

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2006-003

March 9, 2006

Basin Plan Amendment to Incorporate a Variance Provision for the Groundwater Mineral Quality Objectives from Coastal Groundwater Areas with High Concentrations of Naturally Occurring Minerals

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

1. In 1988, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) adopted Resolution 88-63, the Sources of Drinking Water Policy (SODW Policy). This statewide policy mandated that all surface and ground waters of the State are to be considered suitable, or potentially suitable, for municipal or domestic water supply and that all waters should be so designated by the Regional Boards, with certain exceptions.
2. In 1989, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) adopted Resolution 89-03, amending the Basin Plan for the Los Angeles Region per the directive in State Board Resolution 88-63.
3. Currently all ground waters, with the exception of the two areas, are designated as either 'existing' or 'potential' MUN in the Basin Plan for the Los Angeles Region. [These MUN use designations of all ground waters pre-date the incorporation of the SODW Policy in the Basin Plan for the Los Angeles Region in 1989.]
4. The current Basin Plan for the Los Angeles Region contains mineral water quality objectives for TDS, sulfate, chloride and boron in ground waters.
5. Some of the exceptions identified in the SODW Policy that could be applied to water bodies include surface and ground waters where:
 - a. The total dissolved solids (TDS) exceed 3,000 mg/L (5,000 μ S/cm, electrical conductivity) and it is not reasonably expected by Regional Boards to supply a public water system, or
 - b. There is contamination, either by natural processes or by human activity (unrelated to the specific pollution incident), that cannot reasonably be treated for domestic use using either best management practices or best economically achievable treatment practices, or
 - c. The water source does not provide sufficient water to supply a single well capable of producing an average, sustained yield of 200 gallons per day.
6. In 1998, the Regional Board adopted amendments to the Basin Plan that de-designated the MUN beneficial use from portions of two groundwater basins that lay seaward of established groundwater injection barriers designed to prevent further seawater intrusion in the basin (Regional Board Resolution No. 98-18).
7. From 2000 to 2004, Regional Board staff has received four additional requests to consider removing the MUN beneficial use from other groundwater areas on the basis of exceptions

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permitted in the SODW Policy. In particular, the following exception was invoked: waters of the State where total dissolved solids (TDS) exceed 3,000 mg/L and it is not reasonably expected by Regional Boards to supply a public water system (State Board Resolution No. 88-63, exception 1.a.). Staff anticipates that similar requests will continue to be made by various stakeholders.

8. In the process of evaluating these 4 additional requests for de-designation, it has become apparent to staff and management that we need to develop a consistent, regional framework for addressing these groundwater issues.

9. Regional Board staff recommends adoption of a Basin Plan amendment to allow a variance from the mineral quality objectives for groundwater basins when specified criteria are met. If adopted, the Regional Board would have the authority to grant a variance to a discharger(s) from mineral quality objectives (contained in Table 3-10 of the 1994 Basin Plan). This authority would be limited in geographic scope to coastal aquifers in situations where elevated concentrations of minerals are caused by natural sources due to an aquifer's proximity to the coast, including seawater intrusion, presence of marine sediments or tidal fluctuations.

10. It is not the Regional Board's intent in adopting this amendment to provide relief from the groundwater mineral quality objectives to a discharger that is causing or significantly contributing to saltwater intrusion as a result of groundwater overdraft.

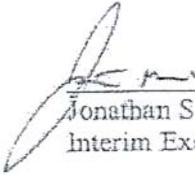
THEREFORE, be it resolved that

1. Some of the groundwater areas at issue have poor mineral quality (i.e. high concentrations of total dissolved solids) and exceed the SODW Policy threshold of 3,000 mg/L of TDS as described in #6 above. However, it is not unreasonable, given the regional demand for water supplies, periodic water shortages, controversy over imported water supplies, and current desalination technology, to anticipate that the ground waters proposed for de-designation may be used as water supplies at some future time.

Pursuant to sections 13240, 13241, and 13242 of the California Water Code, the Regional Board, after considering the entire record, including oral testimony at the hearing, hereby adopts the amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region, to incorporate a variance provision for the mineral quality objectives for groundwater per the variance provisions contained in Attachment A.

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 OAL and the U.S. EPA.
5. If during its approval process Regional Board staff, the State Board or OAL determines that minor, non-substantive corrections to the language of the amendment are needed for clarity or 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.

I, Jonathan Bishop, 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 March 9, 2006.


Jonathan S. Bishop
Interim Executive Officer

5/22/06
Date

Regional Objectives for Ground Waters

Mineral Quality

Inorganic constituents in ground waters are largely influenced by thermodynamic reactions that occur as ground water comes into contact with various rock and soil types. For example, ground water that flows through beds of gypsum ($\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$) typically has relatively high levels of calcium cations and sulfate anions. Ground water flowing through limestone (CaCO_3) also has relatively high levels of calcium cations, but coupled with bicarbonate anions instead of sulfate. Ground waters with these ions at levels greater than 120 mg/L (expressed as CaCO_3) are considered hard waters (Hem, 1989).

Human activities and land use practices can influence inorganic constituents in ground waters. Surface waters carrying abnormally high levels of salts (e.g., irrigation return flows) can degrade the ground waters that they recharge. Abnormally high levels of inorganic constituents can impair and preclude beneficial uses. For example, high levels of boron preclude agricultural use (especially for citrus crops) of ground waters. Hard waters present nuisance problems and may require softening prior to industrial use.

Numerical mineral quality objectives for individual groundwater basins are contained in Table 3-10 (as in the 1994 Basin Plan).

Coastal Aquifer Variance Provision for Mineral Quality Objectives

In coastal aquifers where elevated concentrations of minerals are caused by natural sources due to an aquifer's proximity to the ocean, the Regional Board may grant a variance from implementing the mineral quality objectives specified in Table 3-10 (as in the 1994 Basin Plan) when issuing waste discharge requirements (WDRs) or enforcement orders. Any variance granted pursuant to this variance provision shall be for no more than five years, and may be extended not more than once for an additional period of up to five years. Any further relief should be in the form of a Basin Plan amendment. A decision to issue or to extend a variance will be based upon the Regional Board's evaluation of the evidence submitted concerning the granting of the variance.

A discharger must submit to the Executive Officer a written request for a variance from compliance with the mineral quality objectives for groundwater. The request must include recent data and analysis that provide clear and convincing evidence that elevated mineral concentrations are natural in origin and result from the aquifer's proximity to the ocean. The discharger's request must include clear and convincing evidence and analysis that:

1. The aquifer's proximity to the ocean leads to one or more of the following:
 - a) seawater intrusion;
 - b) the presence of marine sediments high in mineral content;
 - c) tidal fluctuations that regularly influence the chemistry of the aquifer.
2. The source of the elevated mineral concentrations is natural and not induced by current or past discharge of pollutants.
3. A discharge of minerals in excess of the mineral quality objectives in the coastal aquifer will not degrade adjacent inland aquifers.
4. The discharger has not caused or significantly contributed to the elevated mineral concentrations from which it seeks relief.

The Regional Board may only grant a variance after a duly noticed public meeting. The Regional Board's decision to grant or to deny a variance shall be based on the record, including the discharger's request, the circumstances leading to the elevated mineral concentrations at the site, and the comments of staff and interested persons. The Regional Board may only grant a

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variance upon the Regional Board's determination that the request satisfies the conditions specified above and that the variance is in the public interest. In granting a variance, the Regional Board must include appropriate requirements in the WDRs or enforcement order consistent with the State Water Resources Control Board's anti-degradation resolution (SWRCB Res. No. 68-16) and other applicable water quality standards as stipulated in regional and statewide water quality control plans.

Table 3-10. Water Quality Objectives for Selected Constituents in Regional Ground Waters².

DWR Basin No. ^b	BASIN	OBJECTIVES (mg/L) ¹			
		TDS	Sulfate	Chloride	Boron
	Pitas Point Area ^{de}	None specified			
4-1	Ojai Valley				
	Upper Ojai Valley				
	West of Sulfur Mountain Road	1,000	300	200	1.0
	Central area	700	50	100	1.0
4-2	Sisar area	700	250	100	0.5
	Lower Ojai Valley				0.5
	West of San Antonio--Senior Canyon Creeks	1,000	300	200	0.5
4-3	East of San Antonio--Senior Canyon Creeks	700	200	50	
	Ventura River Valley				
	Upper Ventura	800	300	100	0.5
4-4	San Antonio Creek area	1,000	300	100	1.0
	Lower Ventura	1,500	500	300	1.5
	Ventura Central ^{cd}				
4-4	Santa Clara--Piru Creek area				
	Upper area (above Lake Piru)				
	Lower area east of Piru Creek	1,100	400	200	2.0
	Lower area west of Piru Creek	2,500	1,200	200	1.5
	Santa Clara--Sespe Creek area	1,200	600	100	1.5
	Topa Topa (upper Sespe) area				
	Fillmore area	900	350	30	2.0
	Pole Creek Fan area				
	South side of Santa Clara River	2,000	800	100	1.0
	Remaining Fillmore area	1,500	800	100	1.1
	Santa Clara--Santa Paula area	1,000	400	50	0.7
	East of Peck Road				
	West of Peck Road	1,200	600	100	1.0
	Oxnard Plain	2,000	800	110	1.0
	Oxnard Forebay				
	Confined aquifers	1,200	600	150	1.0
	Unconfined and perched aquifers	1,200	600	150	1.0
	3,000	1,000	500	--	
4-6	Pleasant Valley				
	Confined aquifers	700	300	150	1.0
	Unconfined and perched aquifers	--	--	--	--
4-7	Arroyo Santa Rosa	900	300	150	1.0
4-8	Las Posas Valley				
	South Las Posas area				
	NW of Grimes Cyn Rd & LA Ave & Somis Rd	700	300	100	0.5
	E of Grimes Cyn Rd and Hitch Blvd	2,500	1,200	400	3.0
	S of LA Ave between Somis Rd & Hitch Blvd	1,500	700	250	1.0
	Grimes Canyon Rd & Broadway area	250	30	30	0.2
North Las Posas area	500	250	150	1.0	
4-5	Upper Santa Clara				
	Action Valley	550	150	100	1.0
	Sierra Pelona Valley (Agua Dulce)	600	100	100	0.5
	Upper Mint Canyon	700	150	100	0.5
	Upper Bouquet Canyon	400	50	30	0.5
	Green Valley	400	50	25	--
	Lake Elizabeth--Lake Hughes area	500	100	50	0.5

Table 3-10. Water Quality Objectives for Selected Constituents in Regional Ground Waters³ (cont.)

DWR Basin No. ^b	BASIN	OBJECTIVES (mg/L) ⁵			
		TDS	Sulfate	Chloride	Boron
4-4.07	Eastern Santa Clara				
	Santa Clara-Mint Canyon	800	150	150	1.0
	South Fork	700	200	100	0.5
	Placerita Canyon	700	150	100	0.5
	Santa Clara-Bouquet & San Francisquito Canyons	700	250	100	1.0
	Castaic Valley	1,000	350	150	1.0
	Saugus Aquifer	-	-	-	-
4-9	Simi Valley				
	Simi Valley Basin				
	Confined aquifers	1,200	600	150	1.0
	Unconfined aquifers	-	-	-	-
	Gilbreath Basin	900	350	50	1.0
4-10	Conejo Valley	800	250	150	1.0
4-11	Los Angeles Coastal Plain				
	Central Basin	700	250	150	1.0
	West Coast Basin	800	250	250	1.5
	Hollywood Basin	750	100	100	1.0
	Santa Monica Basin	1,000	250	200	0.5
4-12	San Fernando Valley				
	Syomar Basin	600	150	100	0.5
	Verdugo Basin	600	150	100	0.5
	San Fernando Basin				
	West of Highway 405	600	300	100	1.5
	East of Highway 405 (overall)	700	300	100	1.5
	Sunland-Tujunga area ^{1a}	400	50	50	0.5
	Foothill area ^{1b}	400	100	50	1.0
	Area encompassing RT-Tujunga-Erwin-N. Hollywood-Whittier-LA/Verdugo-Crystal Springs-Headworks-Glendale/Burbank-Well Fields	900	300	150	1.5
	Narrows area (below confluence of Verdugo Wash with the LA River)	800	150	100	0.5
	Eagle Rock Basin	800	150	100	0.5
4-13	San Gabriel Valley				
	Raymond Basin				
	Monk Hill sub-basin	450	100	100	0.5
	Santa Anita area	450	100	100	0.5
	Pasadena area	450	100	100	0.5
	Main San Gabriel Basin				
	Western area ^{1c}	450	100	100	0.5
Eastern area ^{1d}	600	100	100	0.5	
Puente Basin	1,000	300	150	1.0	
4-14 8-2 ^{1e}	Upper Santa Ana Valley				
	Live Oak area	450	150	100	0.5
	Claremont Heights area	450	100	50	-
	Pomona area	300	100	50	0.5
	Chino area	450	20	15	-
	Spadra area	550	200	120	1.0
4-15	Tierra Rejada	700	250	100	0.5
4-16	Hidden Valley	1,000	250	250	1.0
4-17	Lockwood Valley	1,000	300	20	2.0
4-18	Hungry Valley and Peace Valley	500	150	50	1.0

Table 3-10. Water Quality Objectives for Selected Constituents in Regional Ground Waters^a (cont.)

DWR Basin No. ^b	BASIN	OBJECTIVES (mg/L) ^c			
		TDS	Sulfate	Chloride	Boron
4-19	Thousand Oaks area	1,400	700	150	
4-20	Russell Valley	1,500	500	250	1.0
	Russell Valley	2,000	500	500	2.0
	Triunfo Canyon area	2,000	500	500	2.0
	Lindero Canyon area	2,000	500	500	2.0
4-21	Conejo-Tierra Rejada Volcanic area ^h	--	--	--	--
4-22	Santa Monica Mountains--southern slopes ^j	1,000	250	250	1.0
	Camarillo area	1,000	250	250	1.0
	Point Dume area	2,000	500	500	2.0
	Malibu Valley	2,000	500	500	2.0
	San Pedro Channel Islands ^k	--	--	--	--
	Anacapa Island	1,100	150	350	--
	San Nicolas Island	1,000	100	250	1.0
	Santa Catalina Island	--	--	--	--
	San Clemente Island	--	--	--	--
	Santa Barbara Island	--	--	--	--

Objectives for ground waters outside of the major basins listed on this table and outlined in Figure 1-9 have not been specifically listed. However, ground waters outside of the major basins are, in many cases, significant sources of water. Furthermore, ground waters outside of the major basins are either potential or existing sources of water for downgradient basins and, as such, objectives in the downgradient basins shall apply to these areas.

b. Basins are numbered according to Bulletin 118-80 (Department of Water Resources, 1980).

Ground waters in the Pitas Point area (between the lower Ventura River and Rincon Point) are not considered to comprise a major basin, and accordingly have not been designated a basin number by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) or outlined on Figure 1-9.

d. The Santa Clara River Valley (4-4), Pleasant Valley (4-6), Arroyo Santa Rosa Valley (4-7) and Las Posas Valley (4-8) Ground Water Basins have been combined and designated as the Ventura Central Basin (DWR, 1980).

e. The category for the Foothill Wells area in existing Basin Plan incorrectly groups ground water in the Foothill area with ground water in the Sunland-Tujunga area. Accordingly, the new categories, Foothill area and Sunland-Tujunga area, replace the old Foothill Wells area.

All of the ground water in the Main San Gabriel Basin is covered by the objectives listed under Main San Gabriel Basin - eastern area and Western area. Walnut Creek, Big Dalton Wash, and Little Dalton Wash separate the Eastern area from the Western area (see dashed line on Figure 2-17). Any ground water upgradient of these areas is subject to downgradient beneficial uses and objectives, as explained in Footnote a.

g. The border between Regions 4 and 8 crosses the Upper Santa Ana Valley Ground Water Basin.

h. Ground water in the Conejo-Tierra Rejada Volcanic Area occurs primarily in fractured volcanic rocks in the western Santa Monica Mountains and Conejo Mountain areas. These areas have not been delineated on Figure 1-9.

i. With the exception of ground water in Malibu Valley (DWR Basin No. 4-22), ground waters along the southern slopes of the Santa Monica Mountains are not considered to comprise a major basin and accordingly have not been designated a basin number by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) or outlined on Figure 1-9.

j. DWR has not designated basins for ground waters on the San Pedro Channel Islands.

k. The Regional Board may grant, at its sole discretion, individual dischargers a variance from the numeric mineral quality objectives for groundwater specified in Table 3-10 under the conditions and procedures specified in "Coastal Aquifer Variance Provision for Mineral Quality Objectives" set forth in the Regional Objectives for Ground Waters.