

AGENDA ITEM: 12

SUBJECT:

Update on the East San Joaquin Surface Water Framework Expert Panel Review

BOARD ACTION:

Information Item

BACKGROUND:

The Central Valley Water Board adopted the East San Joaquin Watershed General Waste Discharge Requirements Order (Order) on 7 December 2012. The Order regulates the discharge of wastes from irrigated agricultural lands to waters of the State. Environmental interest groups petitioned the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) on 7 January 2013, maintaining that the Order does not meet statutory and regulatory requirements. Among their concerns, the petitioners asserted that the surface water monitoring program in the Order does not adequately address surface water quality concerns because the monitoring framework is ineffective as a feedback mechanism to provide the data necessary to show if water quality goals are being met.

The State Board responded to petitioners' concerns by issuing Order WQ 2018-0002. In their Order, the State Board directed the Central Valley Water Board to implement an independent peer review of the surface water monitoring framework established in the East San Joaquin Order. Central Valley Water Board staff has contracted with the Southern California Coastal Watershed Research Project (SCCWRP) to facilitate and administer an East San Joaquin Surface Water Monitoring Framework Expert Panel Review (ESJ Expert Panel Review).

This informational item will provide an update on implementation of the ESJ Expert Panel Review. In early 2019, SCCWRP formed a Stakeholder Advisory Group to assist with selection of Expert Panel members, refinement of Panel charge questions, and development of agendas for public panel meetings. By mid-2019, a five-member panel was selected from the Advisory Group leading candidates and had committed to participate in the process. In addition, the Panel charge questions were refined, and the first public meeting date was selected. By late 2019, an agenda was developed for the first 3-day public meeting to be held on 7-9 January 2020. SCCWRP also created a project website for the [Expert Review Panel for the East San Joaquin \(ESJ\) Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program](http://www.sccwrp.org/about/research-areas/additional-research-areas/east-san-joaquin-expert-panel/)

(<http://www.sccwrp.org/about/research-areas/additional-research-areas/east-san-joaquin-expert-panel/>).

The first public ESJ Expert Panel public meeting was held on 7-9 January 2020. A full day of stakeholder presentations were provided to the Panel on the first day. A field tour to several ESJ Watershed area monitoring sites was provided on the second day. On the third day, the ESJ Expert Panel met to deliberate and then provided preliminary impressions and answered questions from stakeholders in the late afternoon. Webcasts from the January 7 and 9 public meetings are available on the project website. The ESJ

Expert Panel has selected 28-30 April 2020 for the second public panel meeting. A request for additional presentations and information during the April meeting has been submitted by the Panel to stakeholders. The Panel anticipates they will prepare a draft recommendations report and hold a third public panel meeting by late 2020.

RECOMMENDATION:

Not applicable

REVIEWS:

Management Review:	Sue McConnell
Legal Review:	Jessica Jahr
Date:	20/21 February 2020
Board Meeting Street Address:	11020 Sun Center Drive #200
Board Meeting City, State, Zip:	Rancho Cordova, CA 95670