
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

TO: All interested parties or persons

FROM: **PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT UNIT
LAHONTAN WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD**

DATE: 1/23/2020

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC SURVEY AND NOTICE OF LAHONTAN REGION BASIN
PLANNING PROJECT: BACTERIA WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES
EVALUATION**

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) is evaluating the fecal coliform bacteria water quality objectives (WQO) contained in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region (Basin Plan). The Water Board is requesting your participation in a [short survey regarding fecal indicator bacteria WQOs](#). Participation in the survey should take approximately five (5) minutes. Your responses will help the Water Board focus the agency's comprehensive evaluation of the fecal bacteria WQO for the Lahontan Region. [The Bacteria Water Quality Objectives Evaluation Project survey can be found at this link](#), or at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NZYTTYJ>. **The survey will be available until Sunday February 23rd, 2020 at 5.00pm.**

The Water Board is evaluating the Basin Plan fecal coliform bacteria WQO in light of the August 2018 adoption of another fecal indicator bacteria WQO by the State Water Resources Control Board specifically to protect the Water Contact Recreation (REC-1) beneficial use. The new REC-1 WQO uses *Escherichia Coli* (*E. coli*) to indicate the likely presence of fecal matter in surface waters. The Water Board is seeking to engage with Lahontan regional stakeholders and interested parties or persons so that a comprehensive evaluation of the current fecal coliform objective can be completed.

The existing Lahontan Region Basin Plan fecal indicator bacteria WQO uses fecal coliform to indicate the likely presence of fecal matter in regional surface waters. The WQO is a two-part numeric objective, the first part of which uses a log-mean calculation of fecal coliform data collected from the same monitoring location in the same 30-day period. This part of the objective is set at 20 colony-forming-units (CFU) per 100 milliliters (mL) of sample water. The second part of the objective is a statistical calculation where no more than 10% of samples collected during the same 30-day

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period may exceed 40CFU/100mL of sample water. This part of the objective is applied when there is insufficient data to calculate a log-mean. The WQO applies to all surface waters and wetlands in the Lahontan region. The newly adopted *E. coli* WQO to protect the REC-1 beneficial use is also written in two parts: the first is a geometric mean calculation of “generally not less than five samples distributed over a six week period” and is set as 100CFU/100mL of sample water. The second part is a statistical threshold value, applied when insufficient data is available to calculate a geometric mean, and is set as no more than 10% of samples exceeding 320CFU/100mL in a calendar month. The *E. coli* WQO applies to all Lahontan Region surface waters where the REC-1 beneficial use is designated.

Surface waters contaminated by fecal matter present a human health concern because pathogens and viruses which can be harmful to human health are shed with fecal matter and can be transmitted to people via contact with contaminated water. The presence of fecal matter in surface waters also contributes to environmental degradation. In light of the recently adopted *E. coli* objective to protect the REC-1 beneficial use and because of the significant human health risks associated with fecal contamination of surface waters, the Water Board has made evaluation of the current Basin Plan fecal coliform WQO a top planning priority.

Additionally, responses to the [Bacteria Water Quality Objectives Evaluation Project survey](#) will be used to focus future stakeholder meetings and ensure that, to the extent feasible, the Water Board is able to address all issues and concerns raised throughout the evaluation process. The Water Board intends to hold a series of public meetings throughout the Lahontan Region regarding the Bacteria Water Quality Objectives Evaluation Project in March of 2020. Notices of these meetings will be circulated at a later date.

If you are aware of another individual or organization that may be interested in participating in the WQO evaluation, please forward this notice and link to the survey to them.

Future notices regarding the Bacteria Water Quality Objective Evaluation Project will be circulated via the [Basin Planning – Regionwide](#) email list. If you are not already a member of this list, please go to https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg6_subscribe.html, enter your contact information and check “Basin Planning – Regionwide” to subscribe.

[The bacteria evaluation project survey can be found at this link](#), or at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NZYTTYJ>. **The survey will be available until Sunday February 23rd, 2020 at 5.00pm.**

For further information about the Bacteria Water Quality Objectives Evaluation Project please contact the project lead, Ed Hancock, at ed.hancock@waterboards.ca.gov or 530.542.5574.

The Water Board thanks you in advance for your participation in this survey and looks forward to collaborating with interested parties in the region.