



SOUTH FEATHER WATER & POWER AGENCY

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Scott Alcantara, Environmental & Safety Manager

DATE: July 8, 2009

**RE: Information Regarding Recent Changes in the Agency's Aquatic Pesticide Program
7/28/09 Board of Directors Meeting**

Since May 1, 2002 the Agency has been required by a State Water Resources Control Board permit to limit the amount of residual pesticide it discharges into the Feather River. A violation of these permit limits carries a minimum fine of \$3,000.

This permit requires the Agency to monitor and submit annual reports regarding the use of the aquatic pesticides in the Miners Ranch Canal. Until this year copper sulfate has been used as the primary aquatic pesticide. Copper sulfate is a very effective aquatic pesticide and has been used by the Agency for over 30 years. However, because of the chemistry of the Agency's source water, it is difficult to control the residual copper discharged to the Feather River and still effectively control the target pest in the Miners Ranch Canal. To this end, I began investigating other aquatic herbicides to find another product that would be just as effective, but with less potential for residual discharge into the Feather River.

The product found is called sodium carbonate peroxyhydrate. Like copper sulfate, it requires a State permit and approved monitoring program. However, the required monitoring program, unlike the program required for copper sulfate, can be completed by Agency staff. This alone will save approximately \$3,000 per year in contract laboratory costs. Also, unlike copper sulfate, sodium carbonate peroxyhydrate does not have State or Federal residual discharge limits, which eliminates the potential for fines based on discharge-limit violations.

The cost of using sodium carbonate peroxyhydrate is comparable to that of copper sulfate. Sodium carbonate peroxyhydrate is currently \$94 per 50# bag, and copper sulfate is \$125 for the same amount. At the current application rate, approximately 2000# of sodium carbonate peroxyhydrate will be applied this year. This amount should decrease in the future as staff becomes more familiar with the product. In comparison, between 2002 and 2008 an average of 1450# of copper sulfate was applied per year, with a maximum of 3150# applied in 2003.