

Subcommittee on Drinking Water
Draft Report
on the
Meeting of April 5, 2002
to the
Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee

The Drinking Water Subcommittee met on April 5, 2002.

Meeting Summary

Meeting notes of March 18, 2001

The Subcommittee reviewed the meeting notes from the March 18, 2001 meeting without comment.

Subcommittee membership

The Subcommittee has met most of its membership goals both in numbers of members and expertise but it is still checking on one candidate in the wastewater recycling field and is still looking for members with expertise in watershed source control and public health/epidemiology. The chairs have a couple of candidates in mind, and will select one or two additional members shortly.

Conceptual framework for a water quality strategic plan, including defining “An Equivalent Level of Public Health Protection”

The diagram of the Delta drinking water supply system and its relationship to “an equivalent level of public health protection” (ELPH) was revised based upon the comments from members. Changes were made, and new components added, to the diagram, including local water storage, CVP/SWP Operations and Storage, and Education/Outreach.

The Subcommittee first reviewed the initial concept of the diagram, which was created to help the Subcommittee focus on development of a strategic plan. In doing this, the Subcommittee needs to understand the Record of Decision water quality elements and interpret how ROD actions are related to the definition of An Equivalent Level of Public Health Protection. The elements included in the diagram are related to a broad range of ROD actions affecting water quality in the Delta and subsequent treatment and distribution. The purpose of this strategy diagram is to create an intellectual framework, to guide selection of the most cost-effective solutions for CALFED and local water agencies.

Issues/comments/ideas

- “Delivered Water Quality” could be vastly different depending upon what is going into a local water system and how it is handled. In other words, even with the same source

water quality, due to different location, water treatment technology, or operation plans, the output could be vastly different.

- The Subcommittee looks to CALFED to take actions that would drive local infrastructure investments and operations decisions. CALFED agencies need to understand the infrastructure and provide financial and political supports.
- The ELPH diagram is currently only a simplified schematic. We will need higher level of knowledge of the details of the boxes listed in the diagram to create a more complete schematic at the workshop.
- The ELPH diagram is also a conceptual model, which is subjective and still needs to be negotiated. The common interest or bottom line is to deliver high quality water, even though optimally how to get there differs by region.
- Cost/benefit analysis should consider additional health benefits of advanced treatment technology. Advanced technology might have multiple benefits by removing a broad range of contaminants.
- The new added box of “Education/Outreach” is an important addition to the strategy diagram. The concept of “an equivalent level of public health *perception*” could be useful. Education and outreach programs convey the quality issue to the public, and perception could depend on the water quality this Subcommittee decides to achieve.
- Starting with current water quality standards, we can anticipate potential changes and have what-if scenarios for further analysis. This should help us expand the level of analysis, and the analysis will evolve with time as we get better knowledge of issues.
- Water quality regulation starts at the federal level (i.e. EPA), then it gets down to the State level (i.e. DHS), individual utilities, and finally comes to the customers themselves. “Standards” get stricter as you go down the ladder. The minimum levels (customer acceptance) should be our water quality improvement goals.
- “An Equivalent Level of Public Health Protection” is not just meeting health standards. It also means achieving a certain level of health risk. Standards are not what we are shooting for. Public health protection is the goal.
- The box of “Public education and outreach” is not just at the bottom of this conceptual model. In fact, it goes alongside from top to bottom. However, it is not necessary to show direct connections to the diagram boxes.
- Hydrology is implicit in the “Conveyance/Delta Operations” component.

Things to do for the workshop:

The goal for next workshop is to gather information and ideas to help develop the details for the boxes (i.e. components) of the framework.

The Subcommittee was interested to learn more about major CALFED improvements affecting Delta water quality, regional water quality blending/exchanges, water treatment options, and the concept of ELPH, at its next meeting on April 26.

Water quality project priority: Advanced treatment studies

Gartrell reviewed the draft memo he prepared for the meeting, which the Subcommittee discussed in-depth.

Issues/comments/ideas

- Improving in-Delta water quality is not just dependent on CALFED Water Quality Program actions but is also linked to other CALFED programs, such as conveyance and storage improvements.
- The feasibility and cost of advanced treatment technology is essential to evaluation of all water quality improvement projects.
- CALFED should place a high priority on funding and implementing advanced treatment technology studies.
- Local water agencies may already be performing some or most of the advanced treatment studies suggested by the memo.
- While supportive of the memo, Tim Quinn challenged the assertion that such studies are needed for CEQA/NEPA and 404 purposes.
- Studies should cover the entire geographic range of Delta water use instead of being limited to one spot.
- The first phase of the studies suggested by the memo (i.e. current state of knowledge re: treatment technology) could be performed directly by CALFED agency staff.
- The Subcommittee should appoint a technical committee to track and report on the progress of the studies and to provide feedback.
- Memo implies that CALFED has not made treatment technology a high priority when in fact DWQP specifically requested such studies in its PSP.

Action Items: Gartrell will revise memo.

Establishment of technical workgroups

The Subcommittee is interested in establishing technical workgroups to help the Subcommittee and the Drinking Water Quality Program move forward on specific subjects.

Workgroups in the following five technical areas were suggested:

- Treatment Technology
- Source Water Protection
- Blending/Exchanges
- An Equivalent Level of Public Health Protection (ELPH)
- Public Education

Action Items: John will establish technical groups through an open process. The Subcommittee can nominate members or they can self-nominate.

Public Comments

John reported on two follow-up items to the Subcommittee:

- Reimbursement policy for travel expense has been drafted in a memo that may be available at next meeting on April 26.

- In response to the suggestion from the Subcommittee members, the Drinking Water Quality Program (DWQP) will do more reporting to the general public on projects funded by the DWQP. Specifically, by July 1, DWQP will establish a web-based project tracking system of all projects funded.

Agenda for workshop on April 26

Workshop: “An Equivalent Level of Public Health Protection”