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NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON AN AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE SANTA ANA REGION (BASIN PLAN) TO ESTABLISH A NUTRIENT TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) FOR DRY HYDROLOGICAL CONDITIONS FOR BIG BEAR LAKE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) will now accept comments on an adopted Basin Plan amendment that establishes a nutrient TMDL for dry hydrological conditions for Big Bear Lake. The amendment adopted by the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (Santa Ana Water Board) and the State Water Board item language and draft resolution are available on the State Water Board's Web site at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/tmdl/tmdl.html> or can be received by mail by contacting Nirmal Sandhar at (916) 341-5571. The amendment was adopted by the Santa Ana Water Board on April 21, 2006. The State Water Board expects to consider approval of the amendment in the future. Notice of that meeting will be published separately.

The Basin Plan amendment modifies the regulatory provisions of the Basin Plan by establishing a nutrient TMDL for dry hydrological conditions for Big Bear Lake. The proliferation of two aquatic plants, primarily Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum* L.) and Coontail (*Ceratophyllum demersum* L.), severely affects the beneficial uses of Big Bear Lake, including water contact recreation, non-contact water recreation, warm and cold freshwater habitat, and wildlife habitat. The nutrient addressed by the TMDL is phosphorus. There is evidence that nitrogen is a limiting nutrient under certain conditions; however, given the data and analytical limitations, no nitrogen targets are specified. Nitrogen monitoring is required as part of this TMDL. The data will be used to specify nitrogen targets in the future, as warranted.

The amendment specifies both "causal and response" interim and final numeric targets for Big Bear Lake. The causal target is for phosphorus, the limiting nutrient responsible for plant growth. Phosphorus is the primary limiting nutrient in Big Bear Lake, and nitrogen can be a limiting nutrient under certain conditions. Response targets include macrophyte coverage, percentage of nuisance aquatic vascular plant species, and chlorophyll-a concentrations. These response targets are more direct indicators of impairment and are specified to assess and track water quality improvements in Big Bear Lake. These numeric targets are based on the narrative objectives for algae within the Basin Plan.

Waste load allocations are assigned for urban discharges; load allocations are assigned for forest and resort discharges and discharges from atmospheric deposition, macrophytes, and internal sediment. Internal sediment is considered sediment within Big Bear Lake, as opposed to external sediment loads from the watershed. A "weight of evidence" approach will be used to assess compliance with the TMDL, which means that data pertaining to all the numeric targets will be evaluated, and non-compliance with one target will not automatically imply non-compliance with the TMDL.

The Santa Ana Water Board has committed to reevaluating and revising the TMDL, if appropriate, based on monitoring results and relevant studies. These studies include source evaluation and characterization; development of a Big Bear Lake management plan; watershed-wide and lake-wide water quality monitoring; development/revision of a nutrient watershed and lake model; and development of average/wet hydrological wasteload and load allocations. Revision of the TMDL, including compliance dates for all other hydrological conditions, would be considered through a Basin Plan amendment process. Upon completion and consideration of studies and any appropriate Basin Plan amendment, an implementation plan or plans will be established for achieving the targets.

The implementation steps for the TMDL are composed of two phases. Phase 1 will consist of the following: three months after the Basin Plan amendment approval, the plan/schedule for the Nutrient Water Quality Monitoring Program will be due; six months after the Basin Plan amendment approval, the waste discharge requirements will be revised, and new waste discharge requirements for Nutrient Sources will be established; one year after Basin Plan amendment approval, the plan/schedule for the Lake Management Plan for Big Bear Lake and the Atmospheric Deposition Determination will be due; and eighteen months after Basin Plan amendment approval, new waste discharge requirements for lake restoration activities will be established. Phase 2 of the TMDL will consist of the following: by December 31, 2008, the Big Bear Lake Tributary Data will be reviewed; by December 31, 2012, TMDLs, wasteload allocations and load allocations for wet and/or average hydrological conditions will be developed; by December 31, 2015, the Big Bear Lake Water Quality Standards will be reviewed and/or revised; and the TMDL/wasteload allocations/load allocations will also be reviewed once every three years.

Comment letters must be received by 12 p.m. on March 19, 2007. After the March deadline, State Water Board staff will not accept additional written comments unless the State Water Board determines that such comments should be accepted. Please send comments to: Song Her, Clerk to the Board, by email at commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov, (916) 341-5620 (fax), or addressed to State Water Resources Control Board, 1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. Please also indicate in the subject line, "Comment Letter –Big Bear Lake Nutrient TMDL."

Please direct questions about this notice to Nirmal Sandhar, Division of Water Quality, at (916) 341-5571 or (nsandhar@waterboards.ca.gov) or Senior Staff Counsel Steven H. Blum at (916) 341-5177 or sblum@waterboards.ca.gov.

February 22, 2007
Date



Song Her
Clerk to the Board