

## State Water Resources Control Board

### **NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AND WEBINAR ON THE DRAFT SEAWATER DESALINATION SITING AND STREAMLINING REPORT TO EXPEDITE PERMITTING**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT WRITTEN COMMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED** by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) on the draft Seawater Desalination Siting and Streamlining Report to Expedite Permitting (Draft Report) that was developed in response to direction in [California's Water Supply Strategy: Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future](#) (Water Supply Strategy). The Draft Report has no regulatory force or effect, and solely serves to identify potential streamlining pathways and actions consistent with existing laws and regulations. State Water Board staff is seeking public comments on the Draft Report and will consider all comments prior to finalizing the report and submitting it to the Governor's Office.

#### **BACKGROUND**

On August 11, 2022, Governor Newsom released the Water Supply Strategy to update state priority actions to address current and anticipated water supply shortages due to long-term drought and the more extreme weather patterns caused by climate change. To offset the water supplies California could lose over the next two decades, the Strategy prioritizes actions to conserve, capture, recycle, and desalinate more water. The Water Supply Strategy outlines implementation steps to improve the permitting process for seawater desalination and provide guidance to owners or operators proposing to develop new or expanded seawater desalination facilities. This public notice relates to the following Water Supply Strategy implementation action for seawater desalination projects:

*“The State will help streamline and expedite permitting to provide better clarity and certainty to further desalination projects. To this end, by June 30, 2023, the State Water Board, Coastal Commission, Department of Water Resources and other State entities (e.g., State Lands Commission) will develop criteria for siting of desalination facilities along the coast and recommend new standards to facilitate approval.”*

State Water Board staff convened a working group comprised of representatives from partner agencies listed in the [Seawater Desalination Interagency Memorandum of Agreement](#), with additional representation from: California Ocean Protection Council, California Natural Resources Agency, California Department of Water Resources, and California State Coastal Conservancy (interagency group). State Water Board staff in coordination with the interagency group developed the Draft Report that identifies

criteria for siting seawater desalination facilities where they are cost-effective and environmentally appropriate, to streamline and facilitate approval under existing regulatory requirements, as well as potential changes to the requirements. The Draft Report also identifies actions that could be implemented by project proponents and permitting agencies to better facilitate approval of seawater desalination projects given additional resources and regulatory or process changes.

Permitting agencies intend to engage collaboratively with interested persons and Tribes to solicit input on any potential regulatory changes for seawater desalination project planning or permit review. The interagency group will continue coordination to uphold commitments identified in the Draft Report and to address the remaining Water Supply Strategy seawater desalination implementation actions consistent with the agencies' applicable public processes.

**DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:**

The Draft Report is available on the [State Water Board's Desalination Program website](#). The public will also be notified of the release of the Draft Report through the email subscription list as provided below.

**SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS:**

Persons interested in the Draft Report are encouraged to submit written comments electronically. Comment letters **must be received by 12:00 noon on July 28, 2023**. Comment letters received after that deadline will not be accepted unless the State Water Board determines otherwise.

Send comments to Courtney Tyler, Clerk to the State Water Board, by email at [commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov) (**must be no more than 15 megabytes**); fax at (916) 341-5620; or mail or hand delivery at

Courtney Tyler, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 100, Sacramento, CA 95812-2000 (mail)  
1001 I Street, 24th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814 (hand delivery)

Couriers delivering a hard copy of a comment letter must check in with lobby security personnel, who can contact Ms. Tyler at (916) 341-5611.

Please also indicate in the subject line, "**Comment Letter – Draft Desalination Siting and Streamlining Report to Expedite Permitting.**"

**NOTICE IS ADDITIONALLY HEREBY GIVEN** that State Water Board staff will conduct a webinar on the Draft Report on:

**Friday, July 21, 2023 – 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**  
Remote Participation Only

- For those who only wish to watch the meeting, the webcast is available at <https://video.calepa.ca.gov/> (closed captioning available) and should be used UNLESS you intend to ask questions.

- For members of the public who wish to ask questions during the webinar, additional information about participating telephonically or via the remote meeting solution is available on the [State Water Board's Desalination Program website](#).

**WEBINAR OVERVIEW:**

The webinar will include a presentation from the interagency group on the Draft Report followed by an opportunity for participants to provide feedback and ask questions.

**POTENTIAL FUTURE CHANGES TO THE NOTICED ITEMS AND FUTURE NOTICES:**

The State Water Board will make the Draft Report available and hold the webinar at the times noted above to provide an opportunity for public comment. Any change to the items noticed above will be noticed through the email subscription list and information posted on the State Water Board's webpages. Any person desiring to receive future notices regarding the Draft Report must subscribe to the [Waterboards e-mail subscription mailing list](#) by entering the email and opening the "Water Quality" topics and selecting "California Ocean Plan (COP)."

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Date                      July 10, 2023

  
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Courtney Tyler  
Clerk to the Board