



Media Release

Central Coast Water Board adopts Racial Equity Resolution

Acknowledges role of systemic racism, prioritizes action plan

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SAN LUIS OBISPO – The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board today adopted a resolution affirming its commitment to advancing racial equity and acknowledging that its programs were established within a structural framework that perpetuates inequities based on race.

In the resolution, the Central Coast Water Board pledges to institutionalize racial equity in its policies, programs and service to communities while fostering greater workforce diversity, equity and inclusion within the agency.

The State Water Resources Control Board and Central Coast Water Board have a shared mission to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water. This mission is strengthened by a commitment to racial equity and environmental justice. While the regional board has a long history of promoting environmental justice, the current national reckoning on racial justice underscores the urgency of addressing racial inequity at the institutional level.

The Central Coast Water Board's adoption of [Resolution R3-2023-0002](#) follows the State Water Board's approval of a statewide racial equity [Resolution No. 2021-0050](#) and associated [Racial Equity Action Plan](#).

"It is important that the Central Coast Water Board's resolution reflects the unique history and culture of the Black, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic and Latino communities that live and work in the region to ensure that all communities have a meaningful opportunity to provide input to the agency's decision-making," said Matthew Keeling, executive officer of the Central Coast Water Board.

Staff hosted listening sessions and provided many opportunities for employees and the public to provide input on the resolution for the board's consideration. The sessions focused on engaging with communities of color and racial equity in the workplace and as part of water quality programs and projects. Feedback from those sessions indicated a significant opportunity within the board's workforce to increase diversity and enhance staff's understanding of racial equity, racism, implicit bias, cultural competency and



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similar concepts. Participants also expressed the need for an acknowledgment of existing racial inequities and environmental injustices.

“Addressing racial equity is foundational to the work that the Central Coast Water Board does in making strides in ensuring everyone has access to clean water and supporting social and environmental justice,” said Jane Gray, Central Coast Water Board chair,

The resolution does not expand or modify the Central Coast Water Board’s existing authorities but rather reaffirms its commitment to advancing racial equity and environmental justice to create a future where we equitably preserve, enhance, and restore the state’s water resources and drinking water for all Californians, regardless of race, and where race is not a predictor of professional outcomes for Water Boards employees. Similar to the State Water Board, the resolution directs Central Coast Water Board staff to develop a Racial Equity and Environmental Justice Action Plan that articulates the agency’s goals, objectives and metrics.

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The [Central Coast Water Board](#) is responsible for protecting and restoring water quality in a 300-mile-long coastal region, from southern San Mateo and Santa Clara counties to the northern part of Ventura County. Protecting beneficial uses in streams, the ocean, and groundwater is essential to ensuring water quality and protecting the health of humans and wildlife.