



**Presentations on the Impact of Water Quality Standards on
State and Local Water Supplies**

Water Commission members have expressed interest in learning more about the impacts that new or changed drinking water regulations may have on existing local water supplies, the cost to treat water supplies to meet new requirements, and the potential impacts that changes could have on statewide and regional water delivery systems.

The California Department of Public Health has proposed lowering the allowable level of chromium-6 in drinking water. California is the first state in the nation to propose such a rule. There is much discussion about steps to address other contaminants, such as arsenic and nitrates, which pose tremendous challenges to local drinking water systems. A report done by the State Water Resources Control Board in 2013 showed that from 2002-2010, 680 (out of 3,037) community water systems serving nearly 21 million residents, relied on a contaminated groundwater source affected by one or more 'principal contaminants'.

At the March meeting the Water Commission will hear from two speakers on some of the challenges many communities will face under the chromium regulations.

Dr. Tim Worley, Executive Director of the American Water Works Association's California Nevada Section, will speak to this issue from the aspect of groundwater agencies potentially looking for a surface water source due to extremely high projections of treating water to comply with the coming chromium (VI) regulation, and how this fits in the larger context of water quality challenges for water agencies.

Mr. Rich Atwater, Executive Director of the Southern California Water Committee will speak on the impacts of new water quality requirements on state and local water supplies, the management of resources, and costs to agencies/ratepayers. The Committee provided comments to the California Department of Public Health in October 2013, in response to new Regulations for Proposed Draft Maximum Contaminant Level for Hexavalent Chromium stating:

"A review of the best available science demonstrates that there is no public health benefit associated with lowering the MCL for Cr6 from 50 ppb to 10 ppb. In fact, there is new scientific

evidence that demonstrates that the current MCL is fully protective with respect to the cancer end-point and no change in the MCL is mandated. In addition, using CDPH's numbers, the proposed MCL of 10 ppb is not economically feasible because of the unprecedented treatment costs placed on small water systems. Actually, the cost burdens at 10 ppb will be much more severe than CDPH acknowledges because there are numerous flaws in the Department's analysis that lead to a substantial undercounting of treatment costs. We ask that the Department take appropriate action to reconsider its proposed MCL."

Mr. Omar Carrillo, Policy Analyst for the Community Water Center, will speak on the issue of water quality standards from the perspective of the work that his organization has done to address the issues of contaminated drinking water and groundwater protection in disadvantaged communities.

The Association of California Water Agencies, in an October 10, 2013 letter to the California Department of Public Health encouraged CDPH to "consider the potentially significant implications of proposed MCL on California's complex system of water management. In cases where treatment of a source will require time to implement or is not economically feasible, water agencies will be forced to evaluate the development and use of alternative sources of drinking water, including surface water supplies. The direct and indirect costs associated with this "substitution effect" of the proposed MCL were not considered by the Department in the proposed MCL. The Department should consider the possible water supply management impacts of the proposed MCL."

Contact

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