

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

RESOLUTION NO. 81-1

STATEMENT OF INTENT REGARDING THE ISSUANCE OF WASTE DISCHARGE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROPOSED SAN LUIS DRAIN DISCHARGE

- I. WHEREAS, this Regional Board, on February 20, 1964, adopted Resolution No. 535 prohibiting the discharge from the proposed San Luis Drain in the San Francisco Bay Region until the discharger submits evidence and assurances satisfactory to this Board that the proposed discharge will not adversely and unreasonably affect the receiving waters for any of the beneficial uses being protected by this Board; and,
- II. WHEREAS, in June of 1979, the San Joaquin Valley Interagency Drainage Program (IDP) final report documented the need for a valleywide salt collection and disposal plan, provided a preliminary analysis of possible alternatives and identified the need for detailed studies of outstanding environmental issues; and,
- III. WHEREAS, the Water and Power Resource Service (WPRS) requested, in letters dated October 19, 1979 and August 21, 1980, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) to provide them with the process for developing the information necessary for waste discharge requirements; and,
- IV. WHEREAS, the State Board has stated its intent to develop and issue waste discharge requirements for the San Luis Drain discharge in consultation with the Central Valley & San Francisco Bay Regional Boards; and
- V. WHEREAS, the State Board at a special Board workshop on November 12, 1980 identified how the IDP report would be used and outlined the State Board process for issuing waste discharge requirements for the proposed San Luis Drain discharge to the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary; and,
- VI. WHEREAS, on March 17, 1981, the State Board held a public hearing to receive comments on the interim guidance for facility design purposes and on specific information to be included in the report of waste discharge that will be issued to WPRS; and,
- VII. WHEREAS, on February 18, 1981, this Regional Board, in a public meeting heard and considered all comments regarding this matter and requested staff to provide appropriate alternatives for consideration at the March 18, 1981 Board meeting; and,
- VIII. WHEREAS, on March 18, 1981, this Regional Board, in a public meeting heard and considered all comments regarding this matter; now,
- IX. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the position of the Regional Board regarding the process for issuing waste discharge requirements for the San Luis Drain be as follows:

- A. This Regional Board requests that the State Board, in close coordination with this Regional Board, assume the lead role in the development, revision, renewal and enforcement of waste discharge requirements for the proposed San Luis Drain into the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary.
- B. That the State Board and the San Francisco Bay Regional Board shall hold a joint public hearing to consider draft waste discharge requirements for the San Luis Drain to the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary and which shall include whether the discharger has provided evidence and assurances that the proposed discharge will not adversely and unreasonably affect the receiving water for any of the beneficial uses being protected pursuant to the then current "Water Quality Control Plan, San Francisco Bay Basin".
- C. That prior to adoption of waste discharge requirements, both the State and Regional Boards shall find that the discharger has provided evidence and assurances that the proposed discharge will not adversely and unreasonably affect the receiving water for any of the beneficial uses being protected pursuant to the then current "Water Quality Control Plan, San Francisco Bay Basin"; said finding shall determine whether adequate enforcement mechanisms exist to enforce strict and timely compliance with the adopted waste discharge requirements.
- D. That by copy of this Resolution the Regional Board is formally transmitting to the State Board its specific concerns relative to the San Luis Drain discharge set forth in the February 22, 1979 letter attached herein.

I, Fred H. Dierker, 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, San Francisco Bay Region, on March 18, 1981.

FRED H. DIERKER
Executive Officer

Attachment:

Letter dated February 22, 1979
to Louis Beck from Fred H. Dierker

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD

SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

JACKSON STREET, ROOM 6040

ISLAND 94607

Phone: Area Code 415
464-1255

February 22, 1979

File No. 1130.00

Louis A. Beck, Director
San Joaquin Valley
Interagency Drainage Program
1490 W. Shaw Avenue Suite F
Fresno, CA 93711

Dear Mr. Beck:

It is our understanding that before Congress will authorize a valley drain, it will require a letter of intent from the State of California to the effect that the State will adopt discharge requirements. Since it is probable that a valley drain would discharge within the San Francisco Bay Region, this Board would either adopt discharge requirements itself or concur with that action taken by the State Water Resources Control Board. In either event before discharge requirements are adopted or before a letter of intent to adopt discharge requirements is approved by our Board, several issues will need to be resolved. We have discussed these with you and the State Board staff over the last eighteen months and we are fully aware that you are proceeding to resolve them. The purpose of this letter, therefore, is to outline our concerns in order that they may be included in the public hearing record.

The following listing summarizes our concerns:

- 1) Impacts of a drain discharge on municipal and industrial water intakes in the Pittsburg-Antioch area.
- 2) Toxic impacts of a drain discharge on aquatic organisms in the Suisun Bay.
- 3) Eutrophication problems particularly in confined areas around the periphery of Suisun Bay due to increased nitrate concentrations. Also, possible dissolved oxygen depletions in the receiving water due to BOD loadings.

Municipal and Industrial Water Supplies

The discharge of a valley drain at Chipps Island will decrease the normal length of time each year that the Contra Costa County Water District will be able to divert water at their Mallard Slough intake. This may also be a problem with other appropriative water users in the Pittsburg-Antioch area. Before recommending this Board approve a letter of intent to adopt discharge requirements, I will expect the Department of Water Resources and the Bureau of Reclamation to resolve the question of an alternate water supply for the Water District and other local appropriative users.

Toxic Impacts in Suisun Bay

The discharge of heavy metals and pesticides into Suisun Bay may adversely affect aquatic organisms. Based on existing data we do not expect a problem. However, the data base is limited and cumulative impacts are not known. With completion of the toxicity studies that are being planned, we hope to be able to better define potential impacts in the receiving water.

Potential Eutrophication and Oxygen Depletions in Suisun Bay

Nitrate loadings from the agricultural drain will result in increased algal growth in Suisun Bay. While adverse impacts would normally not be expected to occur in open waters, we are concerned about possible algal growth problems in confined areas at the periphery of the Bay and also during those infrequent periods when nitrogen limits growth. We hope that Dr. Oswald's work will demonstrate that significant denitrification and nitrate uptake by vegetation in the drainage/marsh system will occur. Because the actual nitrogen loading to Suisun Bay will not be known until after the drain is in operation, we expect Congress to include in its initial authorization funding of facilities to remove nitrogen from drainage water in the event that algal problems occur.

While we do not anticipate dissolved oxygen problems in Suisun Bay due to the agricultural drain, we will expect further study to estimate oxygen demand loading to Suisun Bay and resulting dissolved oxygen depletions in the receiving water.

Because of the uncertainties relating to public health and environmental quality in the Delta-Suisun Bay area, the initial funding commitment must provide for a detailed monitoring program, additional treatment or disposal needs, and operational flexibility so as to obviate any concerns with the discharge once it becomes functional and its effects on beneficial uses have been determined. Operational flexibility must include provisions for termination of the discharge during the period that additional treatment or disposal facilities may be required to be constructed.

We recognize the importance of obtaining an eventual solution to the drainage problem in the San Joaquin Valley and will help in any way we can to resolve questions pertaining to the impacts of a valley drain discharge into Suisun Bay. It should be noted that our Board has indicated that a solution to the agricultural drainage problem in the San Joaquin Valley should be part of comprehensive state wide water resources planning. The Board questions the reasonableness of constructing a valley drain until questions pertaining to ground water management, efficient irrigation practices, delta protection, and possibly, an acceptance by agricultural users of reclaimed water from the Bay Area have been included in the planning process.

cc: Larry Walker, Executive Director
Water Quality, SWRCB
P. O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95801
Regional Board Members

Sincerely,


FRED H. DIERKER
Executive Officer