

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION--DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY
SEPTEMBER 18, 2007

ITEM 8

SUBJECT

INFORMATION ITEM -- ANNUAL STATUS REPORT ON THE STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD (STATE WATER BOARD) PROGRAM TO DEVELOP SEDIMENT QUALITY OBJECTIVES (SQOs)

DISCUSSION

In 1989, the California Water Code (CWC) was amended to require the State Water Board to develop SQOs as part of a comprehensive program to protect existing and future beneficial water uses within California's enclosed bays and estuaries. The development of SQOs was delayed significantly until 1999, when a lawsuit was filed against the State Water Board for, among other things, failing to adopt SQOs. As a result of the litigation, the State Water Board was mandated to develop and adopt SQOs within a four-year time frame. In 2007, the State Water Board negotiated with the petitioners a 12-month extension to the compliance schedule, in conjunction with an agreement to initiate additional studies for water bodies not previously considered in SQO development. Under the revised agreement, the adoption milestones are:

- By February 29, 2008, the State Water Board must adopt and submit to the Office of Administrative Law for approval proposed objectives and an implementation policy for the first phase of the program.
- By December 31, 2010, the State Water Board must adopt and submit to the Office of Administrative Law for approval proposed objectives and an implementation policy for the second phase of the program.

Major Achievements by the State Water Board since last update:

- In late 2006, circulated a California Environmental Quality Act Scoping Document, held public workshops, and received both written and verbal comments.
- Has prepared and is releasing the draft "Water Quality Control Plan for Enclosed Bays and Estuaries of California, Part 1, Sediment Quality" which was based on input from participants and members of the Sediment Quality Advisory Committee, the Agency Coordination Committee, the technical team, and other interested parties. This Plan includes:
 - Indicators for interpreting the direct effects narrative SQO within embayments.
 - An interim approach for interpreting the direct effects narrative SQO within estuaries.
 - A draft plan of implementation for all narrative SQOs.

- Partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to utilize the indicators developed within this program to prepare California's Clean Water Act section 305(b) report for sediment quality. The application of these indicators was successful in categorizing the health of sediment quality in California's enclosed bays and coastal lagoons.
- Partnered with the Department of Water Resources to plan the October 2007 Delta Sediment Survey. The collection of these data will provide the basis for the development of interpretive indicators for sediments in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and will also provide timely data on sediment quality in the Delta that will benefit many other ongoing efforts.

POLICY ISSUE

This is an information item only.