



VIA EMAIL: [commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov)

June 26, 2018

The Honorable Felicia Marcus, Chair  
c/o Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Comment Letter – Proposed Recycled Water Policy Amendment

Dear Chair Marcus:

As a national leader in recycled water, the Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) has supported efforts to increase water recycling in California, and has advocated for the benefits of a “fit-for-purpose” regulatory approach to recycled water within the state. IRWD believes that recycled water is a key component of the state’s water supply portfolio and expansion of reuse will enhance the state’s overall water reliability.

IRWD appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the “Policy for Water Quality Control for Recycled Water” (Proposed Amendments). IRWD supports the comments submitted by WaterReuse California and the California Association of Sanitation Agencies. It is our hope that the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) will acknowledge and address the concerns voiced by these groups, which represent the majority of California’s active recycled water producers.

**Proposed Addition of an Additional Recycled Water Goal:**

In an effort to avoid duplication, IRWD has not submitted comments similar to those made by the associations, although we agree with them that the new goal related to minimizing ocean discharges should be removed. *We would ask that, if it is the State Board’s desire to keep such a statement, that the State Board work with the associations and coastal recycled water producers to develop alternative placement for such a statement and alternative language.*

At a minimum, any alternative language should recognize that efforts to reduce the amount of treated wastewater discharged to the ocean should be balanced with the costs, challenges, and feasibility constraints many coastal communities face in order to increase the use of recycled water within their service areas, and reflect the Water Code’s focus on the cost-effective expansion of recycled water use.

**Clarification for Individual Permit Holders**

Furthermore, prior to providing detailed comments on two additional items in the Proposed Amendments, IRWD would like to thank you and your staff for the time and effort the State Board has invested in the Proposed Amendments. We recognize that the Proposed Amendments are intended to provide greater statewide consistency in the permitting of recycled water projects. Toward that end, we greatly appreciated Chief Deputy Director Jonathan Bishop’s statement at the June 19, 2018, public hearing that the Proposed Amendments are not intended to require recycled water agencies holding individual permits

for their recycled water projects to transfer to or enroll under the statewide general order (Order WQ 2016-0068-DDW). Instead, he clarified that the Proposed Amendments are intended to ensure that those individual permits meet the policies outlined in the Recycled Water Policy.

IRWD, like many recycled water providers throughout the state, has worked with its regional boards to expand recycled water use throughout its service area. The current permits governing IRWD's recycled water production, distribution, and customers appropriately balance public health, water quality protection, and administrative burden to encourage recycled water use. While we recognize that not all recycled water providers have had this type of working relationship with their regional board, IRWD believes that such relationships should continue to be encouraged by the State Board and individual permits should continue to be allowed.

### **Other Detailed Comments**

In addition to the comments above, IRWD offers the following detailed comments on two topics for the State Board's consideration below:

#### ***1) Proposed Reporting of Wastewater and Recycled Water Data:***

IRWD has many years of experience gathering, reporting, and analyzing data within the water sector. Over the years, it has become more apparent that the time-intensive reporting burden on water districts and water agencies—which send monthly, annual and semi-annual reports to multiple government agencies with the same data categories—is heavy. Often these mandatory reports require the same data but in different formats and time-periods, which only increases the administrative burden on water agencies while providing no additional information to the receiving governmental agencies. IRWD has been an advocate for smarter reporting of data that better balances the burden with the need.

With regards to the Proposed Amendments, IRWD is comfortable with the data being sought under Section 3.2, et seq. and with the annual reporting of recycled water use. To better balance the State Board's need for the requested data with the burden on local agencies, IRWD requests that the Proposed Amendments be modified to streamline the required reporting and make clear that other duplicative reporting of wastewater influent, production and discharge of municipal wastewater treatment, and recycled water use is to be discontinued.

IRWD also requests that the monthly reporting for municipal wastewater treatment plant influent, production and disposal be modified. Specifically, we urge the State Board to modify the monthly reporting provisions to require only the annual reporting of the monthly data instead of setting a monthly reporting schedule.

In order to accomplish this and to streamline the reporting, IRWD recommends that:

- Section 3.2 be amended to reflect the intent that the data being reported pursuant to the Section 3.2, et seq. should ultimately be reported in the California Integrated Water Quality System (CIWQS);
- Sections 3.2.1.1, 3.2.1.2 and 3.2.1.3 be modified to replace “on a monthly basis” with “on an annual basis” and to add “The monthly” as the beginning of each section;

- Section 4.2 be amended to direct the Regional Boards to discontinue all reporting of the wastewater influent, production and discharge of municipal wastewater treatment, and recycled water use data being reported to the State Board, per the Proposed Amendments, and to use the data reported to the State Board instead; and
- Section 4.3 be modified to include a stronger statement encouraging the Department of Water Resources to use the State Board reported data, as a means of streamlining data reporting and collection.

Furthermore, we asked that Section 3.2.1, expressly recognize that the volume of influent entering a wastewater treatment plan will not equal the volume of treated wastewater produced. If the goal is to calculate where all of the influent is used or disposed of, or if the goal is to be able to calculate the amount of influent left to be reclaimed in California, the Board may want to consider asking agencies to report the amount of influent which is not reclaimable—this amount would largely consist of the volume of solids in the wastewater influent, water used in the treatment process, and brine.

## **2) *Incidental Runoff***

The Proposed Amendments appropriately define “incidental runoff,” but remove provisions that recognize incidental runoff occurs even when landscapes are being irrigated efficiently and responsibly. Section 7.4, titled “Incidental runoff of recycled water for irrigation” seems to implicitly acknowledge this, but the text of the section does not expressly address incidental runoff. *IRWD asks that Section 7.4 be modified along the lines of the following to expressly recognize and permit incidental runoff:*

*“Recycled water, more than incidental runoff, shall not be allowed to escape from the use area as surface flow that would either pond or enter surface waters, unless authorized by water discharge requirements, waivers of waste discharge requirements, or conditional prohibitions (e.g., agricultural dischargers from irrigated lands).”*

## **Conclusion**

Thank you again for considering IRWD’s comments on the Proposed Amendments. We appreciate the State Board’s interest in making water recycling projects easier and more attractive for agencies to pursue, and we look forward to continuing the conversation on the Proposed Amendments with you and your staff. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (949) 453-5590 if you have questions regarding our comments.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Cook  
General Manager