



March 4, 2016

Ms. Carolyn G. Hawkins, REHS
Supervisor - Land Use/Solid Waste LEA programs
[DHHS Public Health, Division of Environmental Health](#)
100 H St., Ste 100
Eureka CA 95501

Dear Ms. Hawkins,

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on Humboldt County's proposed Onsite Wastewater Local Agency Management Program ("LAMP"), which is an important tool to protect public health, safety, and the environment from negative impacts associated with bacteria pollution in surface waters used for recreation and shellfish harvest. Humboldt Baykeeper was launched in 2004 with a mission to safeguard coastal resources for the health, enjoyment, and economic strength of the Humboldt Bay community through education, scientific research, and enforcement of laws to fight pollution.

The purpose of the LAMP is to describe Humboldt County's compliance with the State Water Resources Control Board's Water Quality Control Policy for Siting, Design, Operation, and Maintenance of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems and to allow the continued use of onsite wastewater treatments systems (OWTS) while protecting water quality and public health. The OWTS Policy conditionally waives the requirement for owners of OWTS to apply for and receive Waste Discharge Requirements when they meet the conditions set forth in the OWTS Policy.

Tier 3, Advanced Protection Management Program for Impaired Areas, is proposed for four listed waterbodies as of 2013 (Clam Beach, Luffenholtz Beach, Moonstone County Park and Trinidad State Beach). In addition, Tier 3 should at a minimum include all waterbodies listed as impaired by pathogenic bacteria as well as all waterways that discharge to beaches listed as impaired by pathogenic bacteria under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act according to California's 2012 Water Quality Integrated Report as approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on June 26, 2015.

1385 Eighth Street, Suite 228, Arcata, CA 95521
(707) 825-1020
www.humboldtбайkeeper.org



These waterways are:

- Little River
- Widow White (a.k.a. Norton) Creek
- Campbell Creek
- Jolly Giant Creek
- Martins Slough
- Lower Elk River
- Strawberry Creek
- Luffenholz Creek
- Mill Creek

Additional waterways that have been documented to have exceedances of pathogenic bacteria according to Baykeeper's Citizen Water Monitoring data (2005-2012) and/or Humboldt County Department of Environmental Health data include:

- Janes Creek
- Jacoby Creek
- Grotzman Creek
- Second Slough
- Freshwater Creek

We are also concerned that the LAMP does not adequately consider the potential link between OWTS and bacteria pollution in areas with high groundwater table or high density of septic systems in close proximity to existing and former wetlands, including Fieldbrook, the Samoa Peninsula, and residential areas on septic in the historic footprint of Humboldt (Bayside, Old Arcata Road, Indianola, Three Corners, etc.); and residential areas in close proximity to public drinking water supply intakes.

Regarding the Tier 3 Special Provisions, we offer these specific comments:

- On page 14, under "Research and evaluation of existing systems," replace the term "geography" with "geology."
- We strongly recommend that the County explore and establish a no-cost loan program for repair, upgrade, or replacement for existing OWTS owners within the proposed LAMP.
- We support the provision calling for a prohibition on variances from all site evaluation, design, and construction standards within the LAMP for new construction (including modifications to increase capacity) until laboratory testing determines that OWTS effluent is not likely the source of bacterial contamination in 303(d) waterways.

As you are aware, bacteria pollution is one of Humboldt Baykeeper's priorities due to the high levels of bacteria documented in many of our local waterways. We look

