

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING SESSION – DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY  
JUNE 4, 2013**

**ITEM 8**

**SUBJECT**

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CALIFORNIA OCEAN PLAN AND ENCLOSED BAYS, ESTUARIES, AND INLAND SURFACE WATERS WATER QUALITY PLAN TO ADDRESS DESALINATION INTAKES AND BRINE DISPOSAL.

**DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this item is to inform the board members on the status of one of the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board's) priorities for 2012-2013: Desalination and Brine Disposal Amendments to the California Ocean Plan (Ocean Plan) and the Enclosed Bay, Estuaries, and Inland Surface Water Quality Plan. The State Water Board is developing amendments to these Plans to address desalination intakes and brine discharges. The amendments include the following three components: 1) a narrative objective for salinity, 2) limits on desalination intakes, and 3) an implementation plan for discharges, including a provision prohibiting the use of flow augmentation for in-plant dilution.

Our draft amendments are based on three scientific studies that addressed: 1) intakes and mitigation 2) brines disposal, and 3) hyper-salinity toxicity study. Representatives from each of these studies presented their results and recommendations at a workshop held on August 22, 2012. Industry and environmental groups also attended the workshop and provided feedback. On January 30, 2013, we held a stakeholder meeting where the scientific community, industry, and environmental groups were present to discuss policy development. The main objective of this briefing is to update board members about our activities regarding these proposed amendments.

**POLICY ISSUE**

The amendments are needed because there are currently no water quality objectives for elevated salinity in receiving waters in the Ocean Plan. There are no provisions specifically addressing brine waste discharges from seawater desalination plants, groundwater desalination plants, or water recycling treatment plants. In addition, there are no current statewide provisions implementing California Water Code section 13142.5(b) which requires that the "best site, design, technology, and mitigation measures feasible shall be used to minimize the intake and mortality of all forms of marine life" resulting from industrial seawater and estuarine intakes. The proposed amendment will provide clear and consistent requirements to control seawater and estuarine intakes to prevent impingement and minimize entrainment of marine life.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None. This is an informational item.

**REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT**

None. This is an informational item.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

None. This is an informational item.

State Water Board action on this item will assist the Water Boards in reaching Goal 5 of the Strategic Plan Update: 2008-2012 to improve transparency and accountability by ensuring that Water Board goals and actions are clear and accessible, by demonstrating and explaining results achieved with respect to the goals and resources available. In particular, approval of this item will assist in fulfilling the Objective to improve the current Water Board systems, programs, functions, and core business processes to enhance effective and consistent implementation of Final Strategic Plan Update: 2008-2012 9/2/2008 33 Water Board plans and policies, and State and federal laws and regulations, and to reduce processing time and costs.