

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Santa Ana Region

March 2, 2001

ITEM: 13

SUBJECT: Status Report on the Update of the Water Quality Assessment and Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waterbodies within the Santa Ana Region

DISCUSSION

Section 305(b) of the federal Clean Water Act requires the State to submit to the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) a biennial report on the status of the state's water quality. To prepare the statewide report, each Regional Board completes a regional water quality assessment that becomes a chapter in the statewide report submitted to USEPA.

In addition to Section 305(b) requirements, Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires states to update the list of waterbodies for which water quality standards (beneficial uses and water quality objectives) are not, or are not expected to be, attained with the implementation of technology-based controls. The list includes a description of the pollutants causing impairment and a schedule for developing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for each pollutant. The TMDL is the maximum load of a pollutant that can be discharged and still ensure the attainment of applicable water quality standards. Placing a waterbody on the Section 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies requires the development of a TMDL(s) to address the sources of impairment. Federal TMDL regulations promulgated last year require states to update the Section 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies and submit the list to USEPA by April 1, 2002; therefore, the focus of the upcoming assessment in the next year will be on update of the 303(d) list.

In order to update the 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies, staff is preparing to solicit information from the public on the water quality condition of waterbodies within the region. Staff will then review any information submitted, together with any other information available to staff, in order to develop a proposed (updated) regional 303(d) list for the Board's consideration. The region's 303(d) list will then be transmitted to the State Board for adoption in a statewide 303(d) list that will be submitted to USEPA.

Staff will provide an oral report on the upcoming schedule and activities as well as the process that will be utilized to update the region's 303(d) list of impaired waters.