

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Santa Ana Region

July 24, 2015

ITEM: 13

SUBJECT: TRIENNIAL REVIEW OF THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN  
FOR THE SANTA ANA RIVER BASIN (BASIN PLAN)

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this hearing is to give the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed Fiscal Year (FY)FY2015-2018 Triennial Review Priority List and Work Plan, and for the Regional Board to consider adoption of tentative Resolution No. R8-2015-0085, approving the 2015 Triennial Review and FY2015-2018 Triennial Review Priority List and Work Plan. The proposed Priority List and Work Plan is shown in Attachment 1 to the tentative Resolution.

The California Water Code requires periodic review of water quality control plans (basin plans). Federal law requires that the water quality standards (beneficial uses, water quality objectives and the antidegradation policy) established in the Basin Plan be reviewed at least once every three years (hence the term "Triennial Review") to determine whether changes are or may be necessary.

Where the need or potential need for such changes is identified, Board staff develops a proposed list of these issues, together with recommended priorities and schedules whereby the issues would be addressed. The recommended priorities/schedules reflect the limited Regional Board Basin Planning resources (2.0 PYs) that are currently available and are expected to be available to conduct the needed reviews and to develop and process proposed Basin Plan amendments, if found necessary. Where appropriate (where changes to water quality standards are contemplated), it is expected that some of the listed issues will be addressed with Regional Board Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) resources.

The proposed priorities and schedules also reflect work that is already underway in response to prior triennial reviews and implementation commitments (for the review/adoption of water quality objectives) in established TMDLs.

Historically, stakeholder support of work on triennial review issues of particular concern to the stakeholders has enabled the Regional Board to enhance the priority of that work and to facilitate its completion. The work of the Stormwater Quality Standards Task Force to review recreation standards for inland surface waters is a prime example.

Consistent with past practice, the proposed Triennial Review list shown in Attachment 1 to the tentative resolution also includes work to revise the descriptive text, graphics and organization of the Basin Plan and to incorporate all approved amendments. This work is essential to assure that the Basin Plan remains current and as reader-friendly as possible.

Public participation is an important part of this process. On June 18, 2015, Regional Board staff conducted a public meeting to solicit comments on staff's preliminary draft list of Basin Planning issues under consideration for inclusion in the FY2015-2018 Triennial Review Priority List and Work Plan. Announcements of the Triennial Review public meeting were sent by electronic mail to hundreds of interested parties, and posted on the Regional Board's web site. The proposed final Triennial Review list of Basin Plan issues reflects consideration of comments made at the public meeting, and of written comments submitted to Board staff.

The proposed list shows all the identified issues, their proposed priority and schedule, and the resources expected to be necessary to address them. A detailed discussion of each of these issues is provided in Attachment B to this report. A summary of the comments received and Board staff's responses are shown in Attachment C. The original written comments are also included in Attachment C or can be found at the Regional Board's website at: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/santaana/water\\_issues/programs/basin\\_plan/index.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/santaana/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/index.shtml)

At the stakeholder meeting on June 18, 2015, Board staff presented a preliminary Triennial Review Priority List and Work Plan. The list presented at that time included work related to standards changes, but also the work underway or contemplated to incorporate new and revised TMDLs in the Basin Plan. While this was intended to capture the extent of anticipated changes to the Basin Plan as a whole, it created unintended confusion and concern that certain water quality standards items identified as priority items would preclude necessary work on TMDLs, and vice versa. In fact, at the June 18, 2015 meeting, Board staff received two petitions to prioritize work to revise two established TMDLs: the Lake Elsinore/Canyon Lake Nutrient TMDLs and the Middle Santa Ana River bacteria indicator TMDLs (see Attachment C). The stakeholders who filed the petitions committed to providing resources to support and facilitate the revision work.

Board staff understands and agrees with the need to consider revisions to these TMDLs, and we welcome the commitment of resources. However, the need to revise the TMDLs will be addressed via the Board's TMDL resources and TMDL work plan, which are, strictly speaking, separate from this triennial review priority list and work plan. Given the commitment of resources by the stakeholders, Board staff believes that work to revise these TMDLs can proceed in a timely manner, without affecting the Triennial Review issues. Accordingly, for the present purpose of this Triennial Review, staff has revised the proposed list to

incorporate work that is expected to be accomplished with Basin Plan resources and only those TMDL-related tasks that entail possible changes in water quality standards.

The proposed Triennial Review list shown in Attachment 1 to the tentative resolution reflects Board staff's best estimate of the resources and timing needed to complete the work. However, experience suggests that unexpected complexity and/or controversy can significantly affect both the timing and resources required. This may necessitate completion of work on some of these issues in the next Triennial Review cycle.

The following attachments are part of this report:

Attachment A - Tentative Resolution No. R8-2015-0085

Attachment 1 to Tentative Resolution No. R8-2015-0085: FY2015-2018  
Proposed Triennial Review Priority List and Work Plan

Attachment B - Discussion of Issues

Attachment C – Comments/Response to Comments

These documents have also been posted at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/santaana/water\\_issues/programs/basin\\_plan/index.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/santaana/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/index.shtml)

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Board Staff recommends adopting Resolution No. R8-2015-0085, approving the 2015 Triennial Review and the proposed FY2015-2018 Triennial Review Priority List and Work Plan.