State of California
California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region

RESOLUTION NO. R4-2007-018
November 1, 2007

Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region to Subdivide Reach 4 of the Santa Clara River

WHEREAS, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region, finds that:

1. The Santa Clara River (SCR) is the largest river system in southern California that remains in a relatively natural state. The River originates on the northern slope of the San Gabriel Mountains in Los Angeles County, traverses Ventura County, and flows into the Pacific Ocean between the cities of San Buenaventura (Ventura) and Oxnard. The predominant land uses in the SCR watershed include agriculture, open space, and residential uses. Revenue from the agricultural industry within the SCR watershed is estimated at over $700 million annually and residential use is increasing rapidly both in the upper and lower watershed.

2. Reaches 5 and 6 of the SCR are located upstream of the Blue Cut gauging station, west of the Los Angeles – Ventura County line. Beneficial uses of the Upper Santa Clara River (USCR) include agricultural supply (AGR), groundwater recharge (GWR), and rare, threatened, or endangered species habitat (RARE). Reaches 5 and 6 of the USCR are listed as impaired by chloride on the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) approved 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies in California due to excessive concentrations of chloride. A chloride TMDL is currently effective which assigns wasteload allocations to the Valencia and Saugus Water Reclamation Plants (WRPs) which are owned and operated by the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Districts).

3. Reach 4 of the SCR is located downstream from Reach 5 and extends to the City of Fillmore. Reach 4 receives surface flow from Reach 5 and contains several unique hydrogeologic features that affect chloride and other water quality parameters in the upper and lower segments of Reach 4. The key hydrological feature of Reach 4 is a dry gap where surface water in the upper portion of Reach 4 infiltrates into the underlying groundwater basin, Piru Basin, under dry weather conditions. Flow resurfaces approximately six miles downstream. Flow from a major tributary, Piru Creek, also infiltrates into the Piru basin under dry weather conditions. Both the surface water and groundwater upstream of the Piru Creek confluence with Reach 4 contain greater levels of chloride than the surface and groundwater levels downstream

from the Piru Creek confluence due to water reclamation plant discharges into Reaches 5 and 6 upstream of Reach 4. The Basin Plan recognizes the unique hydrologeology in the Piru Basin by establishing different groundwater objectives for chloride upstream and downstream of Piru Creek. The chloride objective for groundwater downstream of the Piru Creek confluence is 100 mg/l whereas the chloride objective for groundwater upstream of the Piru Creek confluence is 200 mg/L. However, the water quality objective (WQO) for chloride in surface water is 100 mg/l both upstream and downstream of Piru Creek.

4. The TMDL schedule requires completion of several special studies and Regional Board consideration of site specific objectives (SSOs) for chloride in the USCR by May 2008. The special studies include a review of technical literature relating to the chloride threshold for irrigation of salt-sensitive crops, a model of the groundwater-surface water interactions in the USCR, and a study of the chloride threshold for threatened and endangered species. The salt-sensitive crop study is complete and the studies pertaining to modeling and threatened and endangered species are scheduled for completion by November 2007.

5. The Regional Board finds that subdividing Reach 4 into two reaches that are spatially equivalent to the existing reach would better represent the unique hydraulic regime between the downstream portion of Reach 4 (i.e. Reach 4A) and the upstream portion of Reach 4 (Reach 4B). Reach 4A is different from Reach 4B in terms of channel morphology, loss in transit, and inflows from tributaries as compared to Reach 4A. All flow in Reach 4B infiltrates to groundwater during dry weather conditions, creating the beginning of the "Dry Gap", while in Reach 4A, rising groundwater resurfaces due to unique geologic conditions. Additionally, surface water quality in Reaches 4A and 4B is significantly different due to the differing groundwater-surface water interaction and contributions from wastewater discharges in these areas. Further, influence from tributary inflows to the SCR in Reach 4B are significantly smaller than influence from tributary flows in Reach 4A. The proposed reaches also better coincide with the Basin Plan descriptions of the groundwater basins underlying the reaches. Finally, the Regional Board finds that dividing Reach 4 into two separate reaches would provide the greatest benefit by limiting the geographical scope of any potential SSO for chloride to be considered by the Regional Board in the future.

6. The present Reach 4 definition is between the A Street bridge in Fillmore and the Blue Cut gauging station near the Ventura – Los Angeles County line. The proposed redefined reach consists of Reach 4A between the confluence of Piru Creek and the A Street Bridge in the City of Fillmore, and Reach 4B between the Blue Cut gauging station and the confluence of Piru Creek. This action itself does not modify the WQO for chloride in either Reach 4A or Reach 4B, nor adopt a SSO for chloride in Reach 4A or 4B. Dividing Reach 4

is an administrative action so that the Regional Board may effectively consider the results of the forthcoming TMDL special studies.

7. The Regional Board finds it appropriate to correct an error in the 1994 Basin Plan map by changing the circled number "3" between "Sisar Creek" and "Santa Paula Creek" above the doted line to circled number "9", and to revise Reach 4 of the SCR by dividing Reach 4 into two separate reaches, Reach 4A between the confluence of Piru Creek and the A Street bridge in the City of Fillmore and Reach 4B between the Blue Cut gauging station and the confluence of Piru Creek.

8. The Staff Report, as well as tentative Basin Plan Amendment was released for public comment on August 27, 2007. The revised reach designations are proposed in Attachment A to this resolution.

9. Notice of this hearing was published in accordance with the requirements of Water Code section 13244. This notice was published in the Santa Clarita Signal and Ventura Star, newspapers of general circulation, on August 27, 2007.

10. The public has had reasonable opportunity to participate in review of the amendment to the Basin Plan. A draft staff report was released for public comment on August 27, 2007, a Notice of Hearing and Notice of Filing were published and circulated 45 days preceding Board action; Regional Board staff responded to oral and written comments received from the public; and the Regional Board held a public hearing on November 1, 2007, to consider adoption of the TMDL.

11. The amendment is consistent with the State Antidegradation Policy (State Board Resolution No. 68-16), in that the boundary re-designation for Reach 4 of the SCR do not include revisions to WQOs. Likewise, the amendment is consistent with the federal Antidegradation Policy (40 CFR 131.12).

12. The proposed amendment results in no potential for adverse environmental effects, either individually or cumulatively, because dividing an existing reach into two reaches that are spatially equivalent to the existing reach to reflect unique hydrological characteristics of the two segments is merely an administrative task and no physical impacts on the environment are anticipated. The subdivision of Reach 4 merely facilitates a convenient and logical basis for consideration of water quality regulations in the future and does not revise any WQOs. This action distinguishes water body segments based on the technical difference associated with their distinct hydrological characteristics and the different effects of wastewater discharges on water quality in the two reaches. The action of creating administrative units has no impacts on what water quality requirements can or should be applicable at any

given location. Accordingly, this action is not a "project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act.

13. The regulatory action meets the "Necessity" standard of the Administrative Procedures Act, Government Code, Section 11353, Subdivision (b).

14. The Basin Plan amendment for re-designation of Reach 4 of the SCR must be submitted for review and approval by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board), the State Office of Administrative Law (OAL), and the U.S. EPA. The Basin Plan amendment will become effective upon approval by OAL and U.S. EPA. A Notice of Decision will be filed following these approvals.

Therefore, be it resolved that:

1. Pursuant to Section 13240 of the Water Code, the Regional Board hereby amends the Basin Plan by dividing Reach 4 of the SCR into two separate reaches, Reach 4A between the confluence of Piru Creek and the A Street bridge in the City of Fillmore and Reach 4B between the Blue Cut gauging station and the confluence of Piru Creek.

2. Pursuant to sections 13240 of the California Water Code, the Regional Board, after considering the entire record, including oral testimony at the hearing, hereby adopts the amendment to Chapter 2 the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region to incorporate the revisions of reach designation of SCR, Figure 2-3, as set forth in Attachment A hereto.

3. The Executive Officer is directed to forward copies of the Basin Plan amendment to the State Board in accordance with the requirements of section 13245 of the California Water Code.

4. The Regional Board requests that the State Board approve the Basin Plan amendment in accordance with the requirements of sections 13245 and 13246 of the California Water Code and forward it to the OAL and U.S. EPA.

5. If during its approval process Regional Board staff, State Board or OAL determines that minor, non-substantive corrections to the language of the amendment, this resolution, or other relevant documentation are needed for clarity, or for consistency, the Executive Officer may make such changes, and shall inform the Board of any such changes.

6. The Executive Officer is authorized to sign a Certificate of Fee Exemption, or pay the applicable fee as may be required by the Fish and Game Code.

7. Figure 2-3. Major surface waters of the Santa Clara River watershed.

Eliminate:

"4. Between Blue Cut gaging station (approx. 1 mile west of LA/Ventura county line) and A Street, Fillmore"

Add:

"4A. Between the confluence of Piru Creek and A Street, Fillmore
4B. Between Blue Cut gauging station and confluence of Piru Creek"

And

Change the circled number "3" between "Sisar Creek" and "Santa Paula Creek" above the doted line to circled number "9".

I, Tracy J. Egoscue, 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, Los Angeles Region, on November 1, 2007.

Tracy J. Egoscue
Executive Officer

Attachment A to Resolution No. R4-2007-018

SUBDIVISION OF SANTA CLARA RIVER REACH 4

Proposed for adoption by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region on November 1, 2007.

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This Basin Plan Amendment (BPA) was adopted by: The Regional Water Quality Control Board on November 1, 2007.
This BPA was approved by: The State Water Resource Control Board on xxxxx xx, xxxx.
The Office of Administrative Law on xxxxx xx, xxxx.
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on xxxxx xx, xxxx.

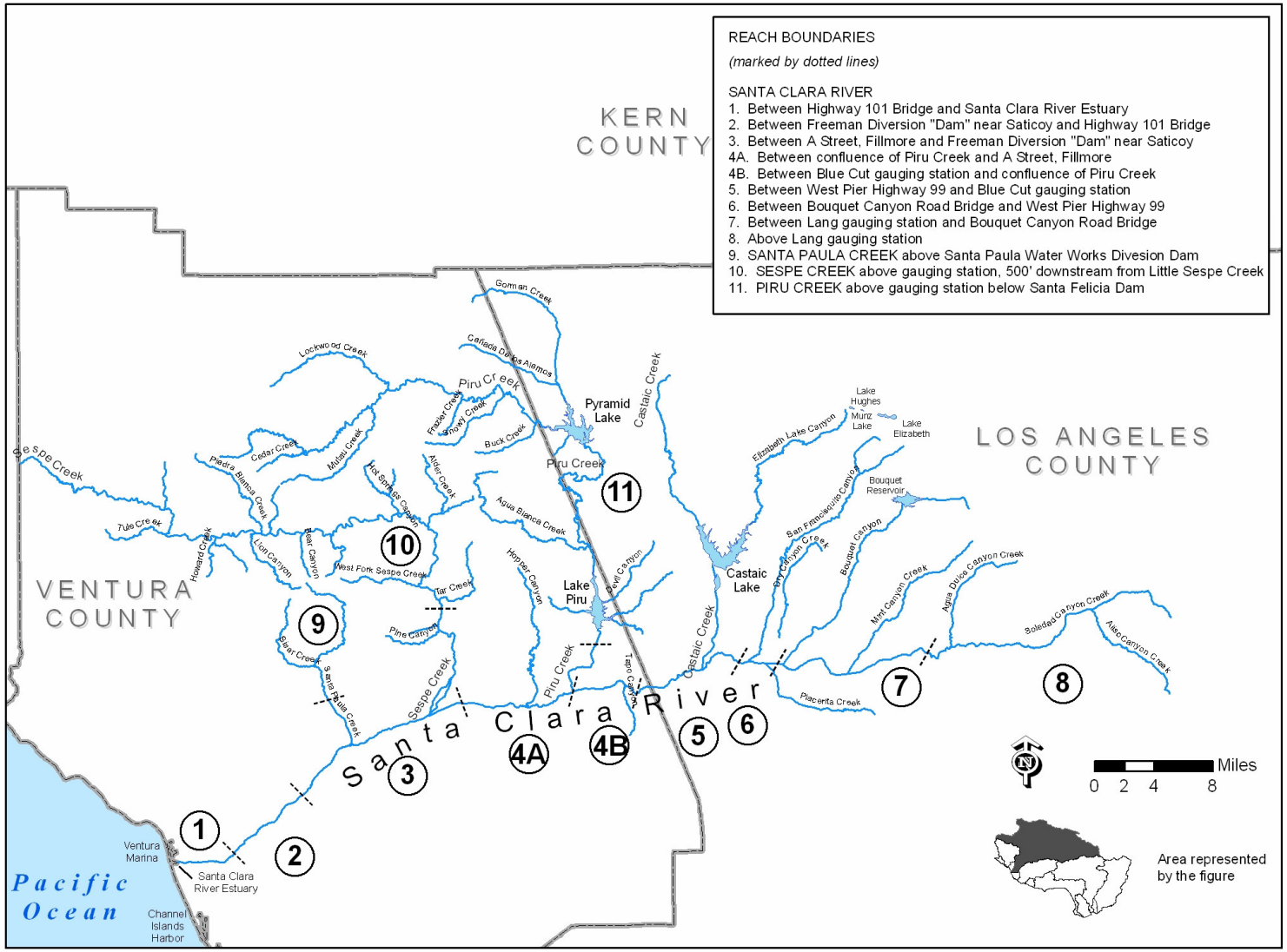

Figure 2-3. Major surface waters of the Santa Clara River watershed.