

**Notice to Prepare a CEQA-Equivalent Document pursuant to Public Resources
Code 21080.4 and Hold a
CEQA Scoping Meeting pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15082 and 15083
for a Proposed Amendment
to the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region
to Update Regional Groundwater and Surface Water Protection**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (Regional Water Board) staff will hold a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.) scoping meeting and public workshop on July 8, 2010 related to the development and adoption of a proposed Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan) to more fully and efficiently protect groundwater and surface water quality in the North Coast Region (proposed Amendment). The proposed revisions to the Basin Plan include changes to: Section 3 - Water Quality Objectives and Section 4 - Implementation Plans of the Basin Plan and are described more fully in the Scoping Fact Sheet, enclosed herein.

The Regional Water Board is the lead agency for evaluating the environmental impacts of Basin Plan amendments pursuant to the CEQA. Although subject to CEQA, the Regional Water Board's basin planning process is certified by the Secretary for Resources as "functionally equivalent to" CEQA, and therefore exempt from the requirement for preparation of an environmental impact report or negative declaration and initial study.¹ (14 Cal. Code Regs. §15251(g).) Instead, the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board) guidelines for exempt regulatory programs require that a CEQA-equivalent document be prepared, containing at a minimum: 1) a brief description of the proposed activity; 2) reasonable alternatives to the proposed activity; and 3) mitigation measures to minimize any significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed activity. (Pub. Resources Code § 21080.5(d)(3).) Additionally, where the Regional Water Board is adopting a rule or regulation that requires the installation of pollution control equipment, establishes a performance standard, or establishes a treatment requirement, the Regional Water Board must prepare an environmental analysis of the reasonably foreseeable methods by which compliance with that rule or regulation will be achieved, including: 1) an analysis of the reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts of the methods of compliance; 2) an analysis of the reasonably foreseeable feasible mitigation measures; 3) an analysis of reasonably foreseeable alternative means of compliance with the rule or regulation, which would avoid or eliminate any identified impacts; 4) the environmental analysis must take into account a reasonable range of environmental, economic and technical factors, population and geographic areas, and specific sites. (Pub. Resources Code § 21159; 14 Cal. Code Regs. §

The Regional Water Board will be seeking input on the range of actions and alternatives that should be considered in the development of the proposed Amendment. It will also be seeking input on the factors identified above, including the reasonably foreseeable means by which dischargers will comply with the proposed multi-part Basin Plan

¹ Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15251(g).

amendment, any potentially significant environmental impacts that could result, and suggestions of mitigation measures to reduce the significance of potential environmental impacts.

BACKGROUND

Staff identified during the 2004 Triennial Review and again during the 2007 Triennial Review, the need to develop a formal policy that describes the process by which narrative water quality objectives are translated into numeric limits. Staff also recommended that groundwater objectives be updated. In 2007, the Regional Water Board concurred with staff's recommendation to combine these two tasks into one work product and identified it as a high priority planning task. This planning task was described as "*Adopt Narrative Objective for Groundwater – Surface Water Policy (including update of groundwater objectives and implementation language)*" in the 2007 Triennial Review Staff Report (June 2007).

To implement this planning task, Basin Planning staff has been working with the Cleanups and Core-regulatory Units to develop a proposed Amendment that revises the Basin Plan to address these issues (see Scoping Fact Sheet attached, for more details). The Scoping Fact Sheet will also be available for download in PDF format from the Regional Water Board's Internet website at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/ by June 30, 2010. Copies of this document can also be obtained by contacting the Regional Water Board's office at 5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403 or calling 707-576-2220.

PURPOSE OF CEQA SCOPING

The purpose of a scoping meeting is to seek input from public agencies and members of the public on the proposed Amendment and the appropriate scope of the CEQA-equivalent document to be prepared, including the range of project actions, alternatives, reasonably foreseeable means of compliance, significant impacts to be analyzed, cumulative impacts if any, and mitigation measures that could reduce impacts to a less than significant level. By requesting this input from federal, state and local agencies and interested persons and entities the Regional Water Board hopes to identify issues for in-depth analysis and to eliminate from further detailed study any issues found not to be relevant. Scoping may also assist in resolving concerns of affected federal, state, and local agencies, and other interested persons.

CEQA SCOPING MEETING AND PUBLIC WORKSHOP CONDUCT AND SCHEDULE

This meeting and workshop will provide participants with: (1) a description of the proposed Basin Plan amendment, including the conditions in the region that the proposed Amendment is intended to address; (2) a discussion of probable environmental effects; and (3) an opportunity to provide input and comment on the proposed Amendment and potential environmental impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures.

A quorum of Regional Water Board members may be present at the scoping meeting; however, no action will be taken by the Regional Water Board at the scoping meeting.

Written comments on the proposed Amendment should be submitted to Lauren Clyde no later than July 22, 2010 (contact information provided below). Comments should discuss concerns and identify those issues on which the commenter believes that the Regional Water Board needs to focus its in-depth environmental analysis, including significant environmental issues, alternatives to the proposed action(s), the potential means of compliance and significant environmental effects of compliance with the proposed action(s), and any mitigation measures that should be explored to reduce any potentially significant impacts. Following the workshop, staff will review written and oral comments, prepare a summary of scoping comments. Those comments will then be used to help staff prepare its draft staff report and CEQA-equivalent document, which will then be released for public comment, tentatively scheduled for December 2010. All scoping comments will be included in the final administrative record for this proposed Amendment.

Notice of CEQA Scoping Meeting for a Proposed Basin Plan Amendment to Update Regional Groundwater and Surface Water Protection – July 8, 2010

CEQA Scoping Meeting Location:	Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE)* Oak Rooms D/E 5340 Skylane Boulevard Santa Rosa, CA 95403-8246 Phone: (707) 524-2600
Date:	July 8, 2010
Time:	1:00 PM to 3:00 PM
Contact information:	Lauren Clyde lclyde@waterboards.ca.gov North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board 5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A Santa Rosa, CA 95403 (707) 576-2674

***PLEASE NOTE: workshop is not going to be held at the Regional Water Board office.**

PARKING AND ACCESSIBILITY

For directions and location information, please refer to:

<http://www.scoe.org/pub/htdocs/contactus.html>

The facility is accessible to persons with disabilities. Individuals requiring special accommodations are requested to contact Ms. Jean Lockett, executive assistant, at (707) 576-2307 or JLockett@waterboards.ca.gov at least five days prior to the meeting. TTY/TDD/Speech-to-Speech users may contact the California Relay Service at 1-800-735-2929 or voice line at 1-800-735-2922.