

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION
MARCH 4, 2014**

ITEM 8

SUBJECT

INFORMATIONAL UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED TRANSFER OF THE DRINKING WATER PROGRAM

DISCUSSION

The Governor's Fiscal Year 2014-15 Budget proposes to transfer the Drinking Water Program from the Department of Public Health to the State Water Resources Control Board. This transfer is intended to align the state's drinking water and water quality programs in an integrated organizational structure. This structure will best position the state to effectively protect water quality and meet both current needs and future demands on water resulting from climate change, increasing population, and economic growth, while still maintaining a strong public health focus. The Administration's objectives include continued focused attention on supporting small and disadvantaged communities to address their unique drinking water needs.

The Administration convened a Drinking Water Reorganization Task Force to receive input on the proposed transfer. The Task Force was composed of 33 representatives of water agencies, environmental justice/disadvantaged communities, legislative staff, local health officers, local environmental health officers, environmental groups, and other entities. The Task Force met a total of seven times during Fall, 2013 to provide input on key elements of the transition, including the regulatory function of the Drinking Water Program and maintaining its public health focus; providing financial assistance for drinking water projects, including projects in disadvantaged communities; and setting Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs). The Secretary for Environmental Protection and the Secretary of Health and Human Services also held a Public Meeting on January 15, 2014. The Secretaries used the input received at the Public Meeting, as well as input from the Task Force, to inform the Transition Plan that they completed in February, 2014.

POLICY ISSUE

N/A – Informational Item only

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A – Informational Item only

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

N/A – Informational Item only

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

N/A – Informational Item only