



Media Release

State Water Board selects Nicole Kuenzi to oversee Administrative Hearings Office

New presiding officer has extensive water law background

Feb. 10, 2023

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SACRAMENTO – The State Water Resources Control Board has appointed Nicole Kuenzi to direct the board’s [Administrative Hearings Office](#) as its new presiding officer.

Kuenzi (pronounced *KINN-zee*) succeeds Alan Lilly, who supervised the office since its inception in September 2019. She also is one of the unit’s original hearing officers.

The office functions as an independent entity within the State Water Board and was created to streamline water rights adjudications by conducting hearings for enforcement, permitting and other contested matters. Hearing officers conduct proceedings, consider evidence, prepare proposed orders, respond to public comments and submit final draft orders for board approval.

“Alan laid a great foundation, building this office from the ground up,” said Kuenzi, who holds a B.A. in philosophy and J.D. from Yale. “In a larger picture, I want to continue to shape the office into an institution that is respected within the water rights community, a place where disputes can be resolved fairly and efficiently, and where we bring orders to the board to address novel water rights issues that have never been addressed.”

A Bay Area native, Kuenzi brings a wealth of experience in water law from both the private and public sector. After a year as a law clerk for the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Salt Lake City, she worked on water rights, land use and public lands law at Petros & White in Denver before returning to California.

She joined the board’s Office of Chief Counsel in 2012, where among her responsibilities, she advised the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board about state and federal law, including the Clean Water Act and Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

Kuenzi, who also is an adjunct professor at McGeorge School of Law, is married with two sons, Hank (7) and Gus (9), and lives in El Dorado Hills.



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

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The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper resource allocation and efficient use for present and future generations.