



REGION 9

SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105

Eric Oppenheimer
Executive Director
California State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Approval of California's Updated 5-year Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program Plan (2025-2030)

Dear Director Oppenheimer,

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hereby approves California's updated 2025-2030 Nonpoint Source Program Implementation Plan (2025-2030 Plan), submitted to EPA by the California State Water Resources Control Board on June 26, 2026.

The 2025-2030 Plan effectively describes California's goals, strategies, and milestones for addressing nonpoint source (NPS) pollution over the Plan's five-year timeframe, consistent with requirements in the Clean Water Act (CWA) §319 and §6217 of the Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments of 1990 ("CZARA"). The 2025-2030 Plan also clearly describes California State Water Board's, the Regional Water Quality Control Boards', and the California Coastal Commission's co-leadership of California's Nonpoint Source Management work.

Enclosed is EPA's Review and Approval document, which presents the basis for our decision in accordance with EPA's Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidelines for States and Territories. EPA looks forward to supporting California's implementation of the 2025-2030 NPS Management Plan to achieve its water quality restoration and protection goals and objectives. We also would like to especially acknowledge and thank the Nonpoint Source Unit Supervisor, Jessica Leonard, for her time and effort dedicated to completing the updated 2025-2030 Plan.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 415-295-9035, or by email at Aguirre.Hector@epa.gov. Your staff may also contact the CWA 319(h) project officer for California, Avra Heller, at 415-972-3773, or by email at heller.avra@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Hector Aguirre, Acting Director
US. EPA R9 Water Division

Enclosure: EPA Review and Determination Document for California's 2025-2030 Nonpoint Source Program Implementation Plan

cc:

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**EPA Review and Determination Document for
California's 2025-2030 Nonpoint Source Program Implementation Plan
Submitted by the California State Water Resources Control Board
September 2026**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that the 2025-2030 California State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) 2025-2030 Nonpoint Source Management Plan (2025-2030 Plan) addresses all key components of an effective State NPS management program as defined in Appendix A of EPA's Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidelines for States and Territories (May 2024). Under these guidelines, states and territories review and update these plans every five years to ensure that the goals, objectives and annual milestones remain current and relevant for achieving water quality benefits and that Clean Water Act (CWA) §319 funds are targeted to priority activities.

This document describes EPA's basis of approval of California's 2025-2030 Nonpoint Source Plan. EPA looks forward to working with California SWRCB staff and program partners to implement the 2025-2030 Plan (applicable through December 2030), and to supporting California SWRCB in preparing the subsequent plan update for EPA review by no later than April 30, 2030.

Overview of California's NPS Management Plan

The 2025-2030 NPS Plan describes how California intends to continue to implement the state's Nonpoint Source Management Program (NPS Program), articulating the state's priority water quality concerns, as well as identification of priority watersheds. The Plan also describes program structure, goals, objectives, and milestones for addressing nonpoint source pollution across California. The work presented in the 2025-2030 Plan will be conducted by the various State Water Resources Control Board units, the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards, and the State Board's co-implementing agency, the California Coastal Commission. The Plan was written in alignment with EPA's Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American, and Pillar 3: Cooperative Federalism, and Cross-Agency Partnerships.

The 2025-2030 Plan will advance water quality improvement activities and meets federal requirements necessary to ensure continued eligibility for funding under CWA §319. EPA will continue to support California's implementation of their NPS program, via support for California's:

- Water Quality Assessment and Monitoring Objectives: developing Integrated Report (IR) and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and associated monitoring programs for tracking and reporting on water quality concerns and improvements.
- Watershed Planning Objectives: coordinating use of the various planning documents required by EPA with California's new statewide Watershed Planning goal to strengthen coordination and early, meaningful engagement with California Native American Tribes; to guide future implementation needs and investments.
- Strategic Partnership Objectives: continuing to build coordination to leverage technical assistance and funding resources for priority water quality issues, including federal, regional and local partner agencies and environmental organizations.
- Adaptive Management Objectives: continuing efforts to assess and advance the program, with the ability to adapt for staff capacities and other priority issues and projects that may arise over the next five years.

Findings for Key Components of an Effective State Nonpoint Source Management Program

EPA finds that California's 2025-2030 Plan addresses the Key Components of an Effective State NPS Management Program per Appendix A of the 2024 CWA 319(h) Guidelines as follows:

1. The state/territory program identifies water restoration and protection goals and program strategies (regulatory, nonregulatory, financial and technical assistance, as needed) to achieve and maintain water quality standards. It includes relevant, current, and trackable annual milestones that best support program implementation.

California's approach to protecting water quality from nonpoint source impairments (in alignment with Porter Cologne and the CWA) is to assess waters, develop TMDLs and watershed-based plans, and regulate discharges of waste with permits or enforcement orders. California's NPS program also includes a robust subaward grant program. Subawards fund critical planning and implementation projects, specific subawards often include input from technical advisory committees, and detailed water quality, monitoring, and public outreach and watershed education opportunities.

California's NPS Management Plan identifies goals along with specific projects and action items to achieve ongoing assessment and improvements of the State's water quality. The overarching goals of the State's NPS Management Program are to manage NPS pollution in alignment with the Clean Water Act as well as with California's Porter Cologne Water Quality Act by:

- Implementing and enforcing waste discharge requirements, waivers of waste discharge requirements, and waste discharge prohibitions to control and reduce nonpoint source pollution to waters of the State;
- Researching, investigating, and employing traditional and non-traditional mechanisms for reducing, regulating, and/or otherwise decreasing nonpoint source pollution to waters of the State;
- Collaborating with state, local, and federal agencies on initiatives to control and reduce nonpoint source pollution to waters of the State;
- Administering a grant program that focuses on controlling and reducing nonpoint source pollution to targeted waterbodies; and
- Evaluating the success of the NPS Program by tracking program activities, nonpoint source pollutant load reductions, and water quality improvements.

2. The state/territory program identifies the primary categories and subcategories of NPS pollution and a process for prioritizing impaired and unimpaired waters and identify how national and state priorities may align.

The State's 2025-2030 Plan focuses on nineteen targeted pollutant categories (Appendix D) impacting approximately sixty priority waterbodies (Appendix B) to address over eighty priority TMDLs (Appendix C). The 2025-2030 Plan also identifies fourteen priority NPS Program Topics (see list below) which are critical sources of NPS Pollution in waters of the State. Each Program Topic is presented with a short background, followed by goals, objectives and milestones, as identified by the State and Regional Water Boards and the Coastal Commission. While not all of the implementing agencies identify goals or action items for every priority NPS topic, all topics have actionable goals and milestones identified.

California Nonpoint Source Focus Areas

1. Agriculture
2. Bacteria
3. Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability

4. Coastal NPS
5. Constituents of Emerging Concern
6. Confined Animal Facilities
7. Forestry, Wildfire, and Fuels Management
8. Harmful Algal Blooms
9. High Quality, Healthy, and/or Threatened Watersheds
10. Natural Disasters, Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Recovery
11. Onsite Wastewater Treatment System
12. Rangelands / Grazing
13. Source Water Protection
14. Transboundary Impacts

3. The state/territory program identifies management measures (i.e., systems of practices) that will be undertaken to reduce pollutant loadings resulting from each category, subcategory, or particular nonpoint source identified in component 2. The measures should also consider the impact of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) on groundwater quality.

Management measures are described broadly throughout the document, with specific goals and measures described within the topic sections discussed above. Additionally, section three in its description of SWRCB's NPS pass-through grant award program highlights the types of projects and BMPs which are funded through the program. These BMPs include agricultural nutrient and irrigation monitoring stations, agricultural BMPs including cover crops, hedgerows, sediment basins; riparian restoration including bank set back and stabilization, revegetation, and large woody debris installations; rural road improvements; and vegetation management to reduce wildfire fuels.

4. The state/territory uses both watershed projects and well-integrated regional or statewide programs to restore and protect waters, achieve water quality benefits, and advance any relevant resiliency goals.

California addresses NPS pollution through a robust combination of approaches including:

- Regulatory programs addressing regional, watershed and/or activity specific issues,
- Water Quality Control Plans (Basin Plans) documenting the actions needed to achieve water quality goals in a watershed, including those identified in TMDL implementation plans, and
- Funding on-the-ground implementation projects to address NPS pollution, including the NPS Grant Program that awards 319 funds (and other funds when available) to targeted watersheds.

5. The state/territory identifies and enhances its collaboration with appropriate federal, state, interstate, Tribal, and regional agencies as well as local entities (including conservation districts, private sector groups, utilities, and citizen groups) that will be utilized to implement the state program.

The management of California's NPS program is complex, as it is spread across the State Board, the nine Regional Boards, the Coastal Commission, as well as many partnering programs internal to the Water Boards, and other agencies who do not receive direct grant funding such as CalEPA, the California Natural Resources Agency, CalFire, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and many more. The plan describes in detail how those partnerships relate to the various NPS focus areas. The plan also identifies goals around strengthening coordination with California's Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Natural Resource Conservation Service to support agricultural nonpoint source pollution projects and better leverage U.S. Department of Agriculture and state funding. Finally, new to this 5-year NPS plan, and in direct response to comments from tribes, California added a new statewide Watershed Planning goal to strengthen coordination and early, meaningful engagement with California Native American Tribes.

6. The state/territory manages and implements its NPSMP efficiently and effectively, including necessary financial management.

Section three of the 2025-2030 Plan goes into specific detail regarding how SWRCB administers California's CWA 319(h) program. This section describes critical annual grant lifecycle management milestones including timelines for workplan and budget development; subaward request for proposal development, announcements, and reviews; federal grant reporting cycles; and increased internal communication between branches of SWRCB and the regional boards to have clear insight on spending trends. Over the last five-year plan period, California struggled with unliquidated obligations, in part due to impacts from Covid and due to the State's transition to a new financial management system. Those challenges led California to develop more robust internal financial tracking protocols and standing meetings between various divisions within SWRCB. A priority listed in the plan is for the program to continue to "restructure the program's internal financial tracking so that the program can successfully spend the CWA 319 funds on time, has more financial transparency to make better informed decisions, and can complete reporting requirements with greater ease and accuracy (2025-2030 Plan, pg. 19)."

7. The state/territory evaluates its NPSMP using environmental and functional measures of success and revises its NPSMP plan at least every five years.

The 2025-2030 Plan includes measures for programmatic evaluation, addressing key performance measures, and reporting requirements. The plan also identifies key capacity building and training opportunities for California SWRCB NPS staff. Reporting measures include the submission of water quality and project success stories via EPA NPS Program's Grants Reporting and Tracking System (GRTS). California SWRCBs will also use their mid-year and end-of-year consolidated grant progress reports along with their Annual NPS reports to document progress towards goals and objectives listed in their annual workplan tasks. EPA welcomes continued collaboration to effectively and efficiently utilize these reports to assess achievement of milestones and water quality results. Finally, future Integrated Reports will be another mechanism where California SWRCB can report on NPS projects' progress towards achieving water quality standards and eventual delisting of waters from the 303(d) impaired list.

Efforts to prepare this updated 2025-2030 NPS Plan began in 2024, and the updated plan was expected in Spring of 2025. However, California requested timeline extensions to ensure compliance with EPA Executive Orders and administration priorities, and to ensure adequate time for a robust public comment process, which included responding to public comments and conducting tribal consultations. To ensure continuity of program implementation during this period, EPA authorized the state to base the FY 2025–2026 Nonpoint Source Grant Work Plan on both the 2020–2025 Nonpoint Source Program Implementation Plan and the draft 2025–2030 Implementation Plan.

EPA encourages California SWRCB to start the next 5-year NPS Planning efforts early and hopes to receive drafts of the 2030-2035 Plan to review by mid-2029 to support submission by April 2030, and a final EPA review and determination by June 2030. EPA applauds the efforts laid out in this 2025-2030 Plan to streamline and improve California's NPS programmatic implementation and the continued work to address California's critical water quality concerns.