

MEETING SUMMARY

CV-SALTS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POLICY SESSION NOTES – JANUARY 11, 2018

PREPARED FOR: Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority (KRWCA)

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DATE: January 15, 2018

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this meeting summary is to document the presentation and discussion items from the January 11, 2018 2017 CV-SALTS Executive Committee Policy Session. The main purpose of this meeting was to review revised Basin Plan language for the nitrate and salinity control programs and review and finalize the presentation for the Regional Board for the January 19 workshop. The first hearing of the split hearing for the Basin Plan will be in March, and the second hearing, when the Basin Plan is expected to be adopted, will be in June 2018.

BACKGROUND

Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) is a collaborative stakeholder driven and managed program to develop sustainable salinity and nitrate management planning for the Central Valley. The goals of CV-SALTS are as follows:

- Sustain the Valley's lifestyle
- Support regional economic growth
- Retain a world-class agricultural economy
- Maintain a reliable, high-quality urban water supply
- Protect and enhance the environment

CV-SALTS includes four working groups:

1. Technical
2. Public Education and Outreach
3. Economic Social Cost
4. Other (CEQA, policy development, etc.)

ACRONYMS

AID – Alta Irrigation District Archetype	NIMS – Nitrate Implementation Measures Study
ACP – Alternative Compliance Program	P&O Study – Prioritization and Optimization Study
BP – Basin Plan	SGMA – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
BPTC – Best Practicable Treatment and Control	SMCL – Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level
GSA – Groundwater Sustainability Agency	SNMP – Salt and Nutrient Management Plan
IAZ – Initial Analysis Zone	SSALTS – Strategic Salt Accumulation Land and Transport Study
ICM – Initial Conceptual Model	WQO – Water Quality Objective
ILRP – Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program	
LSJR – Lower San Joaquin River	
MUN – Municipal beneficial use	

SUMMARY AND RELEVANCE TO KRWCA

- **Basin Plan Presentation for Public Workshop on January 19**
 - Presentation will leave room for public comment and discussion with the Board.
 - Some aspects of the each program, but particularly the nitrate control program, have not been fleshed out. These will be focal points during workshop.
 - Shallow groundwater definition is an important issue to clarify
 - Salinity – some discussion is still needed on how dischargers should be required or not required to participate in the P&O study
 - Conditional prohibition of discharge – though a blanket order revision will be applied to ILRP permittees, dairy doesn't want the same approach
 - Supporting policies – exceptions were discussed in the context of ensuring that they are not perceived as permanent solutions; rather they are temporary solutions, which, if they can't be met, need to go through a process to develop into a site-specific objective.

AGENDA ITEMS

BASIN PLAN PRESENTATION OUTLINE

CONTROL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- Technical studies
- Strategies
- Language to describe policies
- Development into control programs
- Basin plan goals and measures of success
- Salt and nitrate management strategy – broad perspective – two approaches in each strategy

- Key elements for program of implementation
 - Concepts
 - Control programs
 - Policies
- Issues/clarifications – workshop focus
 - Nitrate program
 - How to define shallow zone in nitrate program
 - Timeframes
 - New/expanding dischargers
 - Areas outside of valley floor
 - Collaboration with communities
 - Coordination with GSAs
 - Alternative compliance requirements
- Also some focus areas for salinity program
- Recommended priority areas
 - Groundwater basins – priority 1 and 2, remaining areas
 - Areas not part of a groundwater basin
- Re-defining shallow zone
 - In the context of ESJ revisions, how do we integrate/address comments related to CV-SALTS? How do we make sure the boards know all the work CV-SALTS has done, and make sure they don't adopt an order that has not considered the CV-SALTS work? This order is precedential.
 - The term shallow groundwater is used and defined in the ESJ order.
- Early Action Plan Components
 - Identification and outreach
 - Coordination
 - Funding
 - Schedule
- Focused highlights of management zone revisions
 - Preliminary proposal
 - Final proposal
 - Implementation plan
- Alternative Compliance – time schedule and minimum requirements
- Salinity
- Salinity phases

- Salinity permitting strategy – pathways
- Conservative permitting approach
- Alternative permitting approach
- Phase 1 P&O study – key milestones
- Dededesignation – some parts of this still need clarification
- Sac Valley salt issue is different from salt issues in south valley
- Salinity management strategy – Phase 1 is only information-finding phase that does not include prioritization, so we should not show maps that indicate that areas have been prioritized in terms of salt, even though we know ambient conditions from the high-resolution study.
- Do we use same definition of shallow groundwater for nitrate and salinity? Would be complicated to use more than one definition.
- Clay suggested using effluent/discharge – if salinity is a certain percentage of objective, then discharge has to participate. Non-point source dischargers like ag would have to participate, because if you used soil pore water as a measure of discharge, because of leaching salts, would be over limit. For coalition to consider.
- CVSC decided on the suggested option of using an effluent threshold, or some percentage of it, to determine if permittees should be required to participate in the P&O study.
- Conditional prohibition of nitrate discharges to groundwater – dairies
 - JP thinks it is not a good idea to apply a blanket conditional prohibition to dairies; instead, use management zone participation and requirements in their order.
 - Salinity is a lot easier to regulate with dairies than nitrate; there is no CEQA document to allow dairy permit to be altered in this way, according to Patrick. Salt would not require major CEQA adjustment, but nitrate would.
- Supporting Policies
 - Revisions to current exceptions
 - Question posed – what N is referred to in exceptions policy – total, nitrate and TKN – not answered yet.
 - 5-year reviews are unclear
 - Exceptions are meant to be temporary
- Option #2 Conditional exception - variance for salinity based WDRs
 - Disagreement about interim limits and eligibility
 - Conversion factor
 - Fundamental issue – do you have to be in P&O study to reap benefits of drought and conservation policy.
- Modifications in response to public comment
- Discussion about what should go in staff report and what should go in Basin Plan language