

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – DIVISION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
February 17, 2009**

ITEM X

SUBJECT

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO ALLOCATE \$ ---- MILLION FROM THE CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ACCOUNT (CAA) TO THE CENTRAL VALLEY REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD (CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD) IN SUPPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SALINITY AND NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

DISCUSSION

The Central Valley Regional Water Board requests funding of \$ 1.2 million to support Year one work in the development of a salinity and nutrient management plan for the Central Valley with continued funding for years two and three.

In 2006, the State Water Board and the Central Valley Regional Water Board (Regional Water Board) held a joint workshop on salinity in the Central Valley. This led to the development of a Central Valley Salinity Policy Group and associated committees that are assisting in the preparation of a salinity and nutrient management plan (Management Plan), which will address both salt and nitrate. This Management Plan will be incorporated into and implemented through the Water Quality Control Plans for the Delta and the Central Valley. This effort will result in amendments to the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basin Plan, the Tulare Lake Basin Plan and the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary.

Salinity is likely the largest long-term chronic water quality impairment to surface and groundwater in the Central Valley. Salinity and nitrate from current and legacy sources impair multiple beneficial uses of waters throughout the basin and has resulted in pollution of drinking water sources for some communities in the Central Valley. While the Regional Water Board has established regulatory controls to manage and control salinity through its various regulatory actions, the Board recognized that a much more comprehensive approach was needed to develop the Basin Plan amendments and that this effort must involve the multiple stakeholders that use Central Valley waters. To focus this effort, the Salinity Policy Group found the greatest immediate need was the development of a comprehensive work plan that outlines the necessary steps and timeline to assure the completion of the Management Plan. The collective effort to develop the Management Plan has been termed the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability Initiative (CV-SALTS Initiative). The attached Draft

Comprehensive Workplan Outline was developed by the Technical/Economic and Executive Committees of the CV-SALTS Initiative and provides all activities and the primary projects to complete the plan. Critically important for this is the development of appropriate and applicable uses and objectives for the numerous surface and ground water bodies throughout the entire Central Valley. Given the size and complexity of the Central Valley Board there are many waterbodies that have limited or no data that can be used to establish this information. To address this concern the Salinity and Nutrient Management Plan Work Plan has identified the projects described below as critical components for the successful completion of the basin plan amendments. Projects for funding years one through three are described below:

Salinity and Nutrient Management Regional Work Plan

The CV-SALTS Initiative Salinity and Nutrient Management Work Plan (Work Plan) defines the core of work required for development of a Central Valley Salt Management Plan. The Work Plan defines the technical and policy tasks and elements to be conducted to ensure protection of beneficial uses through objective setting based on surface and groundwater quality and integrated stakeholder implementation planning. Work Plan efforts include the identification and documentation of protocols and processes for all tasks required to develop a Salinity and Nutrient Management Plan. Projects are identified for three funding years with partially funding from the CAA, this effort will proceed with funding from the stakeholders through the Central Valley Salinity Coalition. The first critically important project identified in the Work Plan is Salinity and Nitrate Objective and Beneficial Use Study. This project involves the establishment of a process model developed through the use of existing, reliable and usable data from areas and water bodies within the Central Valley that can then be used to establish beneficial uses and objectives for areas where little or no data exists.

Salinity and Nitrate Objective and Beneficial Use Study Project - Funding Year 1

The following describes the work to be done as part of the Salinity and Nitrate Objective and Beneficial Use Study project:

1. Establish a project work plan in accordance with program work plan outline.
2. Collect salinity and nitrate water quality data, land and site characteristics, waterbody characteristics and other key information from all available sources throughout the Central Valley,
3. Analyze and evaluate the known data to establish appropriate beneficial uses and salinity and nitrate objectives for protection for waterbodies with existing data,
4. Using the data and characteristics of known sites, develop a decision matrix protocol and process that can be used as a model to establish beneficial uses and preliminary objectives.

Deliverable - final report and data attachments supporting establishment of beneficial uses and preliminary objectives acceptable for protection of beneficial uses in known areas and a model to be used for establishment of uses and objectives throughout the region with limited or no data.

Project Timeline: 18 months

Total Cost of Project Estimated Between: \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000

Requested Funding Year 1 amount from CAA Fund: \$1,200,000

Collaborative Surface and Groundwater Data Collection/Analysis Project - Funding Year 2

The following describes the work to be done as part of the Collaborative Surface and Groundwater Data Collection Project:

1. Establish a project work plan in accordance with program work plan outline.
2. Develop standardized methods for aggregation and collection of salinity and nitrate water quality and related data in surface and groundwater, expanding these standards across the Central Valley to fill all data gaps,
3. Aggregate all data from the region and analyze and evaluate, perform analysis to update beneficial uses if necessary and establish salinity and nitrate objectives for protection of all waterbodies of the region.
4. Using the decision matrix protocol and process developed in the prior project establish proposed objectives based on the new data for implementation planning.

Deliverable - Final report and data attachments supporting establishment of proposed objectives for surface and groundwater for all areas in the Central Valley Region.

Project Timeline: 18-24 months

Total Cost of Project Estimated Between: \$3,000,000 to \$5,000,000

Requested Funding Year 2 amount from CAA Fund: \$2,000,000

Limit Implementation Planning and Analysis Project - Funding Year 3

The following describes the work to be done as part of the Limit Implementation Planning and Analysis Project:

1. Establish a project work plan in accordance with program work plan outline.
2. Based on the proposed objectives, establish limits for all activities and discharges to attain long term salt balance sustainability for the region,
3. Develop implementation projects, programs and regulations and schedule with stakeholders to achieve all objectives in a timely manner
4. Evaluate implementation alternatives to be able to complete any environmental documentation required.

Deliverable - final report and data attachments documenting the project, program and limits that will be implemented to meet objectives and protect beneficial uses and the alternatives and schedule to comply with process and environmental review documents.

Project Timeline: 18-24 months

Total Cost of Project Estimated Between: \$3,000,000 to \$5,000,000

Requested Funding Year 3 amount from CAA Fund: \$1,800,000

POLICY ISSUE

Should the State Water Board:

1. Approve of \$ 1.2 million, from the CAA to the Central Valley Water Board to conduct work in support of the development of a salinity and nutrient management plan?
2. Approve of \$ 2.0 million for year 2 and \$1.8 million for year 3, from the CAA to the Central Valley Water Board to conduct work in support of the development of a salinity and nutrient management plan provided funding is available from that account?

FISCAL IMPACT

As of **-date-**, the latest data available, the uncommitted CAA balance is estimated to be no less than **\$-----**.

REGIONAL WATER BOARD IMPACT

Yes, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the State Water Board approve \$ 1.2 million for year 1 and \$3.8 million in years 2 and 3 from the CAA to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board in support of project for the development of a salinity and nutrient management plan.

Policy Review _____

Fiscal Review _____

Legal Review _____

Exec Review _____