



# Media Release

**San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board**

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## San Diego Water Board Accepts Orange County Stormwater Plan for San Juan Watershed Area

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**South Orange County** – The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Diego Water Board) recently approved an Orange County Water Quality Control Plan intended to reduce the effects of storm water pollution and related public health risks and improve water quality in waterways and coastal areas popular with tourists and local residents.

The Water Quality Improvement Plan is mandated under the [Regional Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit \(Regional MS4 Permit\)](#), which regulates storm water discharges in San Diego County and parts of south Orange County and southwest Riverside County.

“The successful implementation of this plan will not only benefit our environment, resulting in cleaner inland and coastal waters, but also enhance the tourist economy in southern Orange County, which can exceed nearly \$10 billion annually,” said San Diego Water Board Executive Officer David Gibson. “Acceptance of this plan is a major milestone in the San Diego Water Board’s efforts to reduce the effects of storm water pollution and achieve improvements in the water quality of inland surface waters, bays, estuaries and coastal waters within the San Diego Region.”

On June 20, the San Diego Water Board accepted the Water Quality Improvement Plan (Plan) for the San Juan Watershed Management Area in south Orange County. Partnering agencies in this watershed are approaching improvements to water quality from a broader perspective.

In their submitted plan, Orange County will address factors that impair the condition of the receiving water that closely relate to beneficial uses rather than focusing only or mainly on individual water quality constituents. Priority conditions include bacteria health risk at beaches, improving natural water flows, restoring natural water balance and physical habitat to improve biology/ecology and chemical qualities, and restoration of beneficial uses in inland receiving waters. The Water Quality Improvement Plan includes strategies to control and abate human waste sources, rehabilitate 23,000 lineal feet of inland streams, and eliminate unnatural dry weather flows like over irrigation from urban environments into creeks.



“Since the Clean Water Act was adopted with mandates from storm water quality protection, we’ve spent 25 years developing tools to manage storm water as a flood hazard, source of pollution and as a resource in an ever-drier state,” Gibson said. “What has been lacking has been a strategic watershed approach with local buy-in and community support to put all the technical pieces together. Through our Practical Vision, the Water Board has found ways like the Water Quality Improvement Plan to improve the effectiveness of storm water and other programs and achieve measurable improvements in water quality in our creeks and beaches”

The accepted Water Quality Improvement Plan implements the optional pathway to compliance with receiving water prohibitions and limitations allowed under provision B.3.c of the Regional MS4 Permit.

This Plan specifically includes those conditions by which the permitted municipalities must fully implement, over a period of time, a rigorous and transparent set of strategies in compliance with a specific set of pollutant combinations in the water body during dry and/or wet weather conditions. This is the first Water Quality Improvement Plan to be accepted by the San Diego Water Board that includes the optional pathway to compliance.

Additional information on the [Water Quality Improvement Plan](#) can be obtained online at the San Diego Water Board’s website.

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