



Media Release

State Water Board Approves Strategy for Water Quality Restoration at Los Angeles and Long Beach Ports *Plan Aims to Protect Fish Caught for Human Consumption*

**For Immediate Release:
February 7, 2011**

**Contact: Sam Unger
(213) 576-6600**

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) has approved a water quality restoration strategy for the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to address a variety of toxic chemicals that can harm human health and aquatic life.

After a lengthy public process, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Los Angeles Water Board) adopted a water quality restoration strategy, known as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), for metals, DDT, PCB, PAHs and other pollutants for the Dominguez Channel and the waters of the Port of Los Angeles and Port of Long Beach in southern Los Angeles County in May 2011. The State Water Board's action on Tuesday sets the stage for final approval of the plan by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"Our goal all along has been to work with the municipalities, the Ports, the environmental community and the industrial and commercial traffic that uses these waterways," said Los Angeles Water Board Chair Maria Mehranian, following the State Water Board's approval. "The Los Angeles-Long Beach Port complex is the busiest harbor in the United States and one of the largest in the world. The strategy will bring about sediments that support healthy sediment-dwelling organisms and fish that are safe to eat."

"We are pleased the state board affirmed our plan that presents a flexible approach and reasonable timeframe to restore safe fishing and protection of our inland and coastal waters in the region," Mehranian added.

This strategy addresses more than 70 water quality impairments resulting from high concentrations of pollutants in water, sediment and fish in the Dominguez Channel and the harbors, the largest number of pollutants addressed by a single TMDL in California.

This strategy will be used by municipalities, agencies and the ports to plan the necessary work to reduce pollution to the Dominguez Channel and waters in the Ports and to address contaminated sediments over the course of a 20-year implementation timeframe. The strategy has been developed to achieve water quality while affording flexibility in methods to achieve the goals and flexibility in demonstrating compliance.



The TMDL fully complies with the State Water Board's established water quality policy and risk management approach that sets objectives for sediment to ensure that organisms living in the sediment are exposed to less contaminants over time. This will have a direct effect on the levels of contamination in fish, including those caught for human consumption. Regular testing and monitoring will be required.

Specific fish tissue levels have been set to protect human health and are based on fish consumption guidelines set by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment.

The TMDL will not require dredging of the entire Harbors. The TMDL is focused on toxic "hot spots." The distribution of chemicals such as DDT and PCB in the harbor sediments is highly variable – in many areas it already meets the sediment standards. The Los Angeles Water Board and the Ports have identified several foreseeable options remediating contaminated sediment, including hotspot removal, capping, and continued monitored natural attenuation.

Cities that directly discharge storm water into the waters of these two ports will be required to comply with the strategy to ensure they are not contributing to the existing contamination.

The Los Angeles Water Board will reconsider the TMDL in light of special studies that might shed additional light on how contamination enters the food chain, to ensure that best scientific approaches are used to correctly gauge the risk contaminants pose to humans who consume fish and other organisms in the port waters.

A TMDL may be reconsidered at any time, but the Los Angeles Water Board has committed to reconsider the TMDL at least once at the 6th year of implementation.

For more information on this Water Board action, please visit the links below:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_info/agendas/2012/feb/020712_7_with%20draft%20resolution.pdf

To learn more about the Los Angeles Regional Water Board, please visit:

<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/>