

**Committee Request for Board Action:** None

Regular meeting: 31 attendees via Zoom, representing 17 member agencies and the Regional Water Board

**Regional Water Board Updates**

Bill Johnson and Robert Schlipf from the Regional Water Board provided updates on several items, including:

Chlorine Blanket Permit Amendment

In July, the Regional Water Board circulated an administrative draft of a blanket NPDES permit amendment for residual chlorine and oil & grease. BACWA and USEPA provided feedback on the draft. The permit amendment will require dischargers that use chlorine for disinfection to include a Chlorine Process Control Plan within their Operation & Maintenance Manual and will have to “target a chlorine residual of 0.0 mg/L” for their “discharge points”. For a few dischargers with a significant travel time between the dechlorination system and the outfall (e.g., the EBDA system), chlorine decay may be a consideration. For most dischargers, the target of 0.0 mg/L would apply at the point of dechlorination. Regional Water Board staff explained that the target of 0.0 mg/L is not an effluent limitation or an operational trigger; it is meant to be used to as a target for establishing dechlorination chemical feed rates. Compliance will be based on the water quality-based effluent limits in the permit amendment, which range from 0.013 mg/L to 1.8 mg/L. Shallow water dischargers do not need to make any changes to their O&M manuals since the permit amendment is not resulting in higher effluent limits. Deep water dischargers who plan to adjust dechlorination feed rates should make a brief note in their annual self-monitoring reports that the O&M Manual was modified in response to this provision.

*Note: The [Tentative Order](#) was finalized after the meeting. Comments are due to Robert Schlipf by Sep. 29<sup>th</sup>. If the Tentative Order is adopted in November, the effective date will be January 1, 2024.*

Proposed Basin Plan Amendment to Address NPDES Permitting Needs

The Regional Water Board recently held a public workshop to introduce a proposed Basin Plan Amendment to address NPDES permitting needs (slides are available [here](#)). The proposed amendment would correct the formulas for freshwater water quality objectives and would allow for some flexibility regarding dilution credits and mercury concentration triggers when recycled water projects are being implemented. The Regional Water Board anticipates releasing a draft staff report in August 2023. The Basin Plan Amendment would be subject to approval by the State Water Board, Office of Administrative Law, and USEPA, so it will take many months to become effective if adopted by the Regional Water Board (which could occur as early as November 2023).

Tentative Orders

NPDES permit reissuances for San Mateo and Sausalito-Marín City Sanitary District will be considered at the November Board Meeting.

**Chronic Toxicity Screening Studies**

[Brant Jorgenson](#) from Pacific EcoRisk provided a presentation on species sensitivity screening (slides are available [here](#)), and provided the following information for Region 2 as they prepare to conduct a screening under the newly adopted [statewide toxicity provisions](#):

- A screening study now takes four consecutive calendar quarters to complete. Previously, it could be completed in 3 consecutive months.
- Estuarine dischargers can choose freshwater or marine species for their study, or a mixture. Previously, there was a requirement to include both freshwater and marine species in the screening study. Freshwater dischargers do not have any choice in species. Marine dischargers have a choice in invertebrates, but not in the fish or plant species. Try to select a species that has high precision and low test variability. Some test protocols have more inherent variability. Development tends to be more precise than growth, for example.
- Consider the availability of test organisms. Some marine invertebrates are wild-collected (e.g., abalone) and not available in some seasons, so they may be a poor choice for monthly testing. Topsmelt also has supply chain constraints because there is only one domestic vendor. By contrast, Ceriodaphnia is typically cultured within a laboratory and is readily available.
- Choosing the right concentration for the test is one of the most challenging parts of the study plan. If the IWC is too low or too high, you may not see a meaningful different between test species. Ammonia sensitivity should be considered. The statewide toxicity provisions do not require a specific dilution series.

Region 2 permits require use of the IWC or 10% (whichever is greater) but also allow the use of higher concentrations “if needed to increase the likelihood that potential effects might be observed.”

**Nutrients Update**

- An algae bloom of *Heterosigma akashiwo* was reported in San Francisco Bay in late July. In response, SFEI has been conducting additional monitoring in the Bay. According to San Jose staff, dissolved inorganic concentrations and chlorophyll concentrations are lower than those observed during the 2022 bloom, and there have been fewer impacts to fish so far.
- The Nutrient Strategy Team is continuing to meet to discuss the potential for nutrient load reductions during the term of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Watershed Permit and beyond. The next meeting is August 18<sup>th</sup>.
- [Special studies](#) required by the 2019 Nutrient Watershed Permit were submitted in late June.

**Other Updates**

- BCDC is continuing work on development of a Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan.
- The committee may hold a catered, in-person holiday lunch meeting in lieu of a potluck.

**Next Permits Committee Meeting: October 10, 2023, 12:30 PM** via Zoom