

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT: Samantha Harper and Richard Looker
MEETING DATE: November 10, 2021

ITEM: 6

2021 Triennial Review of the San Francisco Bay Basin Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) – Adoption of Resolution and List of Prioritized Basin Planning Projects

DISCUSSION:

This item is for the Board to consider adoption of a Resolution and Prioritized List of Basin Planning projects that may result in amendments to the Basin Plan. This package includes the Tentative Resolution and list of prioritized basin planning projects (Appendix A), the supporting Triennial Review Staff Report (Appendix B), written comment letters received (Appendix C), and our responses to those comments (Appendix D).

The Basin Plan is the master policy document for the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board and contains applicable water quality standards, which consist of beneficial uses for all waters in the Region, the water quality objectives necessary to protect those uses, and the implementation plans, policies, and programs designed to achieve the objectives. The Triennial Review has been conducted consistent with State Water Code (section 13240) and federal Clean Water Act section 303(c)(1) requirements. The Triennial Review provides the opportunity to review the water quality standards and identify portions of the Basin Plan that need to be updated or modified to improve the efficiency and environmental protection associated with permitting and other programs. Since the San Francisco Bay Region only has two funded staff positions for all Basin Plan activities, the Triennial Review also serves as a process to set priorities for using staff resources.

We began the Triennial Review in early 2021, reviewing the status of Basin Planning issues identified during the previous Triennial Review completed in 2018, and identifying new issues for consideration. In April 2021, we produced a “Brief Issue Descriptions” paper, describing a wide range of candidate projects. In June, we held a stakeholder workshop and invited stakeholder input on the candidate projects. In addition to comments received during the stakeholder workshop, we received nine comment letters after the workshop. We considered this stakeholder input while developing and refining a list of 16 candidate Basin Planning projects and in ranking these candidate projects. The Triennial Review Staff Report includes a summary of the public participation process, description of the ranking criteria, candidate project descriptions, and final project ranking.

The high priority Basin Planning projects, excluding TMDL projects, include the following:

- Climate Change and Wetland Policy Update
- Nutrient Management Strategy and Dissolved Oxygen Assessment Framework
- Regional Stream Protection Policy
- Temperature Limits to Protect Salmonids
- Designate Tribal Tradition and Culture, Tribal Subsistence Fishing, and Subsistence Fishing Beneficial Uses

The draft Staff Report and list of proposed priority projects were circulated for 30-days to interested parties on September 13, 2021. We received comment letters from: Bay Area Clean Water Agencies; Living Rivers Council/Institute for Conservation Advocacy, Research and Education; San Francisco Baykeeper; San Francisco International Airport; and the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program.

Staff responses to all issues raised by the public can be found in the Response to Comment document. After consideration of public comments and discussion with management, we streamlined the scope for the *Regional Stream Protection Policy* project to focus initial project efforts on stream to baylands connectivity. As a result of this change, an additional 0.5 PY (for a total of 1.0 PY) of staffing resources can be applied to support the anticipated work over the next three-year period on the project to *Designate Tribal Tradition and Culture, Tribal Subsistence Fishing, and Subsistence Fishing Beneficial Uses*. We appreciate all the interest and input from stakeholders.

APPENDICES:

- A. Tentative Resolution and List of Prioritized Basin Planning Projects
- B. Triennial Review Staff Report
- C. Comment Letters
- D. Response to Comments