



**Winston H. Hickox**  
Secretary for  
Environmental  
Protection

# California Regional Water Quality Control Board

## Santa Ana Region

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**Gray Davis**  
Governor

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**TO:** Barbara L. Evoy, Division Chief  
Division of Clean Water Programs  
State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 944212  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2120

**FROM:** Gerard J. Thibeault  
Executive Officer

**SANTA ANA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD**

**DATE:** November 1, 2002

**SUBJECT:** REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT FUNDS TO SUPPORT WELLHEAD TREATMENT PROJECTS TO CLEANUP AND ABATE THE EFFECTS OF PERCHLORATE POLLUTION ON PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY WELLS IN THE RIALTO, COLTON AND CHINO GROUNDWATER SUBBASINS. (Resolution No. R8-2002-0091)

Attached is Regional Board Resolution No. R8-2002-0091 requesting an emergency allocation of \$3 million of Cleanup and Abatement Account (CAA) funds to support wellhead treatment projects to cleanup and abate the effects of perchlorate pollution in public water supply wells in the Rialto, Colton and Chino Groundwater Subbasins. As a direct result of a serious threat to the public health from this perchlorate pollution, more than twenty public water supply wells operated by the Cities of Rialto and Colton, the West San Bernardino County Water District and the Fontana Water Company have been affected by perchlorate pollution and have been removed from service. This has resulted in the potential for a water supply crisis during the peak use periods next summer, unless alternative water supply sources, such as wellhead treatment, can be found.

The Regional Board supports the use of wellhead treatment as a solution for the water supply crisis, because wellhead treatment will also serve to clean up the pollution of these basins. As you know, wellhead treatment requires a significant lead time for the design, purchase, and construction of facilities. Therefore, we ask that this request be considered by the State Board as an emergency measure and acted on as soon as possible, in order to have treatment facilities in place before next summer. The four water purveyors affected by this pollution are seeking to construct two wellhead treatment facilities per entity, for a total of eight systems. It is estimated that the total costs for the eight systems will be in the range of \$16 million.

The affected water purveyors simply do not have the resources to support this burden without outside assistance. The purveyors have purchased supplemental water from neighboring agencies, and these costs have been very burdensome. The affected communities are

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significantly disadvantaged economically, and there are important and serious environmental justice issues associated with this pollution problem.

Concurrent with this effort to secure CAA funding, the affected purveyors have also been seeking funding from other sources. They recently completed a trip to Washington, D.C., where they met with legislators, encouraging them to consider support for these projects. As a result of that visit, it is our understanding that U.S. EPA may fund a portion of this effort under a federal emergency response program.

One of the suspected dischargers, Goodrich, has also made a good faith effort to support these projects. The magnitude of the financial contribution from Goodrich has not yet been finalized, but it is expected to provide a significant level of support.

The Regional Board has also issued eight investigation orders to dischargers suspected to have contributed to the perchlorate pollution problem. We expect to issue additional investigation orders, as sufficient information is developed to meet the requirements of the California Water Code. As many as 15 investigation orders may be issued as a part of this effort. As information is generated through the implementation of the work required by the investigation orders, we expect to have the additional new evidence to name a number of additional parties responsible for the perchlorate pollution. This will assist our cost recovery efforts. Costs recovered from the responsible parties would, of course, be returned to the CAA, consistent with any agreements with the water purveyors to seek recovery of their investigation costs, too.

Attached is Resolution No. R8-2002-0091 that identifies the basis for this request and provides necessary background for evaluation by your Division and the State Board.

This matter is of the utmost importance for addressing an emergency funding need for wellhead treatment to assist in the cleanup of perchlorate pollution in public water supply wells. If we need to provide you with any additional materials, please call me at 909-782-3284, or call Kurt Berchtold at 909-782-3286.

cc. Regional Board  
Senator Nell Soto  
Celeste Cantú, SWRCB  
Perchlorate Task Force  
Department of Health Services, San Bernardino

Enclosure: Resolution R8-2002-0091

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Santa Ana Region

RESOLUTION NO. R8-2002-0091

Request for Cleanup and Abatement Account Funds for Wellhead Treatment Projects in the Rialto, Colton and Chino Groundwater Subbasins, San Bernardino County

WHEREAS:

1. Sections 13440 through 13443 of the California Water Code established the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account (Account) to be administered by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board).
2. Grants to public agencies and regional boards are available from the Account. The State Board may order monies to be paid from the Account to assist a public agency or a regional board to assist it in cleaning up waste or abating its effects on waters of the State.
3. The Rialto, Colton and Chino Groundwater Subbasins are beneficially used for municipal and domestic supply. A significant water quality problem that poses a potential threat to public health currently exists in the Rialto, Colton and Chino Groundwater Subbasins due to perchlorate pollution. Sixteen municipal wells belonging to four water purveyors (West San Bernardino County Water District, Fontana Water Company and the Cities of Colton and Rialto) have been taken out of service or have had their use severely restricted. The perchlorate pollution threatens to impact additional municipal wells. The Department of Defense and numerous industrial waste dischargers have been identified as potential sources of the pollution. Funding is necessary to assist these water purveyors in developing wellhead treatment projects to ensure that an adequate supply of drinking water is available to the public and to prevent further degradation of the resource.
4. The Executive Officer is sending letters pursuant to California Water Code Section 13267 to all suspected perchlorate dischargers, directing them to submit work plans for separate or cooperative soil and groundwater investigations. Regional Board staff is also facilitating efforts among the suspected perchlorate dischargers to provide replacement water to compensate for the loss or restricted use of municipal water supply wells in the Colton, Rialto and Chino Groundwater Subbasins.
5. As a result of the large number of wells that have been taken out of service due to the perchlorate pollution and the lead time necessary to design, order and install


treatment equipment, it is critical that the wellhead treatment projects be initiated at the earliest possible time.

6. It is estimated that more than \$20 million will be required to install wellhead treatment systems for the wells that have already been removed from service.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Executive Officer shall request each of the four water purveyors to submit a Project Plan by November 15, 2002, for approval of the Executive Officer. The Project Plan shall describe how each water purveyor will utilize funds from the Cleanup and Abatement Account to ensure that an adequate supply of drinking water is available to the public and to cleanup the perchlorate pollution in the subject groundwater subbasins.
2. The Executive Officer shall submit a Request for Cleanup and Abatement Funds to the State Board for a total of \$3 million (distributing \$750,000 to each of the four water purveyors). The funds shall be requested to be provided to the Regional Board for distribution to the four water purveyors.
3. The Executive Officer shall request that the State Board consider this request at its earliest possible opportunity as an emergency request.
4. Given the number of wells removed from service, the need to provide for an adequate public water supply and the importance of wellhead treatment as the means for cleanup of the existing perchlorate pollution, the Regional Board requests that the State Board consider an even larger allocation of funds from the Cleanup and Abatement Account for this project, if and when those funds are available.

I, Gerard J. Thibeault, Executive Officer, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region, on October 25, 2002.

  
Gerard J. Thibeault  
Executive Officer