeowners association of the proposed development would be aware of the WDR requirements and the upcoming TMDL.

Alan Bloch replied that the WDR and upcoming TMDLs are clearly specified in the CC&R to be distributed to purchasers.

Board Member Susan Cloke asked Wendy Phillips if she could provide some historical background on the Malibu area and the cumulative impacts of septic systems in the area.

Wendy Phillips replied that she supported staffs recommendation to adopt the WDR but mentioned a region wide water imbalance problem and the general problem of saturated leach fields, tidal influence on groundwater, and a history of septic problems in the area.

Chairman Nahai asked why the applicant was not rescinding old WDRs for the 52 proposed townhouses on the site that were not included in the revised WDR when it was obvious that those WDRs would not be approved for development of the townhouses.

Alan Bloch replied that the applicant wanted to keep those permits so that they could get approval of the tract maps for the current development and would apply for new WDRs when the applicant decided to develop the townhouses. Mr. Bloch committed to send a letter to the Board confirming that the current WDRs would not be used for the future townhouse development and that Trancas would apply for new WDRs when they decided to develop the townhouses.

There was some discussion on Staff’s review of the previous CEQA documents before the revisions were made to the WDR.

The following exhibits were submitted during this item:
A – Tentative WDR 98-190, Trancas/Alan Robert Block
B – Tentative WDR 98-190, Trancas/Loeb & Loeb
C – Power Point Presentation, Staff

After brief discussion by the Board, there was a motion to adopt the WDR with the change sheet:

MOTION: By Chairman Nahai, seconded by Board Member Christopher Pak, and approved on a voice vote. No opposing votes.

The Board voted to add 9.1 and 9.2 to the uncontested items calendar.
6. Uncontested Items Calendar

Chairman Nahai asked for a motion to accept uncontested items 8.1, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6
though 8.13, 9.1, 9.2, and 17

Board Member Christopher Pak left the meeting at 7pm.

10. Consideration of a proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the construction of an
automobile hobby shop at the Naval Base, Ventura County.

Jon Bishop gave the staff presentation background description of the site and the new
requirements under 401 certification to have CEQA documentation prepared by the lead
agency. The Navy proposed to use credits from a previously restored wetland site to
mitigate the proposed auto shop.

Jim Danza, Space Resource Manager for Nay in Ventura spoke on mitigation credits
and how they are used.

Board Member Susan Cloke asked if it was normal to use previously banked sites for
mitigation of current projects.

Raymond Jay, Non-Point Source unit, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality
Control Board stated that this was not normal, but better, since it can take two to
three years to develop mitigation sites.

Tony Kletcha, Non-Point Source unit, LA Regional Board further explained mitigation
credits and discussed other banking projects that the Board was working on.

MOTION: By Board Member Susan Cloke, seconded by Board Member Bradley
Mindlin, and approved on a voice vote. No opposing votes

13. Consideration of ACL Complaint No. 00-171 against County Sanitation Districts of Los
Angeles County in the amount of $89,690.

After a closed session, there was a motion to uphold the fine recommended by staff and
to encourage the payment of the fine through supplemental environmental projects.
Motion approved on a vote of 4 yeas, 1 opposed.

20. Adjournment of Current Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 25,
2001, at Richard H. Chambers, U.S. Court of Appeals located at 125 S. Grand Avenue,
Pasadena, at 9:00 a.m.
California Environmental Protection Agency

Our mission is to preserve and enhance the quality of California’s water resources for the benefit of present and future generations.