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Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

TO: Interested Persons

FROM: Renee Purdy 
Section Chief, Regional Programs
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

DATE: November 6, 2017

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF 2017-19 TRIENNIAL REVIEW OF WATER QUALITY STANDARDS
IN THE LOS ANGELES REGION

This notice is to inform interested persons that the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region (Regional Water Board) is commencing its 2017-19 triennial review of water quality standards.

Section 13240 of the California Water Code directs the Regional Water Boards to periodically review their regional water quality control plans (also known as basin plans), while section 303(c)(1) of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires states to review and, as appropriate, modify and adopt water quality standards applicable to waters of the U.S. In federal terminology, this review of water quality standards is known as the "triennial review," consistent with the federal requirement that the review is conducted on a three-year cycle.

Basin plans are designed to preserve and enhance water quality and protect the beneficial uses of regional surface and ground waters. Specifically, basin plans designate beneficial uses for surface and ground waters within a region and set narrative and numerical objectives to protect the designated beneficial uses and conform to the state's anti-degradation policy. Designated beneficial uses, narrative and numeric water quality objectives, and the state's anti-degradation policy, together, comprise the water quality standards. Basin plans also describe implementation programs to protect all waters within a region. In addition, basin plans incorporate (by reference) all other applicable State and Regional Water Board plans and policies and other pertinent water quality policies and regulations (e.g., California Toxics Rule or CTR, California Ocean Plan, etc.).

At the outset of each triennial review, possible additions and revisions to water quality standards are identified and prioritized at a public hearing. These prioritized additions and revisions are then developed and implemented through future Basin Plan amendments over the course of the three-year cycle, based upon available resources.

In October 2015, revisions to the federal Water Quality Standards (WQS) regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 131 went into effect. The final rule addressed certain key WQS program areas including triennial reviews pursuant to CWA section 303(c)(1). Per the final rule, during their next triennial review, states and authorized tribes are to consider for adoption as WQS new or

updated CWA section 304(a) water quality criteria recommendations¹ published by the U.S. EPA since May 30, 2000.

The Regional Water Board's 2017-19 triennial review directly follows this rulemaking, therefore, its main focus will be the consideration of these section 304(a) recommended criteria for incorporation into the Regional Water Board's Basin Plan. This process will involve evaluating which of the new or revised criteria to consider for adoption and incorporation into the Basin Plan. Where an update or adoption is not recommended, the reasons for this determination will be documented. Following these determinations, staff will proceed with the water quality objective updates. This effort is expected to form the bulk of basin planning work conducted during the 2017-19 triennial review period. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the initial determinations, as well as each of the updates prior to its consideration by the Regional Water Board as part of the public notice and comment process for each individual Basin Plan amendment.

In addition, where resources allow, Basin Planning staff may consider other projects that were identified during the 2014-16 triennial review for future prioritization. These may include any potential actions related to the State Water Board's Bacteria Provisions, as well as continued development of guidance or policy to address naturally occurring chemical constituents that may be elevated above their water quality objectives or may exceed the objective more frequently than currently allowed.

By this notice, staff is soliciting input on the specified projects to be addressed during the 2017-19 triennial review period. Interested persons may provide written comments on these issues and other related concerns, including other projects they would like the Regional Water Board to consider. Written comments and any exhibits must be received by the Regional Water Board **no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 6, 2017**. Interested persons are encouraged to submit comments electronically. Send comments by e-mail to: Celine.Gallon@waterboards.ca.gov. Please indicate in the subject line, "Comment Letter – 2017-19 Triennial Review." Written comments submitted through email are requested to be transmitted in Microsoft Word format. Written comments sent by mail should be addressed to:

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Los Angeles Region
Attn: Dr. Celine Gallon
320 W. 4th Street, Suite 200
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Staff will consider stakeholder comments in finalizing the basin planning priorities that will be presented to the Regional Water Board for their consideration and approval at a public meeting. The approved projects, along with those currently in progress, will dictate staff basin planning activities through 2019. In addition to this initial solicitation for input on priorities, there will be

¹ Section 304(a)(1) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) requires EPA to develop and publish, and from time to time revise, recommended criteria for the protection of water quality that accurately reflect the latest scientific knowledge. EPA's recommended section 304(a) criteria provide technical information for states and authorized tribes to consider and use in adopting water quality standards that ultimately provide the basis for assessing water body health and controlling discharges of pollutants into waters of the United States.

other opportunities for public participation, including public comment periods and public hearings for any Regional Water Board actions related to consideration of new or revised water quality standards.

If you have questions about the triennial review process, contact Dr. Celine Gallon at 213 576-6784 or by e-mail at Celine.Gallon@waterboards.ca.gov. You may also contact Dr. Ginachi Amah at 213 576-6685 or by e-mail at Ginachi.Amah@waterboards.ca.gov. Please share this request for data and information with other interested persons who may not be included on our distribution list. We look forward to your continued participation in our efforts to protect water quality.