

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

**Staff Summary Report  
December 4, 2024**

**ITEM: 3**

**SUBJECT:** Informational Workshop Presenting the Draft Racial Equity Action Plan and Call for Public Comments (*Michelle Fuller and Shannon Strong*)

**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)<sup>1</sup> 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, Latinx, Asian, and other people of color (BILAPOC) communities in the North Coast Region, complement the State Water Resources Control Board's Racial Equity Action Plan, and include the following components:

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<sup>1</sup> The Racial Equity Resolution, Resolution No. R1-2023-0001, may be reviewed here: [https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board\\_info/board\\_meetings/02\\_2023/pdf/6/2301\\_raciaequity.pdf](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 draft 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. It was developed from BILAPOC community guidance, North Coast Water Board staff input, and the Racial Equity Resolution directives. The draft 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 is from **November 4, 2024, through December 19, 2024**. During this review period, Staff will hold several public engagement events, including a Board workshop, two virtual listening sessions, and five virtual “office hours,” to seek input on the draft Racial Equity Action Plan from BIPOC communities, Tribes, and members of the public. The Board workshop will occur on December 4, 2024, in Santa Rosa as a part of the regularly scheduled December Board meeting. During the Board workshop, Staff will present an overview of the Draft Racial Equity Action Plan and the public engagement events planned during the 45-day public review period. Oral comments and discussion on the Draft Racial Equity Action Plan from members of the public are welcome and encouraged. Following the closure of the public review period, Staff will review and respond to comments, revise the draft Racial Equity Action Plan, and present an updated Racial Equity Action Plan to the North Coast Water Board, currently scheduled for April 2025.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Not applicable.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

1. Draft Racial Equity Action Plan for the North Coast Region
2. Notice of Public Comment Period, Board Workshop, Listening Sessions, and Office Hours for Draft Racial Equity Action Plan for the North Coast Region

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3. Racial Equity Resolution for the North Coast Region, Resolution No. R1-2023-0001

SSR\_Racial Equity Action Plan Workshop