

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION**

RESOLUTION NO. R7- 2010- 0027

AN AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN  
FOR THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION  
TO REVISE INDICATOR BACTERIA FOR  
THE COACHELLA VALLEY STORM WATER CHANNEL

**WHEREAS,** The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region (hereinafter Regional Water Board), finds that:

1. An updated Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin (Basin Plan) was adopted by the Regional Water Board on November 17, 1993, approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) on February 17, 1994, and approved by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) on August 3, 1994. The Basin Plan includes amendments adopted by the Regional Water Board through May 2007.
2. The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303 requires the Regional Water Board to develop Water Quality Objectives (WQOs), sufficient to protect Beneficial Uses designated for each water body within its Region.
3. CWA Section 303(c) requires the Regional Water Board to review their Basin Plan at least every three years, and modify WQOs or Beneficial Uses if appropriate.
4. California Water Code (CWC) Section 13240 authorizes the Regional Water Board to amend the Basin Plan. CWC Section 13241 authorizes the Regional Water Board to establish WQOs, and CWC Section 13242 provides requirements for implementation programs to achieve WQOs.
5. Beneficial Uses for the Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel (CVSC) designated in the Basin Plan include:
  - Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM),
  - Wildlife Habitat (WILD),
  - Preservation of Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE),
  - Water Contact Recreation (REC I),
  - Non-contact Recreation (REC II), and
  - Freshwater Replenishment (FRSH)
6. To protect the REC I Beneficial Use, the Basin Plan specifies bacterial objectives for fecal coliforms, E. coli, and enterococci, which are general pathogenic microorganisms (i.e., pathogen indicator bacteria).
7. In 1986, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) published a guidance document titled "Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Bacteria." The document designates E. coli as the sole indicator bacterium for protecting the REC I beneficial use for fresh waters. This document was based upon several studies conducted and sponsored by the USEPA.

8. The guidance document indicates that for fresh recreational waters, E. coli and enterococcus equally demonstrate a greater correlation between bacterial densities and gastrointestinal illnesses in humans, than do fecal coliforms.
9. The USEPA 1986 bacteria criteria represent the best available science, and provide equivalent protection of the REC I Beneficial Use as WQOs in the current Basin Plan.
10. Consistent with USEPA's guidance document, this Amendment proposes to revise Chapter III "WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES" of the Basin Plan to designate E. coli (i.e., eliminate fecal colliforms) as the sole indicator bacteria/WQO to protect the REC I Beneficial Use *specifically* for CVSC.
11. A duly-noticed public California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Scoping Meeting was held in Palm Desert, California for the subject amendment on August 7, 2008.
12. The Secretary for Natural Resources has certified the basin planning process as exempt from certain environmental review requirements of CEQA (Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21000 et seq.), including preparation of an Initial Study, Negative Declaration, and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). (California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 14, Section 15251(g).) Regional Water Board staff prepared a draft Basin Plan Amendment (Appendix 1), a Staff Report in support of the amendment, an Environmental Checklist and Determination, an assessment of the environmental impacts of the Basin Plan Amendment, and a discussion of alternatives, among other analyses. The proposed Basin Plan Amendment, Staff Report, Environmental Checklist and Determination, and supporting documentation are considered Substitute Environmental Documents that may be relied on in lieu of the Initial Study, Negative Declaration, and EIR (CCR, Title 14, Section 15252). The Regional Water Board has complied with these exempt certified regulatory program procedures.
13. Regional Water Board staff has prepared and distributed the Substitute Environmental Documents and other supporting written materials regarding adoption of the Basin Plan Amendment in compliance with applicable state and federal laws (PRC Section 21080.5; CWC Section 13240 et seq.; CCR, Title 14, Section 15252, and Title 23, Section 3775 et seq.; 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 25, 130, 131).
14. In accordance with CCR Title 23 Sections 3778 through 3779, Regional Water Board staff consulted about the proposed action with stakeholders in the Region and potentially affected parties, and considered and addressed their comments.
15. The proposed Basin Plan amendment is consistent with State Water Board Resolution No. 68-16, "Statement of Policy with Respect to Maintaining High Quality of Waters in California", also known as the State's "Anti-degradation Policy," in that the changes to WQOs:
  - i. consider maximum benefits to the people of the state,
  - ii. will not unreasonably affect present and anticipated beneficial use of waters, and
  - iii. will not result in water quality less than that prescribed in policies.

Likewise, the amendment is consistent with the federal Anti-degradation Policy (Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations (40 CFR) Section 131.12).

16. The Regional Water Board held a Public Hearing on May 20, 2010, to consider and hear testimony on the draft Basin Plan Amendment. Notice of the Public Hearing was given to all interested persons, and published in accordance with CWC Section 13244. The Regional Water Board heard and considered all comments.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The Regional Water Board adopts the proposed Basin Plan amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin as set forth in Appendix 1.
2. The Executive Officer is directed to forward copies of the Basin Plan Amendment to the State Water Board in accordance with the requirement of CWC Section 13245.
3. The Regional Water Board requests the State Water Board to approve the Basin Plan Amendment in accordance with CWC Sections 13245 and 13246, and forward the Basin Plan Amendment to OAL and USEPA for approval.
4. The Executive Officer is directed to transmit to the California Department of Fish and Game payment of its required CEQA filing fee for certified regulatory programs, which include this Basin Plan Amendment, as prescribed by California Fish and Game Code Section 711.4 and implementing regulations set forth at CCR, Title 14, Section 753.5.
5. If, during the approval process, the State Water Board or OAL determines that minor, non-substantive corrections to the language of the amendment are needed for clarity or consistency, the Executive Officer may make such changes, and shall inform the Regional Water Board of any such changes.
6. After USEPA approval of the Basin Plan Amendment, the Executive Officer is directed to file a Notice of Decision (NOD) with the Secretary for Natural Resources in accordance with PRC Section 21080.5, subdivision (d)(2)(E), and CCR, Title 23, Section 3781, and to include with the NOD a copy of the CEQA filing fee paid to the California Department of Fish and Game.

I, ROBERT PERDUE, Executive Officer, do hereby certify the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin, on May 20, 2010.

  
ROBERT PERDUE  
Executive Officer

**APPENDIX 1**

**BASIN PLAN AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN  
FOR THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION  
TO REVISE INDICATOR BACTERIA FOR  
THE COACHELLA VALLEY STORM WATER CHANNEL**

This Basin Plan amendment:

1. Revises the date on the title page of the Basin Plan.
2. Revises the Table of Contents to include the addition of section “E” to Chapter 3.
3. Adds to Chapter 3, section: “III. SPECIFIC SURFACE WATER OBJECTIVES”, a new section labeled “E. COACHELLA VALLEY STORM WATER CHANNEL” that immediately follows section “D. IRRIGATION SUPPLY CANALS”.

These Basin Plan revisions and addition are shown below in underlined and strikethrough format. Proposed changes are in reference to the Basin Plan as amended through 2007. Proposed additions are denoted by underlined text, proposed deletions are denoted by ~~strikethrough~~ text.

**AMENDMENT**

**To the title page of the Basin Plan, revise the date to read as follows:**

**WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN  
COLORADO RIVER BASIN- REGION 7**

*Includes Amendments Adopted by the Regional Board through ~~June-2006~~ May 2010*

**To the TABLE OF CONTENTS, “CHAPTER 3 – WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES”, under “III SPECIFIC SURFACE WATER OBJECTIVES”, add “E. COACHELLA VALLEY STORM WATER CHANNEL”, and renumber pages accordingly:**

|   |   |
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| CHAPTER 3 - WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES      | 1 |
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| II. GENERAL SURFACE WATER OBJECTIVES      | 1 |
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| B. TAINING SUBSTANCES                     | 2 |
| C. TOXICITY 1                             | 2 |
| D. TEMPERATURE                            | 2 |
| E. pH                                     | 2 |
| F. DISSOLVED OXYGEN                       | 2 |
| G. SUSPENDED SOLIDS AND SETTLEABLE SOLIDS | 2 |
| H. TOTAL DISSOLVED SOLIDS                 | 2 |

|      |                                      |    |
|------|--------------------------------------|----|
| I.   | BACTERIA                             | 3  |
| J.   | BIOSTIMULATORY SUBSTANCES            | 3  |
| K.   | SEDIMENT                             | 3  |
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| O.   | PESTICIDE WASTES                     | 4  |
| III. | SPECIFIC SURFACE WATER OBJECTIVES    | 4  |
| A.   | COLORADO RIVER                       | 4  |
| B.   | NEW RIVER                            | 5  |
| C.   | SALTON SEA                           | 7  |
| D.   | IRRIGATION SUPPLY CANALS             | 7  |
| E.   | COACHELLA VALLEY STORM WATER CHANNEL | 7  |
| IV.  | GROUND WATER OBJECTIVES              | 78 |
| A.   | TASTE AND ODORS                      | 8  |
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**Under Chapter 3, section “III. SPECIFIC SURFACE WATER OBJECTIVES”, add immediately after “D. IRRIGATION SUPPLY CANALS”, the new section given below labeled “E. COACHELLA VALLEY STORM WATER CHANNEL”**

**E. COACHELLA VALLEY STORM WATER CHANNEL**

The following bacterial objectives apply to a limited section of the Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel (CVSC) where perennial flow exists specifically, that part of the channel that begins at the Valley Sanitary District Waste Water Treatment Plant in the City of Coachella, and extends to the south for approximately 17 miles, where it discharges into the Salton Sea at the northern shore. The bacterial water quality objectives for this reach of the CVSC are expected to protect human health against gastro-intestinal illness caused by exposure to pathogenic organisms present in surface waters. These objectives are based on several epidemiological studies sponsored by USEPA, which determined that Escherichia coli (E. coli) is the most reliable indicator bacteria for protecting human health, given that E. coli is more specifically intestinal in origin than other coliforms. E. coli density limits for the CVSC are as follows:

Based on a minimum of five samples equally spaced over a 30 day period, the geometric mean of E. coli densities must not exceed the following:

|                |   |  |
|----------------|---|--|
| <u>E. coli</u> | <u>REC I</u><br><u>126 MPN<sup>1</sup> per 100 ml</u> | <u>REC II</u><br><u>630 MPN per 100 ml</u> |
|----------------|---|--|

Nor shall any single sample exceed the following:

|                |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|
| <u>E. coli</u> | <u>REC I</u><br><u>400 MPN<sup>1</sup> per 100 ml</u> | <u>REC II</u><br><u>2000 MPN per 100 ml</u> |
|----------------|---|---|

<sup>1</sup> MPN represents "Most Probable Number", which is defined as an index of the number of bacteria that, more probably than any other number, will give the results shown by the laboratory examination (APHA, 2005).