



Guidance

Receiving Water Risk Guidance

***For the 2022 Construction Stormwater General Permit (2022 CGP)
(Order WQ 2022-0057-DWQ)***

Purpose

The 2022 CGP relies on a two-part Risk Level determination process to assess the threat construction activities may pose to a receiving water body: the project's sediment risk and the project's receiving water risk. This document provides guidance for the latter, including:

- Background on receiving water risk
- Data and method used to develop High-Risk Receiving Watersheds map
- Available Resources

Background

Receiving water risk is based on whether a project drains to a water body that is considered sediment-sensitive. A sediment-sensitive water body is either:

- 1) Included in the [2020 – 2022 California 303\(d\) list](#) for water bodies impaired for sediment, siltation, **or** turbidity.

OR

- 2) Designated with the beneficial uses of COLD, SPAWN, **and** MIGRATORY in the applicable [Regional Water Board's Basin Plan](#).

A project discharging to a sediment-sensitive water body is considered to have a high receiving water risk. The State Water Board has created this tool to identify the High-Risk Receiving Watersheds that drain into sediment-sensitive water bodies either directly or indirectly.

Data and Method

Water Board staff mapped the High-Risk Receiving Watersheds using the California water bodies and Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 12 watersheds included in the [National Hydrography Dataset](#) (NHD) in conjunction with georeferenced information from the 2020 – 2022 California 303(d) list and the Regional Water Board's Basin Plans. A combination of HUC 10 watershed boundaries and physical barriers (e.g., dams) were used to delineate the upstream extent of the High-Risk Receiving Watersheds.



Available Resources

The High-Risk Receiving Watersheds are available for individuals to view through the [2022 CGP High-Risk Receiving Water Map Tool](#), which is published on an ArcGIS platform. The sediment-sensitive watersheds are shaded in red. When entering risk information in SMARTS, the discharger can auto populate receiving water risk using the project's latitude and longitude coordinates. SMARTS will generate the risk based on the most up-to-date High-Risk Receiving Watersheds dataset. Note, if the Water Boards determine that there was an error in how the receiving water risk was assigned, Water Board staff may direct the discharger to revise the project's receiving water risk.

Individuals that wish to view the watersheds through a different platform may download a KMZ file of the watersheds on the [2022 CCGP webpage](#) under the "Guidance" section. The KMZ can be uploaded to programs such as Google Earth for viewing.

Additional Information

If you have any questions regarding the High-Risk Receiving Watersheds, please contact the Stormwater Help Desk (stormwater@waterboards.ca.gov). If you believe there is a discrepancy between the High-Risk Receiving Watersheds map tool and the 2020 - 2022 California 303(d) list or a Regional Water Board basin plan, please contact the Stormwater Help Desk with a description of the issue.

This Guidance Document was last updated on September 15, 2025.