



November 16, 2015

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Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
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Submitted via email to commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov

Subject: Comment Letter-Storm Water Strategy (Regional San)

Dear Ms. Townsend:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on the Draft Strategy to Optimize Resource Management of Storm Water (Strategy) dated November 2, 2015. The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (Regional San) provides wastewater collection and treatment services to 1.4 million residents, businesses, and industry in the greater Sacramento region and is affected by changes to storm water regulations. The following comments are being provided by Regional San related to the draft Strategy. The recommended text additions are shown in green bold font and deletions in red strikethrough. Note that where the comments below would affect items mentioned in Appendices A and B, a reference and text edits are proposed also for those documents for consideration.

General Comments:

We encourage the State, including the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board), to continue to work collaboratively between its departments and agencies, and with stakeholders; to coordinate efforts related to water quality regulations; and to encourage and support multiple-benefit solutions and projects, as stated in sections 2 (Introduction) and 2.1 (Background) of the Strategy, and in several subsequent sections of the Strategy and its appendices.

The Strategy identifies programs and projects that are interrelated and that have multiple benefits including integrated water management. We encourage the State to continue to provide funding opportunities and incentives for planning, design, and construction for these types of projects and programs.

On October 30, 2015, Regional San issued a Notice of Intent to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement for the South County Ag Water Recycling Program. This Program will provide approximately 50,000 acre-feet per year of recycled water and offers multiple benefits, such as groundwater recharge and storage; irrigation of agricultural and habitat lands with recycled water in lieu of continued groundwater pumping; and restoration and preservation of riparian habitat along the lower reach of the Cosumnes River. The current estimate for project construction is \$217 million. Funding is a major obstacle that lies in the way of completion of the project. Through collaborative efforts and identification of funding partners, the project could be evaluated for additional uses such as storm water capture and recharge. The South County Ag Water Recycling Program appears to be a good fit for Project 1a – Promote Storm Water Capture and Use from Appendix A Proposed Project List.

Specific Comments:

Section 4.2 Goals lists Goal 3 that addresses the topic “Implement Efficient and Effective Regulatory Programs”. Regional San is appreciative of the efforts of the Water Board to recognize the importance of environmental outcomes within the goals of the Strategy. We strongly encourage the concurrent evaluation of cost effectiveness and measurable environmental benefits when considering the addition of or changes to all regulations, including those related to storm water. We recommend the following changes to the text included in Goal 3;

*“Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Water Boards’ Storm Water Program increases Water Board productivity while concurrently achieving progress toward desired environmental outcomes. Because external stakeholders must focus on environmental outcomes, the Water Boards should ensure its regulatory and funding programs also focus on environmental outcomes, **including measureable or quantifiable environmental benefits and cost effectiveness.**”*

Similarly, text included in Appendix B Methodology Section 5.1 should be changed as follows;

*“Will addressing the issue reduce pollutant discharges and improve water quality **to result in measurable or quantifiable results?**”*

Section 4.2 Goals includes Goal 4 that addresses pollutant problems and source control. Regional San supports the source control techniques mentioned in this section where there is a basis for the control. Specifically, we support product replacement, product substitutions, and green chemistry. Regional San is an advocate of product stewardship and recommends the participation of product manufacturers and suppliers in evaluating product and pollutant life cycle, fate and transport, and treatment technologies. The following addition to the text in Goal 4 is recommended;

*“These types of actions necessitate extensive collaboration with **product manufacturing representatives and industries** and require those agencies with appropriate authorities to take action to achieve success.”*

This concept should also be incorporated into Appendix B Guiding Principle 4, which also addresses source control. We recommend the following addition to that section;

*“True source control would necessitate extensive collaboration with **product manufacturing representatives and industries** and require those agencies with appropriate authorities to take action as well in order to achieve success.”*

Similarly, we recommend the addition of an item to Appendix B Table 1 after ID 40 as follows;

“ID 41 The participation of product manufacturing representatives is needed to understand fate and transport and product life-cycle, to develop treatment technologies, and to identify product replacement, product substitutions, and green chemistry alternatives.”

Section 4.3 Objectives and Projects, Objective 2 addresses Increased Stakeholder Collaboration on a Watershed Scale. Appendix A contains only one project related to this objective – Project 2a Encourage Stakeholder Collaboration to Promote Storm Water as a Resource. Regional San recommends the addition of a project or project component in which the Water Board would provide or facilitate a forum for stakeholders and project proponents to share project information such as cooperating entities, project benefits, cost, schedule, and location. This forum would help to identify projects, stakeholders and project partners, facilitate cooperative local and regional efforts, maximize and prioritize project funding, and could encourage stakeholder collaboration and coordination. It could also result in the sharing of tools and ideas related to strategy, planning, funding, and implementation of effective projects. The creation of a stakeholder forum is in agreement with Appendix B Items 3.1 and 3.2 and subsections.

Appendix A Project 3e – Standardize Minimum Control Measures for Specific Municipal Program Elements and Project 3f – Develop Guidance for Implementation of Post-Construction Requirements to Improve Watershed Health are related to meeting water quality requirements. It is encouraging to see that the Water Board has recognized the need for flexibility of control measures and post-construction management strategies

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based on items such as topographic, climatic, hydrologic, geologic, and land use differences, as well as variability within watersheds. This is reflected in the Scope and Background sections of Projects 3e and 3f. Regional San encourages the Water Board to consider cost effectiveness and corresponding environmental benefits when considering standardized minimum control measures and post-construction requirements. Additional requirements should not be implemented where there is not a measurable and corresponding environmental benefit.

The following modification is recommended for Appendix B Table 1 List of Issues organized by Guiding Principle and Topic, ID 13;

*“The performance goals and **performance** requirements for post construction measures should be consistent in order to lead to effective implementation during the planning, design, and construction phase.”*

Appendix A Project 4d is titled “Identify Industrial and Construction Storm Water Compliance Cost”. Regional San is supportive of this project and recommends that the Water Board request information from affected industries on a voluntary basis to assist with estimating the discharger cost of compliance with the Industrial General Permit and the Construction General Permit related to stormwater. This would ensure a more accurate cost estimate associated with current and future regulations.

Appendix A Project 5C is to Establish Sector-Specific Technology-Based Numeric Effluent Limits for Industrial and Construction Storm Water Permits. As stated in multiple comment letters related to Order 2009-0009-DWQ and subsequent amendments, the addition of numeric effluent limits should be carefully considered with respect to site and watershed characteristics, and should have a scientific basis.

Similarly, Appendix B Table 1 ID 31 and ID 33 should be revised to read as follows;

ID 31: *“Water quality-based numeric effluent limitations (**NELs**) can be feasible and effective and should be used in storm water permits **where there is a scientific or regulatory basis.**”*

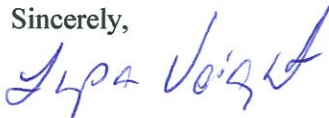
ID-33 *“Technology-based, numeric effluent Limitations (**NELs**) can be feasible and effective in some cases (eg., sectors, circumstances, etc.) and should be utilized in storm water permits **where there is a scientific or regulatory basis.**”*

Appendix B Section 2, Background contains a statement related to wastewater treatment facilities that is not necessarily representative of wastewater facilities and may be misleading. We recommend the following edits in this section;

*“Wastewater facilities can plan on a consistent and relatively predictable **influent to effluent discharged from** a single centralized treatment facility **allowing with** treatment systems ~~to be~~ designed to optimize removal of solids, organics, and other pollutants.”*

If you have any questions related to the comments provided, please contact me at 916-876-6038 or VoightL@sacsewer.com.

Sincerely,



Lysa Voight, P.E.
Senior Civil Engineer