



State Water Resources Control Board



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Arnold Schwarzenegger
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NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE CENTRAL COAST REGION TO INCORPORATE A TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) FOR NITRATE-NITROGEN IN SAN LUIS OBISPO CREEK

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) will now accept comments on an amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the Central Coast Region that would establish a TMDL for Nitrate-Nitrogen in San Luis Obispo Creek. The proposed amendment and the State Water Board item language and draft resolution are available on the State Water Board's Web site at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/tmdl/tmdl.html> or by request. The proposed amendment was adopted by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) on September 9, 2005. The State Water Board expects to consider the proposed amendment at a future meeting. Notice of that meeting will be published separately.

San Luis Obispo Creek is not meeting standards due to elevated nitrate-nitrogen concentrations. These elevated concentrations are impairing the designated beneficial use of the municipal and domestic supply (MUN) of water. This TMDL addresses the impairment of MUN and articulates an implementation plan to meet water quality standards by the year 2012. Over 90 percent of the nitrate-nitrogen loading in the watershed has been found to be caused by croplands and discharge from the San Luis Obispo Water Reclamation Facility (WRF). The TMDL sets a numeric target of 10 mg/L, which is equivalent to the existing Basin Plan objective of nitrate-nitrogen for protecting the MUN beneficial use.

An effluent limit for the WRF discharge will be added to the existing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit regulating this discharge. At the time of the permit renewal, staff will recommend that the Central Coast Water Board issue the WRF a Cease and Desist Order that includes a time schedule to meet the effluent limit. The limit will be incorporated at the next permit renewal, scheduled for 2007.

Parties responsible for irrigated agriculture will be required to meet the conditions set forth in the Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges to Irrigated Lands. Meeting the provisions of the conditional waiver will result in achieving the allocations assigned to the cropland source.

Other less significant sources of nitrate-nitrogen in the watershed will be monitored to ensure that current nitrate-nitrogen loading levels do not increase. Specifically, the City of San Luis Obispo, the County of San Luis Obispo, and Cal Poly State University will implement management practices consistent with and required by Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permits and will submit annual reports as required by such permits. Staff will utilize these annual reports to verify that measures are taken to reduce, or hold at current levels, nitrate-nitrogen loading to receiving waters. If implementation actions are insufficient to achieve the TMDL, additional implementation measures will be required through approval of the Executive Office or by the Central Coast Water Board.

Comment letters to the State Water Board must be received by 5 p.m. on June 14, 2006. After the June deadline, State Water Board staff will not accept additional written comments unless the State Water Board determines that such comments should be accepted or unless changes are made to the proposed resolution before the State Water Board meeting. Please send comments on the proposed amendment to:

Song Her, Clerk to the Board, by email at commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov, (916) 341-5620 (fax), or addressed to State Water Resources Control Board, 1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. Please also indicate in the subject line, "Comment Letter - Nitrate-Nitrogen TMDL in San Luis Obispo Creek."

Please direct questions about this notice to Michael Buckman, Division of Water Quality, at (916) 341-5479 or mbuckman@waterboards.ca.gov or Senior Staff Counsel Steven H. Blum at (916) 341-5177 or sblum@waterboards.ca.gov.

June 2, 2006
Date



Song Her
Clerk to the Board