

Date: October 8, 2004

To: Members, Drinking Water Subcommittee

From: Scott McCreary and Eric Poncelet, CONCUR, Inc.

Re: Preparing Questions for Consideration by the Water Management Science Board/Drinking Water Standing Panel

The purpose of this memorandum is to help members prepare for the upcoming Drinking Water Subcommittee discussions on the key drinking water quality questions that it will forward to the Water Management Science Board (WM-SB) for review and deliberation.

A note on CONCUR

Our firm, CONCUR, Inc., has been engaged by EPA to help facilitate this process. CONCUR is a Bay Area-based firm specializing in environmental policy analysis and mediation. For the past 7 years, we have worked with CALFED on a wide variety of water management and quality protection issues.

Structure and Function of the WM-SB

The California Bay-Delta Authority (CBDA) is convening the WM-SB this fall. The WM-SB will provide overarching review and coordination of program strategies, plans, and specific issues of strategic importance for program elements that contribute to Drinking Water Quality and Water Supply Reliability. The first WM-SB meeting is provisionally scheduled for January 26-27, 2005.

Given the multiple CBDA Water Management Program elements, the WM-SB intends to convene a number of issue-specific Standing Panels as well as problem-focused ad hoc Task Forces. One of the Standing Panels will focus on water quality with a special focus on drinking water quality issues.

We anticipate the Water Quality Standing Panel will meet approximately twice a year. The Chair of the Water Quality Standing Panel, as well as at least one other member, will be members of the WM-SB. Other Standing Panel members (2-3 total) will be selected by the Chair or the WM-SB for their expertise and the perspective they bring to the subject area. Additional resource experts will also be asked to participate on a more ad hoc basis.

One of the key roles of the WM-SB is to help CBDA staff identify and clarify critical strategic questions for all of the major program areas, including Drinking Water Quality. In particular, the WM-SB will help articulate the scientific dimension of key issues being faced within the various program areas.

Framing Critical Drinking Water Quality Questions

Over the past several months, the Drinking Water Subcommittee has engaged in an extended discussion regarding the key strategic issues facing drinking water quality in the Bay-Delta. To date, the Subcommittee has discussed drinking water issues in the areas of source improvement, treatment technology, monitoring and assessment, emerging contaminants, and regional water quality planning. The following three questions were generally viewed as having the greatest salience:

1. Are there emerging treatment technologies which could be used to address issues within the Bay-Delta?
2. What will the positive and/or negative impacts be to water quality from the DIP, including the emerging Salinity Management Plan?
3. Would it be appropriate to develop a "Drinking Water Index" to define "Whole Water Potability," similar to the Whole Effluent Toxicity in wastewater effluent discharge, to address the synergic effect of contaminants in drinking water?

Note: this list of questions is not intended to be definitive; it merely represents the most recent Water Quality Subcommittee thinking on this topic.

Guidance for Drinking Water Subcommittee Review of Critical Questions

On October 22, 2004, the Drinking Water Subcommittee is scheduled to meet. One of the meeting's major goals is to discuss and refine these key questions. The goal is to forward a final set of questions for consideration by the WM-SB. The WM-SB would review the questions for adequacy and articulate the scientific foundations and challenges involved.

As part of the agenda for the October 22 Drinking Water Subcommittee meeting, we will facilitate a discussion to engage these questions with the following guiding considerations in mind:

- Are the questions clear and complete? Do the questions as framed need either a clearer statement of content or a greater level of detail?
- Are there other critical questions that need to be added to this list?
- What policy decisions might these questions help inform?
- What disciplinary perspectives are needed to address the science underlying these questions?
- What individuals might serve as strong candidates for the Drinking Water Standing Panel? What individuals might be candidates to serve as supplemental resource experts?

The goal is to achieve general consensus by Subcommittee members around the questions to be forwarded to the WM-SB.

Anticipated Next Steps

Following incorporation of the refinements to the strategic questions during the October 22 Drinking Water Subcommittee meeting, the following next steps are anticipated:

- Convene a follow-up stakeholder workshop to elicit broader review of the draft questions. The workshop would be targeted to staff level stakeholders for the purposes of: 1) inviting additional questions that merit WM-SB deliberation, and 2) exploring in greater depth the underlying technical elements of the key strategic concerns.
- Present the Drinking Water Quality critical questions to the WM-SB for review at its January 2005 meeting.