

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION**

73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260
Phone: (760) 346-7491

Public Notice 7-22-07
December 22, 2021

NOTICE OF CEQA SCOPING MEETING

**IN THE MATTER OF A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY
CONTROL PLAN FOR THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION TO
INCORPORATE TMDLS FOR AMMONIA AND TOXICITY IN THE NEW RIVER,
IMPERIAL COUNTY**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region (Colorado River Basin Water Board) staff will hold a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping meeting to discuss the development of a proposed amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region (Basin Plan). The proposed amendment would incorporate Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for ammonia and toxicity that impair the New River, located in Imperial County, into Chapter 4 of the Basin Plan (Project).

This scoping meeting will provide participants with: (1) an opportunity to comment on the appropriate scope and content of the “functionally equivalent” environmental document to be prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.5 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15251(g); and (2) an opportunity to comment on the proposed scope of the Basin Plan amendment.

The CEQA scoping meeting will be held at the following date and time, by **video and teleconference only**:

Date: January 13, 2022
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom Video
and Teleconference

The public meeting will occur solely via remote presence. Links for the meeting, including a phone call option, will be posted on the Colorado River Basin Water Board’s website at: [Colorado River Basin Water Board Home Page](#).

BACKGROUND

The Basin Plan is the guiding document that outlines the Colorado River Basin Water Board’s plan for preserving and enhancing water quality in the region for the protection of beneficial uses for present and future generations. The Basin Plan contains the region’s beneficial uses for groundwaters and surface waters, water quality objectives for protection of beneficial uses, and implementation programs to achieve water quality objectives. The New River exceeds narrative and numeric water quality objectives

outlined in the Basin Plan for ammonia and toxicity. These impairments are listed on the federal Clean Water Act section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters and are scheduled for TMDL development. This Project would address ammonia and toxicity impairments in the New River with the development of TMDLs.

The New River watershed is approximately 500,000 acres (202,350 hectares) in size: comprised of 200,000 acres (80,940 hectares) of Imperial Valley farmland in the US and 300,000 acres (121,410 hectares) in Mexico, including the Mexicali metropolitan area and agricultural land in Mexicali Valley. Discharges in these areas cause ammonia and toxicity to impair water quality. Discharges are either carried via drains or empty directly into the New River and subsequently into the Salton Sea. Ammonia and toxicity currently have unknown sources. It is anticipated that attainment of water quality standards will be achieved with the implementation of management practices to reduce the amount of ammonia and toxicity in the New River, though additional actions may also need to be taken.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the scoping meeting is for Colorado River Basin Water Board staff to seek input from public agencies and members of the public on the range of Project actions and alternatives, reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance, significant and cumulative impacts, and mitigation measures. Scoping may also assist the Colorado River Basin Water Board in resolving concerns of affected federal, state, and local agencies and other interested persons. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 3775.5.)

SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS

The Colorado River Basin Water Board will accept written and oral comments. Staff will solicit oral comments at the CEQA scoping meeting. Persons wishing to submit written comments are requested to do so as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on **January 30, 2022**.

Interested persons may submit written comments via email to Rosalyn Fleming at Rosalyn.Fleming@waterboards.ca.gov using the subject line: "Comment Letter: CEQA Scoping New River TMDL." Hand deliveries and mailed comments should be sent to the address below:

Rosalyn Fleming, Water Resources Control Engineer
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin Region
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Written comments may also be faxed to the Colorado River Basin Water Board office at (760) 341-6820.

Colorado River Basin Water Board staff will not prepare written responses to comments received at this meeting or to written comments submitted. However, Colorado River

Basin Water Board staff will address all significant environmental impacts in the draft and final environmental documents.

ACCESSIBILITY AND LANGUAGE NEEDS

Any person who is disabled and requires special accommodations or interpreter services to participate in this meeting, please contact Hilda Vasquez at (760) 776-8950 or via email Hilda.Vasquez@waterboards.ca.gov at least 10 working days prior to the meeting.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions concerning this matter, please contact Rosalyn Fleming at Rosalyn.Fleming@waterboards.ca.gov. Please bring the foregoing to the attention of any persons known to you who would be interested in this matter.