

Drinking Water Policy for Surface Waters

Policy Outline

October 2011

Background

As directed in Resolution R5-2010-0079, Central Valley Water Board staff is developing a proposed Drinking Water Policy to include additions and modifications to three chapters of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins (Basin Plan): Water Quality Objectives, Implementation, and Surveillance and Monitoring. The policy provisions will apply to surface waters only. This policy is the culmination of almost ten years of work, during which staff has worked closely with the Central Valley Drinking Water Policy Workgroup (Workgroup) to complete necessary technical studies. The Workgroup is comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders which encompasses water supply, wastewater, storm water, agriculture interests and includes other state and federal agencies. Staff will continue to work with the Workgroup to develop the proposed policy and the supporting technical information

The Basin Plan includes existing provisions (beneficial use designations, water quality objectives, implementation measures) that protect drinking water uses. The proposed policy will augment and modify those existing provisions and will provide direction for future action, building off the approach and findings developed by the Workgroup.

Drinking Water Policy Elements

Below are some proposed Policy elements as well as some background information regarding the current Basin Plan.

Water Quality Objectives

The existing Basin Plan includes a number of water quality objectives and provisions that address drinking water, including the following.

1. "Waters shall not contain chemical constituents in concentrations that adversely affect beneficial uses." (III – 3.0)
2. "The Regional Board acknowledges that specific treatment requirements are imposed by state and federal drinking water regulations on the consumption of surface waters under specific circumstances." (III – 3.0).

Changes to the Water Quality Objectives chapter to address drinking water constituents are being considered.

- Changes to this chapter may include a new narrative water quality objective for the pathogens, *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*, to protect all beneficial uses. New narrative objectives developed as a part of the

Policy will be linked to the Basin Plan Implementation Chapter for clarification regarding implementation.

Implementation Chapter

The Implementation Chapter of the Basin Plan includes a number of Policies and Plans adopted by the State Water Board (IV-8.00) and the Central Valley Water Board (IV – 14.00). Within this Chapter, staff proposes adding a Drinking Water Policy for Surface Waters with the following elements:

- A policy statement recognizing the importance of protecting the municipal beneficial use and sources of drinking water for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its tributaries.
- Summary of current Basin Plan elements that address drinking water protection, such as:
 - Water quality objectives are developed to protect all applicable beneficial uses, including the MUN beneficial use unless otherwise stated.
 - Implementation Chapter contains a number of policies relevant to drinking water protection:
 - ✓ Resolution No. 68-16, Policy with Respect to Maintaining High Quality of Water in California (IV – 8.00).
 - ✓ Resolution No. 88-63, Sources of Drinking Water Policy (IV – 9.00).
 - ✓ Antidegradation Implementation Policy (IV – 15.01).
 - ✓ Policy for Application of Water Quality Objectives (IV – 16.00).
 - ✓ Policy for Implementation of Toxics Standards for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California; a.k.a. State Implementation Plan or SIP (IV-26.02)
- A very concise summary of Workgroup findings (most of the details will be in the accompanying resolution and staff report) such as the following:
 - Source evaluation and modeling results to date do not support initial concern that water quality would decline over time.
 - Monitoring and studies may be needed to fill data gaps, to ensure that modeling predictions are accurate and to further refine modeling efforts.
 - Workgroup findings pertain to organic carbon, *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, salt and nutrients that were identified as the constituents of concern early in the process.

- Clarification for interpreting narrative objectives associated with drinking water protection, including the following:
 - New narrative objective(s) will be linked to the Basin Plan Implementation Chapter to provide context, clarification for implementation, and to protect all designated beneficial uses.
 - Water quality objectives developed for the policy would apply to surface waters in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Basins downstream of major dams.
 - Existing narrative objective for chemical constituents includes drinking water chemical constituents of concern, including organic carbon.

- Recognition of the following:
 - The multi-barrier approach for protecting public health which balances source water protection and water treatment.
 - On-going Water Board efforts to address other drinking water constituents of concern including salts, nutrients, and emerging constituents.

Surveillance and Monitoring

The Drinking Water Policy will include a monitoring component to improve the knowledge of existing conditions and trends, to refine models, and also to support implementation of the Drinking Water Policy. The following monitoring is being considered for inclusion in the Drinking Water Policy:

- Monitoring to ensure that Workgroup findings are accurate, that drinking water constituents do not increase over time to levels that adversely affect beneficial uses. This monitoring effort could also be used to assess compliance with antidegradation requirements.
- Conducting focused, limited-term studies within the Delta.
- Gathering information needed for future model refinement
- Coordinating all monitoring efforts described in the Drinking Water Policy with the Delta Regional Monitoring Program (RMP) to maximize the value of this work.