
San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE OF FILING OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

In the Matter of Proposed Amendments to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin to Incorporate Biological Objectives for the San Diego Region

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region (San Diego Water Board) is holding a public hearing to consider the adoption of proposed amendments to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin (Basin Plan). The proposed amendments to the Basin Plan would incorporate general narrative guidance for the development of biological objectives and a numeric biological water quality objective for perennial and seasonal streams using benthic macroinvertebrates and the California Stream Condition Index (CSCI). The Staff Report and Substitute Environmental Document for the proposed amendments were released on February 28, 2019, and the written public comment period closed on June 01, 2019. The San Diego Water Board has made changes to the amendments and associated documents in response to comments received from the public and scientific peer review, and will consider adoption of the proposed amendments and draft environmental documents at a public hearing scheduled for **September 9, 2020**.

Public Hearing

The San Diego Water Board will hold a public hearing to consider adopting amendments to the Basin Plan to establish general narrative guidance for the development of biological objectives and a numeric biological water quality objective for perennial and seasonal streams using benthic macroinvertebrates and the CSCI, as well as “functionally equivalent” environmental documents prepared pursuant to section 21080.5 of the Public Resources Code, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Draft environmental documents conclude that the proposed amendments will have no significant or a less than significant effect on the environment. Interested persons are invited to attend the hearing and present oral comments to the Board. To the extent possible, oral presentations should summarize previously submitted written comments and evidence. Written comments and evidence not previously submitted may not be accepted into the administrative record, if doing so

HENRY ABARBANEL, PH.D., CHAIR | DAVID GIBSON, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

would prejudice any party, at the discretion of the Chair, in accordance with section 648.4, of title 23, of the California Code of Regulations. Oral comments are generally limited to 3 minutes each, but time limitations may be adjusted at the discretion of the Chair, depending on the number of persons wishing to be heard and other items before the Board. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the San Diego Water Board will consider adoption of the proposed Basin Plan amendments and certification of the environmental document, including changes to the proposed amendments that are consistent with the general purpose of the proposed amendment and are a logical outgrowth of the evidence and testimony received. The San Diego Water Board will conduct the public hearing for the proposed amendments at the following time and location:

September 09, 2020, 9:00 A.M.

No Physical Meeting Location – Webcast Only

(Authorized by and in furtherance of Executive Orders [N-29-20](#) and [N-33-20](#).)

Video broadcast of meetings will be available at:

<https://cal-span.org/>

A meeting agenda, which will indicate any changes in the meeting location and may provide other specific information concerning this hearing, will be posted prior to the hearing on the San Diego Water Board website at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/board_info/agendas/

The procedures governing San Diego Water Board meetings may be found in California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 647, et seq. and are available upon request. As a result of the COVID-19 emergency and the Governor's Executive Orders to protect public health by limiting public gatherings and requiring social distancing, this meeting will occur solely via remote presence. Links for the meeting, including a phone call option, will be posted on <https://cal-span.org/>

For those who wish to comment on an agenda item or are presenting to the Board, additional information about participating telephonically or via the remote meeting solution is available here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/board_info/remote_meeting/.

To receive the agenda and future updates on the proposed narrative guidance for biological objectives and numeric Stream Biological Objective via e-mail, please subscribe to the "Biological Objectives for the San Diego Region" email list on our Email Subscriptions web page:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg9_subscribe.shtml

Accessibility

The facility is accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who have special accommodation or language needs, please contact Ms. Chris Blank by phone at (619) 521-3382 or by email at Christina.Blank@waterboards.ca.gov at least 5 working days

prior to the meeting. TTY/TDD/Speech-to-Speech users may dial 7-1-1 for the California Relay Service.

Document Availability

The final proposed Basin Plan amendments, including the Staff Report and Substitute Environmental Document, as well as the response to comments received on the February 28, 2019 draft, will be available for review on the San Diego Water Board web site by **August 09, 2020**, at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/bio_objectives/

Interested persons may also receive copies of the proposed amendments and associated documents by contacting Mr. Chad Loflen by phone at 619-521-3370, or via e-mail at chad.loflen@waterboards.ca.gov.

Contact for Further Information

Please contact Mr. Chad Loflen by phone at 619-521-3370, or via e-mail at chad.loflen@waterboards.ca.gov, for information regarding the above proposed action. Please share this information with any person who may be interested in this matter.

Background

The Basin Plan designates beneficial uses for water bodies in the San Diego Region and establishes water quality objectives and implementation plans to protect those beneficial uses. The objective of the federal Clean Water Act is “to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters.” Existing water quality objectives in the San Diego Water Board’s Basin Plan emphasize the chemical integrity of waters on a pollutant-by-pollutant basis, which can underestimate the biological integrity of waters. The goal and intent of the biological objectives project is to use biological assessment (“bioassessment”) to better assess, protect, and restore designated aquatic life beneficial uses of waters.

The San Diego Water Board is proposing to amend the Basin Plan to incorporate general narrative guidance for the development of biological objectives and incorporate a numeric biological water quality objective for perennial and seasonal streams using benthic macroinvertebrates and the CSCI. The proposed numeric biological water quality objective uses the CSCI to evaluate attainment of aquatic-wildlife beneficial uses, provide for protection of high-quality streams, and prioritize restoration activities.

The San Diego Water Board 2014 triennial review of water quality standards identified the amendment of the Basin Plan to incorporate biological water quality objectives as a high priority project needed to protect and restore beneficial uses associated with aquatic and aquatic dependent wildlife. On May 13, 2015, the San Diego Water Board

adopted Resolution R9-2015-0043, which directed staff to begin working on the project to amend the Basin Plan to incorporate biological water quality objectives.

On January 22, 2018, the San Diego Water Board released an administrative draft (Administrative Draft) of the proposed amendments to the Basin Plan to incorporate biological objectives and subsequently held a public workshop during the February 14, 2018, San Diego Water Board Meeting. The Administrative Draft was released, and public workshop held, in order to receive initial comments and feedback from San Diego Water Board Members and the public prior to releasing a formal draft for public and peer review. On October 10, 2018, the San Diego Water Board adopted Resolution R9-2018-0123, which directed staff to continue working on the project. Feedback received from San Diego Water Board Members and the public on the Administrative Draft was considered by San Diego Water Board staff prior to public release of the proposed Basin Plan amendments and associated documents.

On February 28, 2019, the San Diego Water Board released, for public review and comment, the Draft Basin Plan Amendments, Staff Report, and Substitute Environmental Document. On April 18, 2019, the San Diego Water Board held a Public Workshop to provide information and receive public input on the proposed Basin Plan amendments, Staff Report, and Substitute Environmental Document. Based on comments received at the Public Workshop, the San Diego Water Board, on April 25, 2019, extended the written public comment period from May 02, 2019 to June 01, 2019. The Draft Basin Plan Amendments, Staff Report, and Substitute Environmental Document were also peer reviewed pursuant, to Health and Safety Code section 57004, and peer reviews were made available on the State Water Resources Control Board website on May 31, 2019.

The San Diego Water Board received 11 comment letters on the February 28, 2019 Draft Basin Plan Amendments, Staff Report, and Substitute Environmental Document. San Diego Water Board staff have reviewed the written comments received, as well as the peer reviews, and have made proposed changes to the Basin Plan Amendments, Staff Report, and Substitute Environmental Document in response. A hearing has been scheduled for September 09, 2020, for the Board to consider adoption of the proposed Basin Plan Amendments, Staff Report, and Substitute Environmental Document.

Kelly Dorsey
Assistant Executive Officer

July 24, 2020
Date