

Web-Based Performance Report Tracks Water Boards' Water Quality Protection Actions

The Water Boards released its first Web-based *Performance Report* in September 2009. To improve transparency and accountability, a key priority for the Water Boards, the *Performance Report* is designed to provide information on the Water Boards' efforts to protect and allocate the state's waters for beneficial uses.



Mountain View Sanitation District Flushing Ponds (Treated Wastewater)
(Photo courtesy of State Water Resources Control Board)

This first Web-based *Performance Report*, which covers July 1, 2008–June 30, 2009¹, relies mainly on information from databases used by the Water Boards. As with any first year effort, data availability limits the information reported. Over time, the information presented will better illustrate the work and effectiveness of the Water Boards, and the quality of the state's waters.

Why You Need to Know

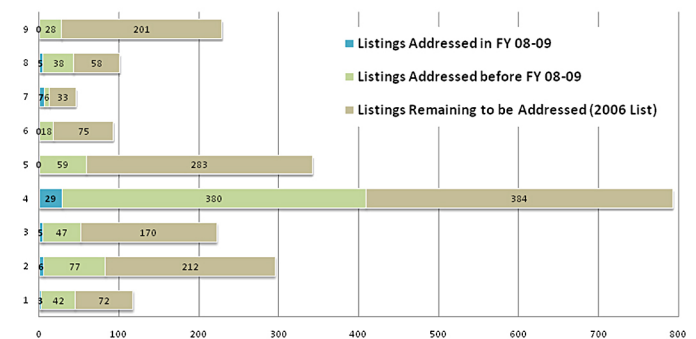
To protect our water resources, the Water Boards set water quality standards in plans and policies, monitor and assess the state's waters, regulate pollutant sources, enforce compliance with regulatory requirements, provide funding for water quality protection projects, and allocate water. The *Performance Report* is a way to learn about the efforts of California's regulatory agencies responsible for the quality of the state's rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, ocean, and ground waters. By providing this information on the Web site, the report builds public confidence in decision-makers, improves the delivery of government services, and leads to greater public interest and involvement.

A Click Away: Web-Based Water Regulation Information Instantly

The report's Web pages provide data and information about Water Board actions to protect the state's waters. These Water Board activities are grouped into five categories: "Plan and Assess"; "Regulate"; "Enforce"; "Fund"; and "Allocate Water". The Web page for each category includes a summary of the Water Boards' work and data reports.

Plan & Assess

The Water Boards adopt plans and policies to carry out federal and state water quality protection laws. The plans and policies contain water quality standards and regulations, including monitoring requirements to assess the condition of the waters. This part of the *Performance Report* presents data and information on surface water monitoring, sewage spills, coastal beach monitoring and availability, and actions to restore impaired waters through standards called Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). For instance, the graph shows impaired water body listings acted on in Fiscal Year 2008-09 compared to those in prior years and those remaining.



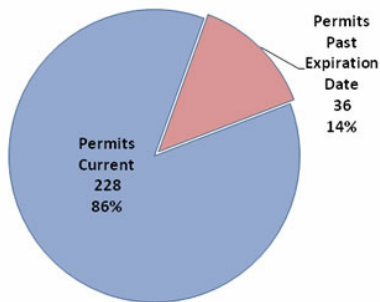
Ecosystem health indicators for coastal waters, streams, wetlands, and lakes are also shown in this part of the report.

Regulate

The Water Boards identify the sources of pollutants that threaten the quality of the state's waters and regulate those sources by imposing requirements to control the discharge of pollutants in permits. The permits are based on water quality conditions, and the laws, regulations, plans, and policies designed to protect water quality. To be effective, the Water Boards must ensure that permit requirements are enforceable. Discharger compliance

¹ This time period represents Fiscal Year 2008-09.

with permits is assessed through the review of waste discharge reports and inspections. This part of the *Performance Report* presents data and information on permits and inspections for many types of discharges to surface and groundwaters. For instance, the graph shows that 86 percent of permits for major wastewater facilities are current.



Where documented violations of permit requirements occur, the Water Boards are responsible for taking enforcement actions.

Enforce

The Water Boards enforce pollution control requirements that are established for discharges. Where violations of regulatory requirements are detected, enforcement actions of varying types and severity are taken. For the most serious violations, penalties are often imposed. In all cases, the goal of enforcement is to encourage compliance with requirements so that water quality is protected. This part of the *Performance Report* presents data and information on violations, enforcement actions, and penalties.



North Coast Regional Water Board staff monitoring water quality. (Photo courtesy of North Coast Regional Water Board)

Fund

The State Water Board provides financial assistance through various state and federal loan and grant programs to help local agencies, businesses, and individuals meet the costs of water pollution control, develop locally available sustainable water supplies, and cleanup. This funding is available for local and regional projects that can include construction of municipal sewage and water recycling facilities, remediation for underground storage tank releases, watershed protection, nonpoint source pollution control, and other water protection projects. The data reports for this part of the *Performance Report* are being developed.

Allocate Water

The State Water Board establishes and maintains a system of water rights to ensure that the State's limited water resources are put to the best possible use and the public interest is served. A water right is legal permission to divert and use a reasonable and nonwasteful amount of surface water for a beneficial purpose, such as domestic, irrigation, industrial, or recreation uses. In allocating water rights, through a system of permits, licenses, and registrations, the State Water Board works to ensure that vested rights, water quality, and the environment are protected. The data reports for this part of the *Performance Report* are being developed.

Next Steps

The Water Boards will update the *Performance Report* annually. The second Annual *Performance Report* (for Fiscal Year 2009-10) will include performance targets, information on Water Board resources dedicated to the work represented by the measures, and more focus on water environment outcomes of the Water Boards' efforts.

Feedback Welcome

The Web pages of the *Performance Report* encourage suggestions for continual improvement. This feedback, along with improvements to the Water Boards' data systems, will boost routine reporting and supplement the report information.

To view the Water Boards' *Performance Report*, see:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/about_us/performance_report/