



## MEMORANDUM

Date: April 24, 2023  
To: RMP Steering Committee  
From: Jay Davis  
Subject: Considerations Behind Formation and Deactivation of RMP Workgroups

The RMP began convening workgroups after the first Program Review in the late 1990s. Since that time a number of workgroups and strategy teams have been formed and then deactivated after they have served their purpose. These include (among others) the following workgroups:

- Contaminant Fate
- Exposure and Effects
- Selenium
- Design Integration
- Chlorinated Hydrocarbons

Based on this experience over the past 25 years, the following considerations and criteria guide decisions about initiating, deactivating, and dividing labor among RMP workgroups.

- High priority management questions that are unanswered

An RMP aim to answer high priority management questions in a focus area is the fundamental driver of workgroup formation. Once the questions are answered, the workgroup may be deactivated (e.g., the Dioxin Workgroup).

- Significant, multi-year body of RMP special study work needing peer review of plans and projects

In the past, the minimum levels have been approximately \$50-\$100K per year of RMP special study funds over a span of five years. Below these levels it is not worth the effort of convening a workgroup and science advisors. When a focus area reaches these levels, formation of a workgroup should be considered.

- Opportunity to influence other funders via a strategic plan to answer priority Bay questions
- A possible exception to the minimum multi-year funding level is when the RMP aims to influence funding allocations by other entities. An example is the Microplastic Workgroup and Microplastic Strategy, which have brought funding to Bay microplastic studies in the past (Moore Foundation) and is anticipated to continue to do so.

- Ensuring high quality peer review of RMP studies

The primary purpose of RMP workgroups is to provide for high quality peer review of RMP studies, from an early phase of study design, during implementation, and of the final report and other communication products. Creating a forum for interaction between science advisors, stakeholders, and investigators is a tremendously valuable benefit of this peer review process.

- Making good use of science advisors' time

RMP science advisors generously provide their time and expertise to review RMP studies. An important organizing principle for the workgroups is to be respectful of, and make the most efficient possible use of, the time and interests of the advisors. Part of this is minimizing the amount of time that advisors sit through discussions that are not of interest to them.

- Distributing workgroup workload

The Emerging Contaminant Workgroup's scope has increased over the years, to the point where an annual two-day meeting is needed to discuss all of the current and planned studies. CEC studies on microplastics and stormwater loading could conceptually be covered in the ECWG, but the ECWG cannot accommodate the additional workload. In addition, other advisors are needed for these topics.