



**Linda S. Adams**  
Secretary for  
Environmental Protection

# State Water Resources Control Board

## Executive Office

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**Arnold Schwarzenegger**  
Governor

## NOTICE OF WORKSHOP/ CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT SCOPING MEETING

### STATEWIDE GENERAL PERMIT FOR LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION USES OF RECYCLED WATER

Wednesday, June 18, 2008 – 1:30 p.m.  
Coastal Hearing Room  
Joe Serna Jr./Cal-EPA Building  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) staff will hold a workshop/California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping meeting to seek public input regarding the scope and content of a statewide general permit for landscape irrigation uses of recycled water and an associated environmental document. The location and time of the meeting is provided above.

#### **PROJECT TITLE**

Statewide General Permit for Landscape Irrigation Uses of Recycled Water (General Permit)

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

New law, California Water Code section 13552.5<sup>1</sup>, requires the State Water Board to adopt the General Permit by July 31, 2009. The intent of the new law is to develop a uniform interpretation of state standards to ensure the safe, reliable use of recycled water for landscape irrigation uses, consistent with state and federal water quality law. The new law is also intended to expedite permitting for use of recycled water for landscape irrigation.

“Recycled water” is water which, as a result of treatment of waste, is suitable for a direct beneficial use or a controlled use that would not otherwise occur and is therefore considered a valuable resource<sup>2</sup>; “recycled water” and “reclaimed water” have the same meaning.<sup>3</sup> Staff anticipates that the General Permit will be for “recycled water” produced from the treatment of municipal wastewater.

<sup>1</sup> Assembly Bill 1481 (De La Torre, Chapter 535, Statutes of 2007)

<sup>2</sup> California Water Code section 13050(n)

<sup>3</sup> California Water Code section 26

## **MEETING PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION**

State Water Board staff is starting the process of developing and proposing for Board adoption the General Permit. The State Water Board, acting as "lead agency," plans to complete an environmental review process, as required by CEQA<sup>4</sup>, prior to the adoption. The environmental review requires an initial review of the project and its potential environmental effects.

Scoping is helpful to the State Water Board in identifying the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and potential significant environmental effects to be analyzed. Scoping meetings provide participants with a forum for early public input regarding environmental information that the State Water Board should consider.

For the workshop / scoping meeting, staff will provide a description of the General Permit adoption process and its schedule; it will present an overview of the regulatory and technical issues associated with landscape irrigation uses of recycled water; and it will discuss potential elements of the General Permit. Afterward, workshop / scoping meeting participants will have an opportunity to provide comments regarding the appropriate scope and content of the General Permit and the environmental documents to be prepared pursuant to CEQA.

A quorum of State Water Board members may be present at the workshop / scoping meeting. No action, however, will be taken by the State Water Board at the workshop / scoping meeting.

## **WRITTEN COMMENTS**

The State Water Board will accept both written and oral comments on the scope and content of the General Permit and the environmental documents. All written comments must be received by **12 p.m. on June 26, 2008** and should be addressed to:

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control board  
1001 I Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Comment letters may be submitted by email to [commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov) (if less than 15 megabytes in total size) or by fax at (916) 341-5620. For email submittals, please indicate in the subject line: **Comment Letter-Landscape Irrigation General Permit.**"

## **DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY**

A project discussion paper for the workshop / CEQA scoping meeting may be obtained via the Internet on the State Water Board Web site at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/water\\_recycling\\_policy/landscape\\_irrigation\\_general\\_permit.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_recycling_policy/landscape_irrigation_general_permit.shtml)

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<sup>4</sup> Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.

Paper copies of this information are available upon request by writing or calling:

Colleen Ingram, Division of Water Quality  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: (916) 341-5506  
Email: [cingram@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:cingram@waterboards.ca.gov)

Interested parties may subscribe to an email list serve for future notices about the General Permit at: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lyrisforms/swrcb\\_subscribe.html](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lyrisforms/swrcb_subscribe.html); choose Recycled Water Policy/General Permit for Landscape Irrigation.

### **PARKING AND ACCESSIBILITY**

A map and directions to the Joe Serna Jr./Cal-EPA Building in Sacramento can be found at: <http://www.calepa.ca.gov/EPABldg/location.shtml>.

The Joe Serna Jr./Cal-EPA Building is accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who require special accommodations at the Joe Serna Jr./Cal-EPA Building are requested to contact Catherine Foreman, Office of Employee Assistance, at (916) 341-5881.

Due to enhanced security precautions at the Cal-EPA Headquarters Building, all visitors are required to register with security staff prior to attending any meeting. To sign in and receive a visitor's badge, visitors must go to the Visitor and Environmental Services Center, located just inside and to the left of the building's public entrance. Depending on their destination and the building's security level, visitors may be asked to show valid picture identification. Valid picture identification can take the form of a current driver's license, military identification card, or state or federal identification card. Depending on the size and number of meetings scheduled on any given day, the security check-in could take up to fifteen minutes. Please allow adequate time to sign in before being directed to the room.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Please direct questions about this notice to Jarrod Ramsey-Lewis at (916) 341-6984 or [jramsey-lewis@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:jramsey-lewis@waterboards.ca.gov).

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Date                      May 8, 2008

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*Jeanine Townsend*  
Jeanine Townsend  
Clerk to the Board

**PROJECT DISCUSSION PAPER**  
**STATEWIDE GENERAL PERMIT**  
**FOR LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION USES OF RECYCLED WATER**  
**(General Permit)**

**Project Description**

New law, California Water Code section 13552.5<sup>1</sup>, requires the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) to adopt the General Permit by July 31, 2009. The intent of the new law is to develop a uniform interpretation of state standards to ensure the safe, reliable use of recycled water for landscape irrigation uses, consistent with state and federal water quality law. The new law is also intended to expedite permitting for use of recycled water for landscape irrigation.

“Recycled water” is water which, as a result of treatment of waste, is suitable for a direct beneficial use or a controlled use that would not otherwise occur and is therefore considered a valuable resource<sup>2</sup>; “recycled water” and “reclaimed water” have the same meaning.<sup>3</sup> Staff anticipates that the definition of “recycled water” will be limited in the statewide General Permit to water which results from the treatment of municipal wastewater.

State Water Board staff is commencing the development of a statewide General Permit pursuant to the new law. The State Water Board, acting as “lead agency,” plans to complete an environmental review process, required by the California Environmental Quality Act<sup>4</sup>, prior to adopting the General Permit. The environmental review requires an initial review of the project and its potential environmental effects.

**Key Issues and Questions**

State Water Board staff identified the following key issues and questions for public input related to the appropriate scope and content of a statewide General Permit:

- Eligibility Criteria - The new law requires the State Water Board to establish criteria to determine eligibility for coverage under the General Permit.
  - What uses of recycled water should be considered “landscape irrigation” uses?
  - Who should be eligible for coverage under the General Permit? (e.g., producer, distributors, users, etc.)?
  - What are appropriate eligibility “criteria” and why?

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<sup>1</sup> Assembly Bill 1481 (De La Torre, Chapter 535, Statutes of 2007)

<sup>2</sup> California Water Code section 13050 (n)

<sup>3</sup> California Water Code section 26

<sup>4</sup> Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.

- Should certain areas be excluded from eligibility (e.g., wetlands, vulnerable surface waters, or unique public resources such as Lake Tahoe Basin or the California Coastal Zone)?
- Recycled Water Benefits - The Department of Water Resources' *California Water Plan Update 2005* (Water Plan) states that the primary benefit of recycled water is to augment water supply. The Water Plan also identifies the following potential benefits of recycled water use:
  - Provide more reliable local sources of water, nutrients, and organic matter for agricultural soil conditioning, and reduction in fertilizer use.
  - Reduce the discharge of pollutants to water bodies, beyond levels prescribed by regulations, and allow more natural treatment by land application.
  - Provide a more secure water supply during drought periods.
  - Provide economic benefits resulting from a more reliable water supply.
  - Improve groundwater and surface water quality and contribute to wetland and marsh enhancement.
  - Provide energy savings; the use of recycled water as a local source offsets the need for energy-intensive imported water.

What other potential benefits of recycled water used for landscape irrigation should the State Water Board take into consideration?

- Recycled Water Concerns - Recycled water has several characteristics that can create water quality and public health problems if improperly treated, managed, and regulated, including the following:
  - If not fully treated, domestic wastewater may contain pathogens harmful to humans. The potential transmission of disease by pathogenic organisms may be a concern.
  - Recycled water contains a mixture of anthropogenic and naturally occurring salts. These salts are usually concentrated in the soil column as a result of irrigation. The extent to which the salts accumulate in the soil and threaten to degrade beneficial uses of water depends on many factors, including the salinity of the recycled water, irrigation management, and the adequacy of drainage.
  - As a result of domestic, commercial, and industrial uses, waste constituents enter the collection system of wastewater treatment facilities. Although wastewater treatment facilities substantially reduce the concentration and mass of waste constituents, most conventional wastewater treatment plants are not designed to completely remove all wastes, including "emerging contaminants." The fate of untreated waste constituents is variable and in some cases unknown. How should the General Permit address emerging contaminants?
  - Discharges of recycled water, without regard to intent or negligence, not authorized by waste discharge requirements threaten to create a nuisance and in some cases violate provisions of the federal law.

- What considerations should be included in the General Permit regarding application of State Water Board Resolution No. 68-16 (the “anti-degradation” policy)?

What other potential concerns regarding recycled water use for landscape irrigation should the State Water Board consider?

- Agency Coordination

- A 1996 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the State Water Board [on behalf of itself and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH)] regarding the use of recycled water specifies primary areas of responsibility and authority between these agencies. Is the agency coordination strategy identified in the MOA appropriate to ensure adequate coordination of activities among the respective agencies relative to the development of the General Permit?
- How should the State Water Board coordinate the development of the General Permit with other state and federal agencies?
- How should the State Water Board facilitate consultation and consideration of “comments from the Regional Water Boards, groundwater management agencies and water replenishment districts with statutory authority to manage groundwater pursuant to their principal act, and any interested party,” as required by the new law?
- Which recommendations in “Water Recycling 2030” by the Recycled Water Task Force (June 2003) should the General Permit implement and how?

- Existing Recycled Water Use Authorizations –Regional Water Boards currently use a combination of water reclamation requirements, waste discharge requirements, general waste discharge requirements, master reclamation permits<sup>5</sup>, conditional waivers, and other regulatory tools to authorize landscape irrigation uses of recycled water.

- How should the General Permit address persons currently subject to the various Regional Water Board authorizations for “landscape irrigation uses” of recycled water?
- What is an appropriate way for the General Permit to interface with existing and future master reclamation permits?

- Fees – The new law requires the State Water Board to establish a reasonable schedule of fees to reimburse the costs incurred to implement, develop, and administer the General Permit and other requirements in the new law.

- What is a “reasonable schedule of fees” to satisfy the new law?

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<sup>5</sup> California Water Code section 13523.1

## More information

- **Web Page:** [Statewide General Permit for Landscape Irrigation Uses of Recycled Water](#)
- **Web Page:** [Development Of A Statewide Policy For Water Recycling](#)