

 **Region 9 News Release**
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- **EPA ANNOUNCES FINAL CALIFORNIA WATERS POLLUTANTS LIST**

Agency Names Dioxins, Furans, Dioxin-Like PCBs as Bay 'High Priorities'

SAN FRANCISCO -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized its decision today to add dioxins, furans and the pesticides DDT, dieldrin and chlordane as high priorities to California's list of pollutants that are impairing water quality in San Francisco Bay.

The action is part of the EPA's larger decision to add 37 rivers and streams and 12 additional pollutants to the State Water Board's 1998 list of impaired waters in need of pollution control plans. The list includes 35 Bay Area creeks that are affected by the pesticide diazinon and Oakland's Lake Merritt, which has had problems with low dissolved oxygen and excessive floating material. The EPA approved the state's list in November, which for the first time includes exotic species as a threat to the Bay.

"It's time to get serious about dioxins and PCBs," said Felicia Marcus, EPA regional administrator. "This decision will focus federal and state attention on a series of pollutants that have been compromising San Francisco Bay and other critical California waterways for too long."

What the Decision Means

The state's list includes particular pollutants of concern for each waterway, and the state's priority (high, medium, or low) for creating control plans for each pollutant on each waterway. The biennial listing, required under the federal Clean Water Act, is used by federal, state, and local agencies to set these priorities.

The EPA set a high priority for plans to control dioxins, furans and dioxin-like PCBs in San Francisco Bay. These compounds include seven types of dioxin, 10 types of furans, and 12 types of PCBs. The state had already listed PCBs, but the EPA is setting a higher priority ranking for dioxin-like PCBs because they pose an unacceptably high health risk to people who eat fish from the Bay.

In addition to announcing today's decision, the EPA has undertaken several other measures to address dioxin and PCB pollution.

The agency recently proposed a rule that would require a lower threshold for dioxin discharges that companies would have to report as part of the Toxics Release Inventory, an annual federal community right-to-know program. The EPA is currently working with Bay Area environmental groups, other government agencies and the hospital industry to minimize hospital waste, much of which is linked to dioxin formation during incineration. The agency has also set a number of technical standards for business and industry nationwide that will reduce dioxin discharges.

"We hope to continue working with the state and others to educate people on the health threats posed by eating certain fish caught in San Francisco Bay," Marcus said. "At the same time, we should begin devising a comprehensive strategy to rid the Bay of dioxins, furans, PCBs, and other critical pollutants. The long term health of the Bay -- one of our country's most treasured water bodies -- depends on it."

JUST ONE OF MANY ^{What's Next} E.P.A. REPORTS

The California's State Water Resources Control Board's list guides the state's

development of water pollution control plans called "total maximum daily loads" (TMDLs) for each water body and pollutant of concern. TMDLs are assessments of pollution sources in a given watershed, together with estimates of the maximum amount of each pollutant that a water body can absorb while still meeting local needs for clean water.

The EPA is working with California's regional water quality control boards to develop TMDLs for all of the impaired waterways. Devising the TMDLs will require substantial effort to conduct additional monitoring, characterize sources including air sources, and identify control strategies. Several TMDL efforts are already underway throughout California.

Once the TMDLs are developed, they are implemented through regulatory pollution control programs administered by government agencies and voluntary efforts of watershed stakeholders and landowners. Regulatory programs control discharges from wastewater treatment plants, industrial facilities, urban stormwater systems and other discharge sources. Voluntary approaches are often used to address polluted runoff from operations such as agricultural and livestock management.

The EPA made its final decision after reviewing nearly 200 comments that were received during a public comment period that ended in December. The full list, including the EPA's additions, is available on the Internet at: <http://www.epa.gov/region09/water/tmdl>.

EPA Additions to 1998 California 303(d) List

North Coast Regional Board: Stemple Creek, Estero de San Antonio
Pollutant: nutrients
Priority: low

San Francisco Bay Regional Board:
San Francisco Bay (all segments): Central S.F. Bay, Lower S.F. Bay, South S.F. Bay, Carquinez Strait, Richardson Bay, San Pablo Bay, Suisun Bay, Sacramento San Joaquin Delta
Pollutants: dioxins, furans
Priority: high (high priority ranking also set for dioxin-like PCBs, already listed by state)
Pollutants: DDT, dieldrin, chlordane
Priority: low

Lake Merritt:
Pollutants: dissolved oxygen, floating material
Priority: low

Creeks: Mt. Diablo Creek, Pine Creek, Pinole Creek, Rodeo Creek, San Pablo Creek, Walnut Creek, Wildcat Creek, Laurel Creek, Ledge wood Creek, Suisun Slough, Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio, Corte Madera Creek, Coyote Creek (Marin County), Gallinas Creek, Miller Creek, Novato Creek, San Antonio Creek, San Rafael Creek, San Mateo Creek, Calabazas Creek, Coyote Creek (Santa Clara County), Guadalupe River, Los Gatos Creek, Matadero Creek, Permanente Creek, San Felipe Creek, San Francisquito Ck., Saratoga Creek, Stevens Creek, Alameda Creek, Arroyo de la Laguna, Arroyo Del Valle, Arroyo Hondo, San Leandro Creek, San Lorenzo Creek
Pollutant: diazinon
Priority: low

Los Angeles Regional Board: Santa Clara River, Reaches 7 and 8
Pollutant: chlorides
Priority: medium

Central Valley Regional Board: Stockton Deep Water Channel
Pollutants: dioxins, furans, PCBs
Priority: medium

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