
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

California Regional Water Quality Control Board North Coast Region

5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 576-2220

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Proposed General Waste Discharge Requirements for Commercial Lily Bulb Operations in the Smith River Plain and Final Environmental Impact Report

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (North Coast Water Board), will hold a public hearing to consider for adoption the proposed General Waste Discharge Requirements for Commercial Lily Bulb Operations in the Smith River Plain (Proposed Lily Bulb Order) and consider for certification the supporting California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR).

The hearing is scheduled during the North Coast Water Board's regularly scheduled **August 6, 2026** meeting in the Sam Lopez Room at the Elk Valley Rancheria in Crescent City, California. The hearing for the Proposed Lily Bulb Order and Final EIR is scheduled to begin at 4:00 p.m.

This meeting is scheduled to occur with both a physical meeting location and an option for remote participation via video and teleconference. Live video and audio broadcasts of the public hearing will be available via the internet and can be accessed at the CalEPA Public meeting live webcasts webpage (<https://video.calepa.ca.gov>). The meeting will be recorded.

Please be aware that dates and venues may change. In accordance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Gov. Code, § 11120 et seq.), an agenda will be posted to the Board's website at least 10 days in advance of the Board's meetings. The agenda will specify any updates to the meeting format. You can access the current agenda for

changes in dates and locations at the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Meetings webpage

(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/ . Please follow the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board website for information on how to participate in the meeting and any updates regarding this agenda item.

Overview

The Smith River Plain is a coastal plain located at the lower end of the Smith River watershed near the mouth of the mainstem Smith River. The drainage network of the Smith River Plain is comprised of several small coastal tributaries and the Smith River estuary, which provides high quality habitat for salmonids and other aquatic and riparian species, and which holds deep cultural and subsistence significance for the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation. Tillas Slough and Delilah Creek (tributaries to the Smith River estuary) are listed on the Section 303(d) list of impaired water bodies for copper, and synthetic pesticides have been detected at monitoring locations downstream of lily bulb agriculture through the North Coast Water Board's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program.

Commercial lily bulbs are cultivated in the Smith River Plain on a 3-5 year rotation with pasture and hay production on an area of roughly 1,000 acres. Accounting for this crop rotation, about 160 acres are planted to lilies each year, with another 160 acres in a given year being prepared to receive the following year's plantings.

Cultivation of lily bulbs has the potential to discharge wastes to surface waters and groundwater (through soil disturbance and use of agricultural chemicals) and affect other related controllable water quality factors such as the loss of riparian shade. The North Coast Water Board has a statutory obligation under the Federal Clean Water Act and the State Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act to regulate discharges of waste to waters of the state, restore water quality in impaired waters, and maintain existing high-quality waters.

The Proposed Lily Bulb Order would require Enrollees to implement management practices to control agricultural discharges in their fields in rotation for lily bulb cultivation, appurtenant agricultural roads, and Streamside Areas. Through a Monitoring and Reporting Program, Enrollees would sample surface waters for pesticides and groundwater for pesticides and nitrates. When sampling results document exceedances of Water Quality Benchmarks for constituents of concern, Enrollees would be required to implement improved management practices on a time schedule to meet Receiving Water Limitations. As is consistent with the statewide Irrigated Lands Regulatory

Program, Enrollees may enroll individually or through an approved Coalition, which manages fees and may conduct monitoring and reporting on behalf of Enrollees.

Information about the North Coast Water Board's Lily Bulb Program can be found online at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/agricultural_lands/lily/

Document Availability

The Proposed Lily Bulb Order and Final Environmental Impact Report will be available approximately 10 days before the public hearing on the North Coast Water Board's Lily Bulb Program website at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/agricultural_lands/lily/

All meeting materials, including the Proposed Lily Bulb Order, Final Environmental Impact Report, Staff Summary Report and other supporting documents can also be viewed on the North Coast Water Board's Agenda page:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/.

These files may also be viewed or copied by contacting or visiting the North Coast Water Board's office, 5550 Skylane Blvd, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California, weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Appointments are recommended for document reviews and can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.

Prehearing Submission of Comments

The noticed written comment period for these items has closed. Pursuant to the Notice of Opportunity for Public Comment and Extension of Public Comment Period, interested persons were previously invited to submit written comments on the Draft Order and Draft Environmental Impact Report by to 5:00 pm on March 30, 2026. Written materials submitted after the close of the written comment period will not be accepted and will not be incorporated into the administrative record absent a ruling by the Board Chair.

Public Hearing Oral Comments

Oral comments will be accepted at the hearing. The time limit for oral comments will be 5 minutes; however, additional time may be provided, upon request, at the discretion of the North Coast Water Board Chair. A timer may be used, and speakers are expected to honor time limits. Where speakers can be grouped by affiliation or interest, such groups will be expected to select a spokesperson to avoid unnecessary or repetitive presentations.

Procedural Matters

The procedures governing North Coast Water Board hearings may be found in the California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 648 et seq. and are available upon request.

Ex parte communications in this matter are subject to the disclosure requirements of Water Code section 13287

(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/laws_regulations/docs/exparte.pdf). Any communications between interested persons that are subject to ex parte disclosure requirements and board members (other than at a noticed board meeting where the Lily Bulb Order is on the agenda or submitted as a comment letter in compliance with this or another public notice) must be disclosed by the interested person within seven working days of the communication. A sample disclosure is available at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/public_notices/.

Ex parte communications between interested persons and board members concerning this item are prohibited for a period beginning 14 days before the board meeting at which the Proposed Lily Bulb Order is scheduled for adoption. Beginning **July 23, 2026**, ex parte communications between interested persons and board members concerning this item are prohibited. If the North Coast Water Board does not take action on August 6, 2026, the ex parte prohibition will remain in place until the North Coast Water Board, the Chair, or the Executive Officer directs otherwise. Once lifted, the prohibition on ex parte communications may be reinstated for 14 days before the date of the board meeting to which the decision is continued. The North Coast Water Board will provide notice via its email list for this item if the prohibition is lifted and/or reinstated.

Accessibility

Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in the public meeting should contact the North Coast Water Board at 707-576-2220 at least five days prior to the scheduled meeting. The meeting location is accessible to people with disabilities. TTY users may contact the California Relay Service at 800-735-2929 or voice line at 800-735-2922.

Regional Water Board Staff Contact

Questions regarding the Proposed Lily Bulb Order should be directed to the Lily Bulb Program, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, 5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA, 95403, by phone or email at NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov with "Lily Bulb Program" as part of the subject.

For future updates on the Proposed Lily Bulb Order and Final EIR, please subscribe to the email list by visiting our subscription site and choosing “Agricultural Lands Discharge Program” after entering your email address

(https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?qsp=north_coast).