

Issue 4: Desalination Facilities and Brine Disposal, Water Recycling

Commenter	Comment	Staff Response
<p>Association of California Water Agencies</p> <p>Avista Technologies Inc.</p> <p>CalDeseal</p> <p>City of Santa Cruz Water Department</p> <p>Dietrich Consulting Group, LLC</p> <p>Marina Coast Water District</p> <p>Mesa Consolidated Water District</p> <p>Municipal Water District of Orange County</p> <p>R.W. Beck, Inc.</p> <p>San Diego County Water Authority</p> <p>Toray Membrane USA Inc.</p>	<p>Consider Alternative #1: No Action. Brine WQ objectives are not necessary, as the NPDES permits required for brine discharges are already protective of the environment. It is not appropriate to have a statewide percent of natural background, as suggested in Alternative #2, and Alternative #3 is not feasible. The Ocean Plan already offers good methods of protection by allowing for site specific permits and the NPDES permits and acute and chronic toxicity protects the marine species</p>	<p>Staff is required to consider all alternatives, including "no action". This option was presented in the 2007 scoping document for the purpose of guidance for discussion and will also be included in the Substitute Environmental Document (SED). However, it is unlikely that staff will recommend "no action" due to the numerous requests by the public to address this issue, and Staff's judgment that brine discharges and desalination intakes are important issues to address.</p>
<p>California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA, Tri-TAC)</p>	<p>Should require WQ testing at end of ocean outfall rather than at multiple input points along the outfall. Desalination facilities should not be under the same regulations as industrial facilities, since they are more appropriately categorized as municipal water supply facilities. The State should undertake a separate policy initiative to address brine discharges from wastewater recycling. The Ocean Plan should be amended to encourage water recycling, and proper brine discharge by allowing brines to be discharged to the ocean without the construction of new outfalls for this purpose - the issues need to be addressed either directly through the Ocean Plan, through the adoption of a new policy, or by amending the existing Water Recycling Policy.</p>	<p>Staff is currently working on an amendment to the Ocean Plan to address salinity objectives, brine discharges and intakes, and will consider these and other issues in preparing draft amendments. The State Board already encourages and requires water recycling as stated in the Water Recycling Policy, and amendments to the Ocean plan must be consistent with the Water Recycling Policy.</p>
<p>General Public/ Joseph Rizzi</p>	<p>The State (and Federal governments) need to support natural desalination.</p>	<p>The Ocean Plan is a water quality control plan and does not promote specific industries.</p>

California WaterReuse	Impairing the discharge of brine will negatively impact existing and planned recycled water projects. The Ocean Plan already includes adequate provisions to protect beneficial uses from adverse effects of brine discharge. A "one-size-fits-all" state-wide approach to fit all coastal environments would not recognize the range of natural background levels. Acute and chronic toxicity standards already allow the regional boards to successfully develop permits for brine discharge.	Staff does not intend to prohibit brine discharges, and in fact water recycling is required by the State Board. However the Ocean Plan does not have an objective for elevated salinity, and staff maintains that a narrative objective for salinity is needed for the protection of beneficial uses. Narrative objectives in the Ocean Plan may be designed to account for environmental conditions that occur naturally.
Poseidon Resources	Suggests alternative #1 (from the 2007 Scoping Document), that no action be taken on the amendment.	The No Action alternative will be included as an option for Board consideration in the Substitute Environmental Document when that is released; however it is unlikely that staff will recommend that alternative.
Poseidon Resources	A statewide narrative or numeric water quality objective for salinity would not be able to address site-specific considerations. The State Water Board should provide guidance to the Regional Boards for establishing salinity limits based on project and site-specific conditions.	Narrative objectives in the Ocean Plan are designed to account for environmental conditions. For example the pH and dissolved oxygen narrative objectives are both relative to conditions that occur naturally ("The dissolved oxygen concentration shall not at any time be depressed more than 10 percent from that which occurs naturally, as the result of the discharge of oxygen demanding waste* materials." and "The pH shall not be changed at any time more than 0.2 units from that which occurs naturally.") Any narrative objective that staff would propose for elevated salinity would be similarly phrased, and that would be relative to the salinity level that occurs naturally in the vicinity of the discharge. With regard to site-specific objectives, there are already existing provisions under the Clean Water Act. Training has been provided, and regional boards have adopted site specific objectives in certain water bodies of the state. However site-specific objectives are typically relevant to numeric objectives rather than the kind of narrative objective we are considering for elevated salinity.

West Basin Municipal Water District	Amendment for salinity objectives/desalination should be developed along with a broader policy supporting desalination and water recycling. An artificial standard, such as percent deviation from natural background salinity, should not be added as a water quality objective. The state should undertake a separate policy initiative to address brine discharges from desalination and water recycling, instead of creating a patchwork of regulatory approaches in state planning documents. In the absence of a separate policy, the Ocean Plan should be amended to encourage water recycling, and create a place to bring brines to the ocean.	The State Board already encourages and requires water recycling as stated in the Water Recycling Policy, and amendments to the Ocean plan must be consistent with the Water Recycling Policy. The Ocean Plan does not currently have an objective for elevated salinity, and staff maintains that a narrative objective for salinity is needed for the protection of beneficial uses. Narrative objectives in the Ocean Plan may be designed to account for environmental conditions that occur naturally.
South Orange County Wastewater Authority South Coast Water District	<p>"The Ocean Plan should be clear in preventing situations where individual Regional Boards imposes effluent limitations on individual facilities that produce potable or recycled quality water from brackish and/or degraded groundwater" and the costs of development of water supply project should be kept "within the reach of Californians" by allowing brine to be discharged through a common ocean outfall (which the Ocean Plan does not currently restrict as long as the discharge meets Ocean Plan Standards).</p> <p>California's policy on brine discharges should adequately protect "the environment while providing agencies with certainty that they wastewater recycling and brackish groundwater treatment facilities can be permitted in a fair and predictable manner"; "The Ocean Plan must set a statewide standard that is consistent through the State and in accord with State policy requiring the development and use of local water sources."</p>	The Ocean Plan is a statewide water quality control plan that <u>does</u> provide consistent standards throughout all of the State's near coastal ocean waters, regardless of Region. Amendments to the Ocean Plan to address brine discharges will provide statewide consistency.
California Coastkeeper Alliance, Center for Biological Diversity	Would like a chance for further comment on this issue.	Staff will prepare a Draft Substitute Environmental Document (SED), which will be open for public comment and presented to the Board.