

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
RESOLUTION NO. 88-114

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR JOINT ACTION BY  
FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES  
TO  
REMEDY CONTAMINATION IN THE  
MAIN SAN GABRIEL GROUND WATER BASIN

WHEREAS:

1. A portion of the Main San Gabriel Ground Water Basin (Main Basin), in the County of Los Angeles, is contaminated with TCE, PCE, CTC, other chlorinated volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and nitrates. Four large areas of the Main Basin and connected contaminated areas, such as Whittier Narrows, are included in the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Priorities List for Uncontrolled Hazardous Waste Sites List (NPL) of Superfund sites and the analogous state list prepared by the California Department of Health Services (DHS). For several years, EPA has been conducting a remedial investigation and feasibility study of the problem.

On January 29 and March 21, 1988, informal meetings were held by representatives of State Water Resources Control Board (State Board), Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board), Department of Water Resources (DWR), EPA, DHS, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, Central and West Basin, Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster and Assemblywoman Tanner. They supported the State Board holding a hearing in order to coordinate efforts to protect and remedy ground water quality problems in the Main Basin.

2. On June 28 and 29, 1988 the Board held the hearing in El Monte, California.
3. Ten key issues were addressed including characterization of the contamination problem; options for protection from and prevention of further contamination and restoration of the resource; consequences of potential action or inaction; institutional relationships and constraints and potential funding mechanisms.
4. The contamination is deep and covers a wide area. About 70 wells out of 275 wells are contaminated above proposed

maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) or state action levels. The contaminated water is in motion and will pass through the Whittier Narrows and into the Central Ground Water Basin if prompt remedial action is not taken.

5. Ground water represents more than 90 percent of the water supplies to over one million people in the Main Basin and the Montebella Forebay of the Central Basin. The abandonment of wells experiencing contamination will not remedy the contamination problem. Further, the development of new wells or the deepening of existing wells for extraction of water may contribute to the spread of the contamination.
6. Additional years of investigation will be required to fully identify ongoing and historical sources of contamination and assess the full extent of ground water contamination. Given the magnitude of the problem and the fact that the contaminated water is in motion, remedial work should begin as soon as practicable. Further, the contamination is so widespread that the combined efforts and resources of federal, state, and local government are necessary to remedy the contamination problem.

The planning, design, construction and financing of treatment facilities for remediation has faced several constraints including unsettled requirements for maximum contaminate levels and state action levels.

7. As a condition precedent to committing Superfunds for remedial action, EPA seeks: (a) an increased commitment by state agencies to identify persons responsible for contamination; and (b) a state or local governmental agency to assume long-term funding and operation and maintenance obligations for treatment facilities.
8. The Regional Board is responsible for protecting water quality and expends substantial resources on programs for the protection of ground water quality. The Regional Board indicated its willingness: (a) to expand its programs for discovering sources of ongoing and historical contamination, and (b) for ordering containment of contamination sources and/or remedial cleanup action to the extent possible. The Regional Board, EPA and DHS are developing an expanded program for source identification.
9. DHS is responsible for the quality of ground water used for public water supplies and uses the California Superfund to provide for the cleanup of hazardous wastes. DHS may make additional resources available for identifying persons responsible for contamination and for recovering remediation costs. Although DHS indicated its willingness to make money available from the California Superfund, such funds may not

be available after January 1, 1989. The 1988 Legislature did not authorize additional bonded indebtedness for hazardous waste cleanup.

10. The Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster is deeply concerned over the spread of the contamination, the slow progress toward source identification and remedial action; and the jeopardy to the long-range viability of the Main Basin as a drinking water source. A Basin Water Quality Management Committee (Committee) has been formed to advise the Watermaster on possible solutions to these concerns.

Hearing testimony indicated that the Committee had preliminarily concluded that a new water quality authority should be formed and that such an authority may require legislation. Further, the testimony indicated that legislation is probably required to provide the authority with overall local management for water quality control, the power to operate and maintain cleanup facilities and a dependable source of revenue for such activities.

It now appears that a joint water quality management group may be formed. As presently envisioned, the group would consist of the Main San Gabriel Watermaster, the Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District and the Upper San Gabriel Valley Water Association. By joint resolution these organizations would agree to exercise their individual powers in a coordinated manner to address the ground water contamination.

More specifically, additional powers will be sought from the court for the Watermaster to control the effects of water extraction on water quality and the districts would use existing powers to construct, operate and maintain cleanup facilities and related works. Legislation may still be required to provide a dependable source of revenue for these activities.

11. MWD supplies supplemental water to the Main Basin and participates in conjunctive use of surface and ground water resources in its service area. MWD obtains supplemental water from northern California via the State Water Project (SWP) and from the Colorado River.
12. DWR is responsible for the management of SWP water. To the extent that the Main Basin ground water and ground water storage cannot be used due to contamination, increased demands will be made on the SWP and on the quantity of water available for outflow through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. DWR indicated it is willing in a yet-to-be-defined way to assist in solving the contamination problem of the Main Basin.

13. Based upon the testimony received at the June 28 and 29, 1988 hearing, it is clear that there is a need for a coordinated effort to manage ground water, preferably at the local level, for water quality improvement as well as supply. Further, federal, state and local governmental coordination is essential to providing adequate funds for remedial efforts. Such coordination will help assure that the projected year 2010 demands in the state will be met.
14. Under Water Code Section 2100 this Board has authority to bring an action to restrict pumping, or to impose physical solutions, or both, to prevent destruction or injury to state waters. Further, under Article X, Section 2 of the California's Constitution and Water Code Section 275 we may initiate other appropriate actions to prevent waste, unreasonable use, unreasonable method of use, or unreasonable method of diversion of water.

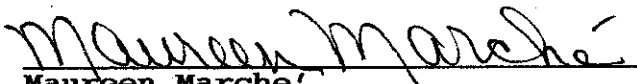
**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:**

1. The Regional Board, in concert with other agencies, should proceed forthwith to:
  - a. Identify sources of water quality degradation in the Main Basin.
  - b. Take all necessary actions to stop further contamination.
  - c. Ensure the protection of ground water quality and beneficial uses of such ground water.
2. To provide for the construction, operation and management of cleanup facilities, the San Gabriel Water Quality Management Committee should proceed forthwith to form either: a new water quality authority, a water quality management group for exercising individual powers under a joint resolution or a joint powers agency. Consideration should be given to providing the new authority, group, or agency with the power to: monitor water quality, regulate ground water extraction or recharge to avoid or minimize the spread of contamination, plan and construct the treatment facilities necessary for improving water quality, accept and disperse funds for the construction, operation and maintenance of treatment facilities, issue bonds for treatment facilities, and to sue and be sued. Further, an authority or agency should be a member of the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster. If needed, legislation for a new authority or a dependable source of revenue should be formulated, circulated for comment, and be ready for introduction early in 1989.

3. Overlying water suppliers have the capability of ensuring that maximum beneficial uses are made of the ground water and should therefore, at a minimum, proceed forthwith to pump, treat, blend, or otherwise use ground water to the maximum extent practicable.
4. EPA and DHS financial and technical support is vital to the success of any management program. They should proceed as rapidly as possible to ensure funding and construction of facilities for the extraction, treatment, and blending of ground water as necessary.
5. DWR and MWD have substantial interests in ensuring the success of water quality management of the Main Basin and therefore should actively contribute to such management efforts.
6. The Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster, after consultation with interested agencies, should either assume the lead role for coordinating the activities of local, state and federal agencies in addressing ground water quality problems in the Main Basin or indicate in writing the agency that it would prefer exercise such a role.

#### CERTIFICATION

The undersigned, Administrative Assistant to the Board, does hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution duly and regularly adopted at a meeting of the State Water Resources Control Board held on October 20, 1988.

  
Maureen Marche  
Administrative Assistant to  
the Board