

Surface waters from the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds and Bay-Delta provide drinking water for more than two thirds of all Californians. The Sierra tributaries to the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers are high quality sources of drinking water. As the water flows out of the foothills and into the valley, pollutants from a variety of urban, industrial, agricultural, and natural sources affect the quality of the water, leading to treatment challenges and potential public health concerns.



What regulatory controls are currently in place?

Drinking water quality is regulated by several state agencies. For instance, the California Department of Health Services issues Drinking Water Standards, or maximum contaminant levels, that stipulate the maximum concentrations of certain chemicals in drinking water supplied to consumers. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) and Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) Basin Plans designate beneficial uses, including municipal drinking water supply, for the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and Delta. Basin Plans also specify numeric and narrative water quality objectives to protect designated beneficial uses. For copies of plans or policy documents, visit www.swrcb.ca.gov.

Why is a comprehensive Drinking Water Policy needed?

Current policies and plans lack water quality objectives for several known drinking water constituents of concern, such as disinfection by-product precursors and pathogens, and do not include implementation strategies to provide effective source water protection. The California Bay-Delta Authority's (CBDA) CALFED Programmatic EIS/EIR established a Drinking Water Quality Program, which requires development of a source water protection program that includes a comprehensive drinking water policy for the Delta and its upstream tributaries.

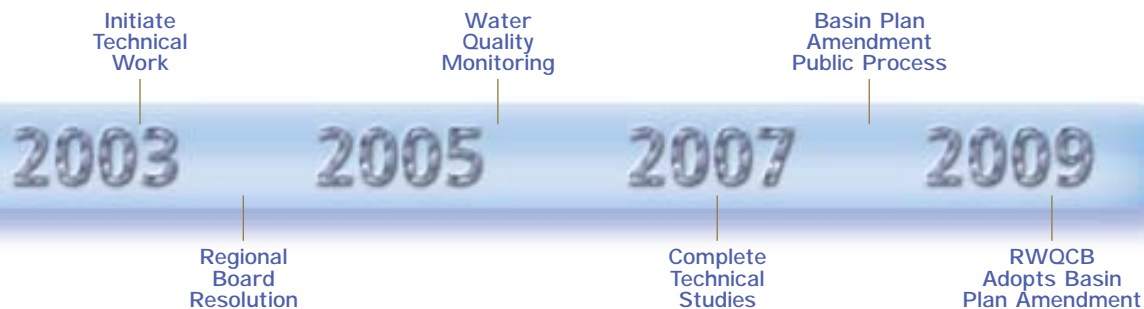
What is the process and schedule for developing the Drinking Water Policy?

The Central Valley Drinking Water Policy Work Group (Work Group) was formed to develop and implement a work plan to provide the technical information needed by the Regional Board to develop a comprehensive Drinking Water Policy for the Central Valley. Work plan tasks include water quality monitoring, pollutant load evaluations, and evaluation of potential control strategies to identify those that are reasonably attainable and cost effective. The following agencies and stakeholder groups have been involved in the development of the work plan or are actively participating in implementing work plan tasks:

- California Bay-Delta Authority (CBDA)
- Department of Health Services (DHS)
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (CVRWQCB)
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
- Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD)
- Northern California Water Association (NCWA)
- California Urban Water Agencies (CUWA) with representatives from Contra Costa Water District and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Clean Water Action
- Sacramento City Stormwater



The work group utilizes the Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee's Drinking Water Subcommittee as the forum to update the public on the progress of the policy development. The Subcommittee is the stakeholder group responsible for advising the CBDA on the implementation of the Drinking Water Quality Program. The technical portions of the work plan are expected to take up to three years to complete at which time the Basin plan amendment process can begin. The Regional Board has the authority to establish an enforceable Policy and will ultimately be responsible for its development and implementation. Any Regional Board actions will include additional public outreach and review, and will provide further opportunity for stakeholder input. Policy development and adoption could occur by the middle of 2009.



How will the Drinking Water Policy effort coordinate with other Regional Board programs?

Development of the Drinking Water Policy will be coordinated with other Regional Board programs. Furthermore, the policy for protecting drinking water source waters, in whatever form it takes, will become part of the Basin Plan. The Basin Plan guides all programs that the Regional Board implements and thus, once adopted, the drinking water policy will need to be considered in all relevant program decisions.

What types of regulatory requirements might be included in the Policy?

The exact types of regulatory requirements that will be included in the Drinking Water Policy have not yet been determined. Any changes to the Basin Plans for the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers as a result of any new water quality objectives developed under this policy will impact those governed by the requirements of those Basin Plans. Any water quality objectives developed will be established in accordance with California Water Code requirements. The Regional board will hold public hearings if changes are proposed to the Basin Plans. All interested stakeholders, including the regulated community, will have the opportunity to provide their input during the public hearings.

How is development of the Policy being funded?

Due to the State's fiscal situation, the Regional Board does not have funding to fully support the development of the drinking water policy. Partial funding to implement initial tasks in the work plan is currently being provided by SRCSD and CUWA. The Work Group is actively seeking other sources of funding including EPA and State Board grant funding.

Who can I contact for more information or to get involved?

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