



Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

March 14, 2024

NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKSHOPS AND CEQA SCOPING MEETINGS

Regarding
**Development of Total Maximum Daily Loads to Address
Neonicotinoid Pesticide and Toxicity Water Quality Impairments
in the Lower Santa Maria River Watershed**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) staff will hold two public workshops and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping meetings to seek input on the development of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) to address neonicotinoid pesticide and aquatic toxicity water quality impairments in the lower Santa Maria River watershed (TMDL Project).¹ The Central Coast Water Board is the lead state agency charged with the protection of water quality in the Central Coast Region.

The workshops will be held on **April 15, 2024**, and will have both in person and remote attendance options.

In Person Attendance Only
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. PDT
Central Coast Water Board
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Remote Attendance Only
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. PDT
<https://waterboards.zoom.us/j/97400418394>
Or call in (669) 900-9128, meeting code 974 0041 8394

¹ The Central Coast Water Board's Basin Planning Program, which includes approved TMDLs, is certified as exempt from the requirements for preparing Environmental Impact Reports, negative declarations, and initial studies. Public Resources Code section 21080.5. (California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3775.). This project remains subject to other provisions of CEQA, and the Central Coast Water Board is required to draft Substitute Environmental Documentation (SED) and to seek early public consultation pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, sections 3775 and 3775.5. Early public consultation may include one or more CEQA scoping meetings.

BACKGROUND

The proposed geographic scope of this TMDL Project includes the lower Santa Maria River watershed, which encompasses an area of approximately 218 square miles in northwestern Santa Barbara and southwestern San Luis Obispo Counties. The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires States to develop TMDLs for waters on the CWA section 303(d) List of impaired waters (303(d) List). Impaired waters include rivers, streams, lakes, and other types of surface waterbodies that do not meet water quality standards). In the TMDL Project area, waterbodies are identified as impaired on the 303(d) List for the neonicotinoid pesticide imidacloprid and for toxicity. Subsequent TMDL Project data analysis indicates that in addition to imidacloprid, waterbodies in the TMDL Project watershed are impaired for the neonicotinoid pesticides acetamiprid, clothianidin, and thiamethoxam and are impaired for toxicity to the aquatic test organism, *Chironomus dilutus* (midge).

TMDLs define the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards. A TMDL Project identifies the probable sources of pollution, establishes the maximum amount of pollution a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, allocates pollutant loads to all probable contributing sources, and establishes an implementation plan to restore water quality.

PURPOSE

These workshops and CEQA scoping meetings will provide participants with 1) an explanation of this TMDL Project; 2) an opportunity to comment on this TMDL Project; and 3) an opportunity to comment on the appropriate scope and content of the environmental analysis and environmental documentation for this TMDL Project, including the range of project actions, alternatives, reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance, significant impacts to be analyzed, cumulative impacts if any, and mitigation measures that will reduce impacts to a less than significant level; and to eliminate issues found not to be important from detailed study.

Participants are specifically requested to provide information about:

- How responsible parties would foreseeably comply with the TMDLs;
- The reasonably foreseeable significant environmental impacts associated with those means of compliance;
- Specific evidence supporting that such environmental impacts are reasonably foreseeable, and describing the magnitude (significance) of the impacts;
- Reasonable alternative means of compliance that would have less significant adverse environmental impacts; and
- Reasonable mitigation measures to minimize any unavoidable significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the means of compliance.

Staff will solicit oral comments during the meetings. Additionally, if interested persons wish to submit written comments regarding the potential environmental impact issues relevant to CEQA scoping, please submit the written comments no later than April 25, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. To submit written comments, please see the section entitled

“How to Submit Written Comments” below. Staff will consider the issues raised and comments provided on the TMDL Project and on the appropriate scope and content of the environmental documentation. Staff will not prepare written responses to each individual comment received but will incorporate written responses to all significant environmental points in the SED that will later be available for public review and will be presented to the Central Coast Water Board.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Persons interested in the lower Santa Maria River watershed TMDLs and water quality, including representatives of agricultural interests, landowners who own or operate agricultural operations, representatives of municipalities and other public agencies/entities, representatives of environmental groups, California Native American tribes, pesticide companies, and all others interested in this TMDL Project.

LANGUAGE SERVICES

To request oral interpretation or sign language services, please submit your request at least 10 calendar days before the meeting by contacting Peter Meertens at (805) 801-4287 or Peter.Meertens@waterboards.ca.gov. Telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) users may contact the California Relay Service at: TTY (800) 735-2929 or voice line at (800) 735-2922.

HOW TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS

Persons wishing to submit written comments may submit them via e-mail to Peter Meertens at Peter.Meertens@waterboards.ca.gov. If you wish to submit written comments by postal mail, please address comments to:

Central Coast Water Board
Attn: Peter Meertens
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-7906

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Public participation will be via in person and an online hosted platform. Questions, comments, and discussion items will be collected from the public through these platforms.

FUTURE NOTICES

Staff will hold the public workshops and CEQA scoping meetings at the times and through the formats noted above. Any change in the date, time, place, or format of the public workshops and CEQA scoping meetings will be noticed through the Santa Maria River watershed TMDL e-mail distribution list. Any person interested in receiving future notices, including any changes to this notice of a public workshops and CEQA scoping meetings, must sign up for the e-mail distribution list using the [subscription form](#)

(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg3_subscribe.html), by entering your email address, then selecting the box for “Santa Maria River

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Watershed - TMDL” and then clicking on the “submit” button.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions regarding CEQA scoping or the TMDL Project please contact Peter Meertens at Peter.Meertens@waterboards.ca.gov or at (805) 549-3869.