

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: Selenium Control Program – *Information report*

BOARD ACTION: This is an information item.

BACKGROUND: The purpose of the Grassland Bypass Project is to manage agricultural drainage generated in the Grassland drainage basin by controlling the concentration and loads of water-borne pollutants leaving the basin. Drainage is diverted to a single discharge point – the Grassland Bypass. Due to the Project's proximity to wetland wildlife areas, the major pollutant of concern is selenium, although salt, boron and molybdenum are also concerns.

In 1996, the Grassland Area Farmers, a group of water and drainage management authorities within the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA), began operating the Grassland Bypass Project (GBP) under a Use Agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR). The Use Agreement allows them to discharge agricultural drainage through the Grassland Bypass to a section of the San Luis Drain, which subsequently discharges to Mud Slough and the San Joaquin River. The GBP has been operating under Waste Discharge Requirements since 1998. This is a program review as required by the Basin Plan.

ISSUES: The *Water Quality Control Plan for the San Joaquin River and Sacramento River Basins, 4th edition* (Basin Plan) includes a selenium objective for Mud Slough and a prohibition on the discharge of agricultural subsurface drainage water after 1 October 2010 unless the water quality objectives for selenium are being met. The Dischargers have made significant progress towards this goal but have been unable to complete the drainage projects that would enable them to eliminate discharges from the project area entirely.

The San Luis Delta Mendota Water Authority was recently awarded a \$25,000,000 grant to implement much of the Westside Regional Drainage Plan. Implementation of the Westside Regional Drainage Plan will enable the dischargers to comply with the objective, but individual drainage implementation projects may not be installed and operational by October 2010.

The Grassland Area Farmers are requesting that the Board consider amending the Basin Plan to extend the compliance schedule for meeting the selenium objective.

Mgmt. Review _____
Legal Review _____

13/14 September 2007 Regional Water Board Meeting

City of Clovis Council Chambers
1033 Fifth Street
Clovis, CA 93612