



# Update on Water Quality Regulations

Engineering and Operations Committee

Item 6b

March 7, 2011

# Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)

- Part of California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA)
- Develops public health risk information for state and local government agencies
- Health-protective exposure standards
  - Air quality standards
  - Proposition 65 standards
  - Public Health Goals (PHGs)

# Public Health Goals (PHGs)

- The level of a chemical contaminant in drinking water that does not pose a significant health risk
- NOT enforceable and only represent non-mandatory goals
- Development
  - Review all relevant scientific information
  - Determine health risk assessment (draft PHG)
  - Public comment period
  - Finalize PHG
- PHGs must be reviewed every 5 years

# Development of a Drinking Water Standard [Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)]

- MCLs are drinking water standards established by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
- Key Steps
  - Receives PHG from OEHHA
  - Determines analytical capability
  - Evaluates occurrence data
  - Identifies best treatment technology and treatment cost
  - Proposes MCL and solicits public comment
  - Finalizes MCL

# Revised Chromium 6 Public Health Goal

- On Dec. 31, 2010 OEHHA reduced the draft public health goal (PHG) for chromium 6 from 0.06 parts per billion (ppb) to 0.02 ppb
- No drinking water standard for chromium 6; total chromium is regulated (State MCL is 50 ppb)
- Chromium 6 in MWD's finished water ranges from non-detect (<0.03 ppb) to 0.45 ppb
- Next steps by staff:
  - Collaborated with member agencies and the Association of California Water Agencies to comment on draft PHG
  - Implement Chromium 6 Action Plan

# Chromium 6 Action Plan

- Submitted response letter to OEHHA
- Work with member agencies and water industry groups
- Assess occurrence, treatment and operational impacts
- Work with CDPH on MCL development
- Track federal regulatory developments
- Continue with source water protection efforts

# Chromium 6 Hearing

- Senator Boxer (Environment & Public Works Committee Chair) convened a hearing on Feb. 2
  - Chromium 6 and perchlorate in drinking water
  - EPA's regulatory process
  - Proposed legislation (S. 78, S. 79)
- Witnesses
  - Lisa Jackson, USEPA Administrator
  - Representatives from water utilities, water industry trade associations, NIH, academia, Environmental Working Group
- Next steps
  - Follow legislative process for S. 78, S. 79
  - Track EPA's regulatory process for chromium 6 and perchlorate

# AB 403 – Chromium 6 Standard

- On February 14, Assembly Member Campos introduced AB 403, requiring CDPH to establish an MCL for Chromium 6 by January 1, 2013
- If an MCL is not set by that date, the bill would require that the PHG become the MCL



# Revised Perchlorate Public Health Goal

- On Jan. 7, 2011 OEHHA proposed lowering the existing PHG for perchlorate from 6 ppb to 1 ppb
- After reviewing comments, OEHHA will determine the final PHG
- In 2007, CDPH set a drinking water standard of 6 ppb
- If the PHG is lowered, CDPH would reevaluate the existing standard
- Perchlorate levels in 2010 did not exceed 1.7 ppb
- Next Steps
  - Submit comments on draft PHG and assess consequences if MCL is reduced

# Drinking Water Fluoridation

- On Jan. 7, 2011 the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) proposed changing the recommended optimal level for fluoride in drinking water from a range of 0.7-1.2 mg/L to 0.7 mg/L
- 2006 National Academies of Science review of fluoride determined:
  - Current fluoridation levels not necessary due to other sources of fluoride (e.g., dental products)
  - Lower optimal level of 0.7 mg/L would aid in preventing dental fluorosis (staining and pitting of teeth) while still preventing tooth decay
- CDPH must reconcile proposed change with current standards in California

