



California Water Quality Monitoring Council



Matthew Rodriquez
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

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Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor



John Laird
Secretary for
Natural Resources

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Mr. Matthew Rodriquez
Secretary for Environmental Protection
California Environmental Protection Agency
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WATER QUALITY MONITORING COUNCIL – TRIENNIAL AUDIT REPORT

Dear Secretary Rodriquez,

California Water Code Section 13181(h) and a Memorandum of Understanding between the California Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Agencies requires that the Secretary for Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Secretary for Natural Resources, conduct a triennial audit of the effectiveness of *A Comprehensive Monitoring Program Strategy for California*, which was developed by the California Water Quality Monitoring Council and delivered to you in December 2010. As a first step in the audit process, you asked that the Monitoring Council conduct a self-audit. The result of that self-evaluation is enclosed.

As outlined in the enclosed report, the Monitoring Council and its nine interagency workgroups have made substantial progress toward improving the efficiency and effectiveness California's system of water quality and associated ecosystem monitoring and assessment and in making the resulting information available to decision makers and the public via the internet. These accomplishments are even more remarkable considering that they were made largely through voluntary efforts since the enabling legislation, SB 1070 (Statutes of 2006), came with no dedicated funding and gave the Monitoring Council no direct authority for strategy implementation.

The Monitoring Council's self-evaluation report concludes that without explicit management support and dedicated funding, the current level of effort is not sustainable and the letter and intent of SB 1070 cannot be fulfilled. The Monitoring Council urges you to augment our first triennial self-audit through a formal third-party external review.

Based on our self-evaluation, the Monitoring Council makes the following recommendations:

To the Secretaries of the California Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Agencies – Provide the much-needed top-down direction for your departments, boards, and commissions to implement the Monitoring Council’s Strategy. Allocate staff time, not just to attend Monitoring Council workgroup meetings, but to perform the legwork needed to integrate their monitoring programs with those of other governmental and non-governmental organizations and to make the resulting data and information accessible through the My Water Quality portals. Direct departmental staff to use the many tools developed by the Monitoring Council’s workgroups, so as to allow data from multiple programs to be integrated to support broader assessments of the state’s water quality and aquatic ecosystem health.

To the California Legislature – Provide a dedicated source of funding and staff positions specifically tasked with coordinating water quality and associated ecosystem monitoring, assessment, and reporting efforts for the departments, boards, and commissions within the California Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Agencies. Funding and positions are needed to: (a) enable staff to participate in the Monitoring Council’s workgroups; (b) implement technology solutions, which would open up the environmental data systems within these agencies so that the data can be readily accessed by other governmental and non-governmental organizations, and (c) develop and maintain the My Water Quality internet portals that provide water quality and aquatic ecosystem health data and information to decision makers and the public.

Members of the Monitoring Council, its Executive Director, and Assistant Director are available to brief agency and departmental executives and managers, members of the legislature, and appropriate legislative committees.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Bishop, Chief Deputy Director
State Water Resources Control Board
Monitoring Council Co-Chair
Representing Cal/EPA

Paul Helliker, Deputy Director
Delta & Statewide Water Management
Department of Water Resources
Monitoring Council Co-Chair
Representing the Natural Resources Agency

Enclosure

cc: John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources, California Natural Resources Agency
Members of the California Water Quality Monitoring Council