

California Regional Water Quality Control Board North Coast  
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
(707) 576-2220

REVISED NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT, BOARD  
WORKSHOP, AND BOARD HEARING

Proposed General Order for Waste Discharge Requirements  
for Commercial Vineyards in the North Coast Region and Draft Environmental Impact  
Report

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN of an extension of acceptance of written comments by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (Regional Water Board), on the proposed General Waste Discharge Requirements for Commercial Vineyards in the North Coast Region (proposed General Order) and supporting California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

NOTICE IS ADDITIONALLY HEREBY GIVEN that the Regional Water Board will hold a public workshop on the proposed General Order and supporting draft EIR. Board members will be present, however less than a quorum of the Board will be in attendance and the Board will not take any action at the public workshop.

The public workshop is scheduled for August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in the Regional Water Board Hearing Room, 5550 Skylane Blvd, Suite A, in Santa Rosa, California. 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 workshop will be available via the internet and can be accessed at the [CalEPA Public meeting live webcasts webpage](https://video.calepa.ca.gov) (<https://video.calepa.ca.gov>). The public workshop will be recorded.

NOTICE IS ADDITIONALLY HEREBY GIVEN that the Regional Water Board will conduct a public hearing to consider adoption of the proposed General Order and EIR.

The public hearing is scheduled for December 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 a.m. in the Regional Water Board Hearing Room, 5550 Skylane Blvd, Suite A, in Santa Rosa, California. 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 workshop will be available via the internet and can be accessed at the [CalEPA Public meeting live webcasts webpage](https://video.calepa.ca.gov) (<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/) ([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board\\_info/board\\_meetings/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/)).

## Overview

There are approximately 65,000 acres of land planted to vineyards in the North Coast Region. Over 95% of North Coast vineyards are located within the Navarro and Russian River watersheds which are impaired for sediment and temperature and provide habitat for threatened and endangered salmonid species. Cultivation of winegrapes 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 Regional 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 General Order would regulate the cumulative impacts of commercial vineyards through requirements, prohibitions, and provisions applied to farmed areas and appurtenant road networks. Under the proposed General Order, growers would be required to self-assess the conditions on their vineyard and report implementation of minimum management practices and nitrogen use. The proposed General Order would also require surface and groundwater quality monitoring and adaptive management in response to monitoring. The proposed General Order would allow the option for growers to enroll in third-party programs which assist with enrollment, fee collection, monitoring, reporting, and grower education.

[Information about the Agricultural Land's Vineyard Program](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/agricultural_lands/Vineyards/) can be found online at: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water\\_issues/programs/agricultural\\_lands/Vineyards/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/agricultural_lands/Vineyards/).

## Document Availability

The proposed General Order and supporting Draft EIR is available and can be obtained from the [State Clearinghouse website](https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2022080129) at: (<https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2022080129>) and the [the Agricultural Land's Vineyard Program](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/agricultural_lands/Vineyards/) website at: ([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water\\_issues/programs/agricultural\\_lands/Vineyards/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/agricultural_lands/Vineyards/)).

These files can also be viewed or copied by contacting or visiting the Regional 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.

## Public Comments

Any written comments regarding the proposed General Order must be submitted and received by the Regional Water Board by 5:00 p.m. on August 30, 2023. Electronically submitted comments in pdf text format (if less than 15 megabytes in total size) can be sent to [NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov). If the file is greater than 15 megabytes in total size, then the comment letter may be submitted by fax at (707) 523-0135 or mailed to Agricultural Lands Program, 5550 Skylane Blvd, Ste. A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. Written comments received after the above date will not be accepted, except at the discretion of the Regional Water Board Chair.

Staff request that comments on the proposed General Order be submitted with the subject line “Comments on Draft Vineyard Order,” and any comments on the supporting Draft EIR be submitted separately with the subject line “Comments on Draft EIR for Vineyards”.

Oral comments will also be accepted at the workshop and hearing. The time limit for oral comments will be 5 minutes; however, additional time may be provided, upon request. 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 Regional Water Board will not consider certification of the EIR or adoption of the proposed General Order at the public workshop. The Regional Water Board will consider certification of the EIR and adoption of proposed Vineyard Order at the December Board meeting. The procedures governing Regional 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 are allowed in this matter subject to the disclosure requirements of Water Code section 13287,](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/laws_regulations/docs/exparte.pdf)

([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/laws\\_regulations/docs/exparte.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/laws_regulations/docs/exparte.pdf)). Any communications between interested persons and board members (other than at a noticed board meeting or workshop where the Vineyard 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/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/public_notices/).

### Accessibility

Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in the public meeting should contact Deidre Wilkerson 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 Order should be directed to Vineyard 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](mailto:NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov) with “Vineyard Program” as part of the subject.

For future updates on the General Order and 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](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?qsp=north_coast)).