

**Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region**

**Staff Summary Report
April 1, 2025**

ITEM: 4

SUBJECT: Presenting the 2025 Racial Equity Action Plan (*Shannon Strong and Brendan Thompson*)

BOARD ACTION: No action will be taken by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Water Board).

BACKGROUND: Advancing racial equity is a priority for the North Coast Water Board and its staff. Through the adoption of a Resolution *Condemning Racism, Xenophobia, Bigotry, and Racial Injustice and Strengthening Commitment to Racial Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Anti-Racism in the North Coast Region* (Racial Equity Resolution)¹ in February 2023, the development of a Racial Equity Action Plan, and other parallel initiatives, the North Coast Water Board is working toward a future where it equitably implements the Water Boards' mission to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses. The North Coast Water Board envisions a future where:

1. race is not a predictor of water and sanitation access a person receives;
2. race is not a predictor of professional outcomes for North Coast Water Board staff; and
3. a racial equity lens is consistently applied to the North Water Board planning and decision-making processes.

The Racial Equity Resolution (1) acknowledges and condemns racism, xenophobia, bigotry, and racial injustice, (2) commits the North Coast Water Board to advancing racial equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and anti-racism, and (3) directs North Coast Water Board staff (Staff) to develop a Racial Equity Action Plan that "articulates a vision for racial equity and outlines specific actions to address North Coast Water Board systems that perpetuate racial inequities while establishing new, equitable, and resilient systems." It specifies that the Racial Equity Action Plan must be developed in consultation with and informed by California Native American Tribes (Tribes) and Black, Indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC) communities in the North Coast Region, complement the State Water Resources Control Board's Racial Equity Action Plan, and include the following components:

¹ The Racial Equity Resolution, Resolution No. R1-2023-0001, may be viewed here: https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/02_2023/pdf/6/2301_raciaequity.pdf.

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1. goals, actions, timelines, and metrics;
2. quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to measure and evaluate progress; and
3. a framework to analyze the potential impacts of North Coast Water Board actions on racial equity and modify, as necessary, community engagement and decision-making processes to address inequities and advance equity.

DISCUSSION: The Racial Equity Action Plan is the first version of a living document that outlines specific actions that Staff will take to advance racial equity and address racial inequities in the North Coast Region. Its development was informed by BILAPOC community feedback, North Coast Water Board staff input, and the Racial Equity Resolution directives. The Racial Equity Action Plan is organized by Priorities, Goals, and Actions. The three overarching Priorities include: (A) Improve Internal Administrative Processes and Organizational Culture to Promote Racial Equity Within the Workplace; (B) Advance Community Engagement, Collaboration, and Access; and (C) Incorporate Equity into Permits, Enforcement Actions, Watershed Planning, Policies, and Stewardship. Each of these Priorities contains several goals with specific actions, action examples or sub-actions, and performance indicators to specify how goals will be achieved.

The 45-day public review period for the draft Racial Equity Action Plan, presented in English and Spanish, was from **November 4, 2024, through December 19, 2024**. During this time, Staff held several public engagement events, including a Board workshop on December 4, 2024, two virtual listening sessions, and five virtual “office hours.” Members of the public provided oral and written feedback on the draft Racial Equity Action Plan and comments were recorded, reviewed, responded to, and incorporated into, when feasible, this revised Racial Equity Action Plan. Based on oral and written comments, Staff made a number of revisions to the Action Plan. Oral and written comments and staff’s responses are detailed in the attached Response to Public Comments documents. Staff’s presentation for this information item will highlight the revisions incorporated in the final Action Plan. No action will be taken by the North Coast Water Board.

The Racial Equity Action Plan will be available on the North Coast Water Board’s website in both English and Spanish. Staff will implement the actions in the Plan, track metrics, and evaluate how well performance indicators have been achieved over time. Over the coming years, Staff encourage continued feedback from the public and North Coast Regional Board members on the Racial Equity Action Plan as we implement the Plan, and revisions will be made to the Plan, as necessary. Staff will provide periodic updates to the Board regarding implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: Not applicable.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

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1. Racial Equity Action Plan for the North Coast Region
2. Response to Comments
3. Public Comment Letters (available upon request by contacting RB1-Equity@waterboards.ca.gov)