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Name Logan Raub

Firm RWQCB

City Palm Desert

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From Steve Bigley

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Per your request

For your information

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Established in 1918 as a public agency
Coachella Valley Water District

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File: 0022.117
0551.1113

January 9, 2009

Logan Raub
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin Region
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, California 92260

Dear Mr. Raub:

**Subject: Proposed Revisions to the 303(d) List of Impaired
Water Bodies in the Colorado River Basin Region**

The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the subject proposed 303(d) List revisions. CVWD provides domestic water, wastewater, recycled water, irrigation/drainage and regional stormwater protection services to a population of 265,000 throughout the Coachella Valley and we recognize the benefits of preparing an accurate 303(d) List so that limited resources can be applied to achieve the greatest benefit for water bodies with impaired beneficial uses.

Please find enclosed comments on the proposed new listings for the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and the Salton Sea. Your consideration of these comments is appreciated.

If you have any questions please contact Steve Bigley, Environmental Services Manager, extension 2286.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Johnson', written over a horizontal line.

Mark Johnson
Director of Engineering

Enclosure/1/as

SB:ch/eng/wr/09/jan/RWQCB Comments

JAN 13 2009

Coachella Valley Water District
Comments on
Revision to Federal Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of
Water Quality Limited Segments for California
January 9, 2009

1. Proposed Listing for the Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel for DDT. The Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control (Regional Board) proposes to list the Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel (CVSC) for DDT based on a single line of evidence consisting of fish tissue test results. Fish tissue samples were collected from the CVSC at a single location near Mecca. DDT was not detected above a water quality objective in water or sediment samples collected from the CVSC.

The staff report lists the "Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel" as the water segment for the proposed DDT listing. This identification fails to specify the correct segment of the CVSC that is proposed to be listed based on available data. Evidence provided for proposed listings for the 2006 303(d) list indicate the fish tissue samples for the CVSC were collected from a station located at the foot of Lincoln Street. The spatial representation for the proposed DDT listing fails to specify the 2 mile water segment of the CVSC from Lincoln Street to the Salton Sea.

The proposed listing is based on the results of tests performed on 12 fish tissue samples. These samples were collected over a 15 year period beginning in 1986 and ending in 2000. The results of tests performed over many years are being combined to support this proposed listing. However, no fish tissue samples have been collected during the past 8 years to evaluate the existing conditions in this water segment. The weight of evidence fails to provide existing water impairments for DDT in this water segment. This water segment was not listed for DDT following reviews performed in 2002, 2004 and 2006 and no new data is available to make a different determination following the 2008 review.

Since the weight of evidence provided in the proposed listing does not represent existing conditions, Regional Board staff should withdraw their recommendation for listing the CVSC as impaired for DDT.

2. Proposed Listing for the CVSC for Dieldrin. The Regional Board proposes to list the CVSC for Dieldrin based on a single line of evidence consisting of fish tissue test results. Fish tissue samples were collected from a single location in the CVSC near Mecca. Dieldrin was not detected above a water quality objective in water or sediment samples collected from the CVSC.

The staff report lists the "Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel" for the water segment for the proposed Dieldrin listing. This identification fails to specify the correct segment of the CVSC that is proposed to be listed based on available data. Evidence provided for proposed listings for the 2006 303(d) list indicate the fish

tissue samples for the CVSC were collected from a station located at the foot of Lincoln Street. The spatial representation for the proposed Dieldrin listing fails to specify the 2 mile water segment of the CVSC from Lincoln Street to the Salton Sea.

The proposed listing is based on the results of tests performed on 6 fish tissue samples when compared to fish consumption guidelines for Dieldrin. Results for tests performed on an additional 6 fish tissue samples were not used because Dieldrin was not detected in these tissue samples. The 6 samples used for this evaluation were collected over a 15 year period beginning in 1986 and ending in 2000. The results of tests performed over many years are being combined to support this proposed listing. However, no fish tissue samples have been collected during the past 8 years to evaluate the existing conditions in this water segment. The weight of evidence fails to provide existing water impairments for Dieldrin in this water segment. This water segment was not listed for Dieldrin following reviews performed in 2002, 2004 and 2006 and no new data is available to make a different determination following the 2008 review.

Since the weight of evidence provided in the proposed listing does not represent existing conditions, Regional Board staff should withdraw their recommendation for listing the CVSC as impaired for Dieldrin.

3. Proposed Listing for the CVSC for PCBs. The Regional Board proposes to list the CVSC for PCBs based on a single line of evidence consisting of fish tissue test results. Fish tissue samples were collected from a single location in the CVSC near Mecca. PCBs were not detected above a water quality objective in water or sediment samples collected from the CVSC.

The staff report lists the "Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel" for the water segment for the proposed PCBs listing. This identification fails to specify the correct segment of the CVSC that is proposed to be listed based on available data. Evidence provided for proposed listings for the 2006 303(d) list indicate the fish tissue samples for the CVSC were collected from a station located at the foot of Lincoln Street. The spatial representation for the proposed PCBs listing fails to specify the 2 mile water segment of the CVSC from Lincoln Street to the Salton Sea.

The proposed listing is based on the results of tests performed on 4 fish tissue samples when compared to fish consumption guidelines for PCBs. Results for tests performed on an additional 8 fish tissue samples were not used because PCBs were not detected in these tissue samples. The 4 samples used for this evaluation were collected over a 15 year period beginning in 1986 and ending in 2000. The results of tests performed over many years are being combined to support this proposed listing. However, no fish tissue samples have been collected during the past 8 years to evaluate the existing conditions in this water segment. The weight of evidence fails to provide existing water impairments for PCBs in this water segment. This water segment was not listed for PCBs following reviews performed in 2002, 2004 and

2006 and no new data is available to make a different determination following the 2008 review.

Since the weight of evidence provided in the proposed listing does not represent existing conditions, Regional Board staff should withdraw their recommendation for listing the CVSC as impaired for PCBs.

4. Proposed Listing for the Salton Sea for Arsenic. The Regional Board proposes to list the Salton Sea for Arsenic based on a single line of evidence consisting of test results from fish tissue samples collected from three locations in the Salton Sea. Arsenic was not detected above a water quality objective in water or sediment samples collected from the Salton Sea.

The proposed listing is based on the results of tests performed on 9 fish tissue samples when compared to fish consumption guidelines for Arsenic. The 9 samples used for this evaluation were collected over a 16 year period beginning in 1985 and ending in 2000. The results of tests performed over many years are being combined to support this proposed listing. However, no fish tissue samples have been collected during the past 8 years to evaluate the existing conditions in this water segment. The weight of evidence fails to provide existing water impairments for Arsenic in the Salton Sea. The Salton Sea was not listed for Arsenic following reviews performed in 2002, 2004 and 2006 and no new data is available to make a different determination following the 2008 review.

The salinity of the Salton Sea is increasing and topped 50 parts per thousand this year. Within the last decade, salinity tolerances of resident marine fish species were surpassed and none are expected to be present in the Salton Sea. Of the fishes sampled by the RWQCB, bairdiella, orangemouth corvina, redbelly tilapia, and sargo are no longer found in the Salton Sea and data from these fishes do not reflect current conditions. Since bioaccumulation of toxins is well known to be highly dependent on salinity and there has been a significant increase in salinity in the Salton Sea since the last fish tissue sample was collected, the weight of evidence fails to provide a representative assessment of existing conditions in the Salton Sea.

Since the weight of evidence provided in the proposed listing does not represent existing conditions, Regional Board staff should withdraw their recommendation for listing the Salton Sea as impaired for Arsenic.

5. Proposed Listing for the Salton Sea for Chlorpyrifos. The Regional Board proposes to list the Salton Sea for Chlorpyrifos based on a single line of evidence consisting of test results from water samples collected from three locations in the Salton Sea. Chlorpyrifos was not detected above a water quality objective in sediment or fish tissue samples collected from the Salton Sea.

The proposed listing for Chlorpyrifos is based on results of tests performed on 22 water samples during the period August 28, 1996 through April 15, 1997. Fifteen of

these samples collected between August 28, 1996, and March 5, 1997, exceeded the California Department of Fish and Game hazardous assessment criteria of 0.02 micrograms per liter for a one-hour average for freshwater aquatic life use protection. Based on this data, Regional Board staff determined that the Warm Freshwater Habitat designation for the Salton Sea is impaired for Chlorpyrifos.

It is inappropriate to apply a freshwater aquatic life criterion to the Salton Sea. From the time the current Salton Sea was formed, natural salts in the Salton sink leached into Colorado River water causing saltwater conditions with salinity levels exceeding the brine standard of 3 parts per thousand in approximately 1903 and exceeding the salinity of common seawater in 1917. In addition, there is no "Warm Freshwater Habitat" beneficial use in the Salton Sea.

Since the Salton Sea is not freshwater and freshwater aquatic life criteria does not apply to the Salton Sea, Regional Board staff should withdraw their recommendation for listing the Salton Sea as impaired for Chlorpyrifos.

6. Proposed Listing for the Salton Sea for DDT. The Regional Board proposes to list the Salton Sea for DDT based on a single line of evidence consisting of test results from fish tissue samples collected from three locations in the Salton Sea. DDT was not detected above a water quality objective in water or sediment samples collected from the Salton Sea.

The proposed listing is based on the results of tests performed on 31 fish tissue samples when compared to fish consumption guidelines for DDT. The 31 samples used for this evaluation were collected over a 20 year period beginning in 1980 and ending in 2000. The results of tests performed over many years are being combined to support this proposed listing. However, no fish tissue samples have been collected during the past 8 years to evaluate the existing conditions in this water segment. The weight of evidence fails to provide existing water impairments for DDT in the Salton Sea.

The salinity of the Salton Sea is increasing and topped 50 parts per thousand this year. Within the last decade, salinity tolerances of resident marine fish species were surpassed and none are expected to be present in the Salton Sea. Of the fishes sampled by the RWQCB, bairdiella, orangemouth corvina, redbelly tilapia, and sargo are no longer found in the Salton Sea and data from these fishes do not reflect current conditions. Since bioaccumulation of toxins is well known to be highly dependent on salinity and there has been a significant increase in salinity in the Salton Sea since the last fish tissue sample was collected, the weight of evidence fails to provide a representative assessment of existing conditions in the Salton Sea.

Since the weight of evidence provided in the proposed listing does not represent existing conditions, Regional Board staff should withdraw their recommendation for listing the Salton Sea as impaired for DDT.

7. Proposed Listing for the Salton Sea for Diazinon. The Regional Board proposes to list the Salton Sea for Diazinon based on a single line of evidence consisting of test results from water samples collected from three locations in the Salton Sea. Diazinon was not detected above a water quality objective in sediment or fish tissue samples collected from the Salton Sea.

The proposed listing is based on results of tests performed on 22 water samples during the period August 28, 1996 through April 15, 1997. Six of these samples collected on October 1, 1996 and October 31, 1996, exceeded the California Department of Fish and Game hazardous assessment criteria of 0.16 micrograms per liter for a one-hour average for freshwater aquatic life use protection. Based on this data, Regional Board staff determined that the Warm Freshwater Habitat designation for the Salton Sea is impaired for Diazinon.

It is inappropriate to apply a freshwater aquatic life criterion to the Salton Sea. From the time the current Salton Sea was formed, natural salts in the Salton sink leached into Colorado River water causing saltwater conditions with salinity levels exceeding the brine standard of 3 parts per thousand in approximately 1903 and exceeding the salinity of common seawater in 1917. In addition, there is no "Warm Freshwater Habitat" beneficial use in the Salton Sea.

Since the Salton Sea is not freshwater and freshwater aquatic life criteria does not apply to the Salton Sea, Regional Board staff should withdraw their recommendation for listing the Salton Sea as impaired for Diazinon.