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Sent: Wednesday, 5 February 2014 12:53 PM
To: EPA Continuous Improvement Unit Mailbox
Subject: Hunter River Salinity

Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme Review

TO: POEO (HRSTS) Regulation Review

Reform and Compliance Branch

Environment Protection Authority

I was a participant in the Hunter River Water Management Plan community consultation process about 10 years ago.

In this last decade it has become even more apparent that the water quality as well as quantity is of grave concern to the people of the Hunter. The instigation of the HRSTS to help accommodate the needs of different land uses with least environmental impact was a good idea. However it degenerates to a mere market rather than a scheme that uses a market mechanism if the environmental concerns are not paramount.

It is imperative that the salinity targets for the Scheme are not raised above 600 EC at Denman and 900 EC at the confluence of Glennies Creek and at Singleton. In fact , the 900 EC target should be lowered to improve water quality for a wider range of irrigated crops, health of macro invertebrates and align with World Health Organisation standard which is a maximum of 800 EC for drinking water.

I support the removal of the flood flow exemption so that salinity credits are needed for all mine discharges.

It would be improper and short sighted to change the definition of a 'high flow' event so that a discharge event can be triggered at a lower flow.

The salinity level is only one component of water quality that needs to be monitored. The Hunter Catchment Salinity Assessment Report outlines other parameters. These include:

- A more comprehensive and representative groundwater monitoring program for the Hunter catchment
- Studies to fully understand the environmental effects of the different components of mine and power station discharge water (eg ionic composition, metals/metalloid contamination etc)

- Strategic real-time monitoring of flow and salinity in the upper Goulburn River catchment
- Assessment of high EC levels in Wollombi Brook at Warkworth

I support increased public transparency and access to information including: when and where discharges occur, all available water quality data and results of investigations into the health of the river system.

The Hunter River needs protection. This review of the HRST scheme must turn on considerations for a sustainable future - not short term economic gain.

Yours faithfully, Marg McLean

