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California Environmental Protection Agency
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NEWS RELEASE



Gray Davis
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STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS JOIN FORCES TO BATTLE POLLUTED RUNOFF AND PROTECT STATE WATERS, BEACHES

Governor Davis' Funding Commitment Enables Clean-Up of State's Waterways

SANTA MONICA – The State and Federal government today announced a joint effort aimed at tackling one of California's most critical environmental problems: polluted runoff. Polluted runoff, also known as "nonpoint source," refers to a variety of runoffs from widespread urban, agriculture and development sources that contribute to pollution of the state's waterways and beaches.

"This plan represents an important step forward in California's ongoing efforts to protect its environment and natural resources," said Governor Gray Davis. "This is a tough, but balanced approach that will tackle the state's most serious pollution problem and help us achieve cleaner lakes, rivers and beaches."

California is unique in that it is the first state in the nation to combine both inland and coastal runoff sources in a single unified plan. Governor Davis' insistence on broad-based cross-cutting efforts to solve the state's environmental problems brought together the Coastal Commission and the State Water Resources Control Board to work on that plan. That unprecedented collaboration that cleared a bureaucratic logjam that had stymied the creation of a joint inland/coastal runoff program for years.

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Since taking office, the Governor has made the protection of California's environment a top priority of his administration, and the runoff pollution program is another in a series of specific commitments the Governor has made to clean up the state's waterways and beaches.

Last year, Governor Davis supported Propositions 12 and 13 (The 2000 Parks and Water Bonds.) The two bonds can now provide \$300 million to fund the runoff control program. Over the past two years Governor Davis' budgets have funded 31 new staff positions and provided an additional \$4.7 million in support to the Coastal Commission to help enforce environmental regulations. \$10 million was included in this year's budget to battle seashore erosion. Governor Davis also tripled the funding for ocean and coastal research by providing \$1 million for the SeaGrant Program. The Governor has also authorized an additional \$5 million in the state budget for technical resources and staffing specifically to combat polluted runoff.

"This joint program is an example of the way the Governor wants to see environmental policy work," said Mary Nichols, secretary of the California Resources Agency, which oversees protection of coastal beaches through the agency's California Coastal Commission. "Now, it's up to all of us to work together to clean up the state's waterways and beaches."

The approval of the State's plan by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration also triggers \$10.5 million in federal funds for the State of California to kick-start the ambitious proposal. An additional \$10 million in federal grant money will be provided yearly for Program support.

"Nonpoint source pollution is the leading cause of water quality degradation in both California and the nation," said Winston Hickox, secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency. "Over the last year, the problem has been particularly daunting for coastal communities, which have had to close popular beaches due to pollutants that come from inland water sources." Hickox's State Water Board, which regulates water quality in the state, has

compiled data that highlight the problem in coastal communities: 655 posted health warnings and 100 beach closures over the last year.

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Of particular note has been the collaborative and positive input from a broad spectrum of business and environmental interests. The interested parties in support of the Program include the Natural Resources Defense Council; the Surfrider Foundation; the Center for Marine Conservation; the Sierra Club; Chevron; and Southern California Edison.

Said Cal/EPA's Hickox: "As we enter the new millennium, we now face an enormous task to balance our tremendous and prosperous growth with very thoughtful environmental protection measures. The federal government has joined forces with our state in close partnership to curb releases into our lakes, rivers and coastal waters. We also plan to work very closely with our cities and business and agriculture leaders to aid them in this critical fight."

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[see Attached Addendum: "The Program"]

Addendum: Non-Point Source Program Description

The new Program directs more than 20 state agencies and departments to initiate more than 60 comprehensive measures to combat polluted runoff. It will serve as the blueprint for the war against polluted runoff.

At the helm of the Program implementation are the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Resources Agency, which together manage the regulatory activities of numerous boards, offices and departments that protect public health and the environment.

Supporting this mission is the United States Environmental Protection Agency, which oversees pollution control measures nationwide, and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, which regulates activities that may affect U.S. oceans.

Unlike pollution from distinct, identifiable point sources such as factories or wastewater treatment plant discharges, nonpoint source pollution comes from many different places. They include soil erosion and runoff from timber and construction activities; marine discharges from boating activities; pesticide and agricultural runoff from farmlands; and stormwater runoff from cities.

Preventive measures include: erosion and sediment control, nutrient, pesticide and grazing management on agricultural lands; harvest planning, revegetation of disturbed areas and streamside management, road management, timber harvesting and replanting measures in forest

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areas; runoff controls for existing development, construction sites and transportation corridors in urban areas; siting, design, operation and maintenance procedures for marinas; erosion and sediment control for dams, stream banks and shorelines; and wetland protection and restoration.

In addition, the Program calls for the California Environmental Protection Agency and California Resources Agency to aid cities and towns to lessen pollution discharges into storm drains, which feed directly into bays and the ocean. Pollution in urban areas come from a variety of sources: pesticide and fertilizer residues from lawn watering; soap residues from car washing; oil wastes and litter from city streets and parking lots; wastewater overflows from treatment plants after heavy rains; and from raw sewage spills.

The Program will aid these municipalities through a number of urban management measures, including citizen education, runoff control for existing development, construction sites and transportation corridors; and on-site disposal system development and implementation.

The Program features a three-tiered implementation process:

- The first tier will promote self-directed measures of all Californians to implement polluted runoff control measures. An extensive public outreach and education program will supplement these for the public and key stakeholders. Technical assistance and grants will promote the development and use of these measures in fighting the problem.

- The second tier will create a regulatory structure to encourage the use of commonly used pollution control measures. This will involve a collaborative effort of all involved agencies to

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implement, monitor and report on the program's effectiveness.

- The third tier will use effluent limitations and enforcement actions as a means to ensure that management practices are implemented. This will again be a collaborative effort between the federal and state government.

To ensure its success, the state Program will be monitored yearly, and will include five-year milestones to gauge its success. These reports will be shared with the Governor's Office, the federal government, the State Legislature, key stakeholders and the general public. All groups will have a voice in helping to refine the Program, as needed.

The Program is effective immediately. Beginning this fall, a special interagency task force will meet to kick-start the efforts. Other milestones include submittal of a surface water quality monitoring program for all state waters, and development of educational and enforcement mechanisms early next year to serve as guidelines for Program implementation. All state agencies are required to fully implement all 61 management measures by 2013, according to the Program, which will be in place indefinitely.

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