

ITEM: 8

SUBJECT: NPDES Discharge to High Quality Waters

BOARD ACTION: *Informational Item*

BACKGROUND: The Central Valley produces more than 50 percent of the state's total water supply, which provides drinking water for 25 million Californians, and irrigation for millions of acres of farms in and out of the Valley. The Valley also provides habitat to 60 percent of the migratory waterfowl along the Pacific Flyway and refuge for over 100 endangered or threatened species. Much of the waters of the Region are high quality waters that are better quality than necessary to support the designated beneficial uses. Some of these waters receive treated waste discharges from point sources, which are subject to regulation by the Central Valley Water Board. Current implementation procedures consistent with State law allow limited degradation as long as the quality of these receiving waters is protected to support the designated uses. However, consistent with anti-degradation policies, the Basin Plan notes that in cases where the background water quality is higher quality than the water quality objectives, the Board may choose to impose limits that are more stringent than the water quality objectives.

The Central Valley Water Board has options in regulating discharges to waters of the Region that are high quality aquatic environments and high quality source water for much of the State. Staff will present information about factors that the Board might choose to consider in making determinations about effluent limits for discharges to high quality waters.

RECOMMENDATION: This is an information item for Board discussion and provides the opportunity for Board members to have input to staff on this issue.

Mgmt. Review\_\_\_\_\_

Legal Review\_\_\_\_\_

2 February 2012  
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