

**REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN DIEGO REGION**

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
September 14, 2022**

ITEM 8

SUBJECT

Update and implementation status of the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board) Cannabis Cultivation Program in the San Diego Region.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Informational item only; no recommendation.

KEY ISSUE

This item provides an opportunity for the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Diego Water Board) and members of the public to learn about the Cannabis Cultivation Program and implementation of the *Cannabis Policy – Principles and Guidelines for Cannabis Cultivation*¹ (Cannabis Policy) in the San Diego Region.

PRACTICAL VISION

Chapter 4 of the San Diego Water Board Practical Vision, *Proactive Public Outreach and Communication* is focused on implementing the core values of leadership, communication, and transparency. This item provides an opportunity for the San Diego Water Board and the public to learn about cannabis cultivation regulation and issues relevant to the protection of both water quality and public health.

DISCUSSION

The State Water Resources Control Board adopted WQ-2017-0023-DWQ, *General Waste Discharge Requirements and Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Waste Associated with Cannabis Cultivation Activities* (Cannabis General Order), and the Cannabis Policy in 2017, which were later amended in 2019 by WQ 2019-0001-DWQ.² The Cannabis General Order and Cannabis Policy establish requirements for the diversion and use of water, land disturbances, and discharges of waste related to cannabis cultivation. The requirements intend to minimize deleterious effects of cannabis cultivation activities on fisheries, wildlife, and water quality; maintain healthy riparian corridors; and protect springs, wetlands, and aquatic habitat. The Cannabis Policy established Regional Boundaries combining the San Diego, Santa Ana, and Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board Regions to form the South Coast Cannabis Region.

¹https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cannabis/docs/policy/final_cannabis_policy_with_attach_a.pdf

²https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2019/wqo2019_0001_dwq.pdf

Brian Covellone, Engineering Geologist, manages our agency's efforts to regulate the commercial cultivation of cannabis and investigate threats to water quality from unlicensed commercial cannabis cultivations operating in the South Coast Cannabis Region.

This Item will update the Board on the implementation of the Cannabis Policy in the San Diego Region. The presentation includes the status of permitted commercial cultivation operations, as well as an overview of efforts the South Coast Cannabis Region Unit has taken in the San Diego Region to protect beneficial uses and the San Diego Water Board's watersheds from discharges of waste at unlicensed commercial cannabis cultivation operations.

LEGAL CONCERNS

None.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The agenda notice for today's meeting was posted on the San Diego Water Board web site and sent to subscribers of the electronic mailing lists for Board meetings.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

None.