

ITEM: 17

SUBJECT: Waste Discharge Requirements for the Grassland Bypass Project

BOARD ACTION: *Consideration of Adoption of the Waste Discharge Requirements.*

BACKGROUND: The proposed Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for the Grassland Bypass Order is being issued to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (the Dischargers). The Grassland Bypass Project (GBP) involves the use of the San Luis Drain to transport subsurface drainage waters from the Grassland Drainage Area to Mud Slough (north) and eventually the lower San Joaquin River. The proposed WDRs are designed to bring the discharges of subsurface drainage into compliance with the Basin Plan's 5 µg/L selenium limit (measured as a 4-day average) in Mud Slough (north) and in the San Joaquin River before the Merced River confluence by the end of 2019.

In August 2014, a Board workshop was held at Rancho Cordova to receive input from the public and direction from the Board. At the workshop, the Board directed staff to develop WDRs for groundwater discharges by growers in the Grassland Drainage Area (GDA) under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, and present both WDRs before the Board concurrently. The concurrent consideration would allow the Board to better understand how the two Orders integrate and cover discharges from agricultural lands from the Grassland Drainage Area. In May 2015, staff circulated the tentative Orders for the GBP and the GDA for review and comment by the public. For the GBP WDRs, nine comment letters were received by the end of the 45-day comment period; letters and the staff response to comments are included in the agenda package. The tentative Order, which is included in this agenda package, has been revised in response to comments received.

Provided below is a brief summary of revisions relative to the August 2014 draft and May 2015 tentative versions.

### ***General Summary of Revisions***

- *The Information Sheet addresses both the GBP and GDA WDRs.* The Information Sheet was combined to allow how the two orders integrate and provide coverage for surface water and groundwater discharges.
- *Selenium load values.* Rather than mandating load values in the Use Agreement, the Order requires compliance with the overall selenium load reduction strategy described in the Use Agreement. The load reduction strategy requires specific load values and includes consideration of environmental conditions and financial incentives.
- *Continuation of discharges to San Luis Drain.* A requirement to demonstrate compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act has been added before the Board may consider extending coverage beyond 2019.
- *Management Plans.* A section was added regarding compliance when the Dischargers are preparing, or have submitted a Surface Water Quality Management Plan, or are in compliance with the time schedule in an approved

## Management Plan.

- *Grassland Drainage Area boundary.* The Order boundary was modified to include agricultural lands that drain to the Grassland Bypass channel and the San Luis Drain, and exclude agricultural lands that drain to an area outside of the Grassland Drainage Area. A concurrent revision of the Western San Joaquin WDR boundary ensures that all lands have regulatory coverage.
- *Monitoring program.* Monitoring stations in two wetland supply channels, Stations L2 and M2, were added for storm event monitoring. Requirements to prepare sediments and pesticide monitoring plans were added.
- *Salinity control.* Language was added to provide more information on the Real-Time Management Program for salinity control.
- *Mitigation measures.* Reporting on the status of mitigation measures specified in the 2009 Use Agreement are required as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.
- *Corrections and edits.* A number of errors were corrected, and edits made to clarify text.

## **Remaining Issues**

The remaining issues and proposed resolution thereof are described in the comment letters and staff response to comments.

RECOMMENDATION Adopt the proposed waste discharge requirements.

Mgmt. Review SYM  
Legal Review PEP  
30/31/ July 2015  
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Meeting  
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Rancho Cordova, CA 95670