

California Department of Water Resources NEWS

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Updated Report on State Water Project Efforts to Assure Water Quality

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Contractors today announced publication of a new report on the Department's efforts to assure high-quality drinking water.

The report is entitled "California State Water Project Sanitary Survey Update Report-1996." The Department of Health Services (DHS) requires that such sanitary surveys be conducted every five years. The purpose of a sanitary survey is to identify and document conditions within the watershed that create actual or potential water quality problems that would affect use of State Water Project (SWP) waters for drinking water supply.

DWR, which provides water to about two-thirds of California's population, invests about \$4 million per year to monitor and study water quality, from a drinking water perspective, in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and State Water Project.

DWR provides monitoring data to agencies that treat SWP water to assure safe, high-quality water at the tap.

Extensive monitoring by DWR, coupled with monitoring and treatment by water contractors and local agencies, results in drinking water that consistently meets the high standards required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and DHS.

The new report is a five-year follow-up to the original Sanitary Survey, completed in 1990. It was conducted by DWR's Division of Local Assistance in conjunction with the State Water Contractors, the

organization representing 29 agencies with long-term contracts for use of SWP water. The report documents actions taken since the 1990 survey and recommends steps for future action.

DWR already is taking steps to implement a major recommendation--increased pathogen and microbe monitoring. DWR has agreed to join with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWDSC) in a partnership effort to expand monitoring for pathogens--in particular, Cryptosporidium, which can be found in water supplies affected by human or animal wastes.

In recent years, Cryptosporidium has been identified as a cause of waterborne gastrointestinal disease that can be fatal to individuals with compromised immune systems. There have been no documented waterborne disease outbreaks from Cryptosporidium in California.

DWR plans to implement the partnership effort with MWDSC through an action committee to be formed through the State Water Contractors.

The report found that the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is an important source of organic carbon compounds that form unwanted chemical byproducts when water is disinfected during the treatment process. The report recommends studies to evaluate methods for reducing these compounds in SWP water. The report contains several other recommendations, which will be evaluated and prioritized for further study and implementation, as appropriate.

Copies of the report can be obtained by calling Rick Woodard of DWR at (916) 327-1636.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs. The State Water Project provides water to two-thirds of California's population.

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