

State Water Resources Control Board

NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

PROPOSED APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE NORTH COAST REGION TO 1) INCORPORATE THE ACTION PLAN FOR PATHOGENS IN THE RUSSIAN RIVER WATERSHED ESTABLISHING A FECAL WASTE DISCHARGE PROHIBITION AND A TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD FOR BACTERIA IN THE RUSSIAN RIVER WATERSHED, AND 2) REMOVE THE POLICY ON THE CONTROL OF WATER QUALITY WITH RESPECT TO ON-SITE WASTE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL PRACTICES SPECIFIC TO THE RUSSIAN RIVER WATERSHED, INCLUDING THE LAGUNA DE SANTA ROSA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) will accept comments on the proposed approval of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's (North Coast Water Board) Water Quality Control Plan from the North Coast (Basin Plan) that would 1) Incorporate the Action Plan for Pathogens in the Russian River Watershed (Action Plan) establishing a Fecal Waste Discharge Prohibition and a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for bacteria in the Russian River Watershed, and 2) Remove the Policy on the Control of Water Quality with respect to On-Site Waste Treatment and Disposal Practices Specific to the Russian River Watershed, including the Laguna de Santa Rosa (Basin Plan Amendment). The Basin Plan Amendment was adopted by the North Coast Water Board on 08/15/2025 via R1-2025-0030. The Action Plan adds a TMDL, waste load allocations (WLA), load allocations (LA), and targets for all surface waters of the Russian River Watershed with the water contact (REC-1) beneficial use based upon the [statewide Bacteria Water Quality Objectives](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/bacterialobjectives/docs/bacteria.pdf) (<https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/bacterialobjectives/docs/bacteria.pdf>) for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) or enterococci applicable to those waters, depending on the salinity level. Key to the program of implementation, the Action Plan adds a watershed-wide fecal waste discharge prohibition, mechanisms and compliance timeframes for each sector to comply with the prohibition, and establishes a region-specific assessment program for Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) across the Russian River Watershed. Taken together with the WLAs and LAs, these elements minimize human exposure to pathogens and protect the REC-1 beneficial use. Compliance with the fecal waste discharge prohibition can be achieved by providing adequate treatment or management practices that prevent the discharge of fecal waste, compliance with a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, or Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) permit, waiver of WDRs, or implementing terms of Memoranda of Understanding between the North Coast Water Board and relevant local agencies, as applicable. The North Coast Water Board incorporated the Water Quality Control Policy for Siting,

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | ERIC OPPENHEIMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Design, Operation, and Maintenance of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems
[statewide OWTS Policy](#)

(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/owts/docs/owts_policy.pdf) into its Basin Plan in 2015, retaining the pre-existing Policy on the Control of Water Quality with Respect to On-Site Waste Treatment and Disposal Practices Specific to the Russian River Watershed, Including the Laguna de Santa Rosa (Regional OWTS Policy). The Regional OWTS Policy for the control of OWTS discharges in the Russian River Watershed remains in effect until the Action Plan takes effect. Upon effect of the Action Plan, the siting and design requirements within the Regional OWTS Policy will be removed from the Basin Plan, no longer applying to the Russian River Watershed. Instead, the Action Plan applies standard statewide OWTS Policy requirements for WDR waiver coverage across the Russian River Watershed. All design and siting criteria for OWTS will be as described under the statewide OWTS Policy or in accordance with provisions under an approved Local Agency Management Program (LAMP). This includes requirements for OWTS subject to an Advanced Protection Management Program (APMP). Compliance with an approved LAMP also complies with the statewide OWTS Policy. In addition to statewide OWTS Policy and LAMP requirements, the Action Plan establishes the components for the basic operational inspection of OWTS and a North Coast Water Board OWTS assessment program to identify OWTS not authorized under the statewide OWTS Policy or approved LAMPs. Additional information about the Amendment is provided below.

The Basin Plan Amendment and supporting documents are available for review at: [Russian River | California Northcoast Regional Water Quality Control Board](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/) (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/).

Submission of Written Comments

Persons interested in the Basin Plan Amendment are encouraged to submit comments electronically. Comment letters **must be received by 12:00 noon on February 12, 2026**. Comment letters received after that deadline will not be accepted unless the State Water Board determines otherwise. Send comments to Courtney Tyler, Clerk to the State Water Board, by email at commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov (**must be no more than 15 megabytes**); fax at (916) 341-5620; or mail or hand delivery to:

Courtney Tyler, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100, Sacramento, CA 95812-0100 (mail)
1001 I Street, 24th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814 (hand delivery)

Please also indicate in the subject line, “**Comment Letter— Action Plan for Pathogens in the Russian River Watershed.**”

If you would like a copy of any or all of the written comments submitted on this subject, please send a request to commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov, identifying the subject listed above. Written comments will not be available until after the comment deadline.

Requirements for Submitting Comments

The State Water Board will not accept any new evidence not already presented to the Regional Water Board during its consideration of the Basin Plan Amendment. In accordance with 23 Cal. Code Regs., § 3779, subd. (f), the State Water Board may refuse to accept any comments that do not satisfy all the following requirements:

1. Comments must specifically address the final version of the Basin Plan Amendment adopted by the North Coast Water Board.
2. If the North Coast Water Board previously responded to a similar or identical comment, the commenter must explain why and in what manner the commenter believes each of the responses provided by the North Coast Water Board to each comment was inadequate or incorrect.
3. The commenter also must include either a statement that each of the comments was timely raised before the North Coast Water Board, or an explanation of why the commenter was unable to raise the specific comment before the North Coast Water Board.

Language Services

To request translation of a written document please use one of the following options as soon as possible and no later than January 14, 2026:

- Submit an online request: bit.ly/LanguageAccessForm
- Call (916) 341-5254
- Email languageservices@waterboards.ca.gov

Contact us to request information in your language.

Свяжитесь с нами, чтобы запросить информацию на вашем языке.

Korean: 귀하의 언어로 작성된 정보를 요청하려면 저희에게 문의하십시오.

Punjabi: ਆਪਣੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਭ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਕਰੋ।

Makipag-ugnayan sa amin para humiling ng impormasyon sa iyong wika.

Background

Several reaches of the Russian River Watershed are listed on the 303(d) list of impaired waters for pathogens. Total maximum daily load (TMDL) studies confirmed evidence of pollution and fecal waste discharge from numerous land use sectors throughout the watershed. The data considered to establish the TMDL and the program of implementation specified in the Action Plan include: observed levels of *E. coli*, enterococci, human-, bovine-, dog-, and bird- specific *Bacteroides* bacteria, PhyloChip™ Microbial Community Analysis, land cover, and land use. The Action Plan addresses Russian River Watershed fecal indicator bacteria impairments and protections by establishing a TMDL, a fecal waste discharge prohibition, and a program of implementation for wastewater treatment facilities, sanitary sewer systems, recycled water, land application of biosolids, municipal stormwater runoff, OWTS, dairies, ranches and hobby farms, and homeless encampments.

Stay Informed

The State Water Board will separately publish an agenda for the meeting at which it will consider adopting a resolution approving the Basin Plan Amendment. Oral comments at the State Water Board meeting generally will be limited to a summary of the written comments submitted during the written comment period. Persons interested in receiving notice of the meeting at which the State Water Board will consider approving the Basin Plan Amendment must subscribe to the Regional Water Board's email distribution list. Persons who require notice by regular mail must submit such request to the North Coast Water Board contact identified below.

Subscribe to receive email notifications

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

Enter your email address and password, then select the submit button. If this is your first time subscribing to a Water Boards email subscription list, you will have to register and create a password.

A copy of the Basin Plan Amendment can be received by mail by contacting the staff identified below.

Contact Information

- Staff contact: Prachi Kulkarni, Water Resource Control Engineer at Prachi.Kulkarni@waterboards.ca.gov or 707-576-2650; Lisa Bernard, Planning Unit Supervisor, at Lisa.Bernard@waterboards.ca.gov or 707-576-2677; or Nathan Jacobsen, Staff Counsel, at Nathan.Jacobsen@waterboards.ca.gov or 916-341-5181
- Program contact: Lisa Bernard, Planning Unit Supervisor, at Lisa.Bernard@waterboards.ca.gov or 707-576-2677
- Website: [Russian River | California Northcoast Regional Water Quality Control Board](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdl/russian_river/)
(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdl/russian_river/)

November 25, 2025

Date



Courtney Tyler
Clerk to the Board