

Delta Mercury Exposure Reduction Program

The Delta Mercury Exposure Reduction Program (Delta MERP) is a multi-year effort to reduce human exposure to mercury from eating fish caught in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. While fish is a highly nutritious food and an important part of a healthy diet, many types of fish caught in the Delta and other California water bodies contain mercury, a harmful chemical. To protect the public's health, fish consumption advisories have been issued for the Delta. These advisories provide guidance on the specific types and amounts of Delta fish that can be safely eaten.



The objective of Delta MERP is to work with affected communities and to design and implement culturally-relevant activities and materials that raise awareness and understanding and reduce risks of harm from mercury. The Delta MERP is a part of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's (Water Board) efforts to clean up mercury in the Delta and reduce mercury in the fish. Because it will take many years to lower mercury levels in fish, the Water Board is implementing the Delta MERP to encourage actions that will reduce mercury exposure. The Delta MERP activities in 2014-2015 will include the following:

- Outreach to communities through small group meetings and promoting participation;
- Quarterly meetings of a community stakeholder group to gain input on project activities;
- A small grants program to fund community-based projects with affected populations;
- Development and distribution of multilingual educational materials;
- Training and technical assistance to raise awareness and understanding of fish contamination issues in the Delta to communities;
- Collaboration with local programs to include fish contamination messages in their work.

The Water Board is partnering with the Delta Conservancy and the California Department of Public Health in implementing the Delta MERP. The program staff encourages community-based organizations, Tribes, fish consumers, anglers, fishing organizations, other community representatives, and local agencies with an interest in fish contamination issues in the Delta to participate in the Delta MERP. The program is funded by State agencies, wastewater dischargers, local storm water agencies, and land managers in the Delta.

For more information about the Delta MERP, please contact Janis Cooke at janis.cooke@waterboards.ca.gov or (916) 464-4672 or Kathryn Kynett at Kathryn.kynett@deltaconservancy.ca.gov or (916) 376-4024 or visit: <http://www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov/delta-mercury-exposure-reduction-program-merp>.

For more information about fish advisories in the Delta, visit: www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html.



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