



Media Release

State Water Board Approves Revised Plan to Restore Marina del Rey Harbor

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The State Water Resources Control Board today approved an amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region designed as a preliminary step to achieve water quality standards for a number of toxic pollutants in Marina del Rey Harbor.

The amendment, developed by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, is based on new data and information, including a statewide study showing that Marina del Rey Harbor has the worst copper pollution of any marina in California, with serious toxic effects on the harbor's marine life. The amendment addresses pollution of both the harbor water and sediment, and considers all pollution sources, including stormwater, historic activities, and boating-related sources.

The amendment sets allowable thresholds, called a Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL, for seven toxic pollutants and requires reductions to meet the thresholds. The pollutants include three metals (lead, zinc and copper) and two pesticides (chlordane and DDT) as well as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a synthetic organic chemical historically used as a coolant, among other applications. These pollutants are toxic to marine life and birds. Several of them are carcinogens that impact humans who consume contaminated fish.

Copper damages gills and the nervous system of fish and causes death in smaller marine animals. Local tests conducted in Marina del Rey show that the harbor water is toxic to mussels that live there and that copper is the most likely cause of toxicity. These toxic impacts to smaller animals at the bottom of the food chain affect other species in the harbor and in the adjacent ocean.

"Marina del Rey is the world's largest man-made small craft harbor, and is used by boaters, anglers, swimmers, paddle boarders and bird watchers," said Felicia Marcus, Chair of the State Water Board. "This amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan is an important step to help improve the water quality in the harbor so that aquatic life is protected and the public can continue to enjoy those activities."

The major source of dissolved copper pollution to the harbor water is copper-based antifouling paint applied to boat hulls to slow the growth of organisms that attach to the hulls. The TMDL requires the County of Los Angeles, boat owners, and the individual anchorages to address this source of copper pollution over the next 10 years. The TMDL's approach to addressing pollution from copper-based hull





paint mirrors similar regulations established for Shelter Island in San Diego and Newport Bay in Orange County.

The Los Angeles Water Board has worked with boat owners, lessees, local boatyards, Los Angeles County, surrounding municipalities and other stakeholders to identify the Total Maximum Daily Load necessary to tackle the long standing pollution problems in the harbor by equitably allocating reductions in all pollution sources and providing a reasonable time period to achieve the reductions.

The implementation schedule allows time to complete site-specific studies to modify, if appropriate, the copper threshold that is necessary to support the recreational and aquatic life uses of the harbor. It also provides time to develop and carry out programs to support implementation of best management practices for hull painting and conversion to non-toxic hull paints by boaters.

A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is a regulatory term in the U.S. Clean Water Act, describing a value of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a body of water can receive while still meeting water quality standards. Essentially once a TMDL has been established, an implementation plan to meet a TMDL then follows.

For more information on this issue, visit:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/board_decisions/basin_plan_amendments/technical_documents/bpa_96_R14-004_td.shtml