

State of California
Regional Water Quality Control Board
San Diego Region

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
April 9, 2008

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: Resolution to request funding from the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account administered by the State Water Resources Control Board: Sediment contamination and eutrophication in coastal wetlands in the San Diego region. (Tentative Resolution No. R9-2008-0029) (*Lilian Busse*)

PURPOSE: To request funding from the Cleanup and Abatement Account from the State Water Resources Control Board to fund a study on sediment contamination and eutrophication in San Diego coastal wetlands as part of Bight '08.

PUBLIC NOTICE: None required.

DISCUSSION: The Tentative Resolution (No. R9-2008-0029) requests the funding for the proposed project (Supporting Document 1). The project will study the sediment contamination and the eutrophication in coastal wetlands in the San Diego region.

The Southern California Bight includes coastal southern California, the Channel Islands and the Pacific Ocean from Point Conception to San Diego offshore to San Nicolas Island. This region, which includes complex current circulation patterns and is an important marine biological resource area, is impacted by the discharges and activities of millions of people who reside in coastal Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties. The Bight program is a regional assessment of the Southern California Bight organized every 5 years by the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP). SCCWRP has successfully completed three previous Bight surveys from 1994, 1998, and 2003.

In Bight '03, sediment contamination was measured in coastal wetlands, with special focus in the Los Angeles region. Out of all marine habitats, most of the sediment contamination was found in embayment areas. In addition,

marinas and estuaries had the greatest relative contribution of highly toxic sediments out of all marine habitats. Most of the moderate and high disturbance of benthic infauna was observed in embayments. Eutrophication (increased primary production) was not assessed in Bight '03. There is indication that eutrophication is a major problem in coastal wetlands in Southern California.

Based on these results, a special wetlands group was formed for Bight '08 to address eutrophication and sediment contamination in the Southern California Bight with special focus in the San Diego region.

Funding from the Clean Up and Abatement Account will support a study on sediment contamination and eutrophication in coastal wetlands in the San Diego region. Results from this study can be used in different ways to clean up and abate sources of pollutants: (1) Identify coastal wetlands that are impacted; (2) Identify severity of impacts; (3) identify pollutants that cause impacts; (4) Identify sources of pollutants; and (5) Develop tools to clean up and abate sources of pollution (Supporting Document 2).

Ken Schiff, Deputy Director of SCCWRP, supports the proposed project; the funds will support the proposed study that is not funded by the Bight '08 program (Supporting Document 3).

The County of San Diego is participating in Bight '08 and supports the proposed study (Supporting Document 4).

The documents cited in the Tentative Resolution are attached as supporting documents (Supporting Documents 5, 6, and 7).

LEGAL CONCERNS: None

SUPPORTING

DOCUMENTS:

1. Tentative Resolution No. R9-2008-0029.
2. Proposal for the Cleanup and Abatement Funds:
"Sediment contamination and eutrophication in coastal wetlands in the San Diego region."
3. Support letter Ken Schiff, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project
4. Support letter Jo Ann Weber, San Diego County
5. Settlement Agreement and Release
6. Order No R9-2005-0229
7. Letter dated November 3, 2006 to Union Bank of California

RECOMMENDATION(S): Adoption of the Resolution No. R9-2008-0029 is recommended.