



December 13, 2006

Today the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board unanimously approved the marine water quality objective for Cyanide in the San Francisco Bay. This action has been many years in the making. BACWA and BACWA member agencies have worked closely with the Water Board to develop site specific information regarding the presence of cyanide in effluent, how it reacts in the Bay at specific discharge locations and the impact on the crabs and other local aquatic organisms.

The Basin Plan amendment includes:

- a chronic four day objective of 2.9 ug/l,
- a chronic objective of 9.4 ug/l,
- an implementation plan, and
- provisions for dilution credits for shallow water discharges.

The dilution credits for calculation of cyanide water quality based effluent limits for shallow water dischargers is ground breaking. The Basin Plan amendment has recognized that, due to the dilution at the site specific discharge points and attenuation of the pollutant in the aquatic environment, an exception to the shallow water dilution prohibition is warranted.

Nine BACWA member agencies will receive a 3.25:1 dilution, one receives 4.0:1 dilution and one receives 3.0:1 dilution.

As part of the implementation plan for the site specific objective (SSO), all municipal wastewater discharges to any segment of the San Francisco Bay shall have the following requirements in NPDES permits:

- effluent limits regardless of reasonable potential for cyanide,
- monitoring and surveillance programs including influent, effluent and ambient monitoring,
- Cyanide source review every five years, and

- Where potential for contributions to the influent exist, implementation of a pollution prevention will be required including programs to:
  - prevent of illicit discharges to the collection system,
  - inspect potential contributor sites,
  - develop and distribute educational materials, and
  - prepare emergency monitoring and response plans if a significant cyanide discharge occurs.

If ambient monitoring shows cyanide concentrations of 1.0 ug/L or higher investigations to determine sources and actions to abate the sources will be initiated.

Nancy Wu, EPA Region 9 Deputy Water Division Director, stated that EPA approves of the SSO and the implementation plan. They remain concerned about the potential impacts of the shallow water discharges on endangered and threatened species and will take up this issue when the SSO is presented to them after the State Board adoption.

Before EPA sees the SSO, it has to be approved by the State Water Resources Control Board and the Office of Administrative Law. With approval of the SSO, EPA must also engage a Fish and Wildlife consultation and de-promulgate the cyanide standard in the California Toxics Rule.

BACWA will continue to encourage and support prompt action on all fronts to finalize the SSO.

For more information about the Cyanide SSO, the Water Board staff report can be found on the web-site,  
[www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/basinplan.htm](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/basinplan.htm)