
San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board

August 23, 2012

Anke Mueller-Solger
Kelly Souza
Greg Erikson
Interagency Ecological Program

Subject: Letter of Support for Proposal entitled “Characterizing and quantifying nutrient sources, sinks, and transformations in the Delta”

Dear IEP 2013 Workplan Co-Chairs:

We are writing to support funding for the subject proposal as a part of the Interagency Ecological Program’s (IEP’s) 2013 Workplan. This project would refine our understanding of nutrient fate and transformation in the Delta, including spatial and temporal variation; transformation within the Delta; and identification of data gaps. Significantly for the San Francisco Bay Water Board, it will inform understanding of nutrient discharges from the Delta to Suisun Bay, Suisun Marsh, and other parts of San Francisco Bay. A considerable long-term (1975 to present) nutrient-related monitoring dataset and stable isotope data are available and should be utilized to assist us in making management decisions. This proposal will result in the synthesis of these data and the application of hydrodynamic and water quality models, to characterize the role the Delta plays in transforming, assimilating, and removing nutrients.

The study proposal will support ongoing efforts at the San Francisco Bay Water Board, including:

- The San Francisco Bay Nutrient Strategy, which is intended to identify and address the potential for impairment in the Bay due to nutrients, and includes building a nutrient assessment framework, an understanding of nutrient loading and the ecosystem’s response to loading, and developing appropriate models for this purpose.
- Improving our understanding of the fate and transport of nutrients within and through the Delta which is critical to understanding the contributions of nutrients from sources within our geographical jurisdiction.
- Development of the Suisun Marsh TMDLs to address impairment for pollutants including nutrients and organic enrichment.

The Delta has a direct effect on San Francisco Bay, which provides 70% of the State’s estuarine habitat and is the gateway to more than two thirds of the State’s watershed area. Improved understanding of Delta nutrient dynamics and loads is crucial to inform ongoing Bay modeling work.

JOHN MULLER, CHAIR | BRUCE H. WOLFE, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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The project has a high likelihood of success, because it will review already-existing datasets and use them, in part, to calibrate and apply existing models. Thus, the raw data and tools necessary to complete the project are already in place.

Our support for this proposal stems from our need for a clear understanding of nutrient dynamics to support management decisions. The consequence of those management decisions includes the potential to require significant capital investment for additional wastewater and stormwater treatment. This proposal will contribute significantly to this understanding.

Please contact me at nfeger@waterboards.ca.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Naomi Feger
Planning Division Chief