

Water Resources Committee

Summary Notes

Meeting Date: April 8, 2014 **Start Time:** 4:00 p.m.
Directors Present: John Greci **Staff Present:** T. Rooze, M. Katen,
Bill Stevens K. Arends, J. Duerig
Directors Absent: AJ Machaevich

Director Stevens called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

1. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

None.

2. 2014 Revised Water Quality Policy

Staff gave a presentation and answered questions from the committee.

Summary of Presentation

Staff summarized the history of the 2003 Water Quality Policy and the 2005 Joint Water Quality Resolution. Staff then recommended combining these policies into the 2014 Water Quality Policy because the projects identified in both of the previous policies have been addressed and the reporting requirements overlap. Therefore staff has been working with the staff representing all four retailers (including Pleasanton and DSRSD, signatories to the Joint Resolution) to combine the 2003 WQ Policy and the 2005 Joint Resolution into a new 2014 Water Quality Policy.

The revised policy includes the following:

- The four goals that are in the original Water Quality Policy are included in the revised policy except the fourth is now split into two.
- Staff will maintain dialog with its customers
- Zone 7 will conduct Water Quality Workshops every two years
- Zone 7 and the retailers will work on joint educational projects and materials
- Zone 7 and the retailers will maintain a joint operational workgroup

The revised policy was presented to the Tri-Valley Water Liaison Committee on March 26, 2014. Few comments were received. After today's meeting, staff proposes that it go the full Board on April 16.

Comments and Questions

The committee asked if Zone 7 is responsible for cleaning up salts in water delivered to untreated customers. Staff replied that the untreated customers understand that Zone 7 does not have much control over untreated water since the untreated customers receive their water directly from the SBA. Staff added that the policy for the untreated customers, which has not changed from the 2003 Water Quality Policy, indicates that Zone 7 will endeavor to support projects that improve the source water quality from the State Water Project, for example, supporting the BDCP or the temporary rock barriers project. David Lunn

commented that Zone 7's new Rules and Regulations Governing Untreated Water Service no longer includes any statements or commitments regarding delivered water quality.

The committee asked if Zone 7 is responsible for sampling the water from the South Bay Aqueduct. Staff indicated that DWR does sampling on our behalf.

The committee commented that Mr. Marchand, the current mayor of Livermore and a previous member of the Zone 7 Board, had concerns in the past that Zone 7's existing demineralization plant does not benefit customers who receive water directly from retailer wells.

Staff explained that the new Water Quality Policy is a milestone in collaboration. Historically there has been tension between east and west customers and special concern about unequal water quality being provided by Zone 7, but the collaboration and development of this new policy by staff from the retailers and Zone 7 suggests a significant step forward.

The committee asked if all the Tri-Valley retailers were involved with the Joint Water Quality policy. Staff answered that only DSRSD and Pleasanton were involved. Staff added that DSRSD and Pleasanton are also planning to go to their Boards to rescind the 2005 Joint Resolution.

The committee asked about the status of the projects that were originally proposed in the 2003 Water Quality Policy. Staff answered that most have been completed but that some have been deferred because of the economy, with the concurrence of the retailers.

The committee then discussed staff recommendation and agreed that the updated 2014 Water Quality Policy should be brought to the full board for its consideration at the April meeting.

3. Nutrient Management Plan

Staff gave a presentation and answered questions from the committee.

Summary of Presentation

Staff began by summarizing the progress of the Salt (and Nutrient) Management Plan Update (SNMP) since the last meeting with the Water Resources Committee in January 2014. Staff is currently preparing a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) which will be an amendment or appendix to the Salt Management Plan. The NMP will have both regionally based and local nitrate hotspots components. Staff indicated that during a meeting in March with the RWQCB, the RWQCB recognized that Zone 7 has a SMP which was approved and therefore grandfathered in under the terms of the Recycled Water Policy. However, RWQCB staff asked for assistance from Zone 7 with their Wastewater Discharge Permit reviews to assure non-degradation or improvement of the groundwater basin as concerns nitrate concentrations.

Staff recently sent out a meeting invitation to 200 residents as stakeholders that live in the vicinity of the nitrate hotspots. The three main hotspots are in the May School, Buena Vista and Greenville areas. These areas were defined by city boundaries, land use, areas of high nitrate concentrations previously noted in groundwater monitoring, and whether the area is sewered or not. The goals of the stakeholder meeting are to convey information about the nitrate hotspots, review existing policies, present recommendations for future septic permitting, and to solicit questions and feedback from the stakeholders who attend.

Staff proceeded to preview the stakeholder presentation, summarizing the extent of nitrate concerns in California and the Livermore Valley. Staff showed graphs of nitrate concentrations from wells in hotspot areas. These graphs show that the nitrate concentration in a representative well in the May School area is getting worse and nitrate concentrations in wells in the Buena Vista and Greenville have always been high and don't seem to be getting any better. High nitrate in the groundwater has also already impacted some domestic and municipal wells, is already too high for vineyard irrigation in some areas, and has interfered with permitting and development in the area.

Zone 7's current wastewater management practices follow the 1982 Wastewater Management Plan and the 2004 Salt Management Plan. As part of the SNMP update, staff calculated that the overall Main Basin concentration of nitrate is about 15 mg/L. Also, calculations indicate a net loss of nitrogen loading for both current and future conditions at about 35 tons of nitrogen per year.

Staff then outlined the proposed septic system requirements for the NMP. Regionally, Zone 7 shall continue to encourage Best Management Practices and existing wastewater management policies such as encouraging entities to connect to city sewers when and where available. For those properties in or near existing hotspots, staff proposes the following requirements:

- Existing dwelling with no new septic system required will be grandfathered (no new requirements).
- For an existing dwelling proposing a new septic system, an engineered system with at least 50% nitrogen removal will be required.
- For a new residential unit on less than 5 acres, an engineered system with at least 65% nitrogen removal will be required.
- For a new residential unit on greater than 5 acres, an engineered system with at least 50% nitrogen removal will be required.
- For new Commercial Use properties, self-contained systems are encouraged with records kept and regularly submitted indicating proper off-site disposal.
- For new Commercial Use properties proposing a new on-site wastewater treatment system, a hydrogeologic study will be required that shows that the proposed project will improve groundwater quality.

Comments and Questions

The committee provided some feedback on the hotspot areas. Regarding the May School area, the committee commented that the houses in that area have been there for a long time so the nitrate contamination could be coming from historical build up. Staff concurred, adding that aging septic tanks could be failing. Regarding the Greenville area, the committee suggested that the chipper plant in that area may also be adding nitrates through vegetative degradation.

The committee asked about the effect of rainfall and water levels on nitrate concentrations in the hotspot areas. Staff replied that rainfall and water levels could definitely affect nitrate concentrations in groundwater.

The committee asked about the requirements for a one-acre parcel outside the area of concern. Staff indicated that existing septic rules would apply as the Best Management Practices. The committee also asked if wells would be required for the hydrogeologic studies. Staff indicated that that would indeed be the case.

The committee asked where the public should go to get information on engineered systems. Staff answered that septic tanks are permitted through the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health, which has information on their website on the costs and types of available engineered systems, as well as consultants who specialize in this area.

The committee asked about the depth of the wells that were shown in the nitrate map. Staff answered that the wells were all in the upper aquifer and were less than 100 feet deep. The committee recommended that staff specify that on map. Staff added that some members of the public have said they have wells in the hotspot, but their wells have low nitrate concentrations. Staff said that this is because their wells are in a deeper aquifer, often as much as 300 feet deep; however, that does not mean that their septic system will not impact other shallower, down-gradient wells.

Margaret Tracy asked if the large house just south of Buena Vista, which seems to get bigger and bigger, has applied for any septic permits. Staff indicated that there have been no requests for septic permitting forwarded from that property. Ms. Tracy also asked when residents have to reapply for permits. Staff indicated that permits are required for all new systems and the ACEH requires that owners of all engineered systems submit maintenance records.

Alfred Exner asked why differentiate between the 65% and 50% nitrogen removal systems, that is, why not just require a 65% or better system. Staff indicated that they will investigate that option; however the general concept is that there are more engineered systems available at the 50% nitrogen removal level. This could provide the owner with some economic relief if their project has less risk.

4. Regional Reliability Partnership for Bay Area Water

Staff described the genesis of the Bay Area Regional Reliability (BARR) Partnership, explaining that it was an outgrowth of the Bay Area Regional Desalination Project effort. BARR focuses on new interties to facilitate emergency transfers. A fact sheet that was prepared by the participating agencies (Contra Costa Water District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, San Francisco PUC, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Alameda County Water District and Zone 7). This fact sheet has been used in soliciting conceptual grant funding at both the state and federal level.

Associated with this effort, a set of Guiding Principles are under development to provide a framework for future discussions between the participating agencies. Staff recommend that the committee generally endorse the Principles and continue to work with the participating agencies to finalize and bring forward to respective boards, perhaps as early as May.

Comments and Questions

Committee members asked about some of the cost information and were directed to the fact sheet. For instance, the Transfer-Bethany pipeline is estimated at \$200 million dollars, a bit

higher than projected costs for Zone 7's participation in the BDCP. The EBMUD-Zone 7 intertie was described as further along in the concept development phase and estimated around \$25 million. This could be mutually beneficial for emergency transfers of potable water.

The Committee stated their support for bringing the Guiding Principles to the full Board when they are ready. Matt Morrison expressed concern with providing water outside the County, using Dougherty Valley as an example. He explained how the Dougherty Valley developers purchased banked water outside of the valley, and then asked if that water cannot be brought back to the Livermore Valley, was Zone 7 still obligated to provide them water? The Committee explained that in the case of Dougherty Valley, they also provided a water supply/allocation and that, yes, Zone 7 is obligated to provide the same reliability of supply to all Zone 7 customers.

The Committee applauded efforts to improve reliability through collaboration and encouraged staff to continue to pursue the BARR effort.

5. Verbal Reports

None

6. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 5:23 p.m.