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METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

  
 EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

August 30, 1994

To: Board of Directors (Water Problems Committee--Information)

From: General Manager

Subject: California Urban Water Agencies' Proposal to the State Water Resources Control Board Regarding Bay/Delta Protection

Report

The California Urban Water Agencies (CUWA) will present recommendations regarding Bay/Delta regulatory protection at the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Board) workshop on September 1-2, 1994. This workshop will be the fifth workshop held to discuss the State Board's pending draft Water Quality Control Plan which is scheduled for completion in December 1994. These workshops are part of the State Board's triennial review of the 1991 Water Quality Control Plan required by the federal Clean Water Act and the California Water Code.

The principal objective of CUWA's recommendations is to urge the State Board to: 1) adopt standards for estuarine protection by early 1995; and 2) support development of a joint State and federal multi-species comprehensive ecosystem planning process to minimize species-by-species listings under the Endangered Species Act. Specifically, CUWA's proposal recommends implementing:

1. An estuarine habitat standard incorporating a modified version of the X2 salinity standard that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed in January 1994;
2. Other water project operational measures and best management practices to protect aquatic resources; and
3. Regulatory actions to control other bio-degradation (non-outflow related) factors such as unscreened diversions, toxics, poaching, exotic species, etc.

CUWA's proposal also includes implementation mechanisms such as: 1) a water supply impact threshold (cap) beyond which standards would be met with purchased water; 2) a mitigation credits program to allow responsible entities

alternative, but equivalent means of mitigating their impacts; and 3) an environmental mitigation fund to support water purchases to meet standards above the cap and to fund other environmental improvements. These implementation mechanisms will allow environmental objectives to be met in a manner that minimizes impacts to the State's economy and spreads responsibility among all entities who have an impact on the Bay/Delta ecosystem.

CUWA's recommendations are consistent with components of a larger overall comprehensive ecosystem approach to solving Bay/Delta environmental and water supply reliability problems. Although the details of the comprehensive solution are not completely defined at this time, such an approach provides for integrating existing and future State and federal resource management programs to resolve Bay/Delta problems.

Copies of CUWA's recommendations to the State Board are available at the Executive Secretary's Office upon request. Staff will continue to keep your Board fully informed of developments regarding the State Board's water quality proceedings.

Recommendation

For information only.

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Concur:

  
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