

Mandated Trash Capture Devices: Impeding Trash Without Impeding Mosquito Abatement

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The installation of trash capture devices (TCD) into catch basins (CB) was mandated and implemented by the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Board (SFBRWQB) for San Francisco Bay Area Counties. CB may hold water throughout the year, and if left untreated, are intense breeding sources for mosquitoes that can transmit arboviruses to humans. The SFBRWQB had approved several TCD that complied with their mandate. However, impacts of the TCD design on mosquito control activities were not considered during the review and approval process. Therefore, after noticing these devices in the field, Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District (ACMAD) staff reviewed the diagrams and specifications of TCD that were approved by the SFBRWQB, and identified TCD that would pose the least impediments to mosquito control activities. To convey the importance of TCD design on mosquito control, we prepared a simple flyer that described the ACMAD mission to protect public health through effective mosquito control, and indicated which of the SFBRWQB-approved TCD permitted inspection and treatment of CB, those that would require more research, and TCD that were unacceptable in terms of mosquito abatement activities. This flyer was disseminated by the Bay Area Storm-water Management Agencies Association (BASMAA) to their member cities in the San Francisco Bay Area. We also participated in a BASMAA meeting that was attended by city representatives to discuss our concerns with TCD. Following the meeting, Fremont, one of our largest cities, contacted ACMAD to discuss the TCD they had installed and were indicated on the flyer as unacceptable. Subsequently, a TCD manufacturer contacted ACMAD regarding one of their TCD indicated as unacceptable. In both cases modifications were made to the TCD that permitted mosquito abatement activities. These interactions have helped reinforce our relationships and partnerships with local cities and agencies in our region, and have helped put mosquito control in the mind of government officials and contractors when devising and implementing storm water regulations.