

Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee  
Subcommittee on Drinking Water  
Draft Minutes  
Meeting of October 25, 2002

The Drinking Water Subcommittee met on October 25, 2002 (meeting agenda attached).

*Meeting Summary*

Draft minutes September 18, 2002

The Subcommittee reviewed and approved the minutes from the September 18 meeting without further comment.

Business items

John reported a few things to the Subcommittee:

- The proposal recommendations package for Proposition 13 was released to SWRCB on October 3 for workshop and adopted on October 17 with no changes from SWRCB. Contracting will start as the next step.
- On November 5, the Water Use Efficiency Subcommittee will have a meeting in Sacramento. The focus is on desalination technology.

Issues/comments/ideas

- The tour in Southern California was very good and informative.
- Presentation on recommendations to the BDPAC last month was successful, and all DWS recommendations were 'sort of' adopted by the BDPAC. No opposition from the Committee. All recommendations from each subcommittee are being queued up for December when further discussions and decisions can be made based upon Proposition 50 and federal legislation.

Wastewater treatment

Ruben Robles introduced Steve McDonald and Bob Gillette from Carollo Engineers for a presentation on the costs and performance of wastewater treatment. Steve McDonald's presentation - <[http://calfed/BDPAC/Subcommittees/DWQP\\_MeetingNotes\\_10-25-02/CALFED%20Wastewater%20Presentation\\_files/frame.htm](http://calfed/BDPAC/Subcommittees/DWQP_MeetingNotes_10-25-02/CALFED%20Wastewater%20Presentation_files/frame.htm)>.

Steve briefly went over the typical constituents of concern, and described the matrix of advanced treatment processes vs. pollutant reductions. He pointed out that the key is to recognize that it all starts with the conventional activated sludge process in the secondary treatment, and there is logical sequence in reduction of the pollutants. Chemically enhanced primary treatment, conventional multimedia filtration, and some types of nutrient reduction are common. Biological Nutrient Reduction (BNR), Membrane Bioreactors (MBR), and UV/Ozone are emerging

technologies. Chemically enhanced primary treatment and conventional multimedia filtration have an acceptable amount of pollutant reduction for the cost but 'watershed offsets' and reuse may be better.

### Comments/questions

Q. Does BNR (biological nutrient reduction) mean nitrogen eating bacteria?

A. Yes.

Q. What is meant by "watershed offsets"? This is basically pollutant trading. Concept is that dollars may be better spent removing pollutants elsewhere in a watershed rather than investing in advanced treatment.

There was a lengthy discussion about the costs presented, alternative treatment methods (flash distillation), and comparison with drinking water desalination. Brine disposal is related to location, availability of ocean disposal is important, and can drive costs. Domestic wastewater is different than seawater/other saline drinking water sources. Cost of membrane treatment is declining for both water and wastewater treatment.

Q. Where is wastewater treatment headed in the next 15 years?

A. This is a difficult question and the subject of a planning exercise conducted by Water Environment Research Federation (WERF) and others. Water quality management is moving towards a watershed approach where both drinking water and wastewater issues are addressed together. Ruben said that given the state of flux in the regulatory environment, he could not say what SRCSD will be doing. Steve said that he did not think reverse osmosis was where municipal wastewater treatment was headed.

Discussion continued around the costs and benefits of wastewater and drinking water treatment. Case studies are available where these issues have been addressed in a watershed in an integrated fashion. All sources of a pollutant and options for improving water quality need to be considered.

### Groundwater storage and impact on water quality

Introduced by Bob Neufeld, presentation by John Rossi, CEO of Chino Basin Watermaster.

([http://calfed.ca.gov/BDPAC/Subcommittees/DWQP\\_Presentation\\_10-25-02/CALFED\\_Wastewater\\_presentation/frame.htm](http://calfed.ca.gov/BDPAC/Subcommittees/DWQP_Presentation_10-25-02/CALFED_Wastewater_presentation/frame.htm)).

Reclaimed water is becoming more important in Southern California. Reclaimed water, stormwater recharge, existing water supplies, and groundwater recharge are all being looked at together. Driven by overdrafting, the Chino Basin was adjudicated in 1978 that forced otherwise disinterested parties to work together. Water quality was a challenge to ground water storage and reclamation. The system integrates advanced wastewater treatment, stormwater recharge, groundwater desalination, and reclamation. The potential total groundwater storage in Southern California is about 21 million acre-feet. This system gives the ability to shift from dependence on Delta water, which is especially important in dry years. The agricultural community plays an

important role in managing water in the Chino Basin. Grants from the State and incentives from MWD were critical to this project.

Discussion centered around the opportunities for conjunctive use to store water from wet years, water reclamation, and feasibility of using this model in other areas. Water supply reliability is considered an important factor but it is difficult to quantify benefits. Cost of water is highly dependent on the spot market and it's very difficult to fix a price for cost/benefit analysis. Water quality and regulatory issues have been a challenge but not insurmountable. A key to the feasibility of desalination is the availability of ocean disposal via the brine sewer and wastewater agencies. Salt accumulation ultimately limits recycling.

#### Drinking Water Quality Program Work Plan

John Andrew summarized the latest (October 18, 2002) version of the CALFED DWQ work plan. Highlighted changes from the last version:

- outline numbering matches CALFED program tracking system;
- priorities for current year (year 3); support for DWS activities, monitoring and assessment program, and regional coordination; and
- the Freeport project was added as a CALFED activity under Drinking Water.

There was some discussion on listing of the Freeport Project. Why is it called-out separately from the BAB/E. Also, concerns were expressed over how it fits into CALFED.

John asked for feedback on how to fit the work plan into the ELPH conceptual framework.

Additional changes to the funding amounts depending on the availability of bond funds. There are different scenarios depending on the passage or failure of Prop. 50.

#### Issues/comments/ideas

There was some discussion on the way that funding and activities are presented. Work plan needs to present budget and spending accurately showing what has been spent and still reflect that water quality in CALFED is under-funded.

Other work plan issues discussed – EJ issues, budget changes, organization of the program, roles of the agencies under the new governance structure, make items E. and F. more positive.

Recommendation to expand on public education and outreach, item E. Sujatha will work on expanding this item.

#### Strategic plan

Tom Zuckerman presented the October 16, 2002 version of the strategy. He expressed some concern about the perception of one Subcommittee member writing the draft. Any additional comments should be clear recommendations for textual changes and not broad comments. Most

importantly, the document is incomplete. It needs to include specific public policy and investment recommendations to be a real strategy.

Issues/comments/ideas

Were there conflicts between the different comments? One conflict was to include or not include the regional or sub-regional plans. Time frames should be included, it could reflect CALFED ROD but that may not be realistic. There was some discussion about the geographic and topical scope of the document.

Recommendation – recognize this as a “conceptual framework” and consider it largely done. The strategy will be the next major product. As is, it is an important new statement about how to solve drinking water problems. There was no consensus on this recommendation.

Karen Schwinn said that she has about \$50,000 available and has discussed using this for expert help to advance the work of the DWS to the “next level”.

There was a discussion about who should be writing the document and the role of CALFED staff. It was concluded that CALFED staff can and should provide input, assistance, and guidance but the strategy should be (and is) a product of the Subcommittee.

Next steps for writing the “Strategy” (Conceptual Framework?) document will be: Zuckerman will incorporate latest comments, CALFED staff will format and prepare final draft, finalize at next meeting for presentation to BDPAC in December. Comments due to Zuckerman by November 1, 2002.

Discussion about incorporating the ELPH conceptual framework and DWS input on the upcoming SWRCB RFP. The DWS Chairs and John Andrew will discuss an RFP agenda item for the November meeting.

Public comments/issues

None

Next Meeting

November 22, 2002

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Agenda for November 22, 2002

- finalize “Strategy” document
- other items to be determined by the chairs and program manager