Statewide Mercury Policy

Control Program for Mercury in Reservoirs

December 17, 2012
Why a Statewide Mercury Policy?

- Protect the health of humans and wildlife who eat fish from California’s waters
  - Set standards for safe amounts of mercury
  - Reduce mercury/methylmercury in water and fish
- Efficiency, consistency
Mercury-impaired waters
What Could a Policy include?

- Numeric Mercury fish tissue objectives
  - fish tissue objectives implementation plan

- Mercury control programs
  - Reservoirs

- Future control programs
  - Rivers, creeks, streams, bays, estuaries, and lagoons
Reservoir Fish Mercury Levels

Average mercury concentrations in top trophic level reservoir fish

2010 303(d) List
- Greater than 0.7 mg/kg
  - TL4
- 0.2 - 0.7 mg/kg
  - TL4, TL3
- Less than 0.2 mg/kg
  - TL4

Not on 303(d) List
- Greater than 0.7 mg/kg
  - TL4, TL3
- 0.2 - 0.7 mg/kg
  - TL4, TL3
- Less than 0.2 mg/kg
  - TL4, TL3
Potential Ways to Reduce Mercury Levels in Fish

- Mercury sources
- Reservoir chemistry
- Fisheries management
Sources of Mercury
Sources: Mine Waste
Sources: Air Emissions
Sources: Urban Areas
Water Changes Due to Dams

Before

After
Reservoir Chemistry
Reservoir Chemistry and Water Management

O_2

MeHg → Hg
Photodemethylation

Low O_2

Hg ↔ MeHg
Bacterial methylation

Mercury Mines
Atmospheric Deposition

Soil
Springs

Evasion
Urban Runoff & Wastewater

Gold Mines
Fisheries Management

- Species
- Size limits
- Catch/release
- Signage
Statewide Policy and Reservoir Project Schedule

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<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>CEQA Scoping Meetings</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy and Staff Report Preparation</td>
<td>March 2012- Spring 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scientific Peer Review</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
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<td>Circulate Staff Report for Public Comment</td>
<td>Summer 2013</td>
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<td>Board Workshop</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
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<td>Board Adoption Hearing</td>
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For more information:

- Project web page:
  www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/mercury

- Sign up for email notices for both projects at:
  www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml#quality

- Email: MercuryProject@waterboards.ca.gov