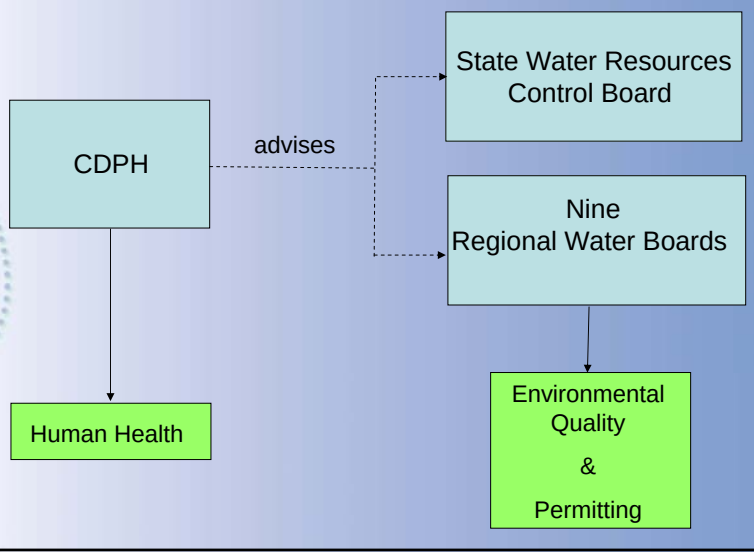
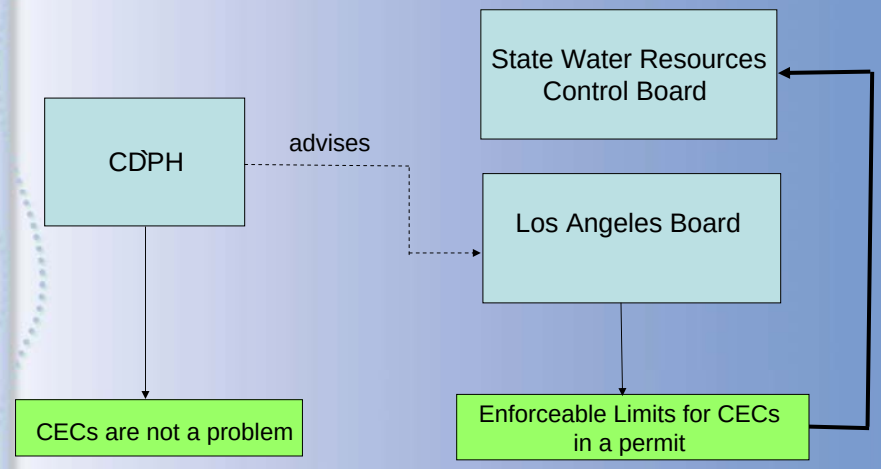
Recycled Water Policy Intent

How Did We Get Here and How is this Going to Impact Local Water Resource Development Projects?

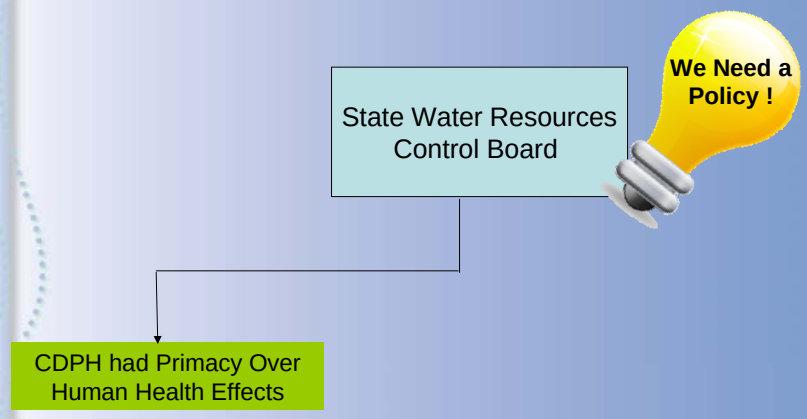
California's permitting structure is byzantine and frustrates project development



The Los Angeles Regional Board was "ground zero" for issues related to agency primacy and the safety of recycled water



SWRCB reversed the permit decision and had a really bright idea



Development of the Policy through the "normal" process didn't work

Limits Recycling

This is worse

1st Staff Draft

2nd Staff Draft

Not Protective Enough

This is worse

Legal & regulatory positions advanced by the water community

- Resolution 68-16 analysis for irrigation is unnecessary
- Incidental runoff can be handled with MS4s
- Salt management only for recycled water projects is inappropriate
- CDPH has primacy over public health issues

Recycled Water is a resource not a waste

Legal & regulatory positions advanced by the environmental community

- Any discharge requires an individual NDPES permit
- Resolution 68-16 analyses are ALWAYS required
- Regional boards should be able to set public health standards in absence of CDPH regulations

Supply driven projects compromise water quality

Common ground

- Recycled water WILL play a larger role in the state's supply
- California needs a portfolio approach that matches water quality to intended use
- The Policy should guide decisions not specifies results

Common ground led to a "Preamble" that expresses a shared vision

"*We strongly encourage local and regional water agencies to move toward clean, abundant local water for California by emphasizing appropriate water recycling, water conservation and maintenance of supply infrastructure with the use of stormwater (including dry-weather urban runoff)…these sources of supply are drought-proof, reliable, minimize our carbon footprint and can be sustained over the long-term*"

Structure that "worked" in the Policy negotiations

All stakeholders committed to quality & quantity

Water Boards have water quality

CDPH has public health

Resolution 68-16 is the umbrella for watershed-based analysis

Shared goals & mandates for recycled water supply

Expert panel convened on CECs

Under the umbrella…
salinity management & streamlined permitting

High quality groundwater basin → All stakeholders involved in planning → Irrigation permitting streamlined → Plans are self-mitigating

Predictions for the future….

- Leadership in the water industry remains essential
- Focusing on science and collaboration not laws and rhetoric will be necessary
- Regional planning efforts may be the only way to achieve both sensible regulation and a secure water supply