

## DRINKING WATER POLICY FACT SHEET

### Central Valley Drinking Water Policy Work Group

#### Background and Overview

Staff of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) has drafted a proposed basin plan amendment to establish a drinking water policy to protect source water quality. The policy includes a focused narrative water quality objective for *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* and other elements to address constituents of potential concern to drinking water, and will apply to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its tributaries below the first major dams. The proposed amendment will be brought before the Central Valley Water Board as a hearing to receive comments in April 2013 and for consideration of adoption during a July 2013 hearing.

In 2002, a Central Valley Drinking Water Policy Workgroup (Workgroup) was formed to provide a stakeholder-based platform for development of the policy. The Workgroup is comprised of representatives from drinking water, wastewater, municipal storm water and agricultural interests and federal and state agencies. The Workgroup has collaborated closely with Central Valley Water Board staff over the last several years to develop this policy, which has also been informed by a number of technical studies performed specifically to assess drinking water constituents.

#### Results of Technical Studies

- Evaluations of wastewater and urban runoff discharges showed that receiving water quality will likely stay the same or possibly improve as a result of actions the Water Boards have taken in recent years. Planned regulatory actions are expected to offset the impacts of increased population.
- The load of drinking water constituents from agricultural land is expected to decrease as a result of conversion to other land uses. Activities undertaken through the Irrigated Lands Program may also reduce the load of drinking water constituents from agricultural land.
- The impacts of projected changes in water quality and drinking water regulations were evaluated with an EPA Water Treatment Model. Since water quality is expected to stay the same or possibly improve, no changes in water treatment will be required with the existing drinking water regulations. Under a projected future regulatory scenario, the model predicted that water treatment upgrades would be needed for water treatment plants treating water from the Sacramento River, the Delta, and at some locations along the California Aqueduct.

#### Drinking Water Policy Basin Plan Amendment

- Recognition of all existing regulations that protect the municipal water supply (MUN) beneficial use.
- Clarification that the existing narrative objective for chemical constituents does include drinking water chemical constituents of concern, such as organic carbon.
- Recognition of the importance of a multi-barrier approach to public health protection that includes source water protection, drinking water treatment, and protection of water quality in the drinking water distribution system.
- Narrative Water Quality Objective for Pathogens to protect the public water system component of the MUN beneficial use. Proposed language:  
*Waters shall not contain Cryptosporidium and Giardia in concentrations that adversely affect the public water system component of the MUN beneficial use. This narrative water quality objective for Cryptosporidium and Giardia shall be applied within the Sacramento-San*

*Joaquin Delta and its tributaries below the first major dams (shown in map X) and should be interpreted as specified in Section IV of the Basin Plan. Compliance with this objective will be assessed at existing and new public water system intakes.*

#### **Narrative Objective Implementation**

- The proposed Drinking Water Policy includes an implementation element to specifically address the interpretation of the proposed narrative objective for *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*.
- The goal of the objective is to maintain pathogens within the range of current bin levels, as defined by the Long-Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT2ESWTR) bin at public water system intakes.
- To prevent violations of the narrative objective and evaluate compliance, numeric *Cryptosporidium* thresholds tied to US EPA's drinking water requirements will be used to trigger early actions. Specifically, trigger levels will be set at 80 percent of the next highest bin level from the LT2ESWTR for a given public water system intake.
- Exceedances of the triggers would not be violations of the proposed narrative objective, but would initiate a process for addressing the issue (see attached flow chart). The Central Valley Water Board would work with the Department of Public Health, the affected drinking water utility, and potential sources of pathogens to implement the program.

#### **Water Quality Monitoring Elements**

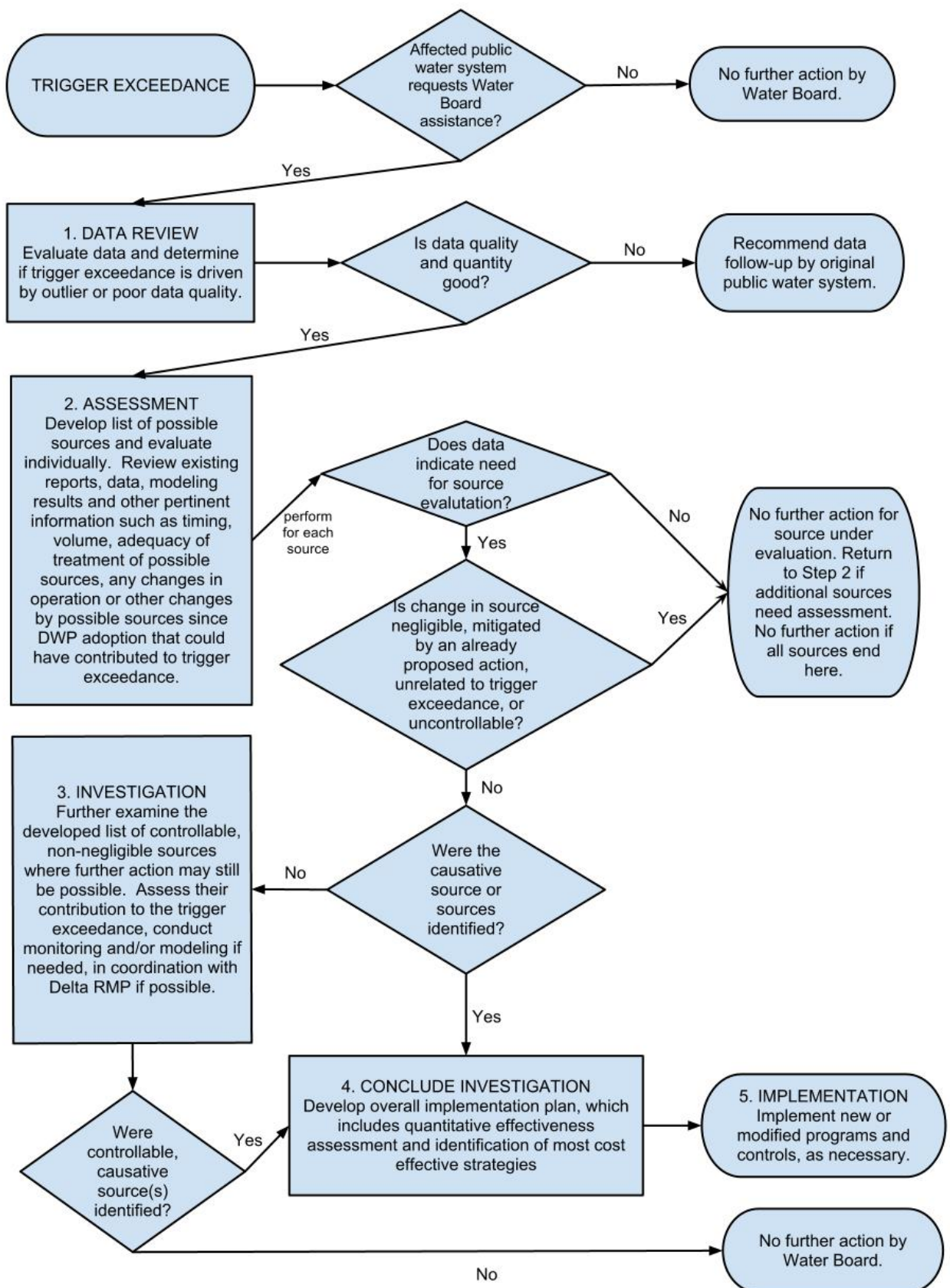
- A one-time special study to further characterize ambient background conditions, linkages to potential sources, and fate and transport is included in the Policy. Details of the monitoring program are to be worked out in the next several months.
- As waste discharge requirements are renewed, the Central Valley Water Board will consider the need to include monitoring for organic carbon, salinity and nutrients in permits for dischargers greater than 5 mgd.
- The Central Valley Water Board will consider requiring monitoring for organic carbon, salinity and nutrients when monitoring is conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of management practices for other constituents (e.g., metals or pesticides).

#### **For More Information and to Provide Feedback**

See [http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/centralvalley/water\\_issues/drinking\\_water\\_policy/](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/drinking_water_policy/)

Central Valley Water Board Meetings:

- Hearing to receive comments - April 11, 2013
- Adoption Hearing – July 25 or 26, 2013



Draft trigger exceedance overview