
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Notice of Public Hearing and Final Hearing Procedure

ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY COMPLAINT NO. R1-2023-0009, ISSUED TO:

**DANIEL MALDONADO SUAREZ, MENDOCINO COUNTY, ASSESSOR'S PARCEL
NUMBER (APN) 011-530-09-01**

**Notice of Public Hearing
June 15, 2023**
Remote and In-Person Meeting
(see instructions below)

Administrative Civil Liability Complaint

On January 9, 2023, the Advisory Team of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) was notified that Regional Water Board Prosecution Team staff had issued an Administrative Civil Liability Complaint (ALCL or Complaint) to Daniel Maldonado Suarez (Discharger). On January 31, 2023, the Advisory Team was notified that the Discharger had received the Complaint.

The Prosecution Team's Complaint seeks penalties of \$424,575 for violations of Cleanup and Abatement and Water Code section 13267 Order No. R1-2022-0016 (Cleanup Order). The Board has scheduled a hearing to consider the matter at its upcoming public meeting scheduled for June 15, 2023. At the public hearing the Regional Water Board will consider whether to issue an order requiring payment of the full amount recommended in the complaint, to issue an order requiring payment of a reduced amount or a higher amount, decide not to impose penalties, or it may refer the matter to the Attorney General's Office. The Regional Water Board may also elect to continue the hearing to a later date or take the matter under submission.

Video and Teleconference Meeting

This meeting is scheduled to occur with both a physical meeting location and an option for parties to the hearing and the public to participate from a remote location. The physical meeting location is: 5550 Skylane Blvd. Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.

Live video and audio broadcasts of the public hearing will be available via the internet and can be accessed at the [CalEPA Public meeting live webcasts page](https://video.calepa.ca.gov) (<https://video.calepa.ca.gov>). The public hearing will be recorded.

At this time, this matter is scheduled to occur on June 15, 2023. In accordance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Gov. Code, § 11120 et seq.), an agenda will be posted to the Board's website at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. The agenda will specify any updates to the meeting format.

Please follow the [Regional Water Board website](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast) (www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast) for updates, including notice of any changes to meeting time, location and format.

Hearing Procedure

Attached to this Notice is a Final Hearing Procedure that will apply to the proceedings related to the Regional Water Board's consideration of the Complaint.

The Prosecution Team and Discharger have the opportunity to comment on the Hearing Procedure and propose changes to the Procedure or due dates for prehearing submittals.

Opportunity for Public Participation

The Regional Water Board will consider written comments submitted by members of the public that are interested in the pending matter (Interested Parties or Persons). Interested Persons who are not the parties to the proceeding will be permitted to submit formal written comments. All written comments by Interested Parties shall be submitted as early as possible, and in no case later than **5 p.m. May 8, 2023**.

Interested Persons will also be provided the opportunity to orally present general policy statements to the Regional Water Board members at the hearing. Such statements will generally be limited to **5 minutes** per Interested Person, though the Board may grant additional time upon request. Interested Persons do not need to submit written statements in order to speak at the hearing. Please follow the Regional Water Board's website and posted agenda for this Board meeting for instructions on how to participate in this meeting remotely.

Document Review

The Complaint and related documents, including any comments that are received on the Complaint are part of the Regional Water Board's public file for this matter and may be inspected or copied at the Regional Water Board's office, 5550 Skylane Blvd, Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA. You may contact the Regional Water Board at 707-576-2220 to arrange for a file review. Additionally, copies of the file record can be obtained by contacting the Prosecution Team.

The Complaint and most associated documents will also be available on the Regional Water Board's website.

Accessibility

Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in the public meeting should contact Deidre Wilkerson at 707-576-2220 at least five days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Regional Water Board hearing room is accessible. TTY users may contact the California Relay Service at 800-735-2929 or voice line at 800-735-2922.

Questions

Questions regarding this Public Notice or the Hearing Procedure should be directed to Nathan Jacobsen, Nathan.Jacobsen@waterboards.ca.gov, or 916-341-5181.

Valerie Quinto

Executive Officer

Attachments: Final Hearing Procedure

Final Hearing Procedure

Proposed Action: Consideration of Administrative Civil Liability Complaint No. R1-2023-0009.

Hearing Date: June 15, 2023

Location: 1)5550 Skylane Blvd. Suite A, Santa Rosa CA 95403; and 2) Zoom Videoconferencing (online)

Discharger: Daniel Maldonado Suarez

IF EITHER PARTY INTENDS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE HEARING REMOTELY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ADVISORY TEAM TO OBTAIN SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO PARTICIPATE REMOTELY VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE OR TELEPHONE

A. Applicable Laws and Regulations

This hearing constitutes an “adjudicative proceeding.” This proceeding is governed by the following statutes, regulations and policies:

- (1) [Title 23, sections 648 through 648.8, available on the State Water Board's laws and regulations page](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/laws_regulations) (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/laws_regulations);
- (2) Chapter 4.5 of the Administrative Procedure Act (Gov. Code, § 11400 et seq.);
- (3) Evidence Code sections 801 through 805;
- (4) Government Code section 11513; and
- (5) [State Water Resources Control Board's Water Quality Enforcement Policy](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2017/040417_9_final%20adopted%20policy.pdf) (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2017/040417_9_final%20adopted%20policy.pdf)

B. Parties and Separation of Functions

To ensure that the Discharger receives a fair hearing, Regional Water Board staff and counsel have undertaken a separation of functions. Board members will be advised by an “Advisory Team” comprised of staff and counsel that have not participated in

development of the Complaint. The Regional Water Board staff and attorneys that have issued the Complaint (the Prosecution Team) have been separated from the Advisory Team regarding the development of the Complaint. Members of the Prosecution Team have not communicated with the Regional Water Board nor the Advisory Team regarding any substantive matter at issue in this proceeding. The Prosecution Team is subject to all applicable rules and regulations as any other party to this proceeding, including the prohibition on ex parte communications with the Regional Water Board and members of the Advisory Team.

The members of the Advisory Team, Prosecution Team and Discharger are listed below with contact information for each.

Advisory Team

Valerie Quinto

Executive Officer, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95043

Valerie.Quinto@waterboards.ca.gov

Nathan Jacobsen

Attorney for North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 341-5181

Nathan.Jacobsen@waterboards.ca.gov

Bayley Toft-Dupuy

Attorney for North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Bayley.Toft-Dupuy@waterboards.ca.gov

Shannon Utley

Engineering Geologist

ShannonM.Utley@waterboards.ca.gov

Ermias Berhe

Engineering Geologist

Ermias.Berhe@waterboards.ca.gov

Prosecution Team

Heather Jidkov, Attorney III, Office of Enforcement

State Water Resources Control Board

Sacramento, CA

(916) 322-3227

Heather.Jidkov@waterboards.ca.gov

Claudia Villacorta, P.E. Assistant Executive Officer,
Claudia.Villacorta@waterboards.ca.gov

Kason Grady, P.E. Chief, Cannabis and Enforcement Division
Kason.Grady@waterboards.ca.gov

Jeremiah Puget, Senior Environmental Scientist
Jeremiah.Puget@waterboards.ca.gov

Brian Fuller, P.G., Engineering Geologist
Brian.Fuller@waterboards.ca.gov

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95043

Discharger

Delivered via US Mail and Certified Mail 7021-0950-0001-6500-0974

Daniel Maldonado Suarez
3554 Princeton Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

Jim Severdia (agent for Mr. Suarez)
nvmtman@yahoo.com

C. Ex Parte Contacts Prohibited

To maintain the Regional Water Board's impartiality, ex parte contacts are prohibited. (See, e.g., Gov. Code, § 11430.10 et seq.) Ex parte contacts are those communications that are directed at the Regional Water Board members or the Advisory Team members, regarding the pending matter, and which are not communicated in a manner open to all other persons. Communications regarding non-controversial procedural matters are not considered ex parte contacts and are therefore not restricted under this Hearing Procedure.

To avoid ex parte contacts in pre-hearing communications, the Discharger should ensure that the Prosecution Team is copied on all correspondence directed to the Advisory Team, and *vice versa*.

D. Interested Persons

The Regional Water Board will consider written comments submitted by members of the public that are interested in the pending matter (Interested Persons). The parties to the proceeding will be permitted to submit formal written responses to Interested Person written comments. To allow for such responses, all Interested Person written comments shall be submitted as early as possible, and in no case later than May 8, 2023.

Interested Persons will also be provided the opportunity to orally present general policy statements to the Regional Water Board at the hearing. Such statements will be limited to 5 minutes, though the Board Chair may grant additional time on a case-by-case basis. Interested Persons do not need to submit written statements in order to speak at the hearing.

1. Request for Designated Party status

By default, the only parties to this adjudicative enforcement proceeding are: (1) the Prosecution Team; and (2) the Discharger named in the Complaint. In some circumstances, however, it may be appropriate for certain Interested Persons to participate directly in the proceeding as a “Designated Party.” Such determinations shall be made discretionarily on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Officer, in consultation with the Board Chair.

To request “Designated Party” status, Interested Persons must have submitted a written request to the Advisory Team no later than March 27th, 2023. No requests were received therefore the parties to this matter are the Prosecution Team and the Discharger/Discharger’s agent listed above.

E. Pre-Hearing Submittals

To avoid the introduction of surprise testimony and exhibits (title 23, § 648.4, subd. (a)), and to minimize the need for oral argument and testimony at the hearing, this Hearing Procedure requires the parties to submit documentary evidence, witness information, and legal/technical memoranda to the Advisory Team prior to the hearing. Absent a showing of good cause and lack of prejudice to the parties, the Board Chair may exclude materials that are not submitted in accordance with this Hearing Procedure. Excluded materials will not be considered by the Board. (§ 648.4, subd. (e).)

1. Submittals shall be submitted electronically

All communications and pre-hearing submittals related to this proceeding shall be submitted electronically. Communications to the Advisory Team shall be submitted via email, per the email addresses listed in section B. All emails and submissions to the Advisory Team shall be directed to the attorney for the Advisory Team, who shall serve as the primary point of contact for the Advisory Team; the parties may elect to include

other members of the Advisory Team on submissions. Communications to the Prosecution Team shall, at a minimum, be sent to the attorneys for the Prosecution Team.

2. Prosecution and Discharger Pre-Hearing Submittals

The following numbered items shall be submitted prior to the hearing by the dates specified. These prehearing submittals shall be submitted to the Regional Water Board's FTP site. Instructions for uploading and downloading documents on the FTP site will be provided. Parties shall provide notice via email to the Advisory Team when documents are uploaded to the FTP site. Notice of document uploads shall be provided to all parties with known email addresses.

(1) The Prosecution Team shall submit all documentary evidence supporting the Complaint. The Discharger shall submit all documentary evidence that supports its position with respect to the Complaint. Each document submitted shall be clearly titled to identify as a Prosecution Team or Discharger submittal and separately designated as a sequentially numbered exhibit (i.e., Exhibit 1, Exhibit 2, Exhibit 3, etc.). The parties must provide an index of submitted exhibits.

(2) The Prosecution Team and Discharger may submit a memorandum articulating the party's legal arguments and technical analyses in support of its position on the Complaint.

(3) The Prosecution Team and Discharger shall submit a Witness Information Sheet containing the name of each witness the party intends to call to testify at the hearing; the subject matter of their testimony and the estimated time required for each witness.

The Prosecution Team shall submit items (1)-(3) above no later than **April 24, 2023**, to the Board's FTP site with notice of submittal provided to the Discharger and Advisory Team.

The Discharger shall submit these items no later than **May 8, 2023**, to the Board's FTP site with notice of submittal provided to the Prosecution Team and Advisory Team.

(4) Rebuttal Evidence and responses to any written comments received from Interested Parties. Both Parties may submit Rebuttal evidence. "Rebuttal" means evidence, analysis, or comments offered to disprove or contradict other Designated Parties' submissions. Both parties may also submit written responses to comments received from Interested Parties. Rebuttal evidence and responses to comments from Interested Parties must be received by **May 17, 2023**, Parties may rebut oral testimony offered at the hearing.

(5) The Prosecution Team **must** submit a proposed Order for the Board's consideration to the Advisory Team by **May 30, 2023**. The Discharger **may** submit a Proposed Order by **May 30, 2023**.

(6) Slide presentations (e.g., PowerPoint) may be used at the hearing provided their contents do not exceed the scope of previously submitted material. Regional Water Board administrative staff will be running the presentation at the party's direction. Copies of the slide presentation must be provided to the Advisory Team by **5 p.m. the day prior to the hearing.**

F. Conduct of Hearing

1. The following Time Limits apply to the hearing.

Prosecution Team: 90 Minutes

Discharger: 90 Minutes

Interested Parties [*if any*]: 5 minutes

The above time limits have been set based on a review of the Complaint, requests from the parties, and in consideration of title 23, section 648.5, subd. (a), which specifies that adjudicative proceedings be conducted with a view toward securing relevant information expeditiously without unnecessary delay and expense to the parties and the Board.

The parties may allocate their allotted time as they see fit between presenting evidence and testimony, cross-examining adverse witnesses, making opening and closing statements. A timer will be used to track how much time has elapsed. This timer will be paused during Board questions and party responses to Board questions. Additional time may be provided at the discretion of the Board Chair (at the hearing), upon a showing that additional time is necessary. The Board Chair may revise this Procedure after notice and opportunity for parties to be heard.

2. Witness Testimony

All witnesses who have submitted written testimony shall be available to appear during the hearing to affirm that the written testimony is true and correct, and shall be subject for cross-examination. All persons intending to testify at the hearing shall take the oath administered by the presiding officer. (Gov. Code, § 11513; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 648.5, subd. (a)(3).)

3. Rules of Evidence

The proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions and rules of evidence set forth in Government Code section 11513. Hearsay evidence may be used to supplement or explain other evidence, but over timely objection shall not be sufficient in itself to support a finding unless it would be admissible over objection in a civil action. Evidence already in the Regional Water Board's files may be submitted by reference if the location of the evidence is clearly identified. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 648.3.)

G. Important Deadlines

The following list summarizes the important deadlines in this matter. The parties may request extensions or modifications to the deadlines; however, any granting or denial of a request shall be at the discretion of the Advisory Team and/or Board Chair. All submissions are due at 5 p.m. on the listed date.

March 27, 2023: Submit any comments or objections to the Tentative Hearing Procedure. Interested Parties submit requests to be Designated Parties.

April 24, 2023: Prosecution Team submits supporting evidence, index, legal/technical memorandum, witness list.

May 8, 2023: Interested Parties/Persons submit written comments

May 8, 2023: Discharger submits supporting evidence, index, legal/technical memorandum, witness list.

May 17, 2023: Parties submit written rebuttal evidence, responses to Interested Parties' comments, if any.

May 30, 2023: Prosecution Team submits proposed Order; Discharger may submit proposed Order.

Day before hearing: Parties submit presentation slides.

H. Prehearing Conferences

The Advisory Team held a pre-hearing conference with the parties on March 9th, 2023. At the pre-hearing conference, procedural issues were discussed including the hearing date and location and evidentiary and hearing waiver submission deadlines. Following the pre-hearing conference, a revised tentative hearing notice and procedures document was circulated on March 20th, 2023, reflecting a new hearing date and location. This final hearing notice and procedure document is issued based on the comments received during the pre-hearing conference and comments submitted on the revised hearing notice and procedures.

I. Summary Report

The Advisory Team will prepare an Executive Officer Summary Report summarizing the matters involved in the proceedings, and the positions taken by each of the parties. Once finalized, the Summary Report will be provided to the parties and included in the agenda materials for the proceeding.

