

Priority Issues for the Advisory Committee

The following list of issues have been identified as high priority concerns by the Sediment Quality Advisory Committee to the SWRCB's effort to develop Sediment Quality Objectives for California bays and estuaries. These concerns have arisen during earlier meetings of the committee and are listed here to ensure that these issues are captured and addressed. The concerns are described only briefly here. A more detailed account of each concern can be found in the meeting summaries.

1. Spatial boundary conditions

The spatial extent of the habitat(s) for which objectives will be developed is not yet defined precisely. Concerns include:

- a) Will the objectives apply to the entire area described in law and included in the formal definition of "bay" and "estuary"?
- b) What criteria will be used to establish the area(s) to which the objectives apply?

2. Beneficial Uses

The objectives will establish criteria for determining whether beneficial uses are being protected. Concerns include:

- a) What specific beneficial uses will be addressed?
- b) How will protection and/or degradation of beneficial uses be determined?

3. Scope of the objectives

The SWRCB has stated its intent to focus on benthic infauna as the primary indicator for the objectives. Concerns include:

- a) Will the objectives include bioaccumulation in aquatic organisms?
- b) Will the objectives address human health issues?

4. Relationship to other regulatory regimes

Many aspects of conditions in bays and estuaries now fall under other regulatory regimes.

Concerns include:

- a) What will be the relationship to TMDL processes?
- b) What will be the relationship to stormwater management programs and their responsibility to identify and reduce upstream sources?
- c) What will be the relationship to other NPDES permit processes?

5. Content and application of the objectives

The SWRCB has described the objectives as including chemistry, toxicity, and benthic infauna data. Concerns include:

- a) How will these be combined into a coherent set of objectives?
- b) What chemical constituents will be included?
- c) What will be the relationship between numeric and narrative criteria?
- d) Will the objectives be site-specific or more general?

5. Narrative versus Numeric Objectives

The SWRCB is proposing development of both numeric and narrative objectives.

- a) What are the working definitions of the terms numeric and narrative objectives?