

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Services



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor



California
Department of
Health Services
Sandra Shewrey
Director

January 7, 2005

Debbie Irvin, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

Dear Members of the Board:

BAY-DELTA PLAN PERIODIC REVIEW

The California Department of Health Services (Department) appreciates this opportunity to provide input to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) on the Periodic Review of the 1995 Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary (1995 Plan). The Periodic Review process is an important opportunity for the SWRCB to review the increasing challenges public water systems face in providing drinking water that meets all treatment regulations and fully protects public health. Our comments are in regard to issue #4: specifically the chloride objectives and potential new objectives.

The Delta is the source of drinking water for public water systems that serve more than half the population of the state. These water systems range from the very large such as Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to those that serve small communities such as Huron and Avenal in the Central Valley. Protecting Delta drinking water quality is, therefore, critical to the health and safety of this population.

The Department along with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has established drinking water standards that are intended to protect the public from chemical and microbiological contaminants. Water systems using the Delta have significant challenges in meeting these standards particularly those standards for chemicals that are produced when water is disinfected. In addition standards for these disinfection byproducts are changing and will become more stringent in the future. As a result these water systems need to be assured that the water quality from the Delta remains consistently high.

Through the CALFED Bay Delta Program and California Bay Delta Authority, the Department along with our other state and federal partners are involved in two major activities that are intended to address the issue of Delta drinking water quality. The CALFED Drinking Water Quality Program and the Central Valley Drinking Water Policy

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Project will be generating information that should lead to the development of appropriate water quality objectives and scientifically based water quality indicators that will ensure that Delta drinking water quality is protected and improved.

Until this work is completed we recommend that the SWRCB's Water Quality Control Plan retain the existing chloride objectives for the continued protection of the public served by water systems using Delta water.

The Department appreciates the SWRCB's efforts to adopt measures that will ensure the future protection of one of California's most significant and important water resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David P. Spath". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

David P. Spath, Chief
Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management