CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION

2023 TRIENNIAL REVIEW OF WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN

FINAL STAFF REPORT

December 2023

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

This Staff Report is written in support of the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board's (Colorado River Basin Water Board) triennial review of its water quality standards (Triennial Review), which are contained in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region (Basin Plan). The purpose of this Staff Report is to detail the Triennial Review process and to develop a three-year workplan for water quality standards projects.

The Triennial Review is a process conducted to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act section 303(c)(1), which requires the Colorado River Basin Water Board to hold public hearings for the purpose of reviewing applicable water quality standards at least once each three-year period. Likewise, the Water Code section 13240 requires the periodic review and revision of regional water quality control plans. Water quality standards consist of beneficial uses for surface water and groundwater bodies and water quality objectives established to protect those uses. In addition to water quality standards, the Basin Plan also describes the water bodies and surrounding environments, actions and policies implementing the water quality standards, monitoring plans to ensure that water quality standards are being met, and other pertinent information. During the Triennial Review, possible additions and revisions to the Basin Plan are identified and prioritized at a public hearing. These prioritized additions and revisions are then developed and implemented through changes to the Basin Plan, as necessary, based upon available resources.

2 TRIENNIAL REVIEW PROCESS

In January 2023, staff began the Triennial Review for the period of January 2024 through December 2026 (2023 Triennial Review Period). On April 26, 2023, staff sent out a Public Notice to solicit potential Triennial Review projects from the general public and local Native American Tribes. The Public Notice announced a comment period to provide project proposals, ending on June 9, 2023. During the comment period, staff also solicited projects internally from other Colorado River Basin Water Board programs. In total, one comment letter was received. Staff prepared a Response to Scoping Comments, provided in **Appendix A**.

After reviewing the comment letter submitted by the public, staff developed a preliminary list of Triennial Review proposed projects and systematically ranked them in order to develop a prioritized list (see section 4 below) of proposed Basin Planning projects to pursue during the 2023 Triennial Review Period (Triennial Review List). Many of the proposed projects are carried over from the previous Triennial Review List completed in December 2020.

This Staff Report was released for public review, along with the Triennial Review List, for a 30-day comment period that began on September 25, 2023, and ended on October 24, 2023. During the comment period, staff also held a public workshop on October 10, 2023 to provide more information about the Triennial Review process and additional comments. After the comment period ended, staff prepared another Response to Comments on the Draft Staff Report, provided in **Appendix D**. Staff also prepared a Tentative Resolution adopting this Final Staff Report.

The approved Triennial Review List and associated administrative record will be transmitted to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

Upon approval of this Final Staff Report by the Colorado River Basin Water Board (via the Tentative Resolution) and transmittal to USEPA, staff will work on developing the identified projects as appropriate throughout the 2023 Triennial Review Period of January 2024 to December 2026. Importantly, because resources are not available to complete all projects, as detailed in section 5 of this Staff Report, placement of a project on the Triennial Review List does not guarantee that the project will be completed, or that it will be completed as described. Additional public participation opportunities will be presented during the development of each project.

Triennial Review projects are implemented through Basin Plan Amendments, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plans, and through policies. Basin Plan Amendments are changes to the Basin Plan. A Basin Plan Amendment project is complete when the amendment goes into effect, which happens when the project has been reviewed and approved by all appropriate agencies, which includes the Colorado River Basin Water Board, followed by the State Water Board, after which the process will vary depending on the project. TMDLs are water pollution control plans that must be developed to

address water quality impairments, which are identified on the 303(d) list of impaired waters. TMDLs are also typically implemented through Basin Plan Amendments, but can be achieved through other regulatory means and for the purposes of this Staff Report they are considered separately. A TMDL project is considered complete after it goes into effect, which occurs after the TMDL has been approved by the USEPA. Policies are typically adopted by Resolution and may also be incorporated into the Basin Plan through a Basin Plan Amendment.

3 STATUS OF 2020 TRIENNIAL REVIEW

The previous review of the Basin Plan took place during the 2020 Triennial Review. The 2020 Triennial Review List was reviewed by the public and adopted by the Regional Water Board on December 10, 2020. The 2020 Triennial Review List consisted of 29 projects, as summarized in **Table 1**. Typically, Triennial Review Lists only contain water quality standards-related projects that may result in Basin Plan Amendments, including TMDLs. Of the 29 projects in the 2020 Triennial Review, fourteen projects were potential Basin Plan Amendments, of which four were assigned to staff. Two of the Basin Plan Amendment projects that were assigned to staff have been completed. Two of the TMDL projects that were assigned to staff have also been completed. Pending projects include projects that were categorized as new during the 2020 Triennial Review, but have since not been started or assigned to staff.

Table 1: 2020 Triennial Review Projects

No.	Rank	Item	Type of Project	Status	Expected Completion by Dec. 2026
1	1	Salton Sea Watershed, Imperial Valley Organochlorine Compounds and Organophosphate Pesticides TMDLs	TMDL	Complete	Yes
2	1	Salton Sea Watershed, Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel Organochlorine Compounds TMDLs Alternatives	TMDL	Complete	Yes
3	1	Salton Sea Watershed, Alamo River Chloride, Indicator Bacteria, and Toxicity TMDLs	TMDL	Ongoing	Yes
4	1	Salton Sea Watershed, New River Ammonia and Toxicity TMDLs	TMDL	Ongoing	Yes
5	1	Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDLs	TMDL	Ongoing	Yes
6	2	Yucca Valley Septic System Prohibition Revision	Basin Plan Amendment	Complete	Yes

No.	Rank	Item	Type of Project	Status	Expected Completion by Dec. 2026
7	2	Salton Sea Watershed, Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel Ammonia, Dissolved Oxygen and Toxicity TMDLs	TMDL	Ongoing	Yes
8	2	Imperial Valley Pyrethroid Pesticides TMDLs	TMDL	Ongoing	Yes
9	3	Salton Sea Beneficial Use Review	Basin Plan Amendment	Ongoing	Yes
10	3	Regionwide Indicator Bacteria Basin Plan Amendment	Basin Plan Amendment	Complete	Yes
11	6	Beneficial Use Designation for Salton Sea Constructed Aquatic Habitats	Basin Plan Amendment	Ongoing	Yes
12	6	Salton Sea Watershed Bacteria TMDL	TMDL	Pending	No
13	6	Adopt Secondary MCLs as Ground- and Surface Water Quality Objectives	Basin Plan Amendment	Pending	No
14	6	Adopt Region-Wide Water Quality Objectives Based on USEPA 304(a) Criteria	Basin Plan Amendment	Pending	No
15	6	Salton Sea Arsenic TMDL	TMDL	Pending	No
16	6	Salton Sea Toxicity TMDL	TMDL	Pending	No
17	6	Salton Sea DDT and DDE TMDLs	TMDL	Pending	No
18	6	Delineate Groundwater Beneficial Uses by Groundwater Subbasin and/or Aquifer	Basin Plan Amendment	Pending	No

No.	Rank	Item	Type of Project	Status	Expected Completion by Dec. 2026
19	7	Designate Tribal Beneficial Uses for Specific Water Bodies	Basin Plan Amendment	Pending	No
20	7	Administrative Update to the Basin Plan	Basin Plan Amendment	Pending	No
21	8	Imperial Valley Drains Toxicity TMDL	TMDL	Pending	No
22	8	OWTS Prohibitions in Areas Where OWTS Pose a Threat to Water Quality	Basin Plan Amendment	Pending	No
23	8	List Certain Unlisted Waterbodies and Applicable Beneficial Uses, And Designate Miscellaneous Beneficial Uses to Listed Waterbodies	Basin Plan Amendment	Pending	No
24	9	General Prohibition of Unpermitted Waste Discharges that Pose a Threat to Water Quality	Basin Plan Amendment	Pending	No
25	9	Palo Verde Outfall Drain and Lagoon Chloride and Indicator Bacteria TMDLs	TMDL	Pending	No
26	9	Groundwater Numeric Water Quality Objectives in Indio Subbasin	Basin Plan Amendment	Pending	No
27	10	Colorado River Toxicity TMDL	TMDL	Pending	No
28	11	Salton Sea Watershed Site-Specific Objectives	Basin Plan Amendment	Pending	No
29	11	Salton Sea Watershed Ammonia TMDL	TMDL	Pending	No

4 PROPOSED PROJECTS

The proposed 2023 Triennial Review projects were compiled and ranked to develop the Triennial Review List, consisting of ongoing, pending, and new projects summarized in **Table 2**, **Table 3**, and **Table 4**.

The 2023 Triennial Review List also contains seven ongoing projects, listed in **Table 2**. Ongoing projects include 2020 Triennial Review projects that have not been completed and other water quality standards projects that were started since the 2020 Triennial Review list was approved, and TMDL projects which have been included since 2020.

There are 18 pending projects for the 2023 Triennial Review List. Ten of these pending projects are Basin Plan Amendments and eight are TMDL projects. Pending projects include projects from the 2020 Triennial Review that have not been started.

Two new projects have been included in the 2023 Triennial Review List. New projects usually include staff-proposed projects, projects proposed by other programs and/or projects proposed in response to public comments. In this case, the Tribal Beneficial Uses Amendment is a part of the proposed Administrative Update to the Basin Plan amendment that was included in the 2020 Triennial Review (#26). It was developed into its own project and started due to the prioritization of Tribal and Environmental Justice issues statewide. Although it is a new project on the 2023 Triennial Review list, some of the contents were included in the administrative amendment project which states that it may be done as multiple projects. We have also added a new project in response to public comment. This project will include designating the COMM (Commercial and Sport Fishing) Beneficial Use in applicable regional waters. The complete Triennial Review List is provided with project descriptions and other details in **Appendix B**.

Table 2: 2023 Triennial Review Ongoing Projects

No.	Project Title
1	Salton Sea Watershed, Alamo River Chloride, Indicator Bacteria, and Toxicity TMDLs
2	Salton Sea Watershed, New River Ammonia and Toxicity TMDLs
3	Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDLs
4	Salton Sea Watershed, Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel Ammonia, Dissolved Oxygen and Toxicity TMDLs
5	Imperial Valley Pyrethroid Pesticides TMDLs
6	Salton Sea Beneficial Use Review

No.	Project Title
7	Beneficial Use Designation for Salton Sea Constructed Aquatic Habitats

Table 3: 2023 Triennial Review Pending Projects

No.	Project Title
1	Palo Verde Outfall Drain and Lagoon Chloride and Indicator Bacteria TMDLs
2	OWTS Prohibitions in Areas Where OWTS Pose a Threat to Water Quality
3	Groundwater Numeric Water Quality Objectives in Indio Subbasin
4	Colorado River Toxicity TMDL
5	Salton Sea Watershed Site-Specific Objectives
6	Salton Sea Watershed Ammonia TMDL
7	Salton Sea Watershed Bacteria TMDL
8	Adopt Secondary MCLs as Groundwater and Surface Water Quality Objectives for the Municipal and Domestic Supply Beneficial Use
9	Adopt Region-Wide Water Quality Objectives Based on USEPA 304(a) Criteria
10	Salton Sea Arsenic TMDL
11	Salton Sea Toxicity TMDL
12	Salton Sea DDT and DDE TMDLs
13	Delineate Groundwater Beneficial Uses by Groundwater Subbasin and/or Aquifer
14	Designate Tribal Beneficial Uses for Specific Water Bodies
15	Administrative Update to the Basin Plan
16	Imperial Valley Drains Toxicity TMDL
17	List Certain Unlisted Waterbodies and Applicable Beneficial Uses, And Designate Miscellaneous Beneficial Uses to Listed

No.	Project Title
18	General Prohibition of Unpermitted Waste Discharges that Pose a Threat to Water Quality

Table 4: 2023 Triennial Review New Projects

No.	Project Title
1	Tribal Beneficial Uses Definitions and Administrative Updates to the Basin Plan
2	Designating COMM (Commercial and Sport Fishing) Beneficial Use in Applicable Regional Waters

5 BASIN PLANNING RESOURCES

The Colorado River Basin Water Board is allocated limited staff resources to administer Water Quality Standards programs, which include implementation of Triennial Review projects. Staff resources are calculated in Personnel Years (PY), where one PY equates to the resources needed to fund one Colorado River Basin Water Board staff person for one year.

Currently, 4.95 PYs are assigned to Basin Planning and TMDL Projects for this fiscal year on an annual basis, which adds up to a total of 14.85 PY's over the course of the 2023 Triennial Review period. Currently, 9.9 PYs are assigned to ongoing Triennial Review projects listed in **Table 2**. This leaves just 4.95 PYs available for new projects and pending projects listed in **Table 3** and **Table 4**.

The ability to apply these resources to these projects is further limited by when the ongoing projects will be completed, which is subject to change. Based on projected resource availability, it is expected that no more than three to five pending or new projects may be started during the 2023 Triennial Review period. To begin working on all new and pending projects an estimated 21.3 PY's are required. This means, that to begin working on all pending and new projects during the 2023 Triennial Review, an additional 16.35 PYs would be needed over the course of the Triennial Review period, which would require five to six new staff positions to be funded, filled and fully available for water quality standards projects.

6 PRIORITIZATION

In order to prioritize the use of limited staff resources, the Triennial Review List has been ranked using scoring criteria, which were developed based on public input and program priorities. The scoring criteria are described in **Table 5**. The scoring criteria were revised following the October 10 workshop to include Board Member comments. The Groundwater criterion scores were increased by 5 points at the request of a Board Member who was concerned that groundwater needed to be weighted more due to the overwhelming surface water nature of the other criteria. Rankings were not changed with the increase in available score because only 4 projects qualify for the Groundwater criterion and none of them are likely to be started during this Triennial Review period due to higher priority projects in progress. During the 2026 Triennial Review, this will be revisited and ranked accordingly.

Table 5: Prioritization Scoring Criteria

Criterion	Question	Min Score	Middle Score	Max Score
Ongoing project	Is this an ongoing project that is already assigned to staff?	0 (no)	N/A	30 (yes)
Groundwater	Does the project address groundwater impairments?	0 (no)	10 (possibly or indirectly)	15 (yes, directly)
Salton Sea	Does the project protect water quality at the Salton Sea?	0 (no)	5 (possibly or indirectly)	10 (yes, directly)
EJ or Tribal	Does the project address Environmental Justice or Tribal issues?	0 (no)	5 (possibly or indirectly)	10 (yes, directly)
Completion (ongoing)	For ongoing projects, how likely is the project to be completed before December 2026?	0 (not likely)	5 (somewhat likely)	10 (very likely)
Completion (new)	For new projects, how long will the project take once started?	0 (≤ 6 months)	5 (18 months)	10 (≥ 48 months)

Criterion	Question	Min Score	Middle Score	Max Score
Public interest	Does the project address concerns expressed by the public?	0=not at all	5 (somewhat or some)	10 (yes, many)
Time sensitivity	When does the project need to be completed to meet commitments?	0 (≥ 2031)	5 (by 2028)	10 (≤ 2026)
Impairments	Does the project address 303(d) listed impairments?	0 (no)	3 (yes, indirectly)	5 (yes, directly)
Beneficial Uses	Does the project protect or designate beneficial uses?	0 (no)	3 (yes, indirectly)	5 (yes, directly)

The scores and rankings are represented by project in **Appendix C**. The prioritization ranking is meant to serve as a guide to assigning resources. When resources become available, a higher-ranking new project may be considered before lower ranking projects. Likewise, when staff resources must be re-assigned, a lower ranking ongoing project would be more likely to be delayed than a higher-ranking ongoing project. Exceptions may be made to account for staff expertise, amount of staff time available, new projects not identified in the Triennial Review, and other emerging priorities.

7 SECTION 304(A) CRITERIA

Title 40, section 131.20 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) requires that Colorado River Basin Water Board provide an explanation when it does not adopt new or revised criteria for parameters for which USEPA has published new or updated Clean Water Act section 304(a) criteria recommendations, adopted since May 30, 2000.

Due to the limited resources available and higher priorities present, staff does not recommend updating the Basin Plan to reflect updated section 304(a) criteria at this time. Revising such criteria involves considerable effort most efficiently done by the State Water Board's Division of Water Quality, since a change to the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California (Statewide Basin Plan or ISWEBE) would supersede all regional Basin Plans.

The Colorado River Basin Water Board staff will continue to engage in discussions and assessments with the State Water Board regarding recommended water quality objectives.

APPENDIX A: RESPONSE TO SCOPING COMMENTS

Colorado Basin Water Board staff solicited input from interested persons during a 30-day public comment period that ended on June 9, 2023. On June 9, 2023, Aydee Palomino, Environmental Justice Project Manager, submitted a comment letter on behalf of Alianza. No other comments were submitted as part of the scoping process.

Alianza-1

Subject: Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDL

Comment: It is important that public health and the environment be considered as compelling reasons for urgent implementation of a TMDL.

Response: The comment addresses the Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDL. The project is one of the 27 projects included in this Triennial Review. This project includes evaluating the concentrations of dissolved oxygen and nutrients in the Salton Sea, determining the sources contributing to the concentrations of nutrients and dissolved oxygen detected, Staff will subsequently, look at the water quality criteria developed to protect the beneficial uses of the Salton Sea. The water quality criteria will be used to calculate the amount of each listed nutrient that can be discharged and an appropriate level of dissolved oxygen which will enable the Salton Sea to meet the water quality criteria. We are aware that this TMDL project has a high level of public interest due to its relevance to public health and the environment. It has been prioritized in this review period because it is an ongoing project, a Salton Sea project, it is an EJ or tribal concern, and of high public interest.

Alianza-2

Subject: Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDL

Comment: Request that the state disclose a comprehensive list of the nutrients to be tested in order to determine or forecast environmental hazards such as algal blooms.

Response: This specific project will focus on implementing TMDLs for dissolved oxygen and nutrients within the Salton Sea. This TMDL will include developing numeric targets for total phosphorous, nitrate, chlorophyll a, Secchi disk depth, and dissolved oxygen.

Alianza-3

Subject: Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDL

Comment: The region 7 water board's sampling should include a site in the main body of the Salton Sea outside of where the Species Conservation Habitat (SCH) project water exchanges and where the New River meets the Sea.

Response: Monitoring locations include the main body of the Salton Sea outside of where the SCH project water exchanges and where the New River meets the Sea (see Figure 1 below).

Alianza-4

Subject: Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDL

Comment: Please include a mention of potential contaminants introduced from lithium extraction to address the community requests.

Response: This specific TMDL is only to address dissolved oxygen and nutrients (discussed earlier) within the Salton Sea. This TMDL does not involve lithium extraction, or other pollutants listed in the section 303(d) list. Lithium extraction is regulated by other programs within the Regional Board and is beyond the scope of this project. There are currently no known discharges to surface waters associated with lithium extraction. Moreover, it would be difficult to distinguish between naturally occurring pollutants and those traceable to lithium extraction. At this time, the Board has no factual basis to suspect that pollutants from lithium extraction are being discharged into the Salton Sea.

Alianza-5

Subject: Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDL

Comment: Request that community science participants in initiatives including SSET be included in the scientific review process.

Response: Scientific peer review is conducted through our contractor, UC Berkeley through which we request scientific peer review by subject matter experts. Subject matter experts are chosen and thoroughly review the staff report. It is an external process and is compliant with USEPA requirements for changes to water quality standards. The responses to the peer review will be made available as part of the draft staff report prior to adoption. As with all Board actions, project documents will be open for public comment, in which community science participants are welcome to submit their

comments. The public comment period comes after the conclusion of the peer review. If we receive substantive comments during the public comment period, we may pose those questions to the peer reviewers.

Alianza-6

Subject: Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDL

Comment: Near-shore areas should be included in the survey of the Salton Sea.

Response: Monitoring locations include near shore locations, where the river outlets empty into the sea as well as deep water monitoring locations (see Figure 1 below).

Alianza-7

Subject: Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDL

Comment: We recommend that the regional board secure funding for water quality monitoring that will last beyond the three years which is when the next Triennial Review will take place. The Board should seek more Salton Sea water monitoring funding from other state and federal agencies such as the Bureau of Reclamation and the USEPA, which have an increasing interest in the Salton Sea.

Response: The Water Boards are always considering funding for ambient water quality monitoring, especially concerning the Salton Sea. However, funding is often limited and competitive. We will continue to look for sources of funding and agencies to work with to help continue monitoring the Salton Sea beyond the three years for which we currently have funding. We want to note that we are maximizing the funding we currently have as we participate in a joint venture with the Department of Water Resources and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to collect the samples. The totality of our budget is funding lab analyses since we have partnered with agencies that are conducting monitoring of their own.

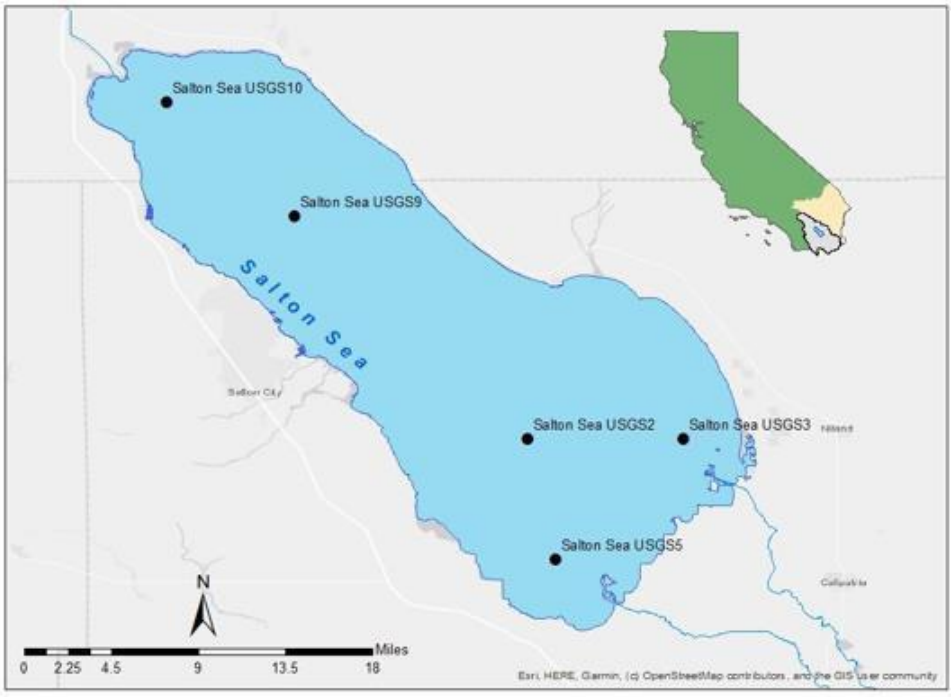
Alianza-8

Subject: Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDL

Comment: We recommend that the board collaborate with other agencies to compile this information and work towards the dashboard, which can serve as a resource to other agency entities, but primarily the public.

Response: The data and information collected from the Salton Sea monitoring program used for this TMDL will be made publicly available in the CEDEN database. The development and/or implementation of a dashboard is outside of the scope of the Triennial Review.

Figure 1: Proposed Salton Sea Monitoring Locations (Colorado River Basin Water Board, 2023)



Appendix B: 2023 Triennial Review List

The Triennial Review List contains the following information:

Description: Purpose and justification for the project.

Public Comments: List of public comments, listed in Appendix A and Appendix D, interpreted to be in support of the entire project or of specific elements of the project.

Rank: The ranking of the project as defined in Appendix C.

Status: "Ongoing" projects are currently assigned to staff, whereas "New" projects are not currently assigned to staff.

Type: Each project will be one of the following three options:

TMDL Plan – Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plan that will likely be proposed to be adopted as a Basin Plan amendment.

TMDL Plan alternative – a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plan that will be implemented without a Basin Plan Amendment

Basin Plan Amendment – a change to the Basin Plan; for the purposes of this list, this refers to amendments other than TMDL Plans.

Basin Plan: This section specifies the Basin Plan provisions that may be amended or affected as a result of the project.

Projected Staff Resources: An estimate of staff resources required to complete the project, calculated from beginning to completion for new projects, or from January 2024 to completion for ongoing projects. Projected staff resources are presented in Personnel Years (PY), where one PY equates to the resources needed to fund one staff person for one year. Note that actual required staff resources are likely to vary, especially for new projects where a greater number of unknown factors will determine the actual complexity of the project.

Expected Completion or Expected Duration: For ongoing projects, Expected Completion provides an estimate of when the project is expected to be completed. For new projects, Expected Duration provides an estimate of the duration of the project from start to completion. A project is considered to be "completed" when the amendment or TMDL goes into effect, which occurs after it has been reviewed and approved by all applicable parties. The actual completion date is subject to change due to factors that may increase the complexity of the project or due to a need to divert resources to other projects.

Project 1: Salton Sea Watershed, Alamo River Chloride, Indicator Bacteria, and Toxicity TMDLs

Description	The Alamo River is 303(d) listed for multiple impairments, including chloride, indicator bacteria (Enterococcus and Escherichia coli), and toxicity. Staff is developing TMDLs to address these impairments. The Salton Sea is also impaired for chloride and indicator bacteria and developing these TMDLs at the Alamo River, which discharges to the Salton Sea, will work toward addressing these impairments at the Salton Sea. The Alamo River toxicity TMDL may also contribute to addressing the Salton Sea toxicity impairment if the two impairments are caused by the same pollutants.
Public Comments	None
Status	Ongoing
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	1.0
Expected Completion by December 2026	Yes

Project 2: Salton Sea Watershed, New River Ammonia and Toxicity TMDLs

Description	The New River is 303(d) listed for multiple impairments, including ammonia and toxicity. Staff is developing TMDLs to address these impairments. The Salton Sea is also impaired for ammonia and developing these TMDLs at the New River, which discharges to the Salton Sea, will work toward addressing these impairments at the Salton Sea. The New River toxicity TMDL will also contribute to addressing the Salton Sea toxicity impairment if the two impairments are caused by the same pollutants.
Public Comments	None
Status	Ongoing
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	1.3
Expected Completion by December 2026	Yes

Project 3: Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDLs

Description	The Salton Sea is 303(d) listed for multiple impairments, including dissolved oxygen and nutrients. Projects are already underway to develop TMDLs for nutrients at the New River and for dissolved oxygen at the CVSC. Under this project, staff is developing TMDLs for nutrients and dissolved oxygen for the entire Salton Sea Watershed. This project will incorporate the New River and Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSC) proposed TMDLs after they are submitted to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).
Public Comments	Alianza-06.09
Status	Ongoing
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	2.1
Expected Completion by December 2026	Yes

Project 4: Salton Sea Watershed, Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel Ammonia, Dissolved Oxygen, and Toxicity TMDLs

Description	The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSC) is 303(d) listed for multiple impairments, including ammonia and toxicity, and it is proposed to be listed for dissolved oxygen under the 2018 Integrated Report. Staff is developing TMDLs to address these impairments. The Salton Sea is also impaired for ammonia and dissolved oxygen and developing these TMDLs at the CVSC, which discharges to the Salton Sea, will work toward addressing these impairments at the Salton Sea. The CVSC toxicity TMDLs will also contribute to addressing the Salton Sea toxicity impairment if the two impairments are caused by the same pollutants.
Public Comments	None
Status	Ongoing
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	1.5
Expected Completion by December 2026	Yes

Project 5: Imperial Valley Pyrethroid Pesticides TMDLs

Description	The New River is 303(d) listed for multiple impairments, including pyrethroids bifenthrin, cypermethrin, and lambda cyhalothrin. The Alamo River is also 303(d) listed for cypermethrin and lambda cyhalothrin. Staff is developing TMDLs to address these impairments. Addressing these impairments at the tributaries may contribute to improving water quality at the Salton Sea.
Public Comments	None
Status	Ongoing
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	0.6
Expected Completion by December 2026	Yes

Project 6: Salton Sea Beneficial Use Review

Description	The Salton Sea is a terminal lake without an outlet, which means that certain pollutants have been concentrating in it since 1905 when it was first formed. Such pollutants include salinity and one of its components, chloride, which are both 303(d) listed impairments that are impairing the Salton Sea's Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM) beneficial use. The Salton Sea is not a freshwater and because of its terminal nature may never meet the current water quality objectives for these pollutants associated with the WARM beneficial use. Under this amendment, staff will determine whether WARM is attainable for these pollutants and establish whether the Salton Sea should be considered a saltwater body for the purposes of applicable water quality objectives. Other pollutants and/or beneficial uses may be included as data is gathered and analyzed. Based on the results of this analysis, a change the Salton Sea's beneficial uses may be proposed.
Comments	None
Status	Ongoing
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Projected Staff Resources	1.7
Basin Plan	Chapter 2, Table 2-3
Expected Completion by December 2026	Yes

Project 7: Beneficial Use Designation for Salton Sea Constructed Aquatic Habitats

Description	The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), in coordination with other Salton Sea stakeholders, is developing plans for and building a series of constructed aquatic habitats as part of the Salton Sea Management Program. The aquatic habitats will be filled with mixed water from the existing tributaries and the Salton Sea and used to provide wildlife habitat while suppressing dust from the exposed playa, as the Sea recedes. Because the habitats will be using mixed water and will be different from both the Salton Sea and the tributaries, they may have different beneficial uses from those parent water bodies, and possibly from each other. As the CNRA develops plans for these habitats, the Colorado River Basin Water Board should coordinate with CNRA to identify and designate beneficial uses for these aquatic habitats.
Public Comments	None
Status	Ongoing
Type	Plan
Basin Plan	N/A
Projected Staff Resources	1.7
Expected Completion by December 2026	Yes

Project 8: Salton Sea Watershed Bacteria TMDL

Description	The Salton Sea is 303(d) listed for the multiple impairments, including indicator bacteria (enterococcus). The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSC) is also impaired for indicator bacteria and currently has an associated TMDL that is being implemented, which may need to be revised to make consistent with the Statewide Bacteria Objectives. A TMDL for Alamo River indicator bacteria is also under development and can be incorporated once it is submitted to USEPA. Staff proposes to develop a new TMDL for indicator bacteria for the Salton Sea Watershed, including and the New River and a revised TMDL for CVSC.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	1.1
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 9: Adopt Secondary MCLs as Ground- and Surface Water Quality Objectives

Description	Numeric water quality objectives for groundwater and surface water with municipal and domestic supply use (MUN) have been developed as Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) contained in Title 22 of California Code of Regulations (CCR), incorporated into the basin plan by reference in Chemical Constituents objective for surface waters (Chapter 3, Section II.N) and Chemical and Physical Quality Objective for ground waters (Chapter 3, Section IV.C.) The MCL values incorporated are those in CCR Title 22 sections 64431, 64444, and 64678. In equivalent objectives, other Regional Water Boards have also incorporated Secondary MCLs (SMCLs) contained in CCR section 64449. SMCLs contain numeric limits for turbidity, color, metals, and other pollutants. Staff proposes to adopt the Secondary MCLs table in CCR Title 22, Section 64449 as water quality objectives to protect the MUN beneficial use in both surface waters and groundwaters.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapter 3, Section IV.C; Chapter 3, Section II
Projected Staff Resources	1.9
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 10: Adopt Region-Wide Water Quality Objectives Based on USEPA 304(a) Criteria

Description	Staff recommends considering adopting surface water quality objectives (WQOs) based on USEPA 304(a) criteria for pollutants that do not have a CA Toxics rule criterion or an existing Basin Plan WQO. Staff recommends consideration of adoption of aquatic life criteria for ammonia, arsenic, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, iron, and malathion. Adoption of these objectives may help address existing impairments as it would trigger the development of water quality-based effluent limitations for discharges to surface waters. These pollutants are associated with 17 impairments, with 14 of those being located in the Salton Sea Watershed. Among them, ammonia and chlorpyrifos are associated with the greatest number of impairments, with five and four impairments, respectively, all located in the Salton Sea Watershed.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapter 3, Section 3.C
Projected Staff Resources	1.1
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 11: Salton Sea Arsenic TMDL

Description	The Salton Sea is 303(d) listed for the multiple impairments, including arsenic. None of the tributaries are currently listed as impaired for arsenic. Staff proposes to develop a TMDL to address the arsenic impairment at the Salton Sea.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	0.8
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 12: Salton Sea Toxicity TMDL

Description	The Salton Sea is 303(d) listed for the multiple impairments, including toxicity. Salton Sea tributaries are also impaired for toxicity, however these impairments may need to be addressed separately if they are caused by different pollutants. Staff proposes to develop a TMDL to address the toxicity impairment at the Salton Sea.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	0.9
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 13: Salton Sea DDT and DDE TMDLs

Description	The Salton Sea is 303(d) listed for the multiple impairments, including DDT; it is also proposed to be listed for DDE under the 2018 Integrated Report. TMDLs for DDT and DDE are under development for its tributaries and can be incorporated once they are submitted to USEPA. Staff proposes to develop TMDLs for DDT and DDE for the Salton Sea.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	0.5
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 14: Delineate Groundwater Beneficial Uses by Groundwater Subbasin and/or Aquifer

Description	This project was included in the 2017 Triennial Review under two projects: item 3, "Review of Municipal Beneficial Use Designation in Ground Water With High Salinity," and item 4, "Revise Beneficial Use Designations to Correspond with Individual Ground Water Basins and Aquifers." The groundwater beneficial uses are currently designated based on hydrologic units, or watersheds. Staff proposes to review the appropriate groundwater data and revise groundwater beneficial uses designations so that they will correspond to individual groundwater subbasins within the various hydrologic units, and to aquifers in areas where additional precision is necessary. The proposed changes in designations would also be consistent with the State Water Board's Sources of Drinking Water Policy, Resolution 88-63. These changes would result in an updated version of Table 2-5 (Chapter 2) and a more detailed map of the groundwater aquifers in this Region in Basin Plan Appendix B. This project is consistent with the Basin Plan Chapter 5, Section III.B, where the need for these changes is identified as a key Regional Water Board issue.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapter 2, Table 2-5
Projected Staff Resources	1.1
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 15: Designate Tribal Beneficial Uses for Specific Water Bodies

Description	Tribal Beneficial Uses are beneficial uses developed by the State Water Board and available for adoption and designation by the Regional Water Boards into their Basin Plans. These uses are Tribal Traditional Culture (CUL) and Tribal Subsistence Fishing (T-SUB). Tribal Beneficial Uses can be designated to waters within a Regional Water Board's jurisdiction. Colorado River Basin Water Board received comment letters from Campo Environmental Protection Agency and from Morongo Band of Mission Indians stating that it would be appropriate to designate Tribal Beneficial Uses for water bodies within the Colorado River Basin regions. However, the commenters did not name specific water bodies that should be designated with which of the two beneficial uses. To designate Tribal Beneficial Uses, designation requests for specific water bodies must be made with supporting data. Morongo Band of Mission Indians also requested to remove Tribal water bodies or segments of water bodies from the Basin Plan beneficial uses tables. Staff proposes to work with the Tribes in the region to identify specific water bodies that should be designated with Tribal Beneficial Uses, and to identify water bodies or segments of water bodies that are on Tribal land that the Tribes would wish to be removed from the Basin Plan beneficial uses tables.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapter 2, Tables 2-2 through 2-4
Projected Staff Resources	1.2
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 16: Tribal Beneficial Uses Definitions and Administrative Updates to the Basin Plan

Description	This amendment would add Tribal Beneficial Uses to the Basin Plan and make various non-regulatory updates and revisions to the Basin Plan which can be accomplished administratively, without California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation or peer review. Tribal Beneficial Uses are beneficial uses developed by the State Water Board and available for adoption and designation by the Regional Water Boards into their Basin Plans. These uses are Tribal Traditional Culture (CUL) and Tribal Subsistence Fishing (T-SUB). Tribal Beneficial Uses can be designated to waters within a Regional Water Board's jurisdiction. This amendment would also incorporate statewide mercury objectives, the HRTW Policy into the Policies chapter, revise Salton Sea language to reflect current restoration plans and other pertinent information, and other minor errors.
Public Comments	None
Status	New
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapters 1-6
Projected Staff Resources	0.9
Expected Completion by December 2026	Yes

Project 17: Administrative Update to the Basin Plan

Description	This amendment would make various non-regulatory updates and revisions to the Basin Plan which can be accomplished administratively, without California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation or peer review. This amendment would incorporate changes proposed by staff and in public comments. All changes proposed below are tentative and subject to change upon further research. These changes may be adopted under a single amendment, multiple amendments, or some changes may be incorporated into other amendments. The following changes were proposed by staff: Update New River language; in beneficial uses tables, correct water body spelling, any non-region 7 water bodies, and map out the springs consistently with NHD maps; update Appendix A and B maps. The following changes are proposed in response to public comments: incorporate Environmental Justice as a Board priority; incorporate DAC community water and wastewater infrastructure as a Board priority; revise Chapter 5, Section III.A "Septic System Impacts to Ground Water Basins" to identify next steps and provide more detail; revise Chapter 4, Section II.H.1 "Statewide Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Requirements" to specify the responsible parties under OWTS Policy and highlight local agency monitoring and reporting requirements; re-structure and revise Chapter 4 to separate out Surface Water and Groundwater Programs, and describe the Colorado River Basin Water Board's permitting, regulatory and enforcement authority in the introductory paragraphs for each set of programs. Make changes to Chapter 4, Section II.E "Confined Animal Facilities" to make the terminology consistent with NPDES definitions; to distinguish CAFO's from smaller AFO's; and to expand the list of possible types of AFO's; revise Table 2-3 footnotes 17 and 23 to clarify where Whitewater River ends and Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel begins; revise and re-structure Chapter 6 Section II "Regional Water Board Monitoring" to separate out groundwater and surface water monitoring programs, and under groundwater monitoring programs describe GAMA and local cooperative relationships and how that data is used; update monitoring activities; make changes to language in Chapter 3, Section III "Specific Water Quality Objectives" as proposed by Colorado River Board; and incorporate identification of Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs) and other unregulated facilities as a Board priority.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending

Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapters 2-6
Projected Staff Resources	1.0
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 18: Imperial Valley Drains Toxicity TMDL

Description	Imperial Valley Drains are 303(d) listed for the multiple impairments, including toxicity. Salton Sea and its other tributaries are also impaired for toxicity, however these impairments may need to be addressed separately if they are caused by different pollutants. Staff proposes to develop a TMDL to address the toxicity impairment at the Imperial Valley Drains.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	0.7
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 19: OWTS Prohibitions in Areas Where OWTS Pose a Threat to Water Quality

Description	This project was included in the 2017 Triennial Review as Item 1, "Evaluate Potential Sources of Nitrates in Prioritized Basins." Staff has been collecting data and information to identify areas where nitrate pollution from Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS), also referred to as septic systems, may be posing a threat to groundwater quality. In areas where the density of existing OWTS may be contributing to nitrate and other pollution, and the OWTS density cannot be mitigated by existing regulations, staff plans to propose a prohibition of discharge from OWTS.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section II.H.2
Projected Staff Resources	1.4
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 20: List Certain Unlisted Waterbodies and Applicable Beneficial Uses, And Designate Miscellaneous Beneficial Uses to Listed

Description	The Basin Plan lists beneficial use definitions in table 2-1 and designates beneficial uses for water bodies in tables 2-2 through 2-5. These tables do not include all water bodies within the region, and certain existing beneficial uses may not be identified for certain water bodies that are listed. Water bodies and beneficial uses should be added to these tables as information becomes available. Staff proposes to make changes to the beneficial uses tables, including, but not limited to, the following: add Commercial and Sport Fishing (COMM) beneficial use definition to table 2-1 and designated it to all REC II waters; add Freshwater Replenishment (FRSH) beneficial use to Cadiz Hydrologic Unit; list beneficial uses for Gieselmann Lake and Imperial Valley Canals, Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel from Palm Springs to Indio; identify general beneficial uses for unnamed lakes; list beneficial uses for 303(d)-listed water bodies not currently in beneficial use tables; list beneficial uses for water bodies monitored by the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) not currently in beneficial use tables; Old Woman Springs Creek; Long Canyon Channel. Additionally, to protect beneficial uses of any unlisted tributaries to listed water bodies, staff proposes to incorporate a tributary clause, which would specify that beneficial uses of a listed water body apply to any of its tributaries that are not listed in the Basin Plan.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapter 2, Table 2-3
Projected Staff Resources	0.7
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 21: Designate COMM (Commercial and Sport Fishing) Beneficial Use in Applicable Regional Waters

Description	This project would add the beneficial use for COMM (Commercial and Sport Fishing) to the Basin Plan. The Regional Water Board will review all waterbody designations and add the COMM beneficial use to any freshwaters that should be covered for recreational/sport fishing for consumption.
Public Comments	USEPA-1
Status	New
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapter 2
Projected Staff Resources	1.5
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 22: General Prohibition of Unpermitted Waste Discharges that Pose a Threat to Water Quality

Description	Currently, the Basin Plan does not include a prohibition against waste discharges and threatened waste discharges to waters of the state. This limits enforcement actions on unpermitted discharges that could have water quality impacts. To address this, staff proposes to adopt a general prohibition of unpermitted waste discharges and threatened waste discharges that pose a threat to water quality.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section II
Projected Staff Resources	0.7
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 23: Palo Verde Outfall Drain and Lagoon Chloride and Indicator Bacteria TMDLs

Description	The Palo Verde Outfall Drain and Lagoon are 303(d) listed for multiple impairments, including chloride and indicator bacteria. Staff is developing TMDLs to address these impairments. 2018 Integrated Report identifies TMDLs for these pollutants as due to be implemented by 2025 and 2019, respectively.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	1.2
Expected Completion by December 2026	Yes

Project 24: Groundwater Numeric Water Quality Objectives in Indio Subbasin

Description	This project was included in the 2017 Triennial Review as Item 2, "Establish Water Quality Objectives for Ground Water Throughout the Coachella Valley." Staff is developing site-specific numeric water quality objectives for TDS and other constituents in the Indio subbasin. To help establish appropriate water quality objectives, a 3-year contract with USGS to determine existing water quality was completed in 2023. Analysis of findings and determination of next steps has begun.
Public Comments	None
Status	New
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapter 3, Section IV.A
Projected Staff Resources	0.9
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 25: Colorado River Toxicity TMDL

Description	The Colorado River is 303(d) listed for multiple impairments, including toxicity. Staff is developing a TMDL to address this impairment. 2018 Integrated Report identifies TMDL for this pollutant as due to be implemented by 2025.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	0.8
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 26: Salton Sea Watershed Site-Specific Objectives

Description	The Basin Plan lists site-specific selenium water quality objectives (WQOs) for the Salton Sea and its tributaries as 0.005 mg/L four-day average and 0.02 mg/L one-hour average, stating that these criteria are based on USEPA's National Ambient Water Quality Criteria, also known as the 304(a) criteria. These objectives may have been based on the 1987 USEPA selenium water column criteria. Since 1987, USEPA selenium criteria have been updated repeatedly, including in 1999 for saltwater and 2016 for freshwater. Because of these updates, the Salton Sea watershed selenium WQOs should also be updated, either by removing the site-specific objectives to ensure that USEPA criteria apply, or by developing new site-specific WQOs. It should also be determined whether freshwater or saltwater WQOs apply. The Basin Plan also lists a site-specific WQO for salinity at 35,000 mg/L, however it is stated in the same paragraph that this objective "may not be realistically achievable." Due to the Salton Sea's terminal nature, its salinity has reached almost

	double that value and will continue to rise. Staff recommends to reevaluate this WQO. Chloride, a component of salinity, also concentrates at the Salton Sea. Because WQO for chloride are not listed in the Basin Plan, 304(a) aquatic life criteria apply, which are 860 mg/L for the acute criterion and 230 mg/L for the chronic criterion, both for freshwater. Chloride criteria for saltwater have not been established. Staff recommends developing site-specific WQOs for the Salton Sea and/or its tributaries for selenium, salinity, chloride, and/or other pollutants as necessary.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	Basin Plan Amendment
Basin Plan	Chapter 3, Section 3.C
Projected Staff Resources	2.2
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

Project 27: Salton Sea Watershed Ammonia TMDL

Description	The Salton Sea, Alamo River and Imperial Valley Drains are 303(d) listed for ammonia. Projects are already underway to develop TMDLs for ammonia at Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSC), and ammonia and nutrients at the New River. Staff proposes to develop a TMDL for ammonia for the entire Salton Sea Watershed. This project will incorporate the CVSC and New River proposed TMDLs after they are submitted to USEPA.
Public Comments	None
Status	Pending
Type	TMDL Plan
Basin Plan	Chapter 4, Section V
Projected Staff Resources	0.7
Expected Completion by December 2026	No

APPENDIX C: 2023 TRIENNIAL REVIEW LIST PRIORITIZATION RANKING

Project Title	Ongoing project (30)	Salton Sea (10)	EJ or Tribal (10)	Completion (10)	Groundwater (15)	Public interest (10)	Time sensitivity (10)	Impairments (5)	Beneficial Uses (5)	Total Score
1. Salton Sea Watershed, Alamo River Chloride, Indicator Bacteria, and Toxicity TMDLs	30	8	8	2	0	9	8	5	3	73
2. Salton Sea Watershed, New River Ammonia, Nutrients, and Toxicity TMDLs	30	8	8	3	0	9	5	5	3	71
3. Salton Sea Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients TMDLs	30	10	10	0	0	10	2	5	3	70
4. Salton Sea Watershed, Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel Ammonia, Dissolved Oxygen and Toxicity TMDLs	30	8	7	0	0	9	5	5	3	67
5. Imperial Valley Pyrethroid Pesticides TMDLs	30	7	8	3	0	5	5	5	3	66
6. Salton Sea Beneficial Use Review	30	10	6	0	0	6	3	2	5	62
7. Beneficial Use Designation for Salton Sea Constructed Aquatic Habitats	30	8	10	9	0	2	10	3	5	47

Project Title		Ongoing project (30)	Salton Sea (10)	EJ or Tribal (10)	Completion (10)	Groundwater (15)	Public interest (10)	Time sensitivity (10)	Impairments (5)	Beneficial Uses (5)	Total Score
8.	Adopt Region-Wide Water Quality Objectives Based on USEPA 304(a) Criteria	0	7	5	8	0	8	10	4	4	46
9.	Adopt Secondary MCLs as Ground- and Surface Water Quality Objectives	0	6	7	6	10	5	5	3	4	46
10.	Salton Sea Watershed Bacteria TMDL	0	10	10	7	0	10	2	4	3	46
11.	Salton Sea Arsenic TMDL	0	10	10	6	0	10	2	4	3	45
12.	Salton Sea Toxicity TMDL	0	10	10	6	0	10	2	4	3	45
13.	Salton Sea DDT and DDE TMDLs	0	10	10	5	0	10	2	4	3	44
14.	Delineate Groundwater Beneficial Uses by Groundwater Subbasin and/or Aquifer	0	2	4	8	10	6	8	0	5	43
15.	Designate Tribal Beneficial Uses for Specific Water Bodies	0	4	10	9	1	6	5	2	5	42
16.	Tribal Beneficial Uses Definitions and Administrative Updates to the Basin Plan	0	5	10	10	0	6	5	0	5	41

Project Title	Ongoing project (30)	Salton Sea (10)	EJ or Tribal (10)	Completion (10)	Groundwater (15)	Public interest (10)	Time sensitivity (10)	Impairments (5)	Beneficial Uses (5)	Total Score
17. Administrative Update to the Basin Plan	0	5	9	4	3	10	6	0	2	39
18. Imperial Valley Drains Toxicity TMDL	0	6	10	6	0	5	2	4	3	36
19. OWTS Prohibitions in Areas Where OWTS Pose a Threat to Water Quality	0	2	6	0	10	7	6	0	3	34
20. Designate Beneficial Uses for Listed and Unlisted Waterbodies, and Apply Beneficial Uses of Listed Water Bodies to Their Unlisted Tributaries	0	3	4	7	5	2	5	2	5	33
21. Designating COMM (Commercial and Sport Fishing) Beneficial Use in Applicable Regional Waters	0	0	5	7	0	5	5	5	5	32
22. General Prohibition of Unpermitted Waste Discharges that Pose a Threat to Water Quality	0	4	5	5	5	4	6	0	3	32
23. Palo Verde Outfall Drain and Lagoon Chloride and Indicator Bacteria TMDLs	0	0	7	4	0	2	10	5	3	31

Project Title	Ongoing project (30)	Salton Sea (10)	EJ or Tribal (10)	Completion (10)	Groundwater (15)	Public interest (10)	Time sensitivity (10)	Impairments (5)	Beneficial Uses (5)	Total Score
24. Groundwater Numeric Water Quality Objectives in Indio Subbasin	0	3	5	0	10	4	5	0	4	31
25. Colorado River Toxicity TMDL	0	2	7	0	0	2	5	4	3	23
26. Salton Sea Watershed Site-Specific Objectives	0	10	10	9	0	10	6	4	3	22
27. Salton Sea Watershed Ammonia TMDL	0	10	10	9	0	10	2	5	3	19

APPENDIX D: RESPONSE TO COMMENTS ON DRAFT STAFF REPORT

Colorado Basin Water Board staff solicited input from interested persons during a 30-day public comment period that began on September 25, 2023, and ended on October 24, 2023. The written comments on the Draft Staff Report submitted during the comment period are listed in **Table 6** below.

Table 6: Comments Received on Draft Staff Report

Commentor	Submittal Date
Matthew Mitchell, Policy Analyst U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Water Division, Standards and Assessment Section	October 24, 2023
Lilian Garcia, Executive Officer United for Justice Inc. (UFJ)	October 24, 2023

USEPA-1

Subject: N/A

Comment: The Colorado River Basin Water Board should adopt site specific criteria for additional pollutants to address priority water quality goals where the California Toxics Rule criteria or Basin Plan objectives are not consistent with current science.

Response: Site-specific criteria will continue to be incorporated through individual permitting actions that are specific to the waterbodies and impairments. Multiple projects in the 2023 Triennial Review List will require site-specific criteria for implementation.

USEPA-2

Subject: Basin Plan, Chapter 2

Comment: The Colorado River Basin Water Board should review all waterbody designations and add Commercial and Sport Fishing (COMM) as a designated beneficial use to any freshwaters that should be covered for recreational/ sport fishing for consumption.

Response: Staff have added a new project to designate COMM as a beneficial use for surface waters, where such uses are applicable. See project number 21 in Appendix B for more detail.

UFJ-1

Subject: Basin Plan, Ch. 4, § V

Comment: The Colorado River Basin Water Board has not developed enough Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) to address the increasing number of impairments on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List. As the Salton Sea recedes, its residents will be exposed to airborne particles and toxic air contaminants. In 2012, the 303(d) List included 68 listings. In 2018, another 24 listings were added. Unlike other regions, there are several sources of pollution within the Colorado River Basin Region. Therefore, the Colorado River Basin Water Board must prioritize the development of TMDLs, and in particular, TMDLs for the Salton Sea and its tributaries, the Coachella Valley, and the Imperial Valley Drains.

Response: Despite considerable challenges, the Colorado River Basin Water Board has already made significant progress towards addressing many of the impairments identified in the 303(d) List. The 303(d) List currently contains 110 combinations of waterbodies and impairments. Seven of these listings have already been addressed by TMDLs that are currently in place. Another six combinations are being addressed through TMDL alternatives (e.g., Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program). Additionally, the USEPA is currently reviewing adopted TMDLs that address another 30 combinations; USEPA approval is expected by the end of the year. All of these activities are focused exclusively on the Salton Sea watershed (which includes Coachella Valley surface waters and Imperial Valley Drains).

Colorado River Basin Water Board staff are currently developing TMDLs to address an additional 18 pollutant/waterbody combinations. These TMDLs will be presented to the Board for adoption starting in the next calendar year. Further, the top seven Basin Plan Amendment projects in the 2023 Triennial Review Staff Report are all focused on the Salton Sea watershed.

UFJ-2

Subject: Basin Plan, Ch. 6, § II.F, p. 6-8 (TMDLs Compliance Assurance and Enforcement)

Comment: The Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region (Basin Plan) provides that “[t]he Executive Officer shall use, as the circumstances of the case may warrant, any combination of the following actions to ensure that the water pollution threats identified in TMDLs are

promptly and effectively corrected." None of the previously approved TMDLs have been effective or corrected.

Response: The provision cited by the Commentor lists a series of actions that may be taken by the Executive Officer to ensure that the impairments addressed by TMDLs are corrected. The enumerated actions are listed below:

- Implementation and enforcement of sections 13225, 13267, and 13268 of the Water Code to ensure that all responsible parties submit in a prompt and complete manner, the Water Quality Management Plan defined in Chapter 4, Section V.E.1.i.

- Require submission of reports of waste discharge pursuant to Water Code section 13260.

- Adoption of waste discharge requirements, pursuant to section 13263 of the Water Code, as appropriate (i.e., for any responsible party who fails to implement voluntary or regulatory-encouraged sediment controls).

- Adoption of enforcement orders pursuant to section 13304 of the Water Code against any responsible party who violates Regional Water Board waste discharge requirements and/or fails to implement voluntary or regulatory-encouraged sediment control measures to prevent and mitigate sediment pollution or threatened pollution of surface waters.

- Adoption of enforcement orders pursuant to section 13301 of the Water Code against those who violate Regional Water Board waste discharge requirements and/or prohibitions.

- Issuance of Administrative Civil Liability Complaints, pursuant to sections 13261, 13264, or 13268 of the Water Code, against any responsible party who fails to comply with Regional Water Board orders, prohibitions, and requests.

- Adoption of referrals of recalcitrant violators of Regional Water Board orders and prohibitions to the

District Attorney or Attorney General for criminal prosecution or civil enforcement. [1]

None of these actions involve the adoption or revision of TMDLs. However, the Colorado River Basin Water Board routinely utilizes the referenced Water Code sections when developing Waste Discharge Requirements and Monitoring and Reporting Programs, and when required to enforce those orders.

A TMDL is a basin planning action that establishes load allocations for pollutants that are impairing the beneficial uses of the water body. The TMDL is implemented in permits issued to discharge to those waterbodies. Enforcement associated with the TMDL would occur as a result of violations of the permit.

UFJ-3

Subject: Basin Plan, Ch. 6, § II.F.1.i(d)-(e), p. 6-11

Comment: The Colorado River Basin Water Board's TMDL for Silt and Sedimentation in the Imperial Valley Drains requires Board staff to track the implementation of sediment control activities, and report on such activities to the Board on a yearly or more frequent basis. Staff are further required to prepare an annual "report assessing compliance with the TMDL Goals and Milestones." There are no records of any reports being prepared for any of the Board's nine TMDLs.

Response: Although the Commentor references nine TMDLs, the cited requirements are only applicable to the TMDL for Silt and Sedimentation in Imperial Valley Drains. It does not apply to the other existing TMDLs. In any event, the Colorado River Basin Water Board has produced Water Quality Report Cards for Imperial Valley Drains and presented annual program updates on TMDLs and Basin Planning activities.

[1] It should be noted that the authority to take many of the listed actions, such as the adoption of waste discharge requirements orders and certain enforcement orders, cannot be delegated to the Executive Officer. (Wat. Code, § 13223, subd. (a).)

UFJ-4

Subject: N/A

Comment: The Colorado River Basin Water Board should conduct monitoring in designated areas within the Salton Sea and its tributaries, as well as within the Imperial and Coachella Valley Drains. Monitoring should also be conducted at the drains' point of entry to the Salton Sea. Such monitoring would help determine the source of pollution. This request was made more than 3 years ago and has yet to be fulfilled. The monitoring of harmful algal blooms should also be a priority to take precautions and protect public health, and the ecosystem. Monitoring should be done year-round, and locations of testing should be changed throughout the year to obtain an accurate assessment.

Response: It should be noted at the outset that the requested monitoring activities are not related to the 2023 Triennial Review Staff Report that is currently being considered for adoption. That said, the Colorado River Basin Water Board monitors the New River, the Alamo River, and the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel twice a year through the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program. All waterbodies in the region are sampled for a suite of constituents tied to their impairments. Salton Sea tributaries are monitored from the headwaters to where they discharge to the Sea. Data is available in the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN; https://ceden.waterboards.ca.gov) on a rolling basis as data is entered. Harmful algal blooms are monitored in the Salton Sea around holidays when recreation at the sea is most likely. Unfortunately, monitoring is limited by funding availability.

The Colorado River Basin Water Board is currently working with the Department of Water Resources and California Natural Resources Agency to sample the Salton Sea quarterly for three years at various locations within the Sea. The first sampling occurred in November 2023; results are pending.

Monitoring other bodies of water including the Imperial Valley and Coachella Valley Drains is dependent of the availability of funding. However, the Irrigated Lands General Orders require monitoring of the drains and rivers. All other dischargers, such as those permitted under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems Program, are also required to monitor discharges and receiving waters. Data collected as part of these programs is housed in CEDEN or the California Integrated Water Quality System (CIWQS). The Colorado River Basin Water Board is always looking for funding for ambient water quality monitoring, especially concerning the Salton Sea. However, funding is often limited and competitive. We will continue to look for sources of funding and agencies to work with to help

continue monitoring the Salton Sea, its tributaries and the Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley Drains.

UFJ -5

Subject: N/A

Comment: The New River should be monitored for the larger number of constituents, as was done from 1997 to July 2008. Per the Basin Plan, New River, parameters are being monitored in the New River, but the data available online does not reflect this.

Response: The requested monitoring activities are not related to the 2023 Triennial Review Staff Report that is currently being considered for adoption. The Colorado River Basin Water Board monitors the New River at the International Boundary monthly and has for decades. The monitoring conducted between 1997 and 2008 was bolstered by additional funding that ceased in mid-2008. The Colorado River Basin Water Board had to prioritize constituents to analyze with a smaller budget. The current constituents were chosen and continually monitored since then. If the budget allows or if additional funding is secured, a reevaluation of constituents will be conducted.

UFJ-6

Subject: N/A

Comment: The Colorado River Basin Water Board should investigate for noncompliance those permitted waste discharges in the Colorado River Basin Region that discharge directly/indirectly into the Salton Sea and its tributaries/Imperial/Coachella Drains.

Response: The requested activities are not related to the 2023 Triennial Review Staff Report that is currently being considered for adoption. The Board's permittees are continually monitored for compliance with their Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs). Permit violations are evaluated and appropriate enforcement actions are implemented.