

Recomputation of Ambient Water Quality for the Period 1999 to 2018

- Work with the State Water Board to align the AWQ database with requirements from the Recycled Water Policy, including reporting periods.
- Work with the State Water Board to develop and potentially implement Water Board methodologies for determining “at-risk” public water systems, domestic wells, and state small water systems (Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience [SAFER] Program).

5.6 Response to Regional Board Request

On June 22, 2020, the Regional Board submitted comments to the Task Force on the Draft Technical Memorandum that contained the Recomputation of Ambient Water Quality for the Period 1999 to 2018. In their comment letter, the Regional Board urged the Task Force to evaluate the existing Salt and Nitrogen Management Plan contained in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Santa Ana Region as compared to provisions contained in the State Water Board’s updated 2019 Recycled Water Policy. Under the 2019 Recycled Water Policy, salt and nutrient management plans adopted prior to April 8, 2019 must be evaluated by April 8, 2024. The evaluation includes assessing data to identify the following:

- Observed trends in water quality data as compared with trends predicted in the salt and nutrient management plan
- The ability of the monitoring network to adequately characterize groundwater quality in the basin
- Potential new data gaps
- Groundwater quality impacts predicted in the salt and nutrient management plan based on most recent trends and any relied-upon models, including an evaluation of the ability of the model to simulate groundwater quality
- Available assimilative capacity based on observed trends and most recent water quality data; and
- Projects that are reasonably foreseeable at the time of this data assessment but may not have been when the salt and nutrient management plan was prepared or last updated.

Based on the results of this assessment, the Regional Board (in consultation with stakeholders) needs to consider if an update to an existing salt and nutrient management plan is warranted to make it consistent with the 2019 Recycled Water Policy.

The next Recomputation of Ambient Water Quality will be for the 20-year period 2002-2021, and will thus need to be performed in 2022 and 2023. The timing of this next Recomputation period matches well with the 2024 deadline for evaluation of the existing salt and nitrogen management plan, and should address the data assessment and evaluation requirements as spelled out in the 2019 Recycled Water Policy. To ensure that the next Recomputation addresses all of the assessment requirements in the 2019 Recycled Water Policy, the Task Force will convene a scoping committee made up of interested Task Force members - including Regional Board staff. The purpose of the scoping committee is to evaluate the Task Force’s current recomputation approach as compared to the data assessment needs in the 2019 Recycled Water Policy, and identify additional assessments, data gaps, or special studies that may need to occur over the next several years so that the April 8, 2024 data assessment requirement can be met. The scoping committee will bring forward proposed recommendations to the Task Force in a timely manner for consideration.