March 6, 2019

David Woelfel
3737 Market Street, Suite 500
Riverside, CA 92501
Via E-mail Only to: David.Woelfel@waterboards.ca.gov

Re: 2019 Triennial Review of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Santa Ana River Basin

Dear Mr. Woelfel,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board’s (Regional Board’s) 2019 Triennial Review Description of Proposed Issues and the Regional Board’s Draft Priority List of Issues 2019 Basin Plan Triennial Review. EPA’s comments are in response to the Regional Board’s February 14, 2019 Notice of Public Workshop and Solicitation of Public Comment for the 2019 Triennial Review of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Santa Ana River Basin.

EPA supports the projects listed in your Draft Priority List of Issues and described in your 2019 Triennial Review Description of Proposed Issues. For TMDL-related issues, we strongly support Item 1f., Adopt the Copper TMDL and non-TMDL Metals Action Plans for Zinc, Mercury, Arsenic and Chromium in Newport Bay. The Regional Board previously identified this project as a Vision Project within the TMDL program; we support its expeditious adoption and implementation.

To comply with 40 C.F.R. Part 131.20, the Triennial Review must include an explanation if the State does not adopt new or revised criteria for parameters for which EPA has published new or updated Clean Water Act (CWA) section 304(a) criteria recommendations. Therefore, EPA strongly supports item 17, Consider Adopting New CWA 304(a) Recommended Criteria. For new criteria that are not considered for adoption, please include a brief explanation for each. EPA also supports Item 14, Consider Deletion or Revision of Established SSOs for Copper, Cadmium and Lead for the SAR and Tributaries. This action would be consistent with previous EPA action concerning the site-specific objectives.

Lastly, we continue to support identification of freshwaters that support early life stages of salmonids, and adoption or revision of pentachlorophenol (PCP) water quality objectives, where appropriate, as part of the Triennial Review process. This request is a result of EPA’s Endangered Species Act consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National...
Marine Fisheries Service (the Services) for the California Toxics Rule (CTR). The Services’ Biological Opinion for the CTR concluded that the CTR criteria for PCP were not protective of early life stages of salmonids, and under certain conditions of low dissolved oxygen and high temperatures. Protective criteria are outlined in U.S. EPA’s November 14, 2007 letter to the State and Regional Boards sent to you again in December, 2018. If the Regional Board does not have any waters for which these conditions exist, and no action is necessary, please let us know.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues. If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3527 or at Fleck.Diane@EPA.gov.

Sincerely,

Diane E. Fleck, P.E., Esq.
Water Quality Assessment Section