

Coalition Members:

Ventura County Agricultural Assn.
Ventura County Farm Bureau
Western Growers
California Avocado Commission
California Strawberry Commission
Ventura County Economic
Development Association
Association of Water Agencies
of Ventura County
United Water Conservation District
Supervisor John Flynn, 5th District -
Ventura County
A.A. Naumann, Inc.
Camulos Ranch Company
Oxnard Lemon Company
Somis Pacific Agricultural Mgmt.
Saticoy Lemon Association
Limoneira
Ventura Pacific Company
Calavo Growers
Sunrise Growers
Catalinos Berry Farms
D.W. Berry Farms
Iwamoto-Gean Strawberry Farms
Anacapa Berry Farms
Westview Berry Farms
Pacífico Berry Farms
Mugu Ranch Partnership
Conroy Farms
Mandalay Berry Farms
Pac-Man General Partnership
Montalvo Farms
Festival Farms
Gull Island Farms
Dullam Nursery

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 9, 2008
TO: Water Quality Coalition
FROM: Robert P. Roy, Co-Chair
RE: Technical Working Group Meeting Update

The first 2008 meeting of the Technical Working Group of the Chloride TMDL Implementation Plan for the Upper Santa Clara River was conducted yesterday from 1 - 4 p.m. at the Fillmore City Council Chambers.

An overview of the Site Specific Objective and Anti-Degradation Analysis Study was provided by Ashli Desai. Ms. Desai and Sam Unger of the LA Regional Water Board, also provided an update on the agriculture beneficial use clarification which is subject to study.

Mr. Joel Kimmelshue and his associate provided an analysis on a study of the appropriate "averaging period" for chloride threshold guidelines for avocados. It was noted that any written comments by the TWG on the LRE averaging period study are due on January 22, 2008. The comments may be sent to aarona@mig.com. The Coalition, with the assistance of its water consultant, Ed Means, will evaluate the necessity of filing comments to the proposed study.

At this time, the averaging period for chloride threshold guidelines involving avocados is recommended to be three months. This constitutes a rejection of a twelve-month period proposed by LA Sanitation Districts and a two-day period proposed by the Regional Water Board. In further discussion of the issue, and in light of the potential for implementation of an alternative water quality management plan involving blending of waters to meet the Board's water quality standard at the Ventura County line, the study's authors agreed to analyze the potential for a longer averaging period if the chloride levels will be substantially less than those indicated in the published agricultural studies.

Dan Detmer of the United Water Quality Control District also questioned whether the averaging period included nursery stock and strawberries. The authors of the study indicated that the study was directed only at strawberries since the water quality standard of 100-117 mg/l was the only standard indicated by the Literature Review Evaluation study approved by the Board. They indicated that because of the prevalence of various strawberry varieties, it would be difficult to establish an averaging threshold for damage from chloride. Rob Roy indicated that because of the potential growth of nursery stock in Reach 4 of the Upper Santa Clara River, it may be prudent to evaluate a threshold for nursery stock as part of the study. These concerns will be raised in the Coalition's comments.

Next, the TWG addressed the Alternative Water Resource Management scenario proposed jointly by the United Water Conservation District, a Kennedy-Jenks water consultant on behalf of Castaic Water District and the LA County Sanitation Districts. The Water Coalition has been supportive of this alternative concept which, in a nutshell, would require the release of low chloride waters from Castaic to be blended with discharged effluent from the waste water reclamation plants operated by LA County Sanitation Districts. The goal is to meet the water quality objectives established by the LA Regional Water Board at the County line. This proposed program would obviate the need for expensive reverse osmosis to be implemented by the County Sanitation Districts under the Chloride TMDL Implementation Plan.

Participants were treated to an overview by representatives of the Sanitation Districts, Dr. Steve Bachman of United Water Conservation District and Tracy Quinn of Kennedy-Jenks, the water consultants to Castaic and Valencia Water Districts. Brian Louis representing the Sanitation Districts also discussed a slide demonstrating the relationship of the alternative water resource management scenario to other studies being conducted as part of the TMDL Implementation Plan.

All parties are very encouraged by this alternative scenario which could achieve the water quality standard within a 3-4 year period as opposed to 11 years. Of course, there are many details that have to be worked out as part of this scenario including the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding by all of the parties, and regulatory language in the MOU with respect to contingencies such as drought conditions and unavailability of water for blending to meet the reduced chloride water quality objective.

Lastly, the participants were shown a Groundwater Surface Water Interaction Model slide presentation. An overview of the GWSWIM progress-to-date was presented, as well as the Technical Sub-Committee discussion. Again, GWSWI modeling is near completion and will be the "smoking gun" to scientifically demonstrate how chlorides move throughout the Upper Santa Clara River, thereby providing all parties with an objective basis to assess loading, drought, rain conditions and other factors affecting the movement of chloride throughout the Upper Santa Clara River.

Water Coalition members are encouraged to attend the monthly Technical Working Group meetings. The next one is scheduled for January 29, 2008, from 1 - 4 p.m. The meeting site is yet to be established.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Association office.