

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

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT (Keith Lichten)
MEETING DATE: February 11, 2015

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: **Local Agency Efforts to Address Illicit Dumping and the Water Quality Impacts of Homeless Encampments – Status Report**

DISCUSSION: Water Board staff has invited speakers from four local agencies to discuss their agencies' ongoing efforts to address direct discharges of trash and human waste to receiving waters associated with illicit dumping and homeless encampments. The agencies are:

- The Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water District
- The City of Oakland
- The City of San Jose
- The Santa Clara Valley Water District

Discharges of trash from urban areas are a significant source of pollutants to waters of the State, including creeks, wetlands, and San Francisco Bay. The Water Board has previously found that trash levels in the Region's waters are "alarmingly high," with significant discharges during both dry and wet weather periods, and has set the goal of 100% reduction of trash loads from Phase 1 municipal storm drain systems by 2022.¹

Direct discharges of trash to receiving waters—discharges that do not flow through a municipal storm drain system—are another significant source. Significant components of direct trash discharges include illegal dumping and discharges from homeless encampments.

These discharges are often entwined with complex and challenging social issues, including poverty, the Bay Area's high cost of living, and un- and under-employment. Other issues include, but are not limited to, substance addiction, access to education, and the availability of health care, including mental health care and related support services. Efforts to address direct discharges of trash associated with homelessness are unlikely to result in long-term success if they do not recognize the larger issues that contribute to chronic homelessness.

Illicit dumping, such as by licensed and unlicensed contractors, landscapers, and urban residents, can be entwined with issues of poverty, and can also result from efforts to gain competitive advantage by transferring business costs to municipal governments and society as a whole.

¹ Fact Sheet, Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit, Board Order No. R2-2009-0074.

The speakers for this item are expected to discuss their agencies' efforts to address direct discharges of trash and human waste to receiving waters, the challenges they have encountered, and some of their approaches to address those challenges.

**RECOMMEN-
DATION:**

This is an information item not requiring action by the Board.