

ITEM:

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SUBJECT:

Salinity in the Central Valley - Report from Board Members Longley and Odenweller on Salinity Policy Developments, and Consideration of a Resolution Requesting State Water Resources Control Board Support for Planning Efforts

BOARD ACTION:

Consideration of a Resolution.

BACKGROUND:

The State Water Resources Control Board and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board held a joint workshop on 31 January 2006 to receive information on salinity issues in the Central Valley. At the end of the workshop the State Water Board Chair asked the Central Valley Water Board to develop recommendations regarding the process that should be followed to address the issues raised at the workshop.

Salinity is already impacting beneficial uses of Central Valley waters and harming the municipal, industrial and agricultural users of Central Valley water, both within and outside of the Central Valley. The challenge of managing salinity is expected to grow as the population of the valley grows. It is anticipated that a full assessment of the issues will take several years and require an increase in staffing and contract monies. At the very least, it is anticipated that the project will result in amendments to the Region's Water Quality Control Plans, as necessary, to address salinity with a planning horizon of 50 to 200 years.

Regardless of the process followed, there will be a lag time before funding is available for this effort. The proposed resolution requests support and funds from the State Water Board to develop the process that will be followed and to identify the source and amount of funding needed to conduct the full project.

ISSUES:

Should the Central Valley Water Board seek assistance from the State Water Board to obtain resources to work on salinity issues at this time? The proposed resolution requests immediate support and funding for such an effort.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the proposed resolution

Mgmt. Review _____

Legal Review _____

16/17 March 2006 Board Meeting

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