

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

**STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF January 29-30-, 2015**

Prepared on December 17, 2015

**ITEM NUMBER: 7**

**Drought Conditions Update by Regional Liaison to Water Rights Division**

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**KEY INFORMATION:**

Location: Region-Wide  
Type of Activities: Permitting, Interagency Coordination, Technical Assistance, Grant and Loan Funding, Stakeholder Involvement

**THIS ACTION: Board Discussion/Information/Direction**

**DISCUSSION**

Central Coast Water Board staff continues to work on tasks related to water rights, given the high demand for staff resources under the current extreme drought conditions. Drought-related tasks continue to emerge through permitting, groundwater and spill cleanup and investigations, interagency coordination (since we regulate municipalities for wastewater discharges who also provide water supply), and grant-funding outreach. Staff is also seeking opportunities to facilitate or implement drought-related tasks regionally to address drought-related problems and limited water supply and availability with Central Coast Water Board water quality authorities.

Staff continues to track and facilitate drought assistance and water supply improvement in critical areas. See the specific area information in the subsequent section of this report.

**Regional Liaison to Water Rights Division**

Lisa McCann, Environmental Program Manager and Section Manager for the Watershed Planning and Protection Section, continues to serve as the Regional Liaison to the Water Rights Division. In this role, Ms. McCann does the following:

- Coordinate and provide information updates to the Central Coast Water Board and stakeholders regarding drought activities in the Central Coast Region
- Represent State Water Board staff, if needed, on local projects and to local agencies and stakeholders
- Facilitate stakeholders' needs with State Water Board activities and authorities to address and resolve local drought problems
- Coordinate and make Central Coast Water Board activities consistent with State Water Board activities, regulations and policies

**State-wide Drought Information and Activities**

The September Board Meeting Drought Update included identification of groundwater basin prioritization by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) under the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) program, released in June 2014. The CASGEM Basin Prioritization ranks Salinas as the highest priority in the State, so the most threatened groundwater basin. The Gilroy-Hollister, Pajaro Valley, Santa Maria, and Carmel Valley basins follow closely in the top 23 out of 515 basins in the State.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Act revised the Water Code to direct the DWR to develop the initial groundwater basin priorities by January 31, 2015. DWR has concluded that the basin prioritization finalized in June 2014 under the CASGEM program will be the initial prioritization when the SGM Act goes into effect on January 1, 2015. The basin prioritization results are posted on DWR's CASGEM website at [http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/basin\\_prioritization.cfm](http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/basin_prioritization.cfm) (webpage) and [http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/pdfs/lists/StatewidePriority\\_05262014.pdf](http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/pdfs/lists/StatewidePriority_05262014.pdf) (Table of Basins)

**Central Coast Water Board General Activities Related to Drought****Funding**

Drought-related funding opportunities continue to include the following and are further described at these links to webpages:

- [\\$4 Million in Funds for Interim Replacement Drinking Water for Economically Disadvantaged Communities](#)
- [Low Interest Loans for Water Recycling Projects](#)
- [Facilities Planning Grants for Water Recycling Projects](#)
- [\\$800 Million at 1 Percent for Water Recycling Projects](#)

**Drought-Related Complaints**

Central Coast Water Board staff continues to refer people with complaints related to water use and diversions to the State Water Board's Water Rights Enforcement webpage and the complaint form:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water\\_issues/programs/enforcement/complaints/index.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/enforcement/complaints/index.shtml)

The State Water Board is giving highest priority to these types of complaints when they are in critical watersheds that have had water rights curtailed due to drought conditions or in watersheds that have resident endangered species.

Since the last Water Board Meeting and Drought Update Report, Central Coast Water Board received the following complaints: 1) agricultural wells going dry (Nipomo, Santa Maria); 2) citizen complaints to Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency about high volume of water running off from agricultural ditches and tile drains, 3) reduction in cropped area and/or crop yields due to lack of water and an increase in salinity negatively impacting crops grown in San Luis Obispo County (based on the report, *The 2014 Drought: Impacts on San Luis Obispo County Agriculture*, San Luis Obispo County Cooperative Extension, University of California, <http://cesanluisobispo.ucanr.edu>).

## **Central Coast Water Board Activities Related to Communities with Critical Water Supply Conditions**

### Monterey County

The Monterey County Inter-Agency Drought Task Force on October 8, 2014 reported that two water systems in Monterey County have applied for funding for public drinking water systems from the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water Programs. These programs have been deemed "critical" by the state (Arroyo Seco and Cachagua).

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency, the city of Salinas and the Marina Coast Water District, are establishing a memorandum of understanding which sets a framework for negotiating an agreement on water sources for expanding the recycled water supply. The agreement considers tapping Peninsula wastewater and storm runoff, and Salinas-area produce wash water and contaminated runoff to help meet regional water needs. Some water would be steered to a project known as Pure Water Monterey, in which treated water would be pumped into and stored in a Seaside aquifer, joining with California American Water's desalination plant as part of the Peninsula water supply project, which is designed to help replace state-mandated pumping reductions from the Carmel River. The deal would also provide additional irrigation water for the existing Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project, water reclamation project. This information was reported in the press at the following links:

[http://www.montereyherald.com/localnews/ci\\_26682809/monterey-county-agencies-close-groundwater-deal](http://www.montereyherald.com/localnews/ci_26682809/monterey-county-agencies-close-groundwater-deal)

[http://m.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news\\_blog/agreement-to-agree-all-six-parties-approve-mou-to-hash/article\\_ee28a26c-500d-11e4-beda-0017a43b2370.html?mode=qm](http://m.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news_blog/agreement-to-agree-all-six-parties-approve-mou-to-hash/article_ee28a26c-500d-11e4-beda-0017a43b2370.html?mode=qm)

### Cambria

At the last regular Board meeting, on November 13-14, 2014, the Central Coast Water Board adopted two new and one modified Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Orders for the Cambria Community Services District (CCSD): 1) WDRs specific to the reinjection of recycled water subject to Title 22 drinking water standards and 2) WDRs for a surface impoundment (evaporation pond) that would receive reverse osmosis reject subject to Title 27 solid waste disposal standards, and 3) modified existing WDRs Order No. 01-100 for a portion of extracted groundwater, treated with membrane filtration, to be discharged to existing wastewater percolation ponds.

Additionally, the CCSD also proposes to divert a portion of the extracted groundwater treated by membrane filtration to direct discharge into the San Simeon Creek fresh water lagoons to enhance aquatic habitat conditions. This discharge will be covered by the existing Central Coast Water Board's General Permit for Discharges with Low Threat to Water Quality, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit No. CAG993001, Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R3-2011-0223 (Low Threat General Permit). On September 17, 2014, the CCSD submitted an initial application for enrollment under the Low Threat General Permit. Water Board staff received and reviewed the CCSD's application and determined that the application was incomplete so sent a letter to the CCSD on October 3, 2014 describing the reasons. On behalf of the CCSD, CDM Smith submitted supplemental information to the Water Board on November 25, 2014, and December 2, 2014. In the Notice of Applicability dated December 8, 2014, the Executive Officer found the CCSD's application to be complete and conditionally approved Low Threat Permit enrollment, provided the CCSD operates the project as described in the Notice of Intent. To comply with the Low Threat General Permit, the CCSD must initiate start-up monitoring of the effluent, San Simeon Creek, and the San Simeon Creek freshwater lagoon before full-scale operation of the Project in accordance with the revised Monitoring and Reporting Program No. R3-2011-0223.

In order to work on these permits, Central Coast Water Board staff has not been able to keep up on several other important permitting activities. This includes the following items:

- Preparation of the San Simeon Nutrient Total Maximum Daily Load to the Board (originally scheduled for January 2015).
- Review and approval of the final construction quality assurance (CQA) plan for Chicago Grade, Paso Robles, and Tajiguas landfills- Each of these plans needs to be approved prior to authorizing the discharger to place waste in the newly lined module of their landfills, although we do allow them to place waste at their own risk in the new module while pending CQA documentation review and approval. Due to limitations in capacity at the landfills, dischargers may, in some cases, be forced to place the waste in the new cells at their own risk.
- Pre-winter inspections for some active or closed landfills typically conducted in the fall to ensure landfills are ready for the winter season.
- Review of a submitted joint technical document to update waste discharge requirements for a needed expansion at Cold Canyon landfill.
- Strategic planning meeting requests with landfill staff and their consultants (postponed), for example, discussions with Camp Roberts to discuss next steps for lead-impacted waste disposal.

#### Los Osos

The Los Osos water purveyors and the County of San Luis Obispo, the “working group” pursuant to the Interlocutory Stipulated Judgement, updated the Los Osos Groundwater Basin Management Plan to reflect more recent groundwater monitoring results and current proposed options to manage the groundwater basin. In January, the working group expects to set a date for approval of the Basin Management Plan and the Stipulated Judgement. Central Coast Water Board staff, with assistance from the Groundwater Management Unit at the State Water Resources Control Board, will review the plan and report to the Central Coast Water Board at one of the next few Board meetings provided the plan is timely available for staff to review. Staff will inform the Board as to the severity of the basin conditions, what actions are proposed to manage the basin and when these actions will be implemented. Additionally, staff will identify the roles or authorities of the Regional or State Water Board to intervene to compel basin management, if appropriate or necessary.

#### Santa Barbara Area

Modification of the Waste Discharge Requirements and NPDES Permit for City of Santa Barbara for Discharges from Ocean Desalination System will be considered by the Central Coast Water Board later in this meeting as Agenda Item 9.

In order to work on this permit, Central Coast Water Board staff has not been able to keep up on several other important permitting activities. This includes the following items:

- Review of key report for the Diablo Canyon Power Plant addressing the installation of saltwater cooling towers in the South parking lot - Bechtel’s *Draft Final Addendum to the Independent Third-Party Final Technologies Assessment for the Alternative Cooling Technologies or Modifications to the Existing Once-Through Cooling System*.
- Participate in Nuclear Review Committee.
- Respond to City of Lompoc request to evaluate their Waste Water Treatment Plant’s Toxic Reduction Evaluation and modify their NPDES permit.
- Writing expired NPDES permit renewals for Moss Landing Commercial Park and Diablo Canyon Power Plant.
- Inspecting assigned NPDES permitted facilities (i.e. Santa Cruz, MRWPCA, CAWD, Scotts Valley, Lompoc, Montecito, Carpinteria, Summerland, Goleta, Cuyama, Moss

Landing Commercial Park, Moss Landing Power Plant, and Diablo Canyon Power Plant).

- Review of applications to enroll several facilities under the General Aquaculture Permit in the Moss Landing area and elsewhere in the Region.
- Review of reports following dredging activities to determine permit compliance (i.e. Morro Bay Pier replacement project, tidal wetland project, etc.).
- Respond to General Permit enrollee requests regarding Monitoring and Reporting Program changes.
- Review the Cal Am slant test well for the desalination facility enrolled under the General Low Threat Permit.
- Meet with the Technical Working Group to enroll Diablo Canyon Power Plant thermal impact studies.

### **CONCLUSION**

Given the severity of the drought and the high volume of work in response for the State Board Division of Water Rights, Central Coast Water Board staff will continue to track drought-related activities and issues in the region and provide assistance to stakeholders and the State Water Board as needed. Additionally, Central Coast Water Board staff will take drought conditions and impacts to beneficial uses and water quality into account as we continue to conduct permitting, groundwater and spill cleanup and investigations, interagency coordination and grant-funding outreach or other business affected by the drought.