Item #3
Public Hearing for the Draft 2026 California Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list of Impaired Waters

Part of the Integrated Report

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CALIFORNIA
Water Boards

Division of Water Quality | March 18, 2025

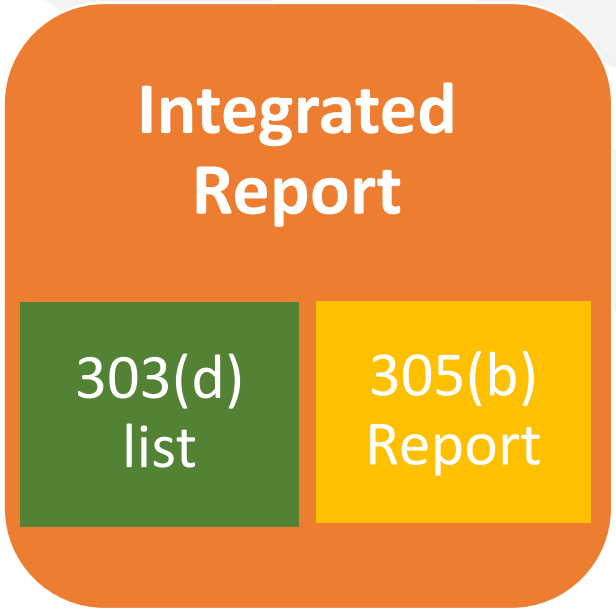
Presentation Outline

- Integrated Report Overview
- Summary of the Draft 303(d) list
- Assessment Methodologies
- Anticipated Adjustments to Draft 2026 303(d) list
- Important Dates and Next Steps
- Questions?

The **Integrated Report** addresses **Sections 303(d)** and **305(b)** requirements of the **Clean Water Act**

303(d) list of Impaired Waterbodies

- Where beneficial uses are not supported.
- Total Maximum Daily Loads or other restoration programs are required.
- Requires United States Environmental Protection Agency approval.



305(b) report

- Report on the overall condition of surface water quality.
- Included in the Integrated Report, but does not require approval.

Water Quality Control Policy for Developing California's Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list ("listing Policy")
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2015/020315_8_amendment_clean_version.pdf

California Integrated Report Condition Categories

1	At least **one** core beneficial use is **supported** and none are known to be impaired.
2	**Insufficient information** to determine beneficial use support.
3	There is insufficient data and/or information to make a beneficial use support determination but information and/or data indicates beneficial uses may be **potentially threatened**.
4	At least one beneficial use is not supported but a **TMDL is not needed**. **4a:** A TMDL has been developed and approved by USEPA, and the approved implementation plan is expected to result in full attainment of the water quality standard within a reasonable, specified time frame. **4b:** Another regulatory program is reasonably expected to result in attainment of the water quality standard within a reasonable, specified time frame. **4c:** The non-attainment of any applicable water quality standard for the waterbody segment is the result of pollution and is not caused by a pollutant.
5	At least one beneficial use is not supported and a **TMDL is needed**. **5r:** An Advance Restoration Plan (ARP) has been developed that includes a near-term plan or description of actions, with a schedule and milestones, that is more immediately beneficial or practicable to achieving standards than a TMDL.

Category 5 TMDL Priority Rankings

High Priority	TMDLs are planned for development within the next two years.
Medium Priority	TMDL are planned for development within two to ten years.
Low Priority	• TMDLs are planned for development in over ten years. • Impairment *planned to* be addressed by a Category 4b Plan. • Impairment addressed by an Advance Restoration Plan. • Where applicable water quality standards may not be appropriate.

How the 303(d) list Can Be Used

- **Informational**: Does not by itself directly establish new regulatory requirements.
- Prioritize the development of TMDLs or other restoration plans.
- In a separate action, a listing and associated data ***may*** be used to:
  - Prioritize review of beneficial uses or objectives, leading to a standards change.
  - Prioritize and target additional ambient monitoring.
  - Inform permit development and permit requirements.
    - Evaluating whether effluent limitations are appropriate.
    - Monitoring requirements.
    - Source analysis study requirements.

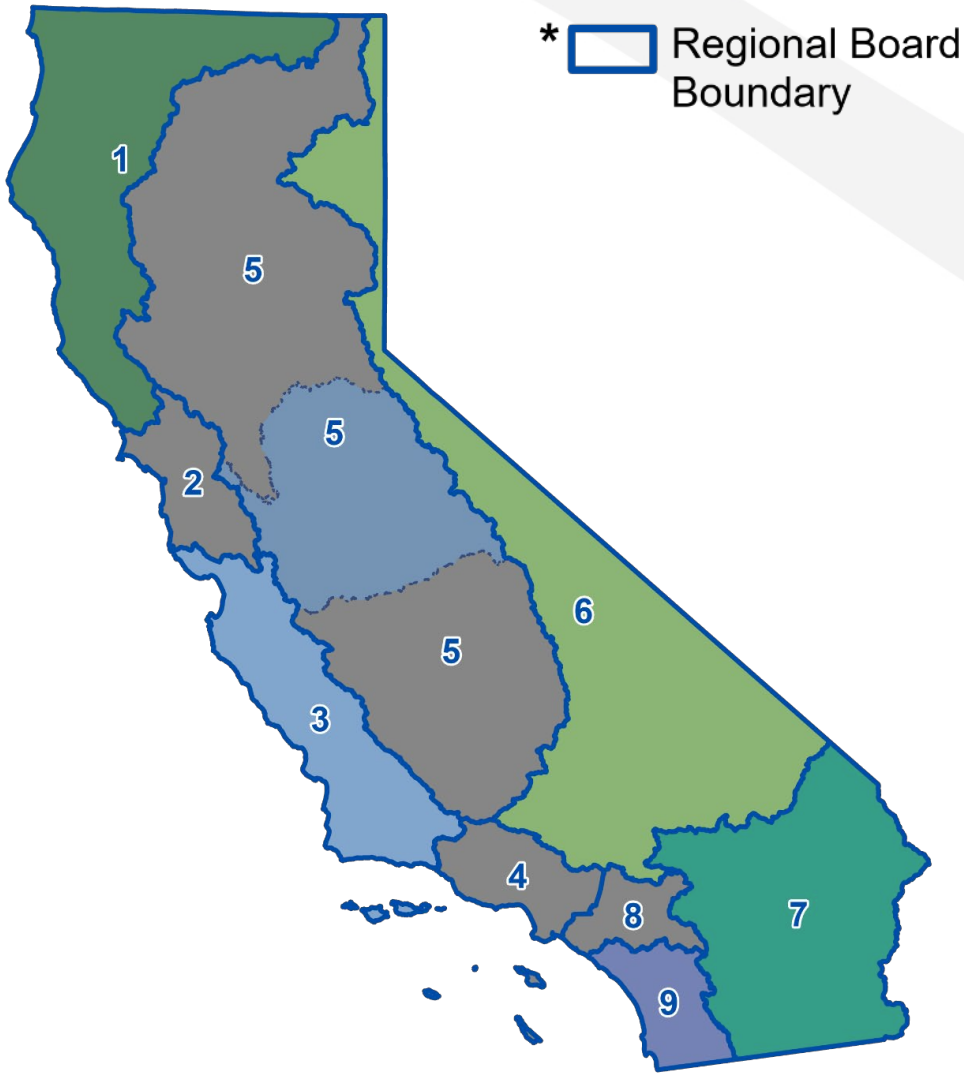
Racial Equity Action Plan Actions

- Use Integrated Report data for racial equity analysis.
- Identify impacted waters in Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and disadvantaged communities.
- Identify data gaps.

Tribal Considerations

- Data not assessed if collected from waters on federally recognized tribal lands.
- Data assessed if collected from waters bordering federally recognized tribal lands.
- Engagement letters sent to tribes.

2026 “On-Cycle” and “Off-Cycle” Regions



On-Cycle Assessments

- North Coast (1)
- Lahontan (6)
- Colorado River (7)

Off-Cycle Assessments

- Central Coast (3)
- San Diego (9)
- Central Valley (5)
  San Joaquin River sub-basin

Not Assessed

- San Francisco (2)
- Los Angeles (4)
- Santa Ana (8)
- Central Valley (5)
  Sacramento and Tulare sub-basins

Data Cut-Off Date: October 21, 2022

Summary Statistics

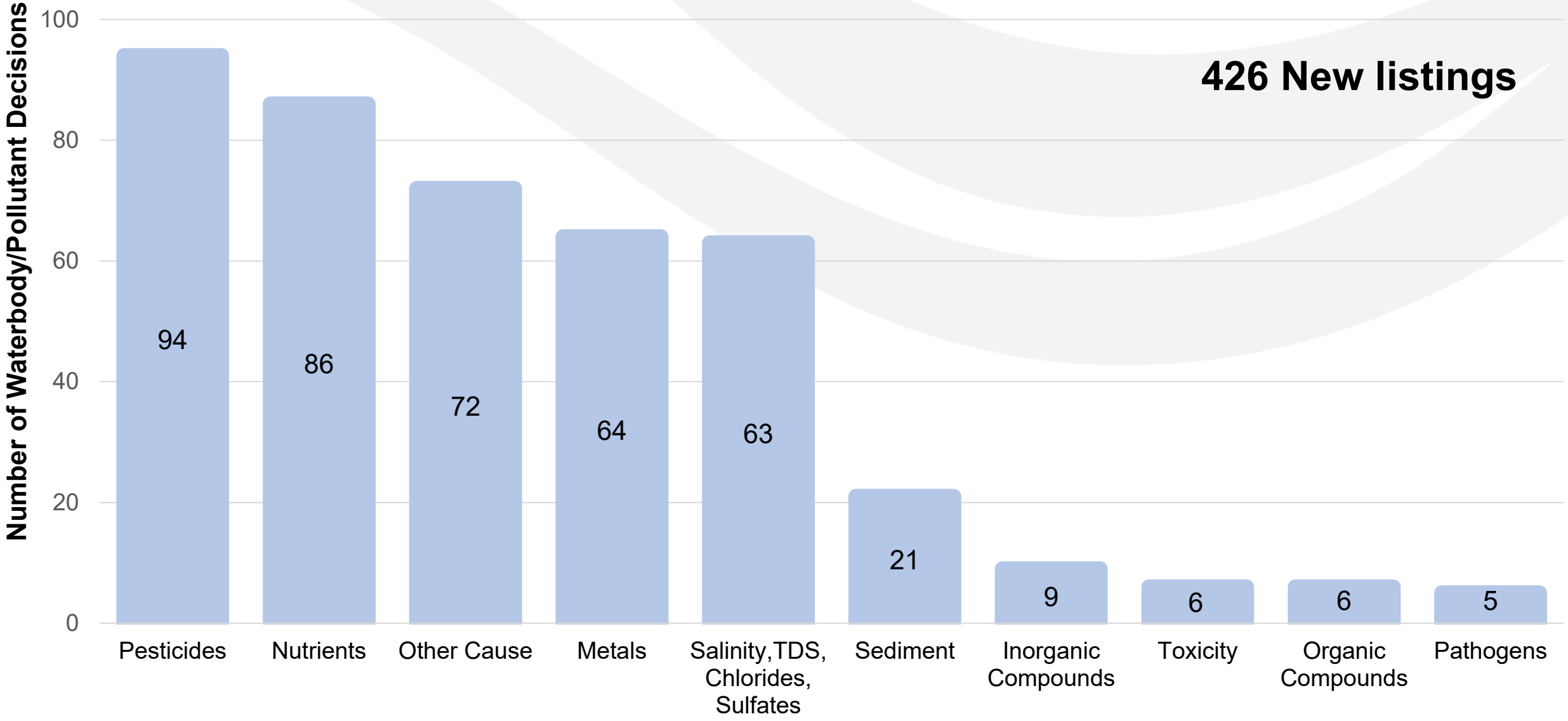
Statistic	2020-2022	2024	Draft 2026
Data Rows Assembled	4,587,101	5,351,531	**1,425,079**
Waterbodies with Data Assessed	1,630	1,591	**983**
Lines Of Evidence Assessed	112,537	95,708	**33,685**
Waterbody-Pollutant Combinations Assessed	24,964	20,632	**15,819**

Summary Statistics: Draft 2026 303(d) List

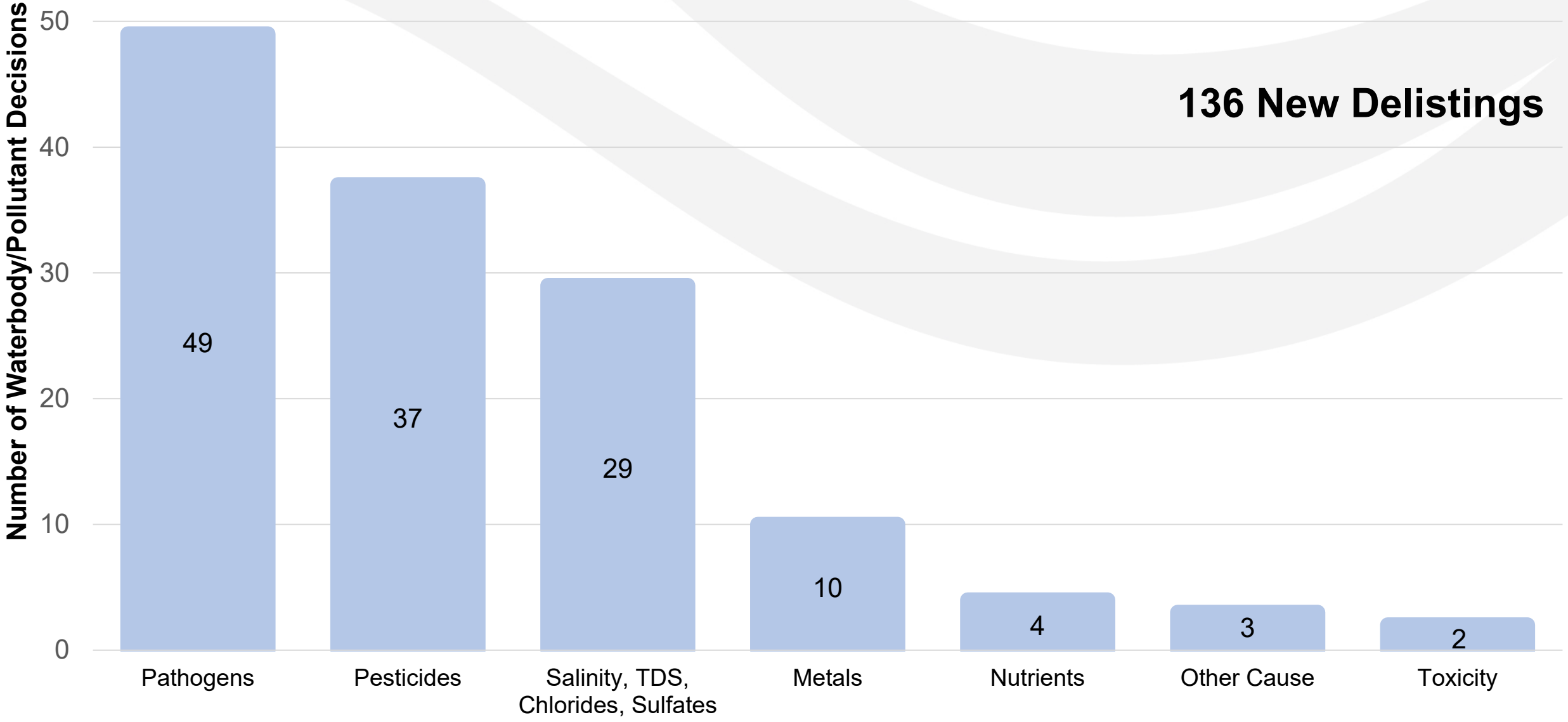
Region	2024 303(d) listings	New listings	New Delistings	2026 303(d) listings*
North Coast	**217**	**77**	**13**	**317**
San Francisco Bay	476	0	0	476
Central Coast	**1,200**	**1**	**6**	**1,198**
Los Angeles	1,215	0	0	1,215
Central Valley	**1,246**	**149**	**75**	**1,227**
Lahontan	**256**	**151**	**35**	**353**
Colorado River Basin	**110**	**47**	**5**	**152**
Santa Ana	183	0	0	183
San Diego	**839**	**1**	**2**	**838**
TOTALS	**5,742**	**426**	**136**	**5,959**

Count of 2026 303(d) listings may not equal the addition of new listings and removal of delistings from the 2024 303(d) list due to waterbody segment splits, merges, or other miscellaneous changes.

Draft 2026 New 303(d) Listings



Draft 2026 New 303(d) Delistings



136 New Delistings

Assessment Methodologies

Assessments for Controllable Water Quality Objectives

- Some water quality objectives tie exceedances to controllable water quality factors or a waste discharge.

- Examples:
  - The pH shall not be raised above 8.6 or depressed below 7.0 ***as a result of controllable water quality factors*** [emphasis added].
  - At no time shall water temperature be raised above 80°F ***as a result of waste discharges*** [emphasis added].

Assessments for Controllable Water Quality Objectives

- Where evidence indicated that exceedances of the numeric portion of the objective are due to a controllable water quality factor or waste discharge, the waterbody was placed in Category 5.
  - Listing Policy sections 3.1 and 3.2.
- Where evidence did not indicate that exceedances of the numeric portion of the objective are due to a controllable factor or waste discharge and there are no alternative narrative objectives that can be applied, the waterbody was placed in Category 3.

Assessments for Controllable Water Quality Objectives

After closer review of specific objectives, we plan to update the decision language in several waterbody fact sheets for:

- 4 temperature assessments in specific segments of the Sacramento River.
- 85 pesticides assessments throughout the Central Valley.
- 1 mercury assessment in Sulphur Creek located in the Central Valley.

We also plan on updating Staff Report section 4.2 to better describe the complexity around controllable factors and waste discharges across the regional basin plans.

Assessments for COMM when the Beneficial Use is Occurring (but not designated)

- Fish tissue data include mercury, PCBs and other pollutants that can impact human health when consumed.
- Not all waters are designated with the Commercial and Sport Fishing (COMM) Beneficial Use.
- Where evidence demonstrated that fishing is occurring, and there was exceedances, the waterbody was placed in category 5.
- Where evidence did not demonstrate that fishing is occurring, and sufficient exceedances existed, the waterbody was placed into Category 3.

Benthic Community Effects

- For the 2026 Integrated Report, waterbody-pollutant combinations were placed into Category 5 when data and information demonstrated:
    - Degraded Biology + Associated Pollutant(s) = Impairment
    - California Stream Condition Index (CSCI) Score < 0.79 = degraded biology
- This approach is consistent with USEPA's Partial Approval and Partial Disapproval of California's 2024 list of Impaired Waters (https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-12/ca-2024-303d-list-epa-partial-approval-disapproval-2024-12-12.pdf)

Benthic Community Effects

- All waterbody-pollutant combinations placed into Category 5 for Benthic Community Effects are identified as priority level low for TMDL development.
- It is not required that a TMDL, or other action to address the impairment, will be developed to address the degraded biology alone.
- A TMDL, or other action, may be developed to address the pollutant impairment that may be contributing to degraded biology.
- If a pollutant impairment is addressed and delisted from the 303(d) list, but the biological community has not improved, the waterbody-pollutant combination will be placed Category 3.
- If an impairment is the result of pollution and is not caused by any known pollutant, a waterbody-pollutant combination may be placed into Category 4c, and no regulatory action is required.

Benthic Community Effects

- Listing Policy section 3.9 – Degradation of Biological Populations and Communities.
- California Stream Condition Index (CSCI) Score < 0.79 = degraded biology.
  - Currently applied statewide.
- Alternative CSCI scores may be available in the future.

Anticipated Adjustments to Draft 2026 303(d) list

- Specific Conductivity in the Central Valley Region
  1. Some data were assigned incorrect units. Resulted in about 23 erroneous listings.
  2. Two parent projects included the same data. Did not result in erroneous listings but assessments will be updated to remove the duplicates.

Status of Prior Cycle Commitments

The following assessments were completed as part of the 2026 IR to fulfill commitments made during previous integrated report cycles:

- Corrected data entry discrepancies identified in the 2024 California Integrated Report.
- Completed Westside San Joaquin Coalition pesticide data reassessments.
- Completed chloride assessments for the Bay-Delta.
- Remapped waterbody boundaries in the Delta.
- Corrected the pyrethroids in sediment organic carbon normalization error.
- Associated data with quality assurance project plans (known as “QAPPs”).
- Completed all aluminum data reassessments using the 2018 USEPA Aquatic Life Criteria for Aluminum in Freshwater.

2026 Integrated Report – Timeline

April 18, 2022	Start of Data Solicitation Period
October 21, 2022	Close of Data Solicitation Period
January 30, 2025	Released Draft Integrated Report
February 11, 2025	Staff Hosted Virtual Workshop
March 18, 2025	**Public Hearing**
April 2, 2025, at Noon	Public Comment Period Deadline
December 2025	Response to Comments and Proposed Final Staff Report Release
January 2026	State Water Board Meeting to Consider Adoption
April 1, 2026	Submittal to USEPA

Documents and additional information available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/

Submitting Comments and Questions

- Comments due April 2, at Noon.
- Send comments to commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov.
- Put “Comment Letter – 2026 California Integrated Report” in the subject line.
- Tips for submitting Comments and Template for Supplemental Information.
- Questions? Contact:
  - Ana Maria Saenz, Senior Environmental Scientist AnaMaria.Saenz@waterboards.ca.gov
  - Lillibeth Rodriguez, Environmental Scientist Lillibeth.Rodriguez@waterboards.ca.gov