THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
MAYOR JERRY SANDERS

Public Comment
Strategic Plan Update
Deadline: 6/20/08 by 12 p.m.

June 20, 2008

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Jeanine Townsend, Clerk of the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov

Subject: City of San Diego Comments Regarding the Draft Strategic Plan 2008-2012

Dear Ms. Townsend:

The City of San Diego, General Services Department, Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division Pollution Prevention Division is pleased to provide the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) with the following comments regarding the Draft Strategic Plan 2008-2012. Our comments will be limited to Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division related issues. The City's Water Department will provide comments regarding groundwater and potable drinking water issues.

The City of San Diego Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division supports the State Board's development of the Strategic Plan to help prioritize efforts across the state in a consistent manner for the next five years. We agree with the concept of sustainable watersheds. Performance goals are a good tool to use to assess our effectiveness with the knowledge that the tools and/or goals may require modification as the program proceeds. This concept is graphically demonstrated on Page 5 as a four step process. We recommend that the diagram be updated to match the five step process in the text under the diagram. Additionally we recommend that "restoration" be added into the Principles and Values Section.

The City of San Diego Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division supports the integrated approach for all TMDLs within a watershed. Additionally, we recommend that the State and Regional Boards consider "cross-media" coordination regarding TMDL listed pollutants. Our studies have found significant sources of dissolved metals from aerial deposition. These sources are outside of the City's control and we are concerned about our responsibility to address their contribution to water quality. We recommend that the State Board and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Water coordinate with the California Air Resources Control Board and EPA Office of Air regarding the regulation of mobile and stationary air sources that contribute to water pollution. Partnerships similar to the one describe above could bring forth new ideas and joint efforts to put our watersheds back on the road to sustainability.

Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division
1970 B Street, MS 27A • San Diego, CA 92102
Hotline (619) 235-1000 Fax (619) 525-8641

The City of San Diego Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division does have concerns regarding the regulation of stream flow standards as stated on page 12. Most of the streams and creeks in southern California are ephemeral and before urbanization when there was no water in them during the summer and fall months. We understand that the climate is varied across the state on this issue, and recommend that ephemeral streams have their own requirements separate from those streams and creeks that flow all year. We propose an approach that would allow for the total diversion of flows from formerly ephemeral streams would be consistent with the State Board staff's draft requirements for Area of Special Biological Significance requiring no dry weather discharges.

The issue of reducing dry weather urban runoff flows is more complex in San Diego and the rest of Southern California. There is a need for a nexus between the new hydromodification requirements that will require retention of storm water to control peak and sustained peak flows with this issue of reduced stream flows. The control of peak flows will improve stream conditions by reducing erosion of banks and stream channel modification. The control of peak and sustain peak flows will actually return to more historical stream flows. The real issue in San Diego and southern California is that of dry weather flows and base flows in streams. New storm water permit requirements have emphasized the use of greater infiltration through LID techniques to provide water quality and peak flow control benefits. This increase in infiltration would be beneficial in other regions, but in San Diego this infiltration is added to the large quantity of imported water infiltration from irrigation. This infiltration has added to base flows and dry weather flows. These flows have contributed to new wetlands occurring where they would not naturally grow. Even though the historical habitat may have been empherial stream ecosystem, now there is conflicting opinions on what needs to be preserved and/or restored. Clearer direction is needed from regulatory agencies to eliminate conflicting objectives.

The City of San Diego, Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division is taking the lead in developing integrated implementation strategies to meet TMDL and permit pollutant reduction goals. We recognized there are common measures to address different TMDLs and there are long term cost savings in implementing an integrated approach. We developed a 5-year Strategic Plan that addresses multiple constituents within watersheds and presents measures that are applicable over multiple watersheds. We recognize that source control and pollution prevention measures are most cost effective; however, these non-structural Best Management Practices may not reduce pollutant to levels that achieve the TMDL targets in some cases. The effectiveness of these measures is not well documented, and therefore requires time for implementation and effectiveness assessment to determine if additional measures are needed. Furthermore, to achieve these water quality goals for multiple constituents a combination of runoff reduction measures such as LID techniques are needed. We have conducted geotechnical investigations and have confirmed the challenges of implementing infiltration type measures given the urbanized, low permeability soils and steep canyon topography common to San Diego. Innovative approaches to these techniques are needed; however, this requires time for development and assessment. Finally, we recognize that additional measures may be needed in some drainage areas where pollutant loading is the greatest, and the above measures are not able to achieve the required load reductions. In these cases treatment may be needed. Treatment in nearly all cases requires storage of storm water and a treatment train approach to address

multiple constituents as part of an integrated approach. Due to the land use needs, high capital and O&M costs, these measures will be implemented when the above measures are shown to not attain the reductions needed and are feasible for the given drainage area conditions. We have adopted a methodology that requires a phase and tiered approach to TMDL implementation (see attachment) and we are in the process of implementing the first tier. This approach is requires additional time for implementation consistent with the process outline on the first page of the State Board's Strategic Plan which includes an assessment and adjust phase.

The City of San Diego Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division supports the goal to eliminate summer beach closures by 75% in the next years. We have been successful in achieving this goal at most City beaches with assistance from the State Board's Proposition 13 grant funding. We support Objective 1.2 to reduce wet weather beach posting by 75% by 2020. Currently, the San Diego region is facing a proposed TMDL that requires the total elimination of bacteria from being released during any rain event in 20 years from the adoption date. This objective's Action 1.2.2 recommends the establishment of a Low-Impact Development Center in the Central Coast region that will help evaluate technologies used for Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division treatment. Additionally, we hope this center will help determine which Best Management Practices are the most cost-effective. We foresee that this new center will help promote the needed interdisciplinary coordination between Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division and other environmental disciplines.

The City of San Diego Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division supports the comprehensive update of the basin plans across California, and wishes to participate in the review of these plans. As a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division agency, we project that a minimum of six long-range priorities will effect how we implement the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division and TMDL programs. We understand and support the need to coordinate with the Department of Water Resources to develop a Comprehensive Water Quality Plan, and will continue to strive for cooperation between the different environmental disciplines.

We support the philosophy of consistency for the implementation and enforcement of programs within California and the individual regions. We also support actions to reissue the statewide Phase II MS4 Permit, and we recommend that this permit be consistent with 40 CFR and require colleges and universities to participant in the program public or private. The City of San Diego concurs with the California Stormwater Quality Association and requests that a statewide Storm Water policy be developed to address storm water issues that will benefit both Phase I and Phase II MS4 permittees. The idea of a Storm Water Policy is not new, and would provide a level playing field for storm water program implementation, assessment and compliance determination.

One issue that is not addressed in the Strategic Plan is impact of consumer products on water quality. Close inspection of our 303(d) Listing for Impaired Waterbody Segments reveals that many of the listings can be attributed to pollutants from consumer products. Control of these products is beyond that of local government. Many of the listed waterbodies are for pesticides, dissolved metals, and nutrients. Pesticides, both insecticides and fertilizers, are controlled by the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. These

chemicals are applied by commercial applicators and citizens without input from local governments. In fact, local municipalities that have tried to control pesticide usage within their jurisdiction have been reprimanded for their efforts. Dissolved metals have been attributed to variety of products varying from copper is brake pads, copper in roofing materials, lead in soil from gasoline and paint that is resuspended in the air, and zinc from wear of tire and automobile belts. These are some of the contributors to water quality problems across our state, and nation, that we need state and federal assistance in addressing the removal of pollutants from consumer products to help clean our water for future generations.

If you have any questions or require more information, please don't hesitate to contact Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division Specialist Ruth Kolb at (619) 525-8636.

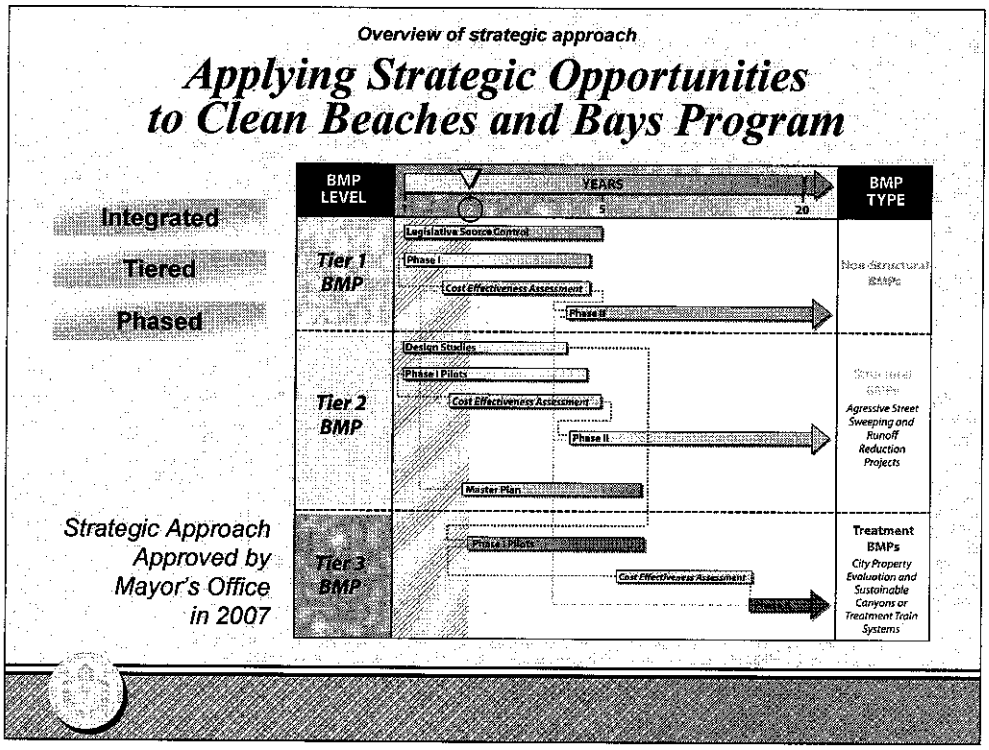
Sincerely,

Kris McFadden
Deputy Director

KM\rk

Attachment: Overview of strategic approach

cc: Tony Heinrichs, Assistant Director, General Services Department
Ruth Kolb, Storm Water Specialist, General Services Department
File



•This graphic is the best single representation of our Strategic approach on a single page

•Please note the we have three tiers and within each tier there are phases

- Tier 1 is non-structural BMPs (such as education and enforcement), the pilot projects are within this tier to determine cost effectiveness
- Tier 2 is structural BMPs, again in a phased approach
- Tier 3 is a phasing of treatment BMPs

•The reason for our pilot projects is to demonstrate which ones are the most cost effective and load reduction effectiveness to achieve compliance, while minimizing impacts to our communities.

•We are coordinating water quality improvement projects with the deferred maintenance projects, which will be easier with the new Storm Water Dept.

•One area we need assistance with, is the development of integrated TMDLs that consider all pollutants within the watershed. This provides us the opportunity to develop pilot projects that address all issues and use the Watershed Strategic plan approach.