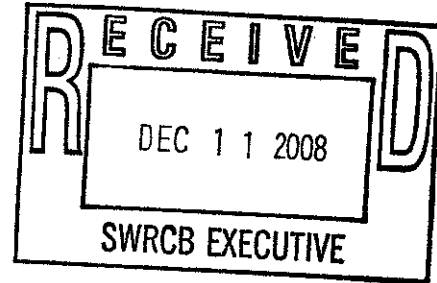




Jeanine Townsend
Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814



RE: Anti-Degradation Policy

Dear Ms. Townsend:

The California League of Food Processors (CLFP) is a statewide trade association that represents food processing companies with facilities in California. Many of these processing plants have been issued Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) by one of the state's local Regional Water Quality Control Boards. A number of processors send some, or all, of their wastewater to public facilities for treatment and eventual discharge to surface water. So, most food processors would be directly or indirectly affected by any substantive changes that might be made in the State Water Board's Anti-Degradation Policy (Resolution 68-16). CLFP's comments with respect to this proceeding will focus on groundwater discharges.

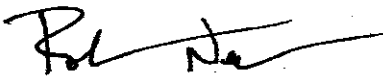
CLFP has reviewed the Anti-Degradation Policy and how it has been implemented by the Regional Water Boards with respect to groundwater discharges. The Policy provides only very general guidance to the Regional Boards and their staff, but to some extent this lack of specificity is necessary to afford the latitude necessary to properly address the wide array of local conditions and discharges across the State. CLFP expects that the Regional Boards strive to ensure that all of the permits that they issue are consistent with the letter and spirit of Resolution 68-16, and reporting and enforcement activities ensure that permit holders abide by their WDR conditions.

The application of the Anti-Degradation Policy, like most any public policy, is not perfect. Individual cases can certainly be found where significant degradation of local groundwater has occurred, or specific permits issued by a Regional Board that may seem inconsistent with the Policy. Reasonable and consistent application of the Policy within, and across, regions may be an issue that warrants enhanced staff training and supervision and increased coordination between the State and Regional Water Boards. Despite these issues, CLFP believes that, on balance, the policy has promoted the protection of groundwater across the state.

CLFP is concerned that a wholesale revision of the Policy to include items such as strict numeric standards, more narrow consideration of economic issues, unrealistic expectations as to what constitutes best available control technology for specific applications, and protracted rulemaking proceedings may effectively result in a Zero-Degradation Policy. This would not be a practical or desirable outcome. CLFP would also like to note that it is not clear how the State Water Board would reconcile enacting more restrictive anti-degradation standards with its current important effort to encourage water reuse. CLFP suggests that rather than developing an entirely new regulatory framework to deal with any perceived deficiencies, that the State Water Board improve the application of the existing policy by ensuring uniform use of sound technical and economic analysis during the development or review of individual WDR's.

CLFP does not support significant revision to the State's Anti-Degradation Policy at this time due to the concerns expressed. If you have any questions regarding this letter or CLFP's views on this subject please contact me.

Sincerely,



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