
State Water Resources Control Board

April 18, 2022

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SOLICITATION OF WATER QUALITY DATA AND INFORMATION FOR THE 2026 CALIFORNIA INTEGRATED REPORT FOR CLEAN WATER ACT SECTIONS 303(d) AND 305(b)

The State Water Resources Control Board (“State Water Board”) hereby solicits surface water quality data and information and commences the statewide data solicitation period for the 2026 California Integrated Report (“2026 Integrated Report”). Please bring this notice to the attention of anyone who may be interested in this matter.

The 2026 Integrated Report satisfies two of the state’s reporting requirements under the Clean Water Act (“CWA”). One is the CWA section 305(b) requirement to report on water quality conditions (commonly called the “305(b) report”). The other is the CWA section 303(d) requirement to identify impaired waterbodies that are not meeting or not expected to meet water quality standards (commonly called the “303(d) list of impaired waters” or the “303(d) list”). The 303(d) list also includes a schedule for establishing in the future a total maximum daily load or other water quality restoration project for waters on the list.

The State Water Board is soliciting data and information to inform the compilation of the 2026 Integrated Report. To be considered for the 303(d) list, data and information submissions must include the minimum data elements required for assessment and be received by the deadline identified below. Minimum data elements and instructions for submitting data and information are detailed in Enclosures 1-4 below. The State Water Board may also consider such data and information in the development of the 305(b) report.

Data and information submissions must be received by the State Water Board no later than 12:00 p.m. noon on October 21, 2022.

The 303(d) list is prepared in accordance with the Water Quality Control Policy for Developing California’s Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List (“Listing Policy”).

“Readily available data and information” submitted during the data solicitation notice will be assembled (e.g., gathered and organized), evaluated to consider whether or how data and information will be used and, if appropriate, assessed to determine surface water quality conditions and to identify impaired waters. Readily available data and

information is defined as data and information successfully submitted to the State Water Board via the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (“CEDEN”), except as otherwise noted in this notice, by the time and date identified above.

The 2026 Integrated Report will continue the rotating basin approach used in previous listing cycles. For the 2026 listing cycle, the State Water Board is administering the 303(d) listing process for the below-identified waterbodies in the following “on-cycle” regions:

- Waterbodies in the region of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Waterbodies in the region of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Waterbodies in the region of the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board

For the 2026 listing cycle, the State Water Board is also administering the 303(d) listing process for the below-identified waterbodies in the following “off-cycle” regions:

- Waterbodies within the San Joaquin River sub-area of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, which is defined as the San Joaquin River watershed and includes the mainstem of the San Joaquin River upstream of the legal boundary of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and all surface waters tributary to the mainstem.

This solicitation notice specifically requests the submission of all readily available data and information for waterbodies listed above.

The State Water Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards (collectively the “Water Boards”) also encourage continuous submittal of data and information for any surface waterbody in California because the Water Boards may conduct listing or delisting assessments using data and information at its discretion. That is, the listing process may be administered for waterbodies in regions that are “off-cycle” (in addition to those identified above) at the State Water Board’s discretion. If data and information submitted during the 2026 data solicitation period for a waterbody that’s considered “off-cycle” is not used in the 2026 Integrated Report, that data and information will be evaluated no later than the next time that waterbody is “on-cycle”.

A map of the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (“Regional Water Boards”) is available here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/regional_assessments.html.

See Enclosures 1-4 below for instructions and additional information:

- Enclosure 1: Data and information submittal basics with an overview of the data and information submittal process and a description of CEDEN compatible data and non-CEDEN compatible data and information
- Enclosure 2: Instructions for submitting CEDEN compatible data
- Enclosure 3: Instructions for submitting non-CEDEN compatible data and information
- Enclosure 4: Instructions for submitting Quality Assurance Documentation

Additional information about the 2026 Integrated Report and previous listing cycles is available on the Surface Water Quality Assessment webpage:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment.

Questions regarding data or information submittals, or about other information included in this notice, should be directed to WQAssessment@waterboards.ca.gov.

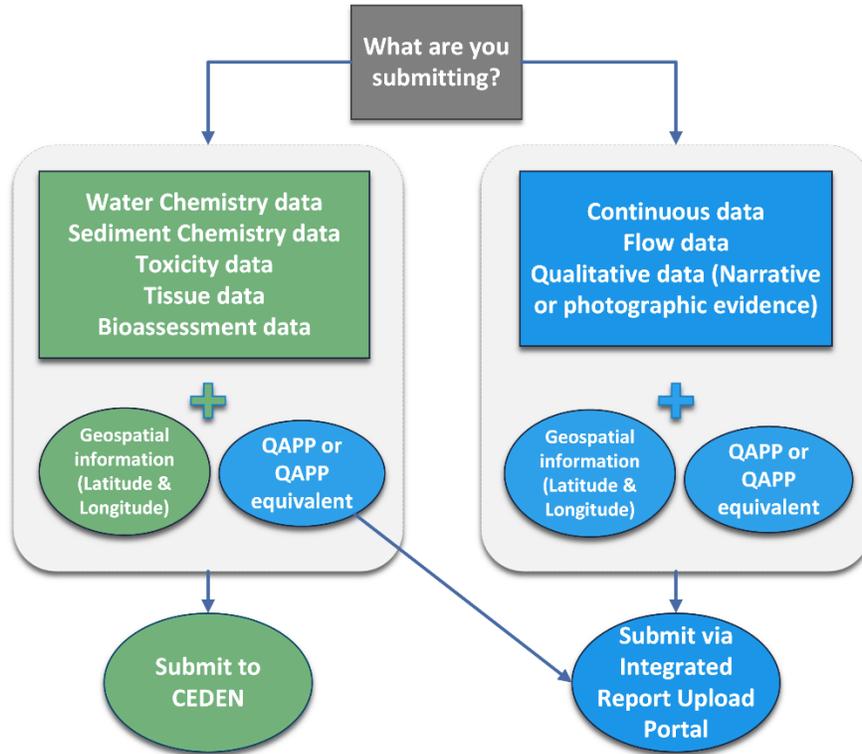
Enclosure 1: Data and Information Submittal Basics

What is the overall data and information submittal process?

The figure below illustrates the process for submitting data and information for the 2026 Integrated Report. Data that can be accepted by CEDEN must be submitted to CEDEN; see Enclosure 2 for submittal instructions. Data and information that are not CEDEN compatible can be submitted via the Integrated Report Upload Portal; see Enclosure 3 for submittal instructions.

In addition, a Quality Assurance Project Plan (“QAPP”) or QAPP equivalent documentation per Section 6.1.4 of the Listing Policy must accompany any data submitted to either CEDEN or the Integrated Report Upload Portal to be utilized for the 303(d) list. Data and information not accompanied by a QAPP or QAPP equivalent documentation cannot be used by itself to support a 303(d) listing or delisting decision. QAPPs or equivalent documents can be submitted via the Integrated Report Upload Portal; see Enclosure 4 for submittal instructions. CEDEN does not store QAPP documents and the QAPP information in CEDEN is insufficient to determine if data are useable for assessments.

Data and information submitters are encouraged to notify the State Water Board when submitting data and information to CEDEN or the Integrated Report Upload Portal. The Water Boards’ staff are available, on a limited basis, to conduct a cursory review of the data and information submittal for the minimum data elements and quality requirements outlined in Enclosures 2, 3, and 4. Please send an email to WQAssessment@waterboards.ca.gov with “Request for Assistance with Data and Information Submittal” in the subject line.



How is “readily available data and information” defined?

The “Water Quality Control Policy for Developing California’s Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List” (“Listing Policy”) defines “readily available data and information” as “data and information that can be submitted to [CEDEN] as directed in the notice of solicitation. If CEDEN is unable to accept a particular subset of data and information, the State Water Board or the Regional Water Board will accept that data and information if it meets the formatting and quality assurance requirements detailed in section 6.1.4 of the [Listing] Policy and the notice of solicitation for the current listing cycle” (Listing Policy, Section 6.1.1.). Enclosure 3 of this notice of solicitation provides the procedures for submitting non-CEDEN compatible data and information. Enclosure 3 is available here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/data_requirements.html.

“Information” is considered to mean any documentation, such as narrative or photographic evidence, describing the water quality condition of a surface water body.

“Data” are considered to mean a subset of information that consist of reports detailing measurements of specific environmental characteristics (i.e., measurements of physical, chemical, or biological characteristics in aquatic environments).

What are CEDEN compatible data?

CEDEN compatible data sets include water chemistry, sediment chemistry, toxicity, tissue and bioassessment data, along with associated geospatial information (e.g., latitude, longitude of sampling locations). CEDEN compatible data must be submitted through CEDEN.

CEDEN accepts the following data types:

- Chemistry: laboratory results from water samples or sediment samples
- Field collection: measurements collected in the field, including data from field probes and habitat surveys
- Toxicity: laboratory results from water column or sediment toxicity tests
- Tissue: laboratory results from fish tissue or other tissue samples
- Bioassessment: habitat measures and observations, and measurements of biology such as benthic macroinvertebrate and algae taxonomy

For instructions on submitting data to CEDEN, see Enclosure 2. Click here to access the CEDEN website: http://ceden.org/303d_list.shtml.

For instructions on submitting a QAPP or QAPP equivalent documentation for CEDEN compatible data, see Enclosure 4.

What are Non-CEDEN compatible data and information?

Data and information that are not CEDEN compatible include continuous monitoring data (e.g., data collected by an in-situ sonde) and narrative or photographic evidence. For instructions on submitting non-CEDEN compatible data, see Enclosure 3.

For instructions on submitting a QAPP or QAPP equivalent documentation for non-CEDEN data, see Enclosure 4.

When should data and information be submitted?

Data and information can be uploaded to CEDEN or the Integrated Report Upload Portal at any time. The State Water Board recommends data and information be submitted early to reduce and to avoid backlogs in data and information uploading. However, data and information must be submitted by **noon on October 21, 2022**, to be evaluated for the 2026 Integrated Report. Data and information submitted after noon on October 21, 2022, will be evaluated in future Integrated Reports.

Who can submit data and information?

Any person or entity (including but not limited to private citizens; local, state, and federal governmental agencies; non-profit organizations; and businesses) possessing information regarding the quality of California's waters may submit data and information.

Which waterbodies are the focus of the 2026 listing cycle?

The listing cycle for the 2026 Integrated Report focuses on surface waterbodies such as rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, estuaries, lagoons, bays, and ocean waters in the following areas of California:

- The regions of the North Coast, Lahontan, and Colorado River Basin Regional Water Boards.
- The San Joaquin River sub-area of the Central Valley Regional Water Board, which is defined as the San Joaquin River watershed and includes the mainstem of the San Joaquin River upstream of the legal boundary of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and all surface waters tributary to the mainstem.

If data and information submitted during the 2026 data solicitation period for a waterbody that's considered "off-cycle" and not used in the 2026 Integrated Report, that data and information will be evaluated no later than the next time that waterbody is "on-cycle". However, the Water Boards encourage continuous submittal of data and information for any surface waterbody in California because the Water Boards may conduct listing or delisting assessments using data and information at its discretion.

What kind of data and information should be submitted?

Any data and information that contribute to a more complete understanding of the quality of the state's surface waters should be submitted. This includes data and information that will help the Water Boards' staff determine if water quality standards are being attained or not attained. Any data and information not submitted for a previous Integrated Report cycle should be submitted. This includes data and information collected since the end of the 2024 cycle solicitation period (October 16, 2020) as well as data and information collected prior to that date but not submitted.

The 2026 Integrated Report is expected to use both quantitative and qualitative information. The bulk of the data used in the 2026 Integrated Report is expected to be quantitative, or numeric. These data provide the basis to develop primary lines of evidence ("LOEs"). Qualitative information consists of non-numeric evidence such as photographs or narrative data. Qualitative information is used to develop ancillary LOEs, in some cases. For greater detail on how different data types are used, see Section 3 of the Listing Policy.

Data and information submitted may pertain to individual waterbody segments, entire waterbodies, or whole watersheds in California.

What kind of data and information should not be submitted?

Please do not submit:

- Data and information previously submitted as part of a past Integrated Report listing cycle
- Data already submitted into CEDEN
- Data and information pertaining to groundwater
- Data and information from collection locations deemed not representative of ambient conditions in the waterbody segment (e.g., storm drain outfalls, effluent discharge)
- Data submitted directly to the U.S. EPA via the Water Quality Exchange (“WQX”)

What if I have already submitted data to federal systems like the Water Quality Exchange data system?

The Water Boards recognize that federal agencies, tribes, and other entities submit data directly to the U.S. EPA via the WQX and it is not feasible to require that those datasets also be uploaded into CEDEN. Consequently, the Water Boards’ staff will pull data directly from the [Water Quality Portal](https://www.waterqualitydata.us) (<https://www.waterqualitydata.us>) which connects to the WQX and attempt to translate that data into a CEDEN compatible format for use in the Integrated Report process. Datasets will only be used for the 2026 Integrated Report if they conform to the minimum data elements and quality requirements outlined in Enclosures 2 and 4 and are timely submitted as described above.

How will the data and information be evaluated for use?

After the end of the solicitation period (October 21, 2022) all data and information submitted will be assembled and evaluated for the minimum data elements, including quality requirements.

QAPPs submitted for the data will be reviewed by the Water Boards’ staff. Per section 6.1.4 of the Listing Policy: If the data collection and analysis is not supported by a QAPP (or equivalent) or if it is not possible to tell if the data collection and analysis were supported by a QAPP (or equivalent), then the data and information should not be used by itself to support listing or delisting of a water segment. All data of whatever quality can be used as part of a weight of evidence determination (sections 3.11 or 4.11).

Data will be screened for quality using an automated data quality estimator tool and reviewed by the Water Boards’ staff. Data identified by the screening tool as inaccurate or of low quality may not be used as primary lines of evidence for assessment. Instances where data may not be used as primary lines of evidence include, but are not limited to:

- QAPP or QAPP equivalent documentation not provided or that does not meet the requirements outlined in Enclosure 4
- Data with inaccurate or missing spatial information (e.g., latitude and longitude)
- Data that are not temporally or spatially representative of the waterbody
- Data that are not appropriate for assessment of ambient surface water quality (e.g., effluent, groundwater, air samples)
- Rejected data or data of poor quality (e.g., holding time violations, failed quality control checks)
- Data that are quality control measurements and not appropriate for assessment (e.g., laboratory duplicates, blanks from control samples, matrix spikes, surrogate measurements)
- Data where the sample value is less than the quantitation limit and the quantitation limit is greater than the water quality standard, objective, criterion, or evaluation guideline

The data of sufficient quality will be compared to water quality standards. Water quality standards include beneficial uses of water and water quality objectives or criteria as listed in the Regional Water Boards' water quality control plans (known as "basin plans"), statewide water quality control plans (e.g., the California Ocean Plan), the California Toxics Rule at 65 Federal Reg. 31681, and pertinent state and federal laws and regulations. Basin plan amendments that incorporate revised water quality objectives after the data solicitation cutoff date may not be used in the 2026 listing cycle but will be incorporated in future listing cycles.

Enclosure 2: Instructions for Submitting CEDEN Compatible Data

The California Environmental Data Exchange Network (“CEDEN”) is a central location to locate and share information about California’s waterbodies, including streams, lakes, rivers, beaches, and coastal ocean waters. Many groups in California monitor water quality, aquatic habitat, and wildlife health to ensure good stewardship of ecological resources. CEDEN aggregates these data and makes them accessible to environmental managers and the public.

The CEDEN website provides information about preparing and submitting data to CEDEN, including data templates that prescribe the CEDEN formats; detailed documentation that defines data elements; and lists that contain the current controlled vocabulary values that can be used in data submittals. Vocabulary that isn't currently listed can be requested through a vocabulary process, which is also outlined on the website.

Note, a Parent Project must be registered in CEDEN prior to submittal. Information on registering a project is outlined on the website.

Click here to access the CEDEN website: http://ceden.org/303d_list.shtml.

CEDEN accepts the following data types:

- Chemistry: laboratory results from water samples or sediment samples
- Field collection: measurements collected in the field, including data from field probes and habitat surveys
- Toxicity: laboratory results from water column or sediment toxicity tests
- Tissue: laboratory results from fish tissue or other tissue samples
- Bioassessment: habitat measures and observations, and measurements of biology such as benthic macroinvertebrate and algae taxonomy

Prior to submitting data to CEDEN, please review the guidance documents, data templates, and submission requirements.

Note that, in addition to the CEDEN submission requirements, the following minimum data elements are required for 2026 Integrated Report assessments:

- Latitude and longitude of site locations. The **Target Latitude** and **Target Longitude** fields in CEDEN are used by the Water Boards’ staff to map waterbodies and ***if these coordinates are inaccurate the data may not be assessed***.
- Minimum detection limit (“MDL”) and reporting limit (“RL”). These are especially important if data results include “non-detect” (“ND”), “detected not quantified” (“DNQ”), or “too numerous to count” (“TNC”) notations.

- Quality assurance (“QA”) codes, when applicable
- Batch verification codes, when applicable

Assistance with uploading Data to CEDEN

Any party collecting water quality data in California can work request assistance to submit data to CEDEN. Please send an email to ceden@waterboards.ca.gov.

Enclosure 3: Instructions for Submitting Non-CEDEN Compatible Data and Information

Data and information that cannot be uploaded into CEDEN must be submitted directly via the Integrated Report Upload Portal, which is available here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/ir_upload_portal.html.

Prior to submitting data and information through the Integrated Report Upload Portal, please ensure the submittal includes the minimum data elements and information required for Integrated Report assessments as described below.

Numeric data and qualitative information must be in electronic format that can be manipulated by the Water Boards' staff for assembly and evaluation (e.g., spreadsheet, comma separated text file) and include the following minimum elements. Numeric data will not be assessed if submitted in portable document format ("PDF") or as a web link reference. Qualitative information (such as a photograph or narrative information) can be submitted as a PDF or image file (.jpeg, .tiff, etc.).

Submit the following minimum data elements with each data set:

- Project Name
- Contact information of person/organization submitting the data
- Applicable Regional Water Board
- Applicable pollutant categories
- Time-period over which the data were collected
- Summary of submittal or list of submittal contents and any instructions required for assessment, which may include:
 - a) Definitions for codes or abbreviations used
 - b) Whether additional summaries or instructions are attached to the cover sheet or where they are included in the submittal
- Sampling location information:
 - a) Station Name(s)
 - b) Station Code(s) (if available)
 - c) Latitude and longitude

Numeric data must also include the following minimum data elements:

- Date and time of measurements
- Number of samples
- Analytes
- Units of measurement

- Minimum detection limit (“MDL”) and reporting limit (“RL”). These are especially important if data results include “non-detect” (“ND”), “detected not quantified” (“DNQ”), or “too numerous to count” (“TNC”) notations.
- Quality assurance (“QA”) codes, when applicable
- Batch verification codes, when applicable
- Supporting or associated analytical data (e.g., hardness data with dissolved metals samples; temperature, salinity, and pH data with ammonia measurements)
- Other relevant factors

Qualitative information must also include the following minimum elements:

- Describe events or conditions that indicate impacts on water quality
- Provide linkage between the measurement endpoint (e.g., a study that may have been performed for some other purpose) and the water quality standard of interest
- Be scientifically defensible
- Provide analyst’s credentials and training
- Be verifiable by the Water Boards’ staff

Photographic documentation must include the following minimum elements:

- Date and time photograph(s) were taken
- Spatial representation of the photographs (e.g., reach, location)
- Temporal representation (e.g., time of year)
- Linkage between photograph-represented condition and condition that indicates impacts on water quality
- Rationale for area photographed and camera settings used
- Any additional pertinent information about the photograph(s) to support assessment

It is crucial all Integrated Report Upload Portal fields are filled out prior to submittal. Incomplete submittals will be deleted. Double check for accuracy and save submittal receipt and Survey Taken ID for submittal records.

Enclosure 4: Instructions for Submitting Quality Assurance Documentation

All data submitted for the 2026 Integrated Report (CEDEN and non-CEDEN compatible data) should be accompanied by a QAPP or QAPP equivalent documentation, and site-specific/project-specific analysis plan (if applicable). If the data are not supported by a QAPP or QAPP equivalent documentation, the data cannot be used as a primary line of evidence to support a listing or delisting of a water segment. Data and information not accompanied by a QAPP or QAPP equivalent may be used as an ancillary line of evidence to support a weight of evidence decision (see sections 3.11 or 4.11 of the Listing Policy).

All QAPP, QAPP equivalent, and site-specific/project-specific analysis plan (if applicable) documentation should be submitted through the Integrated Report Upload Portal, which is available here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/ir_upload_portal.html

All QAPP or QAPP equivalent submittals should include the elements in the Integrated Report Upload Portal (described below) prior to submittal. Incomplete submittals will be deleted. Double check for accuracy. Save submittal receipt and Survey Taken ID for submittal records.

Submit the following minimum data elements with each QA submission:

- Contact information of person/organization submitting the QA Documentation
- Name of QAPP, QAPP Equivalent, or site-specific/project-specific analysis plan
- Author of the QA Documentation and signature of the person responsible for the quality of the data
- Project Name
 - For CEDEN compatible data, include the CEDEN Parent Project Name and the dates for which the QAPP or QAPP equivalent applies, and Project Code(s) if applicable.
 - For non-CEDEN data, use the Project Name used when data and information were submitted.
- Data Collection Period: Data Collection Start to Finish
- Attachments: Quality Assurance Documentation
- Description of attached files: Descriptive information about the attached files, as applicable.

QAPP equivalent documentation must include the following quality assurance and quality control requirements:

- Objectives of the study, project, or monitoring program
- Methods used for sample collection and handling
- Field and laboratory measurement and analysis
- Data management, validation, and recordkeeping (including proper chain of custody) procedures
- Quality assurance and quality control requirements
- A statement certifying the adequacy of the QAPP (plus name and signature of person certifying the document)
- A description of personnel training

If an analysis plan for numeric data was implemented for site-specific or project-specific sampling, then that analysis plan should also be submitted and contain the following elements:

- Data quality objectives or requirements of the project
- A statement that data quality objectives or requirements were achieved
- Rationale for the selection of sampling sites, water quality parameters, sampling frequency and methods that assure the samples are spatially and temporally representative of the surface water and representative of conditions within the targeted sampling timeframe
- Documentation to support the conclusion that results are reproducible