



# Media Release

## **North Coast Regional Water Board Starts Public Comment Period for Draft Russian River Bacterial TMDL**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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SANTA ROSA – The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board’s draft regulatory program for bacteria contamination in the Russian River Watershed is open for public comment until October 8.

Called the Russian River Watershed Pathogen Indicator Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), the draft document is intended to protect public health and attain water quality standards in the Russian River Watershed, by improving the bacteriological quality of the river and tributary streams.

A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, and a TMDL Action Plan allocates that load among the various sources of that pollutant.

In this case, the draft TMDL addresses bacteria in the river that indicate the presence of human and domestic animal waste. The bacteria present a threat to the river ecosystem and a potential health hazard to people who engage in contact water sports, like swimming.

The primary sources of the bacteria in the Watershed include untreated wastewater, particularly from failing septic systems and homeless encampments, as well as livestock operations, and recreational water users.

Controllable sources identified as probable contributors to the bacteria problem will be required to meet the proposed concentration-based targets under conditions of a TMDL Action Plan, by taking specific actions to reduce bacterial contributions. The Regional Water Board will rely on existing permits and regulatory programs to address sources of pathogenic indicator bacteria in the Russian River and its tributary creeks. For identified sources of bacteria that are not currently regulated under an existing permit or program, the TMDL Action Plan will provide time and guidance for developing a satisfactory program to attain healthy watershed





conditions. In some cases, the Regional Water Board may issue discharge permits that require private landowners to meet certain conditions as a prerequisite to discharge.

The Regional Water Board is encouraging a watershed approach in which all parties affected by the TMDL will work together to develop and implement bacterial reduction strategies and monitor the results.

There will be [three public workshops](#) conducted in September, prior to Board consideration at a public hearing scheduled for November 19.

To learn more about the Russian River Pathogen Indicator Bacteria TMDL, visit the [Russian River TMDL webpage](#).

The North Coast Regional Water Board's mission is to protect and restore water quality in the northwest portion of the state, including the counties of Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Modoc, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Trinity, and portions of Glenn, Lake, and Marin counties. For more information visit the Regional Water Board homepage at: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/>.

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