

---

## State Water Resources Control Board

### Notice of Board Workshop Draft Guidance on Designating Tribal Beneficial Uses

Staff of the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) will hold a State Water Board workshop and accept oral comments on July 22, 2026, regarding the Draft Guidance on Designating Tribal Beneficial Uses.

The Draft Guidance on Designating Tribal Beneficial Uses is intended to support consistent and meaningful implementation of Tribal Beneficial Uses (TBUs) across the state. The workshop will also include presentations from California Native American Tribes and Regional Water Boards highlighting progress made to date in designating Tribal Beneficial Uses. Additional information about this project is provided below.

A quorum of the Board may be present, but no decisions will be made.

#### Participation Option(s)

##### Review the Available Documents

Review the Draft Guidance on Designating Tribal Beneficial Uses through the following links. Physical copies of the available documents may be mailed to you upon request by contacting staff as described below.

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/tribal\\_affairs/beneficial\\_uses/draft\\_guidance.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/tribal_affairs/beneficial_uses/draft_guidance.html)

##### Attend the Public Meeting

- Participate in person to observe or provide an oral comment on Wednesday, July 22, 2026 at the Coastal Hearing Room (second floor), CalEPA Headquarters, 1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Submit an online speaker card if you wish to provide a public comment at the Board meeting in person or remotely: [bit.ly/speaker-card-form](https://bit.ly/speaker-card-form). The form accepts responses a few days prior to the Board meeting. The Board Clerk will provide instructions to join Zoom in advance of the meeting. For more information about participating remotely at a Board meeting, please visit [bit.ly/providingcomments](https://bit.ly/providingcomments).
- For those who only wish to watch the meeting, the webcast remains available at either [youtube.com/user/BoardWebSupport](https://youtube.com/user/BoardWebSupport) or [video.calepa.ca.gov](https://video.calepa.ca.gov) (closed captioning available) and should be used UNLESS you intend to comment.

### Submit Written Comments

Written comments on the Draft Guidance on Designating Tribal Beneficial Uses must be received by **12:00pm (noon) on August 31, 2026**. Comments received after this time and date may not be considered.

Please email your written comments to [commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov) and include "**Comment Letter: TBU Guidance Document**" in the subject line. You may also mail, or hand deliver your written comments to the following address:

State Water Resources Control Board  
Attention: Courtney Tyler, Clerk to the Board  
P.O. Box 100, Sacramento, CA 95812-0100 (by mail)  
1001 I Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor Sacramento, CA 95814 (hand delivery)

### **Language Services**

This meeting will be offered in English. To request translation of a written document, interpretation services for the meeting, or sign language services, please use one of the following options as soon as possible and no later than July 6th:

- Submit an online request: [bit.ly/LanguageAccessForm](https://bit.ly/LanguageAccessForm)
- Call (916) 341-5254
- Email [languageservices@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:languageservices@waterboards.ca.gov)

Contact us to request information in your language.

Contáctenos para solicitar información en su idioma.

Liên hệ chúng tôi để yêu cầu thông tin bằng ngôn ngữ của quý vị.

귀하의 언어로 작성된 정보를 요청하려면 저희에게 문의하십시오.

ਆਪਣੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Makipag-ugnayan sa amin para humiling ng impormasyon sa iyong wika.

请联系我们，以您的语言获取相关信息。

### **Accessibility & Reasonable Accommodations**

Users of a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) may contact the California Relay Service at (800) 735-2929 or the teletype (TTY) voice line at (800) 735-2922.

Any person who requires reasonable accommodation to participate in the meeting should email [contact@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:contact@waterboards.ca.gov) or call (916) 341-5254, at least ten (10) business days prior to the meeting. Learn more about accessibility within Zoom at [www.zoom.com/en/accessibility](https://www.zoom.com/en/accessibility).

### **Building and Parking Information**

- Directions to the Joe Serna, Jr. (CalEPA) Building and public parking information: <http://www.calepa.ca.gov/headquarters-sacramento/location/>.
- Visitors to the CalEPA Building are required to sign in and obtain a badge at the Visitor Services Center located just inside the main entrance on 10th Street.
- Please allow 5 to 10 minutes to receive security clearance.

### **Background**

Since time immemorial, California Native American Tribes have stewarded California's waterbodies to support cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, subsistence and/or traditional practices, lifeways and rights.

For many years, Native American Tribes advocated to the Water Boards that the existing beneficial use categories did not adequately reflect how Tribes use water. In response to this concern, Native American Tribes initiated a collaboration with the State Water Board and together created definitions for two new beneficial use categories, known as Tribal Beneficial Uses (TBUs). On February 16, 2016, the State Water Board adopted [Resolution No. 2016-0011](#), acknowledging the importance of identifying and describing beneficial uses unique to Native American Tribes. In 2017, the State Water Board adopted [Resolution 2017-0027](#) which adopted [Part 2](#) of the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California—Tribal and Subsistence Fishing Beneficial Uses and Mercury Provisions. This Plan (often referred to as the ISWEBE Plan) established and defined the Tribal Beneficial Uses as follows:

- Tribal Tradition and Culture (CUL): Uses of water that support the cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, or traditional rights or lifeways of California Native American Tribes, including, but not limited to: navigation, ceremonies, or fishing, gathering, or consumption of natural aquatic resources, including fish, shellfish, vegetation, and materials.
- Tribal Subsistence Fishing (T-SUB): Uses of water involving the non-commercial catching or gathering of natural aquatic resources, including fish and shellfish, for consumption by individuals, households, or communities of California Native American Tribes to meet needs for sustenance.

Tribal Beneficial Uses recognize and honor Tribal Nations' unique and ongoing relationships with water and ensure that these uses are considered and safeguarded in water quality policies, planning, and permitting regulatory processes. The establishment of the Tribal Beneficial Uses definitions was an important step, and now all ten Water Boards are contemplating designation of those uses in water quality control plans (also known as basin plans).

The newly released ***Draft Guidance on Designating Tribal Beneficial Uses*** aims to clarify the designation process to support statewide consistency and transparency, facilitate Tribal Beneficial Use designations, and strengthen partnerships with California Native American Tribes. The Draft Guidance explains the history of Tribal Beneficial Uses, what TBUs are, how TBUs are designated into water quality control plans, and how to engage in the process. The Draft Guidance does not create any legal

requirements or make them more specific, rather it is intended only to describe existing requirements and practices.

The State Water Board is currently seeking feedback on the Draft Guidance on Designating Tribal Beneficial Uses. There are three opportunities to provide your input:

1. Submit Written Comments
2. Request Tribal Consultation
3. Participate in the State Water Board Workshop

### **Stay Informed**

Subscribe to receive email notifications:

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/about\\_us/public\\_participation/tribal\\_affairs/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/about_us/public_participation/tribal_affairs/)

Enter your email address and password, then select the submit button. If this is your first time subscribing to a Water Boards email subscription list, you will have to register and create a password.

Any person interested in receiving additional information about this Tribal Beneficial Uses board workshop, including any change to the date, time, or meeting location in this public notice, should subscribe to the email distribution list.

### **Contact Information**

- Staff contact: Nathan Blacksmith at [Nathan.Blacksmith@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Nathan.Blacksmith@waterboards.ca.gov) or (916) 322-4265.
- Program contact: Adriana Renteria at [tribal-liaison@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:tribal-liaison@waterboards.ca.gov)
- Website:  
[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/about\\_us/public\\_participation/tribal\\_affairs/beneficial\\_uses.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/about_us/public_participation/tribal_affairs/beneficial_uses.html)

June 17, 2026

Date



Courtney Tyler  
Clerk to the Board