



baywire

News and Updates from the Governing Board of the
Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

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Governing Board Discusses Possible County-Wide Water Quality Fee

Should the county assess a property-based fee in order to address water quality problems throughout the region? At its April 2009 meeting, the SMBRC Governing Board considered the benefits of such a measure. Discussing Assembly Bill (AB) 139, authored by Assembly Member Julia Brownley, and sponsored by the Flood Control District, the Board engaged in a lively discourse about water quality issues in the watershed and the need to address them.

Governing Board members expressed support for a County-wide stormwater fee that would be spent on multi-benefit projects to clean up polluted runoff while increasing open space, recreation, wildlife habitat and other natural services in our communities.

AB 139 would authorize the Flood Control District to develop a ballot measure that could authorize it to levy a fee on property owners to use to address water quality and stormwater issues throughout the District's jurisdiction. Existing law requires any such fee be approved by the affected property owners before it can be assessed. The bill would authorize the election at which the property owners would vote on the proposed fee.

County representatives on the Governing Board noted that extensive discussions with affected property owners have shown that there is general approval for such a fee, even in a tough economy. The Flood Control District representatives noted that the fee is necessary to address the increasingly difficult water quality issues facing the region in the 21st century.

Local government representatives to the Governing Board had initially expressed concern about distribution of any money received from the fee, reasoning that if property owners within their city limits are assessed a fee, a portion of it should go to the city to address their unique water quality problems. Because of the Flood Control District's extensive outreach in recent weeks, including a series of sub-regional meetings with local governments, a tentative agreement on distribution of fees was reached, as well as a series of commitments to address water quality and stormwater issues specifically.

AB 139 has been referred to the California State Assembly Committee on Local Government, awaiting its first policy committee hearing. Assuming that it moves through the legislative process without significant opposition, it is possible that the measure could be on the local ballot as early as Spring 2010.

MEETING UPDATE

- *County-Wide Water Quality Fee*
- *New State of the Bay Report Under Development*
- *Bay Watershed Council Welcomes the Malibu Surfing Association*

SAVE the DATE

2009 Governing Board
meetings will be held on:

Jun 18
Aug 20
Oct 15
Dec 17



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New State of the Bay Report Under Development

It's time to take another close look at the State of Santa Monica Bay. The SMBRC is preparing a new State of the Bay report, a follow-up to the last Report in 2005. Our Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been involved every step of the way, recommending issues and indicators, developing the outline, and giving feedback on the data analyses and articles for the Report.

The Report reflects the SMBRC's new Bay Restoration Plan and contains sections relating to two of the Plan's three priority issues (Water Quality and Natural Resources). The third priority issue, "Benefits and Values to Humans," will be discussed throughout the report in pop-out boxes alongside relevant stories. TAC members and staff have already found and analyzed data and drafted several stories at this point. Additional data are being analyzed in coming months for additional articles that will appear in the report.

The finalized State of the Bay Report is scheduled to be published in December. The SMBRC will hold a State of the Bay Conference to present and discuss the report's findings in January 2010. Watch for your save-the-date information and we look forward to seeing you there!

Bay Watershed Council Welcomes the Malibu Surfing Association

In a joint meeting between the Governing Board and the Bay Watershed Council (BWC), the Malibu Surfing Association was unanimously elected as the newest member of the BWC.

The 71-member BWC is the broad stakeholder body of the SMBRC with its primary responsibility being to advise the Governing Board on Bay Restoration priorities. It consists of the various federal, state, and local agencies and representatives with an interest in the Santa Monica Bay watershed, as well as non-profit environmental and user groups and local businesses.

The Malibu Surfing Association is a welcome addition to the BWC, as it is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization dedicated to the fellowship of surfing and to the stewardship of Malibu Surfrider Beach. According to the Association's representatives, it speaks on behalf of its members, the surfing community, and the 1.5 million annual visitors to Malibu Surfrider Beach who should be able to use this recreational resource without fear of illness.

The Association states that "clean water, a clean beach, and protection for one of the world's perfect waves are its mandate. The organization works with other surfing clubs, environmental organizations, city governments, and other agencies to realize this vision."

Welcome aboard!

