(5/5/15) Board Meeting
Desalination Amendments
Deadline: 4/9/15 by 12:00 noon

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4-8-15
SWRCB Clerk

The issue of desalination and proposals for new plants, intakes and outfalls will likely increase in California in the decades ahead. Policies set now will no doubt be with us for some years into the future, and I think everyone would agree that they should be informed by the best available science.

One issue that I don't believe has been given adequate consideration is that of the carbon dioxide content of source water for any future desalination plant. While subsurface drilling or slant wells along the shoreline has been generally presumed to be more environmentally friendly than pumping from surface ocean water, from what I can gather, the carbon dioxide content of this subsurface water is substantially higher than that of surface ocean water, which is already in equilibrium with the atmosphere.

It would appear that the cumulative impacts of multiple desalination plants all withdrawing water through slant wells or subsurface waters would produce significantly more carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere than direct ocean withdrawals. There appear to be large enough concerns or uncertainties of the impacts of this recommended intake policy that a thorough review of this issue should be undertaken before making a decision on a final recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration. These opinions do not represent any official University of California position.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Griggs

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Gary Griggs
Distinguished Professor of Earth and Planetary Sciences
Director Institute of Marine Sciences
University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064
(831) 459-5006 - fax (831) 459-4882