

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – OFFICE OF RESEARCH, PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE
SEPTEMBER 18, 2007

ITEM 7

SUBJECT

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO DEVELOP ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND CONSIDER ACTIONS PERTAINING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND WATER RESOURCES

DISCUSSION

With the passage of AB 32 (Statutes of 2006, Chapter 488), all state agencies “shall consider and implement strategies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.” In an April 2007 Report entitled “Proposed Early Actions to Mitigate Climate Change in California” the Governor’s Climate Action Team illustrated examples of programs and regulatory efforts “which describe ongoing and expected efforts to reduce and mitigate [greenhouse gas] emissions in the near term.”

On August 23, 2007, the State Water Board held a joint meeting with the Department of Water Resources to solicit input on: (1) how both agencies could contribute to meeting the goals of AB 32 and integrate climate change considerations into existing policies, regulatory responsibilities, and grant programs; and (2) how climate change directly impacts various programs and what could be done to address those impacts.

After receiving input from 27 panelists, many potential opportunities for the Water Boards to play a significant role in the State’s response to our changing climate were identified. These opportunities fell into a number of broad categories related to our programmatic responsibilities including strategies affecting: recycled water, surface water, water rights and land use planning. Many of these strategies could assist existing programs in helping to reduce the impact of GHG emissions and/or adapt to changing climatic conditions. Based on the input received, opportunities may also exist for the Water Boards and the Department of Water Resources to work collaboratively for a more effective response.

POLICY ISSUE

Should the State Water Board:

1. Create a process for staff evaluation of the recommendations on climate change generated at the April 23, 2007 joint workshop?
2. Provide direction on incorporating the consideration of climate change impacts as a component of future Water Board decisions and actions?
3. Direct additional internal collaboration and training, external stakeholder input and support/participation in pilot projects related to climate change impacts?

FISCAL IMPACT

None

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

All Regional Water Quality Control Boards.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the State Water Board provide direction to:

1. Further evaluate recommendations provided by panelists and the public at the August 23, 2007 joint Water Board/Department of Water Resources meeting, and any additional recommendations provided through the close of the public comment period on September 14, 2007;
2. Consider the impacts of climate change in future decisions and actions, and
3. Encourage opportunities to further local dialogue and demonstration activities targeted at mitigation and adaptation strategies.

DRAFT

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 2007-

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO DEVELOP ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND CONSIDER ACTIONS PERTAINING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND WATER RESOURCES

WHEREAS:

1. Climate change is predicted to alter water availability with consequential adverse impacts to water quality, water temperature, and the ability to meet water right allocations.
2. The Water Boards recognize that their actions and the programs that they administer may contribute to future Green House Gas emissions and/or may require adaptations to accommodate climate change.
3. The Water Boards are committed to careful consideration of climate change strategies to further our ability to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources, and to ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.
4. Assembly Bill 32, The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, signed by the Governor on September 27, 2006, states that all state agencies shall consider and implement strategies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.
5. On August 23, 2007, the State Water Board and the Department of Water Resources held a joint workshop soliciting suggestions to reduce Green House Gas emissions and identify adaptations to accommodate changing climatic conditions.
6. Suggestions presented at the joint workshop were extensive, including but not limited to, water-energy relationships, water recycling and conservation, water quality regulation, basin planning, Best Management Practices, and land use policies.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. In partnership with the Department of Water Resources, State Water Board staff shall evaluate the input received from the August 23, 2007 joint meeting on Climate Change to identify.
 - Which specific strategies are primarily the responsibility of either the Water Boards or the Department of Water Resources for independent consideration;
 - Which specific strategies are the responsibility of both agencies or cannot be considered without the input of both agencies.

For those strategies that are within the responsibilities of both agencies, staff shall jointly analyze the suggested strategies and determine their appropriateness for consideration as Climate Action Team initiatives.

2. Regional Water Boards are encouraged to work with local stakeholders to refine local actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the impacts of climate change.

3. The State Water Board's Office of Research, Planning & Performance will convene an internal working group of staff participating on the Climate Action Team subgroups to facilitate communication and collaboration on climate action strategies being considered by the Water Board's programs.
4. State Water Board staff will develop approaches for evaluating the potential contribution of Green House Gas emissions and potential adaptation strategies that should be considered as a component of the Water Boards' decisions or actions.
5. The Water Boards' Training Academy will develop, in consultation with the Air Resources Board and the Department of Water Resources, training on the potential impacts that climate change will have on Water Board programs and approaches for taking these impacts into consideration.
6. The State Water Board supports and encourages the development and Implementation of regional pilot projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and demonstrate adaptation strategies that can be replicated statewide. To the extent practical, these projects should take advantage of initiatives where significant progress is already being made.
7. State Water Board staff shall provide a status report in January 2008, summarizing progress in implementing the actions contained in this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

The Water Boards recognize the clear role that climate change considerations must play in the development of the 2008 Strategic Plan Update and will ensure that the priorities reflected in the update have been evaluated for implementation through a carbon lens.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned, Acting Clerk 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 September 18, 2007.

Jeanine Townsend
Acting Clerk to the Board