



California Regional Water Quality Control Board

Santa Ana Region



Linda S. Adams
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

3737 Main Street, Suite 500, Riverside, California 92501-3348
Phone (951) 782-4130 • FAX (951) 781-6288
www.waterboards.ca.gov/santaana

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

NOTICE OF CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

In the Matter of Proposed Amendments to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Santa Ana River Basin (Basin Plan) related to Recreational Standards

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that staff of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region, will hold a CEQA scoping meeting pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21083.9. The scoping meeting will provide participants the opportunity to comment on the appropriate scope and content of the substitute environmental document that will be prepared for the proposed Basin Plan amendments. The substitute environmental document will be prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.5, and the State Water Resources Control Board's regulations related to Certified Regulatory Programs (California Code of Regulations, Title 23, Section 3775 *et seq.*).

The proposed Basin Plan amendments are based on the recommendations of the Storm Water Quality Standards Task Force and include:

- Revision of the REC-1 (water contact recreation) beneficial use definition and applicable bacterial water quality objectives for inland surface waters, based on USEPA national criteria;
- Revision of the REC-2 (non-contact water recreation) bacterial water quality objectives for surface waters based on antidegradation data and analysis;
- Establishment of a narrative objective for pathogenic microorganisms in surface waters designated REC-1 and/or REC-2;
- Establishment of a high flow suspension of REC-1 and REC-2 beneficial uses and bacterial objectives; and
- Re-designation of recreational uses for certain surface waters, pursuant to Use Attainability Analyses.

The purpose of the scoping meeting is to provide a forum for early public consultation regarding the environmental issues that should be considered in the substitute environmental document for these amendments. This consultation will assist the Regional Board in identifying the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant environmental effects to be analyzed prior to the decision-making process.

The scoping meeting will be held at the following time and location:

DATE: January 28, 2010
TIME: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.
LOCATION: Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA), Board Room
11615 Sterling Avenue
Riverside, CA 92503

California Environmental Protection Agency



Any person who is disabled and requires special accommodation to participate in the meeting should contact Jeff Beelher at (951) 354-4239 no later than 10 days before the scheduled meeting.

For additional information, please contact Dave Woelfel at (951) 782-7960 or dwoelfel@waterboards.ca.gov.



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

On January 28, 2010 Board staff presented the CEQA public scoping meeting for the proposed Recreational Standards amendments pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21083.9. The scoping meeting provided participants the opportunity to comment on the appropriate scope and content of the substitute environmental document (SED)¹ that would be prepared for the proposed Basin Plan amendments. Ten individuals attended the meeting. An overview of the amendments was presented by Board staff at the meeting and then there was an opportunity for questions.

One participant at the scoping meeting submitted written questions to Board staff after the meeting. Board staff provided responses and submitted them to the participant on February 4, 2010. The questions and Board staff responses are listed below (as paraphrased):

1) Will there be a loss of recreational opportunities in those waters that are proposed to be reduced from REC1 to REC2 or RECX? If so, what remediation alternatives would be made available to us?

Board Staff response: There will be no loss of recreational opportunities in those waters. As discussed at the scoping meeting, all waters that are proposed to have REC uses de-designed will have a use attainability analysis completed that will show that REC1 and REC2 are not existing uses (i.e., there is currently or potentially no REC1 and or REC2 use). Every triennial review period the de-designated waters will be reevaluated.

2) What is the scientific basis for recommending enterococcus as a bacterial standard for fresh water...considering the present standards are based on the 1986 EPA study?

Board Staff response: Proposed REC standards will be based on *E. coli* not enterococcus and staff are aware of EPA's ongoing work to develop new criteria. The proposed amendments include a recommendation for the addition of a narrative pathogen objective which, in part, anticipates that over time, new analytical procedures for viruses and other pathogens will become available and practicable, and that new criteria/objectives will be developed.

3) Concerning REC2 antidegradation objectives, how are downstream water body beneficial use rights going to be protected?

Board staff response: We propose that as part of the UAA process to consider re-designation to REC 2 only for a specific water body, data be collected and analyses conducted to derive an antidegradation objective for that water body. The intent is to

¹ The substitute environmental document will be prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.5, and the State Water Resources Control Board's regulations related to Certified Regulatory Programs (California Code of Regulations, Title 23, Section 3775 *et seq.*).

assure that there is no lowering of water quality in the re-designated waterbody, thereby satisfying antidegradation requirements.

4) What is the economic impact of permanently removing a potential future recreational water body from public use by reducing the REC 1 bacterial objectives? Are there cost savings?

Board staff response: The re-designations of waters are not necessarily permanent, as indicated at the scoping meeting (i.e., triennial review of de-designated waters).

A change in designation of a water body from REC1 to REC2 or no REC1 and REC2 is likely to result in cost savings in monitoring and the implementation of BMPs. The result is that limited public funds could be focused to give highest priority to the protection of recreational uses and public health where it is most needed.