

## MEETING SUMMARY

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# CV-SALTS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POLICY SESSION NOTES – FEBRUARY 15, 2018

**PREPARED FOR:** Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority (KRWCA)

**PREPARED BY:** Stephanie Tillman/Land IQ

**DATE:** February 26, 2018

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this meeting summary is to document the presentation and discussion items from the February 15, 2018 2017 CV-SALTS Executive Committee Policy Session. The main purpose of this meeting was to recap and follow up from the January 19 Regional Board workshop and discuss remaining revisions to policy language for the Basin Plan. The draft staff report called Amendments to the Water Quality Control Plans for the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins and Tulare Lake Basin was used as a contextual reference, and was included in the agenda package.

## BACKGROUND

Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) is a collaborative stakeholder driven and managed program to develop sustainable salinity and nitrate management planning for the Central Valley. The goals of CV-SALTS are as follows:

- Sustain the Valley's lifestyle
- Support regional economic growth
- Retain a world-class agricultural economy
- Maintain a reliable, high-quality urban water supply
- Protect and enhance the environment

CV-SALTS includes four working groups:

1. Technical
2. Public Education and Outreach
3. Economic Social Cost
4. Other (CEQA, policy development, etc.)

## ACRONYMS

AID – Alta Irrigation District Archetype	NIMS – Nitrate Implementation Measures Study
ACP – Alternative Compliance Program	P&O Study – Prioritization and Optimization Study
BP – Basin Plan	SGMA – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
BPTC – Best Practicable Treatment and Control	SMCL – Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level
GSA – Groundwater Sustainability Agency	SNMP – Salt and Nutrient Management Plan
IAZ – Initial Analysis Zone	SSALTS – Strategic Salt Accumulation Land and Transport Study
ICM – Initial Conceptual Model	WQO – Water Quality Objective
ILRP – Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program	
LSJR – Lower San Joaquin River	
MUN – Municipal beneficial use	

## SUMMARY AND RELEVANCE TO KRWCA

- **Recap and follow-up from January 19<sup>th</sup> Regional Board Workshop** – This was very brief and not substantive. Daniel thanked all who participated for the time they put into the presentation and panels.
- **Remaining policies in Basin Plan format** – Several wording changes were discussed as detailed below. One main outcome is that because of the tight schedule and the difficulty of meeting notice timelines required by the EPA, the committee agreed to changing the originally planned first of two split board hearings on March 22 to a workshop focused on groundwater. The Basin Plan amendments will then be considered for adoption in a single hearing on May 31. Another main point of discussion was how and where to measure nitrogen for a discharger who chooses to be permitted as an individual. It is likely that more flexibility will be added to account for various scenarios that should not lock a discharger into a high degradation category.
- **Surveillance and Monitoring Program (SAMP)** – Richard Meyerhoff reviewed and discussed the SAMP because it has taken a “back seat” to the nitrate and salt control programs. The take home message here is that existing monitoring programs will be allowed to stand in for SAMP requirements as much as possible. Where existing programs don’t meet SAMP requirements, additional monitoring will need to be done to meet these requirements. Discussion revolved around timeline, costs and report due dates. The committee agreed to increase the Quality Assurance Program Plan (QAPP) time allowed for development from one year to two years.

## DISCUSSION OF AGENDA ITEMS

### SALINITY AND NITRATE CONTROL PROGRAMS

- Consideration of degradation to high quality waters
- Allocation of assimilative capacity
- Salinity exception
- Issuance of time schedules

- Clarification of point of compliance – conservative permitting approach for AGR – see page 17 of 93 of staff report
- Doesn't take into account spatial aspect, but spatial extent of degradation should be considered, because extent of degradation as well as quality parameters should be considered
- This pertains to the conservative approach
- Page 28 – see changes – addresses a discharge limitation the Board is proposing, not an objective, so is in wrong place.
- Page 29 – some language needs clarification that the variance/exception is for the water quality objective and not for the effluent limitation.
- Page 51 – Guidelines should not have “must” in them – change to “should”
- Table N-3 – how to measure nitrate/nitrogen is an important policy issue
  - If participating in MZ, not as important
  - Info is in footnote to this table – but it is important info (footnote 16)
  - Category 3 is one where “upper” would come into conversation, as opposed to “shallow” zone
  - If you were a discharger discharging distilled water, but the water quality of the receiving water was really poor quality, because the discharge quality is measured as it enters the shallow zone, the discharger wouldn't be categorized as Category 1, when it really should be, because it is not degrading, but diluting poor water. So, could make the footnote an “or” – i.e. discharge could be measured as itself OR as it enters the receiving water. Another option is to make the footnote apply to Categories 2 through 5 and not Category 1. Just flagged, not resolved.
  - When this was written, thinking was about N transformations that cause discharge to lose N, but never thought about transformations that make the water gain N (such as mixing with poor quality receiving water)
- Page 41 – Table N-5 – Early Action Plan required if discharger is causing any public water supply or domestic well to be contaminated – contamination means exceeding the water quality objective.
- Boundaries of MZ – should be clear so that it is obvious who should be helped or not helped by the management zone. Should be established at beginning of process.
- Page 88 – uncertainty about interpreting what this is saying – comments on these bullet points - these will not be put into Basin Plan (likely) but the rest of the staff report will (likely).
- Board is suggesting about having another workshop in March, that would not be a formal comment workshop, but that would focus on groundwater specifically, because Jeanne is still putting the staff report together, and Patrick still has to review, and then they have to release it for public comment a required amount of time (per EPA) before the hearing. Because of Federal rules, public has to have it 30 days before the hearing, and that is not likely given its current status.
  - Deadline for comments – Feb 23
  - Workshop - March 22 (instead of hearing)

- May 31 – single hearing for adoption

### **SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING PROGRAM (SAMP)**

- SAMP – surveillance and monitoring program requirements – review and discussion led by Richard Meyerhoff (p. 56 of staff report)
  - Approach is built from existing programs as much as possible
  - Two extremes – somebody comes up with a totally new program; use all existing monitoring programs, but would not necessarily meet all SAMP requirements; so this is a hybrid approach between these two extremes
  - Meant to be not overly prescriptive
    - Surface water requirements
    - Groundwater requirements
    - Recommendations for implementation to other agencies – placeholder at this time
  - See three overall goals and what three key questions program is intended to answer
  - Still unclear regarding when reports are due – has to be added to language
  - Requirements of groundwater will apply to surface water too
  - P. 56 – Assessment cost – applied to all? Or applied to individual who needs it? If everyone pays in to have their own area assessed, then who pays for the broad assessment of whole valley?
  - Considerable discussion about timeline for developing QAPP in one year, because there are numerous other timelines going on at the same time with various regulations. Decided to increase this to two years.

### **SECONDARY MCLS**

- Some changes for secondary MCL language suggested. Main suggestion is to be silent about using total vs. dissolved. EO doesn't think that's a good idea. Need to consider more.
  - Division of Drinking Water has input into this – they want to have some discretion