CALIFORNIA Water Boards

Central Coast Regional Water Board

Strategic Plan

FY 26-27

August 4, 2026

Contents

DISCLAIMER: *The following FY 2026-27 Strategic Plan, including priorities, goals, and actions, is for discussion by the Central Coast Water Board and should not be construed as commitments or policy statements as presented in this document. Any priorities, goals, and actions herein are subject to change. The Strategic Plan is not intended to, and does not, list all Central Coast Water Board activities.*

Cover Image:
Big Creek Bridge, Big Sur, CA
Photo Taken by Luke Nydam, Region 3

Introduction

This strategic plan provides a general overview of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's (Central Coast Water Board) regulatory authority and mandate, describes the status of our workforce, and sets regional and program-specific priorities to guide our work towards achieving meaningful water quality, environmental, and public health outcomes that are aligned with our mission and vision. It affirms our commitment to public service and coordination as a foundational principle of our agency and affirms our mission, vision, and measurable goals. It also discusses how our work environment is changing due to various internal and external factors that require us to reevaluate how we prioritize our work, allocate resources, and measure performance. Finally, this strategic plan also recognizes our accomplishments and metrics of success to implement our regional and program priorities.

This is a living document and is intended to set the stage for biannual review of our priorities to ensure we effectively and transparently implement the mission of the Central Coast Water Board.

Mission Statement

The Central Coast Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, for the benefit of present and future generations.

Protecting Present and Future Beneficial Uses

The Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin (Basin Plan)[1], describes that water quality control in California is directed toward achieving the highest water quality consistent with maximum benefit to the people of the State. Therefore, all water resources must be protected from pollution and nuisance that may occur as a result of waste discharges. The Basin Plan describes how the quality of surface water and groundwater in the Central Coast region is managed to provide the highest water quality reasonably possible and also establishes the beneficial uses to be protected. The Basin Plan identifies twenty-six categories of beneficial uses for surface water and groundwater, including but not limited to Municipal and Domestic Water Supply, Recreation, and Aquatic Life Habitats. The Central Coast Water Board's regulatory role is to protect all present and future beneficial uses, and Resolution R3-2017-0004 adopts the human right to water as a core value and adopts the realization of the human right to water and protecting human health as the Central Coast Water Board's top priorities[2].

Strategic Narrative – Adapting for the Future

While the Central Coast Water Board's mission remains consistent, it is important for us to evolve to strengthen our workforce, processes, and capabilities to meet future needs. We must continue to reassess and adjust our priorities and expectations to ensure we can effectively maintain our programmatic functions and implement our mission with available resources. Innovation and emerging technologies create new opportunities to improve efficiency, decision-making, and service delivery. At the same time, they introduce new responsibilities, unanticipated workload, and organizational change that require ongoing adaptation. As our workload continues to increase, we also face complex challenges associated with emerging

[1] https://waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/
[2] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2017/2017-0004_hrtw_fnl.pdf

contaminants and water quality issues, aging infrastructure at regulated facilities, and climate change. These challenges often require us to reassess priorities and shift resources away from other programmatic work. In response to this evolving work environment, a key component of this strategic plan is to identify and provide transparency about our high-priority programmatic functions and initiatives. This strategic plan provides a framework to evaluate and prioritize planned and unplanned work while highlighting the importance of workforce planning and development to provide support to all staff and ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and expertise to successfully complete that work.

Collaboration and Public Service

The effectiveness of our work requires collaboration and partnerships with various entities with shared goals. Coordination with and leveraging of other entities' expertise and resources can inform and streamline our work to achieve meaningful water quality outcomes. Similarly, we can help facilitate actions implemented by other entities by providing them with supporting expertise and resources to achieve shared goals. We actively participate at local, regional, and state levels with other regulatory agencies, cities, counties, special districts, and coordinate with academic and scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, service providers, consultants, regulated entities and individuals, elected officials, and the general public to advance water quality protection and restoration. Our board members are also instrumental in acting as a bridge between communities and staff. We also value our continued coordination with the State Water Board and the other regional water boards to implement our shared mission.

Public engagement is critical to the Central Coast Water Board's success in restoring and protecting water quality, and we are dedicated to serving the public as a fundamental component of our mission. We serve the public by building trust and long-term relationships through service excellence, proactive communication, public outreach and education, accessibility, transparency, and collaboration.

Regional Priorities and Actions

We have identified four regional priorities including Workforce Planning and Development, Programmatic Functions, Environmental Justice, and Climate Change. Our Programmatic Functions are the foundation of the organization and are supported by the other three regional priorities that are integrated into our office culture and programmatic work.

Workforce Planning and Development

We are committed to supporting our staff to ensure they have what they need to do their best work, including effective opportunities to 1) gain skills and knowledge, 2) focus on priorities and have a reasonable workload, and 3) prepare for professional growth.

We prioritize professional development and succession planning of our workforce and create space for our work to be done in a meaningful way. To create space for the very important work of developing a strong workforce, we adjust our priorities in other areas. We continue to recruit, hire, and retain high-quality staff, support staff engagement, and facilitate and encourage staff professional and personal growth through implementation of deliberate and consistent hiring and recruitment processes, staff onboarding, training and mentoring, and succession planning. The following actions are intended to address this priority:

1. Continue to improve our internal hiring practices and recruitment strategies.

2. Continue to improve onboarding and training for technical staff and supervisors.
3. Continue to implement and build on our core curriculum for scientists, engineers, geologists, and supervisors to support professional growth and development.
4. Continue to support a staff-led Workforce Planning and Development Committee to consider feedback from staff, help the organization prioritize actions, and develop recommendations for implementation to ensure that staff have what they need to be successful and do their best work.
5. Increase transparency of various roles and responsibilities in the organization to support opportunities for professional growth, career advancement, and succession planning.
6. Create, implement, and support mentoring opportunities for staff.
7. Continue to encourage and provide opportunities for collaboration, teamwork, and leadership growth.
8. Continue to coordinate with the State Water Board to effectively implement recruitment processes and to develop budget change proposals in support of additional staff resources.
9. Implement succession plans to anticipate workforce changes and maximize effective transfer of institutional knowledge and history.

Programmatic Functions

Key to the effective implementation of our mandate to protect and restore water quality and beneficial uses is the effective implementation of our regulatory programs and planning and assessment programs. Our waste discharge regulatory programs (i.e., Waste Discharge Requirements, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, Stormwater, Land Disposal, 401 Certification, Irrigated Lands, Cannabis) regulate dischargers using various permits.[3] Our Site Cleanup, Underground Storage Tank, and Department of Defense regulatory programs issue orders (e.g., cleanup and abatement orders, California Water Code section 13267 orders, etc.) directing dischargers (i.e., responsible parties), including private parties, corporations, and state and federal agencies, to investigate and clean up sources of pollution and provide replacement water to affected individuals or communities when needed. Other regulatory programs provide an important oversight role in coordination with the State Water Board and/or other agencies like that of our Active Oilfields Program, or to support and facilitate projects to ensure safe drinking water, wastewater system consolidation, water supply resiliency, vegetation management to reduce fuel load fire risks, implement the state's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program, and provide outreach and technical support for grant projects.

Regulatory program staff coordinate with dischargers to implement water quality requirements, facilitate compliance, evaluate and respond to information included in monitoring reports and other submitted documents, conduct compliance verification inspections, and coordinate with other agencies to help facilitate compliance or provide technical assistance. Regulatory programs also coordinate with the Enforcement Program to pursue progressive enforcement as may be required in response to significant issues of noncompliance, and coordinate with affected communities or individuals.

[3] Key examples include individual and general waste discharge requirements orders (WDRs) for various types of waste discharges to groundwater and surface water (in the form of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits, which are also WDRs), including municipal (wastewater and solid waste), industrial and agricultural discharges, municipal, industrial and construction stormwater discharges, federal Clean Water Act section 401 certifications for dredge and fill work or other activities with surface water bodies, etc.

Our planning and assessment programs are non-regulatory but essential in implementing the federal Clean Water Act's water quality based approach by maintaining the Basin Plan, conducting water quality monitoring and assessments through the implementation of ambient water quality monitoring programs and Integrated Report water quality assessments, and develop plans (e.g., Total Maximum Daily Loads [TMDLs]) to document and address sources of impairment and reduce pollutant loading.

Prioritizing our programmatic work is an iterative process in response to input from the public, dischargers and interested parties, policy or legislative changes, or other agency needs, requests, issues of noncompliance, emergency response, etc. This may sometimes require us to shift resources from previously identified high-priority work to emergent tasks based on need and changing priorities. This strategic plan is intended to highlight the priority programmatic functions we must continue to focus on to achieve our mission. Each of our programs are described briefly in the Program Priorities section below and include a list of priority actions for this fiscal year.

Our primary actions associated with Programmatic Functions are:

1. Continue to identify program priorities and implement actions to focus on addressing the highest priorities to effectively protect water quality, as well as identify and implement program efficiencies, in consideration of program capacity and available resources.
2. Continue to conduct regular programmatic workload updates during weekly management meetings to adjust priority actions and workload as needed in response to emerging or emergency issues.
3. Continue to provide periodic program updates during regularly scheduled public meetings to inform the board and public about priorities, accomplishments, and emerging issues.
4. Consider progressive enforcement, as necessary, to maintain discharger compliance with water quality requirements.
5. Continue to work with the State Water Board to identify orders that apply statewide to avoid the need to develop orders at the regional level.
6. Continue to consider environmental justice and climate change factors as we evaluate, prioritize, and implement our work.
7. Continue to coordinate with the State Water Board to identify and track various annual performance targets (e.g., numbers of inspections conducted, permits issued/updated, etc.) and align them to the extent possible with our regional priority actions.
8. Continue to improve public access to information and improve community outreach and engagement.
9. Continue to improve records management and respond to public records act requests (PRAR) for information in a timely manner.

Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience

Climate change related issues are becoming increasingly prevalent, and it is a priority for the Central Coast Water Board to advance climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. The increased frequency and magnitude of climate change related disasters associated with droughts, severe storms, floods, and fires affecting communities and regulated entities[4] require increased levels of local and statewide coordination to develop various strategies or otherwise help facilitate the implementation of statewide efforts and guidance. A key example of this implementation is State Water Board Resolution 2017-0012[5] which describes how the Water Boards are responding to integrate climate change into all Water Boards' actions, and the Governor's Office 2020 Water Resiliency Portfolio and 2022 Water Supply Strategy in response to ongoing drought conditions in California.[6] Regional boards have limited resources to address the increasing coordination and regulatory needs created by climate change and programs must implement creative capacity building strategies; this often impacts our ability to address other high-priority programmatic work. The following includes our proposed actions associated with this priority:

1. Continue to evaluate how climate change affects our region, communities, regulated entities, and water quality in coordination with others.
2. Continue to coordinate with State Board regarding fire and flood related emergency response and recovery activities (e.g., assessment of watershed level risks, such as for debris flows, permitting for recovery work, fire and flood debris disposal, etc.).
3. Continue to include climate change adaptation provisions in our individual and general WDRs (including NPDES permits).
4. Continue to support the technical and regulatory permitting oversight of an increasing number of water supply resiliency projects (e.g., desalination, recycled water advanced treatment and associated indirect and direct potable reuse, aquifer storage and recovery and other recycled water uses, and stormwater capture).
5. Continue to coordinate with the State Water Board to pursue additional personnel resources to implement regionally specific climate change focused projects.
6. Continue to coordinate with the State Water Board, California Coastal Commission, and local agencies, as well as other entities (e.g., California Association of Sanitary Agencies, Association of California Water Agencies, and CalReuse) to build capacity and leverage coordinated strategies and funding to implement projects that result in water supply resiliency and coastal/flooding retreat, wastewater consolidation, recycling, etc.
7. Invest in workforce development by providing staff with the training and professional development needed to build the knowledge, skills, and expertise necessary to advance climate change adaptation and resilience across our regulatory programs and decision-making.

[4] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_info/agendas/2023/feb/item11_stfrpt.pdf (see Flood Incident Response section of the report)
[5] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2017/rs2017_0012.pdf
[6] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_info/agendas/2022/oct/item13_stfrpt.pdf

Environmental Justice

The Central Coast Water Board has a decades long history of prioritizing environmental justice issues and engaging underrepresented and disadvantaged communities in water quality programs. A primary focus of our environmental justice efforts has been on integrating environmental justice into our regulatory program implementation, improving community outreach and engagement, and implementing the state's human right to water policy and associated State Water Board and Central Coast Water Board resolutions.[7] The Central Coast Water Board has been successful through creative and coordinated strategies to leverage the work of community partners and other agencies to increase environmental justice capacity in the region and facilitate the development of programs like the Central Coast Drinking Water Well Testing Program,[8] despite no dedicated staff resources. Over the last several years we have focused on evaluating and aligning our programmatic work with our environmental justice priorities, providing resources to staff to support effective community outreach and engagement during project implementation, and coordinating with the State Water Board Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs (OPEETA). We will continue to implement this strategy in support of this priority with the following actions:

1. Continue to prioritize the human right to water and implement the Central Coast Water Board's Human Right to Water Resolution R3-2017-0004.[9]
2. Continue to implement the Central Coast Water Board's Environmental, Racial Equity, and Tribal Engagement Action Plan consistent with our regionally specific Racial Equity Resolution R3-2023-0002.[10]
3. Continue to engage with tribal governments and tribal communities, consistent with the State Water Board's Tribal Consultation Policy[11] and Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-15-19.[12]
4. Continue to support a regional Environmental Justice Leadership Team, including Environmental Justice and Tribal Coordinators to provide resources to effectively integrate environmental justice into our regulatory programs.
5. Continue to improve our community outreach and engagement tools, resources and strategies to incorporate Assembly Bill (AB) 2108[13] provisions and associated State Water Board guidance.
6. Continue to identify and leverage environmental justice related capacity building opportunities.
7. Continue to identify and leverage technical and financial assistance programs for underrepresented and disadvantaged communities and federal and non-federal tribes in our region.

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[7] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2016/rs2016_0010.pdf), https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2017/2017-0004_hrtw_fnl.pdf
[8] https://sites.google.com/view/ccgroundwater
[9] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2017/2017-0004_hrtw_fnl.pdf
[10] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2023/r3-2023-0002.pdf
[11] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/about_us/public_participation/tribal_affairs/docs/california_water_board_tribal_consultation_policy.pdf
[12] https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/6.18.19-Executive-Order.pdf
[13] https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB2108

8. Continue to coordinate with State Water Board OPEETA and others (e.g., local agencies, community-based partners, non-governmental organizations) to develop and implement effective and equitable outreach strategies.
9. Continue to improve public transparency, outreach, and engagement, particularly with respect to the most impacted and difficult to reach communities and individuals to increase participation in our public decision-making processes.
10. Continue to support the implementation of the Bay Foundation of Morro Bay's Central Coast Drinking Water Well Testing Program through the Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program – Groundwater Assessment and Protection (CCAMP-GAP) Program and replacement water efforts to ensure all communities have access to safe drinking water.
11. Continue to coordinate with State Water Board and other agencies to conduct outreach to impacted or in-need underrepresented and disadvantaged communities and identify and facilitate funding and technical assistance opportunities in support of drinking water and wastewater infrastructure needs.
12. Invest in workforce development by providing staff with leadership opportunities and the training and professional development needed to build the knowledge, skills, and expertise necessary to advance racial equity and environmental justice and promote equitable water quality and public health outcomes throughout the Central Coast region.

Program Priorities

This section includes descriptions of our programs along with specific program priorities and tasks. For some of our programs the State Water Board measures specific programmatic performance targets. Where applicable, the following program summaries identify the specific performance measure and target.

Waste Discharge Requirements Program

***Program Narrative*:** The Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) Program protects the region's groundwater quality and public health by providing regulatory oversight of many of the region's waste discharges to land and groundwater. The WDR Program regulates domestic wastewater, industrial wastewater, recycled water, aquifer storage and recovery, and wastewater collection system discharges through the issuance and enforcement of waste discharge requirements (i.e., permits), including water quality monitoring and reporting requirements. Success of the WDR Program's safeguarding of water quality relies heavily on the implementation of periodic inspections, compliance evaluations and assistance, and progressive enforcement actions as may be appropriate. Currently, the WDR Program oversees 150 individual facility WDR permits and 610 enrollments under various statewide and regional general WDR permits. The WDR Program prioritizes work based on potential threats to groundwater quality and beneficial uses, permit age, environmental justice considerations, climate related risks, and legal requirements.

Staff Resources: The WDR Program currently consists of 6 technical staff, a shared technical specialist, a shared student assistant, and a dedicated program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Protect beneficial uses of groundwater by issuing permits designed to minimize impacts from domestic and industrial wastewater surface and subsurface discharges, and deep injection of advanced treated wastewater.
- Prioritize updating and renewal of outdated individual permits to ensure permit requirements remain protective of groundwater quality and beneficial uses.

- Prioritize decisions that promote environmental justice and racial equity, and that contribute to resilient wastewater management practices for long-term protection of water quality.
- Review facility data and information and complete inspections to ensure facilities are operated in compliance with permit conditions, state laws, regulations, and policies.
- Provide compliance assistance and conduct enforcement actions when necessary.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff by providing professional development opportunities, including field-based training that allows each employee to participate in program-specific field activities.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Enroll facilities into current applicable updated permits and monitoring programs that are protective of groundwater beneficial uses as defined in the Basin Plan.
2. Conduct effective permit oversight through inspections, compliance assistance, and enforcement, as appropriate.
3. Provide information on available funding opportunities to assist the regulated community with facility improvements, rehabilitation, and repairs.
4. Implement project management improvements and modernize regulatory processes through statewide WDR data management enhancements, electronic application tools, and expanded use of GeoTracker.
5. Strengthen partnerships with local agencies, consultants, industry groups, and other stakeholders to improve communication, coordination, and regulatory outcomes.
6. Provide technical support for compliance and improvements, recycled water projects, septic-to-sewer conversions, and other projects that improve or protect groundwater quality.
7. Protect groundwater quality by developing additional strategies and permit language to adequately regulate discharges of salts, nutrients, chemicals of concern, and chemicals of emerging concern.
8. Develop a process for promoting wastewater consolidation where possible, assess current regulatory tools available to compel consolidation, and propose additional requirements where necessary.
9. Develop tools to implement the Statewide Winery General Order using risk-based prioritization and streamlined processes that maximize regulatory effectiveness and efficiencies.
10. Evaluate climate adaptation plans to ensure facilities are prepared for evolving climate conditions while minimizing impacts to groundwater quality.
11. Onboarding of new staff and continued training, development, and growth of all WDR Program staff.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Number of WDR municipal/domestic wastewater facility inspections: 24
2. Number of WDR industrial facility inspections: 6
3. Number of individual orders adopted: 0[14]

[14] The WDR Program focuses on enrolling existing and new facilities under regional or statewide general orders.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program

Program Narrative: The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program issues and enforces permits to protect surface water quality and beneficial uses from point source discharges to waters of the United States. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has authorized the State and Regional Water Boards to implement the NPDES program in California to protect inland surface waters and the Pacific Ocean (within three miles of the coast). Permittees in the Central Coast region include 31 individual facilities (19 major facilities[15] and 12 minor facilities[16]), over 20 dischargers enrolled in two regional general permits, over 80 dischargers enrolled in various statewide general permits, and several dozen sanitary sewer systems that discharge to NPDES facilities. Individual NPDES permits provide coverage to a variety of facility and discharge types, including domestic waste from publicly owned treatment works (POTW) and privately owned facilities; industrial waste from power plants, refineries, quarries and mining operations, and manufacturing and food processing facilities; and discharges associated with desalination and recycled water projects. Development of individual permits presents additional complexity by incorporating outreach, coordination, and requirements related to pretreatment, biosolids, climate change adaptation, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) monitoring, and updates to statewide policies such as the Ocean Plan and the Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries (ISWEBE) Plan.

Staff prioritizes permit reissuance on threat to water quality, opportunities to encourage and facilitate recycled water projects, climate change adaptation needs, and impacts to underrepresented and disadvantaged communities. Staff conduct enforcement activities including assisting with mandatory minimum penalties (MMPs) when dischargers exceed their effluent limitations, responding to spills and sanitary sewer overflows, responding to complaints, developing time schedule orders (TSOs), and coordinating with the enforcement unit on additional enforcement actions when needed. Additionally, staff inspects facilities; reviews technical reports; provides compliance assistance to dischargers with various questions related to their permits, planning, and monitoring and reporting; and provides outreach related to funding opportunities.

Staff Resources: The NPDES Program currently consists of 3 technical staff, a shared technical specialist, a shared student assistant, and a shared program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Prioritize permit renewals and updates for facilities with outdated permits and facilities that are undergoing substantial upgrades, particularly related to recycled water projects and for high-priority water and energy resilience projects.
- Perform inspections and review submitted reports.
- Provide compliance assistance and conduct enforcement actions when necessary.
- Protect facilities and water quality through implementation of pretreatment requirements.

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[15] Major facilities include municipal dischargers with design flows of greater than one million gallons per day and facilities with approved industrial pretreatment programs. Major industrial facilities are determined based on specific ratings criteria developed by USEPA/State.
[16] Minor facilities include discharges with a design flow of less than one million gallons per day that have not been determined to have an actual or potential adverse environmental impact classifying the discharge as major.

- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Issue a new permit to Monterey One Water and California American Water Company to include waste discharge requirements for the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project (MPWSP) desalination plant.
2. Include recycling and climate change adaptation provisions and consider impacts to Underrepresented Communities in all applicable proposed permits.
3. Perform inspections.
4. Implement strategy for updating permits in response to the Supreme Court receiving water limitations decision.
5. Continue to develop and improve California Integrated Water Quality System (CIWQS) electronic self-monitoring report (eSMR) review process and tools.
6. Ensure the requirements of issued time schedule orders are being met.
7. Coordinate with the State Water Board and USEPA on pretreatment program implementation.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Renew or terminate five major facility permits.
2. Renew or terminate one minor facility permit.
3. Inspect nine major facilities.
4. Inspect two minor facilities.

Wastewater Consolidation Program

Program Narrative: The Wastewater Consolidation (WWC) Program is a relatively new program developed pursuant to Senate Bill 1215 (Hertzberg, 2018) that facilitates the consolidation of inadequate onsite wastewater treatment systems (such as septic systems) with centralized wastewater treatment systems, with a focus on assisting disadvantaged communities (DACs). This typically takes the form of septic-to-sewer consolidation projects. Inadequate onsite wastewater treatment systems are a source of bacteria and nitrate pollution to surface water and groundwater. Disadvantaged communities may lack the resources necessary to treat or secure alternate sources of domestic water supply and are particularly vulnerable to public health impacts from bacteria and nitrate in groundwater.

Program staff identify and prioritize potential consolidation opportunities through geospatial and water quality analysis, leveraging current drinking water consolidation projects, and increasingly through community outreach and engagement. Staff coordinate closely with key program partners including sewer providers, city and county public works departments, city and county environmental health departments, consultants, environmental justice groups, and communities. Staff also coordinate closely with the State Water Board Division of Financial Assistance (DFA).

Staff Resources: The WWC Program currently consists of 2 technical staff and a shared program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Increase outreach to and engagement with communities, sewer system entities/municipalities, nonprofit partners, and partnering local and state agencies.

- Continue to coordinate with the Division of Financial Assistance (DFA) and Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs (OPEETA).
- Continue to identify and prioritize new projects and make progress on current projects.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Hacienda Apartments consolidation into City of Soledad sewer system.
2. Support Chualar Wastewater Treatment Plant's upgrade or regionalization.
3. Update program work plan, including incorporating updated datasets and analyses to identify and prioritize potential septic-to-sewer project areas.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Not Applicable.

Recycled Water Program

Program Narrative: The Water Boards recognize the importance of recycled water as a critical water supply for communities throughout California. By developing new and underutilized water resources—including recycled water—communities are better able to diversify local supplies and mitigate the effects of extended drought, climate change, and water supply uncertainty. The State Water Board's *Recycled Water Policy* includes numeric goals for the use of recycled water, narrative goals to encourage recycled water use in over-drafted groundwater basins and coastal areas, and annual reporting requirements statewide for the volume of recycled water. The purpose of the Recycled Water Program is to encourage the use of recycled water, consistent with state and federal water quality laws and with state and federal laws to protect public health and help streamline regional planning and permitting for new water supplies and storage.

Development of new water supplies from recycled water is a complex process involving years of planning, design, and construction, and the regulatory landscape governing the production and use of recycled water involves the State Water Board and regional water boards from project inception to commissioning. The Recycled Water Program facilitates the production of new water supplies from recycled water by streamlining the State Water Board and Central Coast Water Board permitting processes through the following actions:

Cross-Agency and Stakeholder Coordination: Serve as primary point of contact for recycled water permit applicants, state and federal agency partners, communities, and other interested partes related to permit application review, development, implementation, and tracking.

Permit Development and Implementation: Facilitate cross-function coordination within the Central Coast region and with the State Water Board's Division of Drinking Water (DDW) associated with recycled water permitting, including the development of individual waste discharge requirements and NPDES permits for the production and use of recycled water, general permit enrollments for direct reuse, and general permit enrollments for secondary discharges (e.g., aquifer storage and recovery well tests, construction and well development discharges, and operation and maintenance discharges).

Board Meetings: Prepare permits and other materials for Central Coast Water Board adoption (e.g., public notice, staff reports, response to comments) and conduct applicable stakeholder outreach.

Planning and Outreach: Conduct community engagement and stakeholder outreach related to planning and promoting recycled water implementation. Communicate processes and activities required in permitting recycled water projects to interested parties.

Cross-Program Coordination: Define and facilitate coordination among wastewater units within the Central Coast region.

Staff Resources: The Recycled Water Program currently consists of 1 technical staff, a shared technical specialist, and a shared program manager.

General Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27

- Review and process recycled water permit applications and renewals, including updating permits to be consistent with recycled water regulations to protect public health and the environment.
- Evaluate permit and monitoring plan compliance. Improve reporting efficiency through electronic reporting.
- Coordinate with the State Water Board's Division of Drinking Water, Division of Water Rights, Division of Water Quality, and stakeholders on facility permits, consistent with the Water Boards' racial equity resolution and related actions.
- Provide support and outreach to Central Coast communities, consultants and other interested parties related to recycled water planning and permitting.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27

1. Serve as central point of contact and facilitate permitting coordination and support for potable reuse and non-potable reuse recycling projects, such as permitting for City of Pismo Beach, City of Morro Bay, Carpinteria, and Cal Poly.
2. Track recycled water projects, facilitate information sharing, and cross-program collaboration with WDR and NPDES units, and DDW.
3. Review and process enrollments for WQ 2016-0068-DDW, including several high priority projects including City of San Luis Obispo, Soledad, and Cal Poly.
4. Evaluate producer/user compliance with recycled water permits.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Not Applicable

Site Cleanup Program

Program Narrative: The Site Cleanup Program (SCP) regulates the investigation and cleanup of sites where recent or historical unauthorized releases of pollutants to the environment, including soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediments, have occurred. SCP sites are varied and include dry cleaners, pesticide and fertilizer facilities, rail yards, ports, airports, equipment supply facilities, metals facilities, industrial manufacturing and maintenance sites, airports, bulk petroleum transfer facilities, and refineries, among others. Pollutants encountered at SCP sites are diverse and commonly include solvents (e.g., trichloroethylene [TCE] and perchloroethylene [PCE]), petroleum hydrocarbons (e.g., gasoline, diesel, crude oil), pesticides, and heavy metals. The SCP also addresses emerging contaminants, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Most SCP sites are focused on addressing groundwater contamination issues that often take years or decades to clean up.

The SCP prioritizes its work using a ranking system that emphasizes site risk, complexity, and need for public outreach. This helps program staff and management to emphasize program resources where risks to and interest from the public are highest. This is increasingly important due to caseload increases with staffing reductions to the SCP (140 cases with 6.3 PYs as of July 7, 2026, compared to 120 cases with 8.6 PYs on September 11, 2017).

SCP staff regulate dischargers' (i.e., responsible parties') activities pertaining to the assessment and cleanup of pollution at sites to ensure that the dischargers clean up and abate the effects of discharges in a manner that promotes attainment of either background water quality or the best water quality which is feasible if background levels of water quality cannot be restored. SCP data, including site information, case management and regulatory information, and groundwater monitoring data are managed in GeoTracker and available to the public online.

Staff Resources: The Site Cleanup Program currently consists of approximately 6.2 technical staff, and a dedicated program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Protect human health and the environment by reducing risk through the investigation and cleanup of SCP cases that threaten water quality.
- Ensure safe drinking water by evaluating impacts to drinking water and requiring the provision of replacement water or treatment for impacted drinking water supply wells, if appropriate.
- Reduce and mitigate chemical vapor intrusion risks to indoor air for residential and commercial buildings.
- Provide technical review and quality assurance to ensure that proposed plans for investigation and remediation will succeed.
- Support responsible parties in obtaining grants.
- Recommend enforcement actions for significant non-compliant cases.
- Identify high-risk SCP sites that may affect underrepresented communities.
- Conduct community outreach.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport Area – PFAS water replacement
2. Moss Landing Power Plant, Moss Landing, Lithium-ion battery and electronics fire
3. PFAS investigations of sources (including three other airports)
4. Buckley Road Area, San Luis Obispo County, TCE Cleanup and Abatement
5. Casmalia Resources Superfund Site, Santa Barbara County – Mixed Hazardous Wastes
6. Investigate source(s) of impacts to supply wells near Salinas – 1,2,3-TCP
7. Investigate source(s) of impacts to supply wells in Salinas – MTBE
8. Investigate source(s) of impacts to supply well in Solvang – Perchlorate
9. Broadway Cleaners, Santa Cruz – PCE
10. Dutch Maid Cleaners, Santa Barbara – PCE
11. Scotts Valley Dry Cleaners, Scotts Valley – PCE
12. SEMCO, Santa Maria – Industrial solvent site with supply well impacts

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Number of sites new into active remediation: 3
2. Number of cases closed: 5

Department of Defense Program

Program Narrative: **The** Department of Defense (DoD) Program oversees the investigation and cleanup of DoD sites at active and former military facilities with historical releases of pollutants to the environment (including soil, groundwater, surface water, soil gas, indoor air, and sediment). The DoD Program follows the investigation, cleanup, and closure process laid out by the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

The former U.S. Army Fort Ord facility in Monterey County is a DoD Superfund site in the Central Coast region and DoD Program staff coordinate with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) to oversee investigation and remediation. In addition to former Fort Ord, DoD Program staff oversee investigation and cleanup activities at Vandenberg Space Force Base and former Lompoc U.S. Army Disciplinary Barracks (Santa Barbara County), U.S. Army Garrison Fort Hunter Liggett (San Luis Obispo County/Monterey County), and California Army National Guard Camp San Luis Obispo and Camp Roberts (San Luis Obispo County). Pollutants encountered at DoD facilities include petroleum hydrocarbons (gasoline, diesel, aviation gas, motor oil), various solvents (trichloroethene [TCE], tetrachloroethene [PCE], carbon tetrachloride), 1,4-dioxane, heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, perchlorate, unexploded ordinance, and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). DoD data, including military facility information, investigation and remediation documents, and groundwater monitoring data are documented in GeoTracker and are available to the public online.

Staff Resources: The DoD Program currently consists of approximately 2.9 technical staff and a dedicated program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Support the federal government's efforts to reduce risks to public health and the environment and minimize environmental liability.

- Ensure safe drinking water by assessing, remediating, and/or monitoring groundwater pollution relative to water supply wells.
- Cleanup impacted soil vapor to reduce the potential mass transport to groundwater, and to reduce the potential impact to human health via vapor intrusion to indoor air. Ensure buildings are adequately mitigated to prevent vapor intrusion, if needed.
- Remove wastes affecting soil or sediment to prevent negative impacts to human health and aquatic or terrestrial habitat, and to prevent wastes in soil from leaching and impacting soil vapor and/or groundwater.
- Clean up wastes in all media to the maximum extent practicable, so that property owner(s) and occupant(s) will have unrestricted site use, or appropriately restricted site use with protective land use controls.
- Clean up groundwater and surface water pollution that in some cases will take decades or centuries to reach water quality objectives due to site complexity, release type, and magnitude.
- Assess the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, to inform how we evaluate priorities and implement our work.
- Support military facilities with outreach, engagement, and collaboration to maximize the opportunities for all community members to participate and provide input on water quality decisions.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Former Fort Ord – Review and evaluate groundwater plume conditions and remediation progress at Sites 2 and 12, former Operable Unit 2 (OU2) Landfill, and Operable Unit Carbon Tetrachloride Plume (OUCTP).
2. Former Fort Ord – Review and evaluate groundwater, soil gas, and landfill gas monitoring requirements in the Basewide Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for Sites 2 and 12, OU2, and OUCTP.
3. Former Fort Ord – Participate in the development of and evaluate the Draft Five-Year Review document to ensure implementation and performance of the remedies remain protective of human health and the environment.
4. Former Fort Ord – Review and evaluate the Draft Final OUCTP Explanation of Significant Differences (ESD) No. 1 for TCE in the Lower 180-Foot Aquifer.
5. Former Fort Ord – Continue to evaluate the potential vapor intrusion risk to buildings at and near Sites 2 and 12.
6. Vandenberg Space Force Base – Continue to support the Air Force and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) with onboarding new Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) staff and the 10-year contract recipients for site investigation and remediation and Basewide Groundwater Monitoring Program implementation.
7. Vandenberg Space Force Base – Review and evaluate data gap work plans for cases CG147, DC142, SD024, SD025, SA251, SA280, SA288, SS004, TU448, and ZZ025.
8. Vandenberg Space Force Base – Review and evaluate remediation progress, based on BGMP and soil vapor rebound data, for cases PL351, SD015, SD024, SS003, SS004, SS050, ST042, WP005, WP008, and WP013.
9. Vandenberg Space Force Base – Review and evaluate remediation progress and provide technical support for cases SA545, MY255, and SA217 contracted with the USACE/Sustainable Remediation Services (SRS).

10. Vandenberg Space Force Base – Provide technical support for initiating annual inspections in support of the Five-Year Review process for Basewide Munitions Response Areas.
11. Vandenberg Space Force Base – Provide technical support for finalization of the base-wide Uniform Federal Policy for Quality Assurance Project Plans (UFP-QAPP) for the collection of field data.
12. Former Lompoc U.S. Army Disciplinary Barracks – Review and evaluate a remedial action work plan for the Washrack Site and evaluate the protectiveness of Land Use Controls in place at the Wood Dump and Former Army Landfill sites.
13. Provide cross-program support to the Waste Discharge Requirements Program on rocket launch wastewater discharges.
14. Provide cross-program support to the Land Disposal Unit for DoD facility landfills.
15. Vandenberg Space Force Base, Former Fort Ord, and Former Lompoc U.S. Army Disciplinary Barracks – Review and evaluate PFAS investigation progress and reports.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:
Not applicable.

Underground Storage Tank Program

Program Narrative: The Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program provides technical and regulatory oversight for the investigation and cleanup of sites with leaks from USTs. Leaking USTs are a significant threat to groundwater and pose a risk to human health, safety, and the environment. The pollutants encountered at UST sites include petroleum hydrocarbons (e.g., gasoline, diesel, heating oils, jet fuels, and waste oils) and their constituents like benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes, naphthalene, fuel oxygenates, 1,2-dichloroethane, and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Most UST sites are focused on addressing groundwater contamination issues that often take years or decades to clean up. Over time, the number of UST cases is decreasing statewide, with the most complex sites or otherwise challenging sites remaining open.

USTs have a long history of environmental regulation. California has been regulating USTs containing hazardous substances since 1983, applying federal and state laws, regulations, and policies. The UST Program has four main program elements: Leak Prevention Program (including tank integrity testing), UST enforcement, UST cleanup, and the UST Cleanup Fund. In addition, the UST Program implements a Low Threat Closure Policy, which is a streamlined process that uses established criteria to close UST cases that present a low threat to human health, safety, and the environment.

The Central Coast Water Board coordinates with one remaining local agency that implements a certified local oversight program (LOP) to oversee corrective action for leaking USTs. In the Central Coast region, the State Water Board has certified Santa Clara County as a qualified LOP. Santa Barbara County had a certified LOP that was terminated on June 30, 2023, due to a shrinking caseload and Central Coast Water Board UST staff have absorbed their caseload. UST data, including site information, case management and regulatory information, and groundwater monitoring data are managed in GeoTracker and are available to the public online.

Staff Resources: The UST Program currently has no dedicated staff resources and consists of a shared program manager.

General Program Priorities:

The Underground Storage Tank Program lost all of its dedicated staff due to FY 24-25 budget cuts. Currently, Active Oilfields Program staff are managing UST cases as time allows for 23 active remaining cases (as of July 7, 2026). General priorities are focused on moving “stalled cases” forward.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Identify additional resources as they become available.
2. Work with State Water Resources Control Board on “stalled cases” initiative to gain progress on cases that have not had significant movement for various reasons and develop resources for increased UST Program efficiency.
3. Review and potentially establish new cases as remaining single-walled underground tank systems are upgraded.
4. Review redevelopment proposals and potentially reestablish cases as land use changes.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Number of cases closed: 2

Land Disposal Program

Program Narrative: The Land Disposal Program regulates landfills, surface impoundments, and other waste disposal to land operations including compost operations. This includes both active and closed facilities. The primary goal of the Land Disposal Program is to ensure that wastes contained in these facilities do not impact surface or groundwater. The Land Disposal Program regulates landfills using prescriptive technical design standards for liners, covers, leachate collection and removal systems, stormwater drainage systems, and gas collection systems.

The Land Disposal Program oversees 56 waste disposal sites (i.e., landfills, solid waste management units, and historical dumps) throughout the region. Disposal sites in the region range in size from active, hundred-acre, multi-cell, state-of-the-art facilities to small, unpermitted one- to two-acre closed sites. To improve programmatic efficiency and allow limited staff resources to focus on landfill activities with the greatest potential impact on water quality and help dischargers maintain compliance with requirements, the Land Disposal Program regulates active landfills using a general order for active Class III landfills (Order No. R3-2020-0001) and a general order for closed landfills (Order No. R3-2024-0036). The program also oversees nine compost facilities enrolled in the statewide general compost order. All Land Disposal Program data, including facility information, case management and regulatory information, and groundwater monitoring data are managed in GeoTracker and is available to the public online.

Staff Resources: The Land Disposal Program currently consists of approximately 2.3 technical staff and a shared program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Address water quality impacts that affect human health and minimize impacts to surface waters and groundwater.
- Regulate facilities to ensure proper waste disposal and handling.
- Review all land disposal monitoring reports and data.

- Review all land disposal design reports (liner and cover projects) and conduct inspections during landfill project construction.
- Conduct outreach and engage with external stakeholders (CalRecycle, County Environmental Health Departments, Air Districts), interested parties, and internal stakeholders (Stormwater, WDR, 401 Certification).
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Develop site specific Monitoring and Reporting Programs and enroll closed landfill facilities in the Closed Landfill General Order (R3-2024-0036).
2. Review emerging contaminant (e.g., PFAS) data for landfills and evaluate priority sites for follow-up.
3. Conduct construction oversight (e.g., new modules, final covers, etc.)
   3.a. Johnson Canyon Landfill New Module Project (Monterey County)
   3.b. Cold Canyon Landfill Liner Project (San Luis Obispo County)
   3.c. Chicago Grade Landfill Liner Project (San Luis Obispo County)
   3.d. Z-Best Compost Pond and Site Upgrades Project (Santa Clara County)
   3.e. Monterey Peninsula Compost Site Improvement Project (Monterey County)
4. Review wet weather preparedness plans for landfills and composting facilities and conduct inspections to verify implementation.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Land Disposal Program inspections: 52

Active Oilfields Program

Program Narrative: The Active Oilfields Program regulates oilfield activities that have the potential to impact surface or groundwater, in close coordination with the State Water Board, California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) and the US EPA. Specifically, the Active Oilfields Program protects groundwater and surface water beneficial uses, especially underground sources of drinking water (USDW), by reviewing aquifer exemption applications, reviewing, and regulating underground injection control (UIC) projects. In addition, the Active Oilfields Program administers General Order No. R3-2020-0006 to regulate the management and beneficial reuse of petroleum-impacted soils produced at active oilfields and oversee several oilfield-related clean-up sites.

There are twenty-two active onshore oilfields in the Central Coast region. The Active Oilfields Program has reviewed aquifer exemption applications for ten oilfields since the program's inception in 2015, in close coordination with the State Water Board and CalGEM. Of these, five have been forwarded to the US EPA for review with three subsequently approved by the US EPA. The Active Oilfields Program reviews UIC non-expansion projects, aquifer exemption applications including associated conduit analyses, well-casing integrity failure reports as needed, and manages seven facilities enrolled in General Order No. R3-2020- 0006. All Active Oilfield Program data, including facility information, case management and regulatory information, and groundwater monitoring data are managed in GeoTracker and are available to the public online.

Staff Resources: The Active Oilfields Program currently consists of approximately 4 technical staff and a shared program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Address potential water quality impacts from active oilfield activities that affect human health and minimize impacts to surface waters and groundwater, especially sources of drinking water.
- Review all aquifer exemption applications (including associated conduit analyses), and UIC projects to evaluate the protection of sources of drinking water.
- Investigate all well casing integrity failures for potential impacts to groundwater and conduct follow-up as needed.
- Support oilfield lease restoration and decommissioning of orphaned oilfield assets.
- Coordinate with State Water Board and CalGEM staff on all active oilfield projects and participate in public meetings.
- Protect surface water and groundwater resources by regulating waste pile management facilities and beneficial reuse projects, produced water pond facilities, and conducting inspections regularly.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Cat Canyon Aquifer Exemption (Santa Barbara County) - In conjunction with State Water Board and CalGEM staff, evaluate Conduit Remediation and Monitoring Plans and alternative demonstrations for potential conduit wells in the proposed Aquifer Exemption area.
2. Lynch Canyon D Sand Aquifer Exemption application (Monterey County) – In conjunction with State Water Board and CalGEM staff, evaluate the Aquifer Exemption's technical and regulatory merits.
3. Support CalGEM and State Water Board in the Project-by-Project Review of Arroyo Grande Oilfield (San Luis Obispo County) Cyclic Steam and Steam Flood UIC Projects and any forthcoming Project-by-Project Reviews for additional oilfields.
4. Aera Energy Cyclic Steam UIC Project, San Ardo Oilfield (Monterey County) – Evaluate area of review (AOR) submittals for proposed cyclic steam wells.
5. Aera Energy Water Disposal Project, Sections 17 & 30, San Ardo Oilfield (Monterey County) – Review UIC projects including potential release of produced water to groundwater.
6. B.E. Conway Energy, Inc. Non-USDW Application, Santa Maria Valley Oilfield (Monterey County) and PxP Expansion – Review UIC project expansion application and non-USDW proposal for the Monterey Formation.
7. Newbridge Resources, LLC Non-USDW Application, Cat Canyon Oilfield (Santa Barbara County) – Review non-USDW application for the Monterey Formation.
8. Begin implementing SB 1137 primarily through review of sampling proposals and resultant data.
9. Address active and historic produced water ponds.
10. Support CalGEM and other agencies with well abandonment, facility decommissioning, and lease restoration of former oilfield leases.
11. Review and provide feedback to CalGEM on new aquifer exemption applications, including the associated conduit analysis.
12. Oversee a portion of the cleanup sites associated with oil and gas facilities.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:
Not Applicable.

Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification Program

Program Narrative: The Clean Water Act section 401 Water Quality Certification Program (401 program) regulates projects placing dredged or fill material in waters of the state. The discharge of fill material is essentially any activity that alters the bottom elevation of a waterbody or otherwise substantially relocates sediment and other material within a waterbody. Typical types of projects regulated by the 401 program include transportation, flood control, and development projects. The primary goal of the 401 program is to protect beneficial uses from impacts resulting from projects occurring within waterbodies, with a focus on protection of wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat. Staff achieves this goal by working with applicants to first avoid and minimize direct impacts to waterbodies, since leaving waterbodies unaltered is generally the most effective way to protect them. Once impacts have been avoided and/or minimized, staff focuses on mitigation of remaining impacts, typically requiring establishment or restoration of waterbody habitat equivalent to that which was impacted.

Staff Resources: The 401 Program currently consists of 6 technical staff, a shared student assistant, and a shared program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Protect beneficial uses of waters of the state by minimizing project-related direct impacts.
- Optimize mitigation for project-related direct impacts to waters of the state.
- Ensure projects are implemented in compliance with permit conditions.
- Ensure responsible parties take corrective actions for unauthorized impacts to waters of the state.
- Process applications and issue orders within all timeframes stipulated by law.
- Collaborate with stakeholder organizations such as technical advisory committees and workgroups to optimize water quality benefits of large-scale projects.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Issue water quality certifications that are protective of beneficial uses of waters of the state and include minimization of direct impacts to waters of the state and optimization of mitigation for direct impacts to waters of the state where appropriate.
2. Conduct inspections of 30 high priority projects to confirm or attain compliance with water quality certifications.
3. Review annual reports for 60 high priority projects to confirm or attain compliance with water quality certifications.
4. Conduct application completeness reviews within 14 days of receipt of applications.
5. Issue certifications within one month of receiving all supplemental application information.
6. Facilitate incorporation of aquatic habitat and wildlife habitat beneficial use features into the Pajaro River levee flood control project.
7. Make continued progress towards compliance on all currently active enforcement cases addressing unauthorized work in waters of the state.
8. Initiate enforcement cases for new high priority unauthorized work in waters of the state.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Issue an initial regulatory action within 30 days of receipt of an individual 401 application.

2. Issue a final action on an individual 401 application within 60 days of receipt of all supplemental application information.
3. Track the number of applications received.
4. Track the number of active projects.
5. Track the total number of days between receipt of an individual 401 application and the final 401 certification issuance or denial.

Stormwater Program

Program Narrative: The Stormwater Program addresses water quality effects of stormwater runoff from urbanized areas, construction and industrial sites, and the state highway system. The overall goal of the program is to protect water quality from stormwater discharges, prevent alteration of watershed processes resulting from stormwater management, and facilitate use of stormwater as a resource.

Construction and industrial sites produce water quality impacts when they are not adequately protected to control pollutant discharges during rain events or when discharges of non-stormwater occur. To eliminate or reduce these impacts, the program regulates construction and industrial sites through general permits that require site-specific pollution prevention plans, discharge monitoring, and annual reporting.

Stormwater runoff from urbanized areas can contribute to receiving water impacts, alteration of watershed processes, and impairment of beneficial uses. To manage these issues, the program regulates municipal stormwater management programs, which include management of stormwater runoff from construction projects, new development, and municipal facilities, development of public education campaigns, and implementation of Total Maximum Daily Loads. Stormwater capture and use represent a multi-benefit approach to addressing municipal stormwater runoff issues.

Staff Resources: The Stormwater Program currently consists of 4 technical staff, a shared student assistant, and a shared program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Reduce the discharge of pollutants in stormwater.
- Preserve, restore, and enhance natural watershed processes.
- Facilitate use of stormwater capture and infiltration.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Prioritize inspections on industrial dischargers in Level 2 Exceedance Response Action or facilities that do not report water quality sampling data but are suspected to be heavy loaders based on nature of industrial activity and/or proximity to receiving water. Utilize environmental justice datasets into inspection prioritization rubric.
2. Conduct audits of municipal stormwater programs, including execution of Total Maximum Daily Load implementation plans, to ensure compliance with pollutant discharge reduction requirements, and post-construction stormwater requirements.
3. Enforce the Construction General Permit.

4. Award contracts for use of Low Impact Development (LID) funds to develop Central Coast Post-Construction Requirements alternative compliance guidance documents to facilitate regional, multi-benefit stormwater capture.
5. Develop and implement workplan to revise Central Coast Post-Construction Requirements.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Conduct 8 municipal stormwater program audits annually.
2. Conduct 69 construction stormwater inspections annually.
3. Conduct 47 industrial stormwater inspections annually.

Wildfire Resiliency Program

Program Narrative: The Central Coast Water Board's Wildfire Resiliency Program is focused on oversight of three primary wildfire-related activity types: wildfire fuel (vegetation) management, emergency wildfire response, and post-wildfire assessment and recovery. Regarding wildfire fuel management, staff focuses on reviewing projects being conducted under existing regulatory frameworks, while also developing a new general order to address fire fuel reduction projects occurring in waters of the state that fall outside existing regulatory frameworks. Central Coast Water Board staff's role during wildfire emergencies includes providing timely responses to inquiries about regulatory requirements affecting first responders' operations, with an emphasis on facilitating emergency response. As emergency conditions transition into the wildfire recovery phase, Central Coast Water Board staff expedite permitting that is needed to address impacts of the fire. In the aftermath of a wildfire, Central Coast Water Board staff provides compliance assistance to regulated parties affected by the fire and facilitates coordination between affected stakeholders and other state and local agencies to address watershed recovery in a timely manner.

Staff Resources: The Wildfire Resiliency Program currently consists of 1 technical staff and a shared program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Minimize impacts to waters of the state resulting from fire-related activities.
- Minimize pollutant generation and transport from fire-related activities.
- Increase best management practice implementation and effectiveness for fire-related activities.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Conduct regulatory oversight of fire-related activities.
2. Participate in development of statewide wildfire-related orders.
3. Provide prompt facilitation activities for wildfire response and recovery.
4. Review 100 percent of submitted vegetation treatment project plans.
5. Review 100 percent of projects proposed under the Governor's emergency proclamation to expedite fire fuels reductions.
6. Conduct 15 inspections annually of vegetation treatment projects.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Not Applicable.

Irrigated Lands Program

Program Narrative: The Irrigated Lands Program (ILP) regulates discharges from irrigated agricultural lands to protect surface water and groundwater under the authority of Order No. R3-2021-0040, General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands (commonly referred to as the Agricultural Order). The ILP was established with the issuance of the first Agricultural Order in 2004. The Agricultural Order underwent subsequent revisions in 2012, 2017, and 2021.

The requirements in the Agricultural Order protect human health, protect and restore the beneficial uses of surface water and groundwater, and achieve the water quality objectives specified in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin by minimizing nitrogen discharges to groundwater, and minimizing nutrient, pesticide, and sediment discharges to surface water. The Agricultural Order also requires the protection of riparian and wetland habitat to prevent loss or degradation.

The Agricultural Order regulates both landowners and operators of commercial irrigated lands on or from which there are discharges of waste or activities that could affect the quality of any surface water or groundwater or result in the impairment of beneficial uses. Landowners and operators may choose to comply with portions of the Agricultural Order by participating in approved third-party groups or programs, such as Central Coast Water Quality Preservation, Inc. (also called Preservation, Inc.). As of May 2026, enrollment in the Agricultural Order included 1,598 agricultural operations and 3,819 ranches, covering more than 387,469 acres of agricultural land.

Staff Resources: The ILP currently consists of six technical staff, one administrative staff, two shared technical specialists, and a dedicated program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Implement the Agricultural Order (outreach, education, dashboards, guides, instructions, etc.) to achieve the following objectives of the Order:
    - Minimize nitrate discharges to groundwater,
    - Minimize nutrient discharges to surface water,
    - Minimize toxicity in surface water from pesticides,
    - Protect riparian and wetland habitats, and
    - Minimize sediment discharges to surface water.
- Increase enrollment in the Agricultural Order.
- Track compliance with the Agricultural Order or pursue enforcement.
- Revise Agricultural Order to ensure alignment with current State Water Board direction and develop a region-wide alternative water supply program.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Implement the Agricultural Order
    1.a. Coordinate with the approved third-party program, including routine coordination and technical meetings, reviewing and commenting on annual reports and work plans, fees and enrollment, facilitating GeoTracker batch uploads, coordinating on well monitoring implementation and data QAQC, and participating in third-party outreach workshops and follow-up planning.

1.b. Conduct outreach and education efforts to landowners, operators, technical assistance providers and interested parties, including workshops on reporting requirements and responding to routine public record act requests.

1.c. Revise and maintain ILP Dashboards to provide transparent information on grower irrigation and nutrient management reporting, water quality monitoring results, enrollment, etc.

1.d. Issue semi-annual ranch reports and TNA/INMP summaries to all growers that provide feedback on compliance and irrigation and nutrient management.

1.e. Provide an annual implementation update to the Board.

2. Increase enrollment in the Agricultural Order - Enroll non-filers and prioritize enrollment in areas with disadvantaged communities and/or surface water and groundwater impairments. Targeted outreach to non-filers to increase enrollment.
3. Assess compliance with Agricultural Order requirements that includes tracking violations, follow-up on complaints, follow-up using progressive enforcement as needed to increase compliance and enforce against dischargers that fail to repeatedly comply.
4. Revise Agricultural Order and Monitoring and Reporting Program to address remands and directives in the State Water Board's Order WQ 2023-0081 and any future precedential requirements.
5. Hire and onboard staff for two vacancies in the ILP Program.
6. Prioritize field training so that each staff can participate in program specific field events.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Not Applicable

Cannabis Regulatory Program

Program Narrative: The Cannabis Regulatory Program protects water quality and beneficial uses by regulating discharges of waste associated with cannabis cultivation operations. The program implements the statewide Cannabis Policy by 1) requiring compliance with the Cannabis General Order for enrolled sites and 2) coordinating with law enforcement and other regulatory agencies to require remediation actions at unenrolled sites. The program focuses on reducing impacts to water quality and the environment from legal and illegal cannabis operations through requirements related to riparian area management and restoration, winterization, sediment and erosion control, chemical storage and use, and domestic waste, as well as assessing and managing other discharges of waste including reverse osmosis concentrate.

Program staff perform site inspections of enrolled and unenrolled sites, review technical reports and remediation plans, provide compliance assistance, and pursue progressive enforcement actions, as necessary. The program coordinates closely with other agencies including counties, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Division of Cannabis Control (DCC), district attorneys, local law enforcement, and others. Staff also coordinate closely with Cannabis Program staff at other regional Water Boards, and the State Water Board's Division of Water Quality, Office of Enforcement, and the Division of Water Rights.

Currently, there are approximately 200 enrolled sites on approximately 1,900 disturbed acres throughout the region.

Staff Resources: The Cannabis Program consists of three technical staff and a dedicated program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Unenrolled sites: identify, inspect, and require enrollment and/or remediation.
- Enrolled sites: prioritize, inspect, review technical reports, respond to questions, provide compliance assistance.
- Enforcement in coordination with Office of Enforcement and local law enforcement agencies.
- Focus on areas that meet prioritization criteria including threats to waters of the state.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Unenrolled sites: Identify and inspect at least three sites and require enrollment and/or remediation in coordination with local law enforcement and other agencies.
   1.a. Prioritize sites that have perennial or intermittent water bodies, disturbed area within riparian setbacks, and discharges that contain constituents with higher threat to water quality.
   1.b. Identify potential unenrolled sites and coordinate aerial imagery analyses with State Water Board and other agencies, focusing on the Toro Creek watershed (lower Salinas River valley).
2. Enrolled sites: Prioritize and inspect enrolled sites and conduct appropriate follow up.
   2.a. Prioritize potential or designated high risk sites (i.e. those with disturbance within the riparian setback).
3. Enrolled sites: Provide compliance assistance and oversight to enrolled sites.
   3.a. Review or require reporting and plans such as Disturbed Area Stabilization Plans, monitoring reports and other plans required by the Order.
   3.b. Evaluate and revise site risk designations, as appropriate.
   3.c. Conduct follow-up and enforcement as appropriate.
4. New enrollments: Provide compliance evaluations and assistance in advance of enrollment.
5. Enforcement coordination: Follow up on issued Notices of Violation for both enrolled and unenrolled sites to ensure identified water quality threats are either remediated or take formal enforcement actions.
6. Maintain internal templates and process guidance documents.
7. Conduct program staff training by conducting joint site visits and training with the North Coast Water Board and Office of Enforcement staff.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Not Applicable

Nonpoint Source Program

Program Narrative: The Nonpoint Source Program is an important component of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) framework to restore and protect our nation's waters. CWA section 319 requires all states to have an approved management program for controlling nonpoint source pollution to waters of the state and for improving the quality of such waters. In addition, the Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments (CZARA) of 1990 requires coastal states to have a Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program in partnership with the California Coastal Commission. California's Nonpoint Source (NPS) Program works to reduce discharges of NPS pollution to waters of the state and to mitigate impacts from NPS pollution.

The general goals of the NPS Program include the following:

- Implement and enforce waste discharge requirements, waivers, and prohibitions to control and reduce nonpoint source pollution to waters of the state.
- Collaborate with other agencies, Water Board programs of implementation, and TMDL responsible parties on initiatives and implementation strategies to control and reduce nonpoint source pollution to waters of the state.
- Protect beneficial uses of groundwater and surfaces waters and ultimately attain water quality objectives.
- Support NPS pollution control projects, with focus in agricultural areas, to improve water quality, restore degraded aquatic habitats and ecosystems, and protect all beneficial uses and the human right to water.
- Support NPS pollution control projects that adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Prioritize work in disadvantaged, underrepresented, and/or tribal communities and promote environmental justice.

Staff Resources: The NPS Program currently has no dedicated staff resources and consists of a shared program manager. The Program is implemented by the Irrigated Lands Program and the Grants Program.

General Program Priorities:

- Implement the Irrigated Lands Program to minimize NPS pollution to waters of the state.
- Solicit and fund grant projects that protect beneficial uses, restore water quality, advance environmental justice, and adapt to or mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Support NPS implementation projects that protect beneficial uses, restore water quality, advance environmental justice, and adapt to or mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Report to the USEPA on actions and progress towards managing NPS pollution.
- Evaluate success of the NPS Program through tracking program activities, nonpoint source pollutant load reductions, and water quality improvements.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Current projects to be completed by June 2027 as defined in the USEPA approved NPS FY 2026-2027 Annual NPS Program Workplan:

Report to USEPA in semi-annual reports and annual reports on the following actions:

1. Irrigated Lands Program work tracked and reported to the USEPA:
   1.a. Track and report to USEPA on the Irrigated Lands Program implementation.
   1.b. Review total nitrogen applied and removed reports for enrolled ranches.

1.c. Provide summary reports to ~4,000 ranches.
1.d. Enroll non-filer farming operations.

2. Grants Program work tracked and reported to the USEPA:
   2.a. Solicit and fund grant projects that aim to accomplish one or more of the following:
      2.a.i Protect beneficial uses.
      2.a.ii Restore water quality and degraded ecosystems in high priority areas.
      2.a.iii Protect the human right to water, (e.g., protect or restore water quality in groundwater used for drinking water).
      2.a.iv Benefit underrepresented communities.
      2.a.v Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.
   2.b. Demonstrate grant funded practice effectiveness in improving water quality.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:
Not Applicable.

Basin Planning Program

***Program Narrative*:** The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) delegates authority to the states to protect water quality and requires states to adopt water quality standards and a continuing planning process. To fulfill this function, the California Water Code (CWC) directs the State and Regional Water Boards to develop and implement water quality control plans (CWC section 13240).

The Basin Plan is the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin; it is the Central Coast region's primary water quality control planning document. The Basin Plan designates beneficial uses and water quality objectives for waters of the state, including surface waters and groundwater within the Central Coast region, and includes programs of implementation to achieve water quality objectives. The CWA and CWC also require water quality control plans to be reviewed and updated periodically. The Basin Planning Program conducts a triennial review (TR) of the Basin Plan to solicit staff and public input on potential improvements and updates and then develops proposed amendments to protect and restore water quality and beneficial uses. Additional program goals include:

- Update and maintain the Basin Plan to align with the goals and priorities of the Central Coast Water Board and to provide a clear structure that identifies beneficial uses and water quality objectives for all waters of the state.
- Facilitate the effective use of the Basin Plan by Water Board programs to achieve tangible results in water quality protection and restoration.
- Facilitate understanding of Basin Plan.

Staff Resources: The Basin Planning Program currently consists of 1 technical staff and a shared program manager. This year, the Program will also receive staff support from a shared Sea Grant Fellow.

General Program Priorities:

- Facilitate officewide evaluation of program needs for future Basin Plan amendments (BPAs) and incorporate those needs into the TR of the Basin Plan.
- Conduct TRs and revise or affirm the prioritized list of future BPAs.

- Develop BPAs prioritized in the TR, in coordination with technical partners.
- Develop and maintain appropriate tools to track and share Basin Planning Program information.
- Promote cross-program collaborative opportunities.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Current Basin Planning Program projects and milestones to be completed by June 2027, as defined in the USEPA approved Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027 Annual Program Workplan and aligned with TR priorities adopted by the Board in October 2024:
   1.a. Prepare Final Project Report for *Proposed Basin Plan Amendments to Establish Water Quality Objectives for Disinfection Byproducts and Disinfectant Residuals*, facilitate Central Coast Water Board adoption, and develop Administrative Record in preparation for public State Water Resources Control Board approval meeting.
   1.b. Participate in statewide Tribal Beneficial Use (TBU) efforts and working groups, conduct outreach and capacity building to support future TBU designations in the Central Coast region, and solicit a 2027 Sea Grant Fellow support these tasks.
   1.c. Develop Final Nomination Report and Substitute Environmental Documentation for Point Sur Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) nomination, prepare for public comment and Central Coast Water Board public hearing, and solicit a 2027 Sea Grant Fellow to support these tasks.
   1.d. Begin 2027 Triennial Review, solicit Central Coast Water Board program input, and develop Triennial Review Report in preparation a future public workshop and public comment period.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. One Basin Plan amendment is expected to be adopted by the Central Coast Water Board in the Fiscal Year (see task 1).

Total Maximum Daily Load Program

Program Narrative: The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program is an important component of implementing the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) framework (section 303(d)) to protect and restore our Nation's waters. The TMDL Program develops watershed-based pollution control strategies in accordance with Code of Federal Regulations, (title 40, sections 130.6(c)(1) and 130.7) and (California Water Code, section 13242).

A TMDL report is a written plan which describes how an impaired waterbody will achieve water quality standards and California Water Code requirements, to address surface water quality pollution and protect high quality waters. TMDLs are implemented by regulatory programs (when TMDL allocations are established as limits in permits that regulate pollutant sources) and by non-regulatory actions such as grant project implementation. The TMDL Program's goals are to protect and restore water quality and designated beneficial uses by:

- Developing TMDLs and numeric targets for high-priority surface water pollution problems (i.e., those affecting human health and/or aquatic life uses).
- Developing effective implementation strategies.
- Collaborating with interested parties and supporting their efforts to improve water quality in the region.

- Developing water quality data tools that support and inform program staff who develop permits and facilitate non-point source control actions.
- Promote field work and cross-program collaborative opportunities specifically with programs doing TMDL implementation.

Staff Resources: The TMDL Program consists of three technical staff and a shared program manager. This year nearly all of the TMDL Program staff (2.6 of the 3 PYs) will be working on Integrated Report Program tasks as described in the Integrated Report Program narrative.

General Program Priorities:

- Develop implementation strategies to address and prevent water quality threats to human health and aquatic habitats.
- Address multiple and related pollution problems (e.g., watershed scale projects for nutrients and biostimulatory effects or toxicity and toxic pollutants).
- Have multi-benefit outcomes (e.g., coordination with existing work or permits, building upon past work, protection of other beneficial uses such as groundwater recharge, and grant funding opportunities).
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Current tasks to be completed by June 2027 that are included in the USEPA approved FY 2026-2027 Annual Program Workplan include the following:

1. TMDL Project: Biostimulatory impairments in the Elkhorn Slough watershed
   1.a. Respond to Scientific Peer Reviews
   1.b. Develop CEQA documents
   1.c. Prepare documents for public comment, respond to comments, and prepare documents for Regional Water Board consideration/adoption
2. TMDL Project: Neonicotinoid pesticide and aquatic toxicity impairments in the Santa Maria River watershed
   2.a. Respond to Scientific Peer Reviews
   2.b. Develop CEQA documents
   2.c. Prepare documents for public comment, respond to comments, and prepare documents for Regional Water Board consideration/adoption

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Note, targets for both performance metrics listed below are zero this fiscal year because TMDL program staff are focused on the 2028 Integrated Report tasks and TMDL projects will aim for adoption in the following fiscal year.

1. No new TMDL projects are expected to be completed and proposed for Central Coast Water Board adoption this Fiscal Year, program staff are focused on the 2028 Integrated Report.
2. No Clean Water Act section 303(d) listings (impaired pollutant & waterbody combinations) are expected to be addressed by new TMDLs since no TMDL project(s) are anticipated to be considered for adoption.

Integrated Report Program

***Program Narrative*:** The Integrated Report Program is an important component of implementing the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) framework to protect and restore our Nation's waters. Section 303(d) of the CWA requires states to evaluate all available water quality data and make a list of waterbodies that do not attain water quality standards (the 303(d) List). Section 305(b) requires states to report on the condition of all waters (the 305(b) Report). The California Integrated Report includes both the 303(d) List and the 305(b) Report and is submitted to USEPA every two years.

The workload of the Integrated Report varies year to year, with three Regional Water Boards being on-cycle every two years. The Central Coast Water Board is on-cycle for the 2028 Integrated Report and currently in the process of developing a comprehensive assessment for Central Coast data. In on-cycle years, TMDL Program staff workload is significantly higher in this program than in off-cycle years. For the 2028 cycle, staff is assessing readily available data from providers and identify whether waterbodies meet water quality standards or are impaired.

The Integrated Report Program goals include the following:

- Comprehensive water quality data assessments to determine if beneficial uses are supported or impaired by pollutants.
- Reporting on the status of water quality standards attainment in accordance with State Water Board's Policy for complying with the schedule set forth in CWA section 303(d).

Staff Resources: The Integrated Report Program has no dedicated staff resources and consists of a shared program manager. The Program relies on technical staff in the TMDL Program and this year will also receive staff support from a shared Sea Grant Fellow.

General Program Priorities:

- Develop comprehensive water quality data assessments including the use of numeric evaluation guidelines to interpret narrative water quality objectives (e.g., pesticides, water temperature, turbidity, and nitrate for aquatic life uses).
- Develop and customize data assessment outputs to inform other program actions.
- Prioritize 303(d) List for future TMDL development.
- Use 305(b) Report to inform grant funding priorities.
- Use 305(b) Report to identify waters in need of protection from degradation.
- Use 305(b) Report to inform healthy aquatic habitat assessments.
- Collaborate with State Water Board to continually improve the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and usefulness of the Integrated Report.
- Consolidate and update mapping layers.
- Make map layers available on our websites and in databases used by staff and the public (i.e., GeoTracker).
- Determine appropriate evaluation guidelines to interpret narrative objectives and evaluate water quality standards attainment.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Current tasks to be completed by June 2027 that are included in the USEPA approved FY 2026-2027 Annual Program Workplan include the following:

1. Write and develop Integrated Report Decisions (i.e., identifying whether waterbodies meet water quality standards or are impaired).
2. Develop staff report for the 2028 Integrated Report.
3. Coordinate with State Water Board and other on-cycle regional Water Board staff to develop Decisions and the staff report.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Not Applicable

Grants Program

Program Narrative: The Grants program aims to fund and leverage actions that demonstrate water and habitat quality improvements aligned with Water Board programs and the state's Five-year NPS Program Plan. In particular, utilize federal Clean Water Act section 319(h) and 205(j) grant funding for projects that reduce nonpoint source pollution (nonpoint source grant funds). Environmental justice efforts primarily focus on implementing the state's human right to water law. Contaminated surface water and groundwater that is a source of drinking water are often co-located in agricultural areas. The Grants Program goals include the following:

- Support NPS pollution control projects in agricultural areas to improve water quality, restore degraded aquatic habitats and ecosystems, and protect the human right to water.
- Support NPS pollution control projects that protect high-quality waters and improve aquatic habitat in watersheds supporting anadromous fisheries in Critical Coastal Areas, such as San Carpoforo Creek, Scott Creek, Morro Bay, and San Lorenzo River watersheds.
- Advance environmental justice in tribal lands and underrepresented communities.
- Support projects that mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.
- Facilitate the successful implementation of grant projects aligned with Central Coast Water Board priorities.
- Integrate grant project data and products into Water Board programs and databases.
    - Provide readily available Grants Program information to the public and Water Board programs.

Staff Resources: The Grants Program consists of 1 technical staff person and a shared program manager. The Program also receives some staff support from other program staff assisting with grant management.

General Program Priorities:

- Prioritize outreach to solicit projects and in disadvantaged, underrepresented, and/or tribal communities and to promote environmental justice.
- Support projects that adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Advance equity in funding through increasing translation of funding notices and advocating for financial assistance to underrepresented communities.
- Support projects in high-priority watersheds.
- Support projects to reduce impacts from microplastics.
- Support projects to restore or protect groundwater used for drinking water.

- Coordinate with other programs to support effective grant project management.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Identify and solicit one or more grant projects that aim to accomplish the following:
   1.a. Reduce NPS pollution on irrigated lands.
   1.b. Protect beneficial uses with priority given to projects that
      1.b.i Protect the human right to water
      1.b.ii Protect and/or restore aquatic and riparian habitats adjacent to irrigated lands and rural roads in high-priority polluted watersheds, in watersheds supporting anadromous fisheries, and in watersheds used for rangelands and grazing.
      1.b.iii Prevent and/or correct threats to high-quality waters.
      1.b.iv Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.
   1.c. Support and evaluate efforts to address impacts from microplastics on irrigated lands.
2. Report counts of management practices implemented and quantify pollutant load reductions (project effectiveness data).

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Not Applicable

Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program

Program Narrative: The Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program (CCAMP) is the central coast's regionally scaled surface water monitoring program. The CCAMP Program is implemented by the Bay Foundation of Morro Bay (Bay Foundation), in close coordination with the Central Coast Water Board. CCAMP has collected hundreds of thousands of data measurements related to surface water quality since 1998, creating one of the largest water quality datasets in the region. CCAMP's primary goal is to collect, assess, and disseminate scientific information, collected through robust surface water quality monitoring and design, to aid decision-makers and the public in maintaining, restoring, and enhancing water quality and associated beneficial uses in the Central Coast region. CCAMP also serves as a regional component of the State Water Board's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP).

CCAMP's current monitoring strategy is to conduct continuous monitoring at coastal confluence sites, which involves long-term trend monitoring at the lower ends of all the larger coastal streams and rivers in the region. In addition, CCAMP also partners with SWAMP and the Freshwater and Estuarine Harmful Algal Bloom (FHAB) Program to conduct seasonal monitoring for harmful algal blooms (HAB) at inland surface waterbodies prior to high-use recreation weekends, and coordinates with waterbody managers to share data and provide public health advisories, where appropriate. Due to increasing laboratory analytical costs and the elimination of State Regional Monitoring funds (notified November 2024), and Regional Discretionary funds (notified June 2025), CCAMP has suspended the five-year watershed rotation area monitoring, effective January 2025.

CCAMP data are publicly available to all users in the California Environmental Data Exchange Network[17] (CEDEN) and CCAMP's Data Navigator,[18] a web-based interpretive tool that provides easy and informative access to maps, graphs, and charts of regional water quality-related data. CCAMP data are routinely used by program staff to inform programmatic implementation and water quality decisions. For example, the TMDL, ILP, and Basin Planning Programs all rely on CCAMP data for programmatic surface water quality assessments. In addition, CCAMP is an important data source to inform the 303(d) list and Integrated Report.

The Bay Foundation provides one full-time monitoring coordinator, one to two part-time field technicians, and one part-time data management coordinator to implement CCAMP, in coordination with Central Coast Water Board staff who direct field monitoring activities and coordinate with Water Board programs and other partner agencies and organizations.

Staff Resources: The CCAMP Program currently consists of one technical specialist who implements the program and serves as a dedicated program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Ongoing CCAMP coordination with the Bay Foundation to evaluate priorities, manage resources, contracts, personnel, and program implementation.
- Direct CCAMP field activities to ensure robust surface water quality monitoring and results.
- Manage surface water quality data and maintain Data Navigator to provide access to maps, graphs, and charts of regional surface water quality-related data.
- Coordinate with Central Coast Water Board programs and statewide SWAMP and FHAB Programs.
- Conduct data sharing and outreach to staff, partner agencies and organizations and interested parties.
- Coordinate with Bay Foundation to recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Statistical review (Bay Foundation contract with Geosyntec) of CCAMP Program surface water quality monitoring strategies and study designs to evaluate long-term monitoring, address program priorities, and maximize data quality, given available resources.
2. Conduct Monthly Long-Term Trend Monitoring – Coastal Confluences Monitoring
3. Conduct Seasonal Monitoring - Freshwater and Estuarine Harmful Algal Bloom Pre-Holiday Assessments, in coordination with FHAB Program.
4. Manage CCAMP data collection and submittals for upload to CEDEN and CCAMP Data Navigator, including implementing electronic field datasheets and streamlining data quality assurance (QA) and data entry workflows for a new CEDEN 2.0 system.
5. Implement cross-program coordination and field training opportunities for Water Board employees to participate in at least one program-specific field event with the CCAMP monitoring team.
6. Seek opportunities to collaborate on projects using shared resources, and to pursue additional and sustainable funding sources.

[17] https://ceden.waterboards.ca.gov
[18] https://www.ccamp.org/datanavigator

7. Maintain and update CCAMP resources to include in the Central Coast Water Board onboarding toolbox to help new staff learn about watersheds and relevant water quality issues.
8. Participate in the Water Board's paid intern program to implement project to: Develop Water Quality Curriculum/Lesson Plan for Central Coast Communities and Educators to Increase Awareness About Local Water Resources and Related Career Opportunities.
9. Continue to improve Data Navigator to share water quality data and tools with program staff, water quality partners, and the public.
10. Support Integrated Report Program.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:
Not Applicable.

Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program - Groundwater Assessment and Protection Program

Program Narrative: The Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program – Groundwater Assessment Program (CCAMP-GAP) focuses on regional groundwater monitoring programs and implementation of groundwater-related projects that evaluate, restore, and protect the beneficial uses of groundwater, especially drinking water. The CCAMP-GAP Program is an integral component of CCAMP, and is implemented by the Bay Foundation, in close coordination with the Central Coast Water Board.

Over ninety percent of people living on the Central Coast rely on groundwater for their drinking water and other uses. Regional groundwater monitoring data are essential to identify areas of potentially unsafe drinking water supply, measure individual groundwater basin health, and determine the effectiveness of efforts to protect and improve groundwater quality. Consistent with the Central Coast Water Board's environmental justice and racial equity goals described in Resolution R3-2023-0002 and human right to water described in Resolution R3-2017-0004, CCAMP-GAP prioritizes water quality monitoring programs and projects that protect safe drinking water and that provide water quality benefits to underrepresented communities. An important example is the Central Coast Drinking Water Well Testing Program. Additionally, CCAMP-GAP also prioritizes projects that implement climate change mitigation or climate change adaptation strategies and projects that develop or implement activities to achieve sustainable water supplies.

CCAMP-GAP data are available online in the State Water Board's GeoTracker and GAMA GIS databases. Stakeholders who routinely use these data include local water agencies and water purveyors, local environmental health agencies, groundwater sustainability agencies, community organizations, and the public. The Central Coast Drinking Water Well Testing Program data are especially important to identify and evaluate where communities may be exposed to unsafe sources of drinking water. Program staff also use this information to inform program prioritization and implementation.

The Bay Foundation provides administrative resources to implement CCAMP-GAP, in coordination with Central Coast Water Board staff who advise and assist with project management and coordinate with Water Board programs and other partner agencies and organizations.

Staff Resources: The CCAMP-GAP Program currently consists of one technical specialist who implements the program and serves as a dedicated program manager.

General Program Priorities:

- Ongoing CCAMP-GAP coordination with the Bay Foundation to evaluate priorities, manage resources, contracts, personnel, and program implementation.
- Implement regional groundwater monitoring programs and groundwater-related projects that evaluate, restore, and protect the beneficial uses of groundwater, especially drinking water.
- Implement environmental justice, racial equity, and Human Right to Water goals.
- Coordinate with Central Coast Water Board programs and State-wide GAMA program.
- Conduct data sharing and outreach to stakeholders.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Implement the Central Coast Drinking Water Well Testing Program in two focus areas, in coordination with the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs (OPEETA), local agencies, and community partners.
   1.a. Santa Barbara County
   1.b. Santa Cruz County
2. Support regional groundwater monitoring projects
   2.a. Technical Assistance for Limited Resource and Socially Disadvantaged Growers to Conduct On-Farm Domestic Well Monitoring and Reporting.
3. Share groundwater quality data and tools with program staff, water quality partners, and the public.
4. Coordinate with the Division of Drinking Water (DDW), Division of Financial Assistance (DFA), Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Program, local government, and community organizations to support safe drinking water programs (e.g., the Central Coast Bottled Water for Households Program, Santa Cruz County Water Quality Assistance Services, replacement water programs, drinking water pilot projects, etc.).
5. Coordinate with the Rose Foundation to implement the Central Coast Community-Based Water Quality Grants Program.
6. Continue the establishment of a groundwater quality long-term trend monitoring program for at least one groundwater basin.
7. Collaborate with local agencies and organizations to design a monitoring plan and timeline for long-term groundwater quality trend monitoring for the Corralitos-Pajaro Valley Groundwater Subbasin (3-002.01).
8. Finalize an update of the Central Coast Drinking Water Well Testing Program Quality Assurance Program Plan (QAPP) with an expanded list of analytes.
9. Conduct Supplemental Environment Project (SEP) Funds Tracking and Reporting
10. Coordinate with the Bay Foundation of Morro Bay to track SEP funds generated via Resolution 2024-0022.
11. Report status of Resolution 2024-0022 SEP funds via Executive Officer's Reports and/or Enforcement Reports.
12. Provide an annual update on the Central Coast Water Board onboarding toolbox to help new staff learn about groundwater basins and relevant water quality issues.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

Not Applicable.

Enforcement Program

Program Narrative: The Enforcement Program implements and enforces water quality laws, regulations, policies, and plans to promote compliance, deter future violations, and protect waters of the State. Timely, fair, and consistent enforcement is essential to the success of the Central Coast Water Board programs in restoring and protecting beneficial uses of the Central Coast region's water resources. Enforcement is an important component of the Water Boards' authority to encourage the regulated community to anticipate, identify, and correct violations and the Water Boards have a variety of enforcement tools to use in response to non-compliance by dischargers. The Central Coast Water Board follows a progressive enforcement approach and contemplates an escalating series of actions beginning with notification of violations and compliance assistance, followed by enforcement orders compelling compliance, and potentially a complaint for civil liabilities as appropriate and necessary.

Enforcement Program staff are responsible for assisting regulatory program staff with their established program-specific enforcement priorities and evaluating violations to ensure compliance with State and Federal laws, regulations, policies, plans, and permits. Enforcement Program staff also address mandatory enforcement obligations imposed by law and coordinate with other Regional Water Boards, the State Water Board, and other federal and state agencies in pursuing multi-region or state-wide enforcement actions.

Staff Resources: The Enforcement Program consists of one technical staff and one technical specialist, and the Assistant Executive Officer serves as the Lead Prosecutor.

General Program Priorities:

- Address violations that pose an immediate and significant threat to water quality or result in significant detrimental impacts to human health and/or the environment.
- Prioritize violations associated with discharges that impact water quality in Underrepresented Communities.
- Prioritize violations associated with discharges that result in drinking water supplies exceeding drinking water standards for individuals and/or small communities.
- Address violations involving falsification of information, recalcitrant dischargers, and non-compliant dischargers realizing a significant economic benefit and/or competitive economic advantage over compliant members of the regulated public.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including a field training component where each employee participates in program-specific field events.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Support the development of regulatory compliance determinations to facilitate potential enforcement actions.
2. Develop technical staff and management to increase enforcement knowledge and skills within programs for preparing and implementing effective enforcement strategies and documentation to compel dischargers to correct violations, and to build the foundation to escalate to formal enforcement, if necessary.
3. Coordinate with program staff and State Water Board Office of Enforcement to prepare and implement formal enforcement actions for priority enforcement cases. Address mandatory enforcement obligations imposed by law.

4. Use Central Coast Water Board Settlement Project Priorities and Considerations[19] to help inform dischargers and Enforcement Program staff in their selection of settlement projects, including supplemental environmental projects (SEPs) and enhanced compliance actions (ECAs), during settlement negotiations.
5. Strengthen the operational effectiveness of the Enforcement Program by advancing programmatic practices, streamlining processes, and implementing effective records management.

State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Number of MMPs[20] that require enforcement within 18 months from the date of violation: 77
2. Number of Class A priority violations[21] with formal enforcement or an Investigative Order pursuant to Water Code section 13267 within 18 months of discovery: 3

Administrative Program

Program Narrative: The Administrative Program provides administrative business services, database, and website management support for approximately 80 staff of the Central Coast Water Board. Administrative Program staff serve a key role in ensuring the success of the Central Coast Water Board's mission by managing day to day operations and providing administrative support to technical staff and management. The program staff also act as liaisons between Central Coast Water Board staff and State Water Board Division of Administrative Services staff for all administrative functions.

Staff Resources: The Administrative Program currently consists of three administrative staff and a dedicated program manager. An additional administrative staff serves as Executive Assistant to the Executive Officer and Clerk to the Board.

General Program Priorities:

- Manage business operations and services (e.g., travel, training, budgets, contracts, coordination of information technology equipment and services, and fleet services)
- Coordinate with State Water Board to address facility maintenance and property management issues
- Implement Health and Safety Plan and Building Emergency Plan
- Manage human resources activities
- Complete Request for Personnel Actions (RPAs) to complete recruitment for vacant positions, employee separations, and other personnel issues
- Coordinate with program managers to maintain Direct Charge Budget and monitor spending
- Manage procurement and accounts payable
- Provide database management and website support
- Plan and coordinate Central Coast Water Board meetings in accordance with Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act to ensure that the Board's decision-making process is legally compliant, transparent, and well documented.

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[19] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/enforcement/docs/2026/r3-sep-priorities-and-considerations-june2025.pdf
[20] MMPs = mandatory minimum penalties
[21] Class A Priority Violation = violations that potentially pose an immediate and substantial threat to beneficial uses and/or that have the potential to individually or cumulatively cause significant detrimental impacts to human health or the environment.

- Provide administrative and procedural support to the Board Members and Executive Officer.
- Facilitate organization-wide strategic planning processes and track implementation of strategic plan priorities, milestones, and performance measures.
- Recruit and retain qualified, well-trained staff, including training on administrative duties and cross-program opportunities for admin staff to learn about regulatory program activities.

Project/Task Specific Priorities for Fiscal Year 26-27:

1. Continue to align administrative program priorities with highest organizational needs. Identify and leverage State Water Board resources to improve administrative efficiencies and staff workload.
2. Develop and maintain procedures to increase efficiency of business operations and services and develop criteria to determine and prioritize work assignments.
3. Provide staff training on health & safety requirements and procedures, including Injury Illness and Prevention Program (IIPP), Building Emergency Plan, and emergency drills.
4. Develop and implement updated Records Management procedures, including responding to Public Records Act requests in a timely manner.
5. Conduct at least six Central Coast Water Board meetings annually while ensuring effective meeting administration, comprehensive documentation, and meaningful opportunities for public participation in the Board's decision-making process.

***State Water Board Program Performance Targets for Fiscal Year* 26-27:**
Not Applicable.

Accomplishments and Metrics of Success

The Central Coast Water Board has made significant progress in advancing our regional priorities and programmatic work to achieve our vision and mission. Attachment 1a[22] summarizes our accomplishments achieved during Fiscal Year 25-26. Moving forward, we will also continue to build on existing and develop new quantitative water quality evaluation tools like the Bay Foundation of Morro Bay's CCAMP data navigator,[23] the State Water Board's Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment Program Groundwater Information System (GAMA-GIS),[24] Clean Water Act section 305(b) condition report and Clean Water Act section 303(d) list of impaired water bodies and associated Integrated Report,[25] and TMDL report cards,[26] and Irrigated Lands Program dashboard tools[27] to more effectively and transparently measure our performance with respect to achieving improved water quality outcomes.

Summation

The Central Coast Water Board has a critical responsibility to protect water quality within the Central Coast region. This Strategic Plan affirms our commitment to carrying out that responsibility by providing a clear framework for aligning our work with our mission, vision, regional priorities, and regulatory responsibilities. It serves as a roadmap for setting priorities, evaluating our progress, and adapting to emerging challenges and opportunities while remaining focused on meaningful water quality, environmental, and public health outcomes.

Our success depends on the dedication, expertise, and collaboration of our staff. As our workforce, technologies, and environmental challenges continue to evolve, we remain committed to investing in workforce planning, employee development, organizational resilience, and a positive workplace culture that attracts, develops, and retains a highly skilled and engaged workforce.

As a public regulatory agency, we are committed to implementing our programs fairly, transparently, and effectively while engaging the regulated community, communities impacted by waste discharge and pollution, underrepresented communities and California Native American Tribes, partner agencies, and the public in our decision-making processes. Public service, collaboration, and transparency are fundamental to how we conduct our work and are essential to maintaining public trust. Together with our partners, we will continue to protect and improve water quality through sound science, effective regulation, meaningful collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to serving the people and environment of the Central Coast region.

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[22] www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_info/agendas/2026/aug/item08_att01a.pdf
[23] www.ccamp.org
[24] https://gamagroundwater.waterboards.ca.gov/gama/gamamap/public/
[25] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/2020_2022_integrated_report.html
[26] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdl/report-cards.html
[27] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/ilp/dashboard.html

Appendix - Background

Authority and Mandate

The Regional Water Quality Control Boards' primary mandate is the protection and restoration of water quality and the beneficial uses of water for existing and future generations. This includes protection of the environment and public health. California's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (1969),[28] which became division 7 ("Water Quality") of the California Water Code (Water Code), establishes the responsibilities and authorities of the nine regional water quality control boards and the State Water Resources Control Board. The Porter-Cologne Act names these boards "... the principal state agencies with primary responsibility for the coordination and control of water quality" (section 13001). Each regional board is directed to "...formulate and adopt water quality control plans for all areas within the region." A water quality control plan establishes the following for the waters of an area (e.g. Central Coast Region) : beneficial uses that are to be protected, water quality objectives that protect those uses, and a program of implementation needed to achieve those objectives (section 13050(j)).

The *Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin* (Basin Plan)[29] is the Board's master water quality control planning document. The federal Clean Water Act (Public Law 92-500, as amended) provides for the delegation of certain responsibilities in water quality control and water quality planning to the states. Where the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State Water Board have agreed to such delegation, the regional boards implement portions of the Clean Water Act, such as the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), section 401 certification, and toxic substance control programs (e.g., Underground Storage Tank Program, Land Disposal Program, Superfund site cleanup oversight).

The Central Coast Water Board protects and restores water quality through the issuance of waste discharge requirements and other orders for various land use activities (i.e., municipal, agricultural, industrial), the implementation of enforcement actions, the implementation of water quality monitoring, and through facilitation and coordination with various other partnering agencies and entities.

Organizational Structure

The State Water Board and the regional water boards (collectively the Water Boards) are housed within state government and are part of the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA).

The nine regional boards[30] are semi-autonomous and are each composed of seven part-time, volunteer Board members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Each regional board makes critical water quality decisions for its region, including setting standards, issuing waste discharge requirements, determining compliance with those requirements, and taking appropriate enforcement actions.

With limited exceptions (Water Code section 13223), the Central Coast Water Board can delegate its powers to the Executive Officer, to administer its duties pursuant to the Water Code in coordination with Central Coast Water Board staff. The Central Coast Water Board can't

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[28] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/laws_regulations/docs/portercologne.pdf
[29] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/publications_forms/publications/basin_plan/
[30] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterboards_map.html

delegate to the Executive Officer certain duties; therefore, the Board must convene pursuant to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act for public meetings, workshops, or formal hearings to conduct its business (e.g., approve waste discharge requirements, enforcement orders, adopt water quality control plans, receive updates from staff and various stakeholders, engage with the public and regulated parties, etc.). The regional water boards are required to have at least six public meetings per year. Under the guidance of the Executive Officer and in coordination with the Board, the Central Coast Water Board staff implement various programs and associated actions.

The Central Coast Water Board currently consists of 81 employees across management, technical, and administrative roles and two students who support the Board's regulatory programs. The bulk of the management team and technical staff consists of scientists, engineers, and geologists with expertise in various areas of water quality associated with data analysis, wastewater treatment, contaminant fate and transport and remediation, geology, hydrogeology, hydrology, natural watershed functions, ecosystems, and beneficial uses. In addition to the administrative team, the management team and staff are distributed across various regulatory and nonregulatory programs (see Program Priorities and Actions section above). Attachment 1b[31] describes the current staff resources of the Central Coast Water Board.

State Water Resources Control Board

The Central Coast Water Board works closely with the State Water Resources Control Board to implement its various programs. The State Water Board consists of five full-time board members and numerous divisions and associated programs implemented by technical, administrative, and legal staff. The State Water Board develops statewide permits, policies, and regulations governing many of our programs, develops and manages information technology resources, databases, and tools we use to manage and track our programmatic work and associated documents and data, provides legal, human resources, administrative, public participation and engagement, and general support to the Regional Boards. Separate from regional water board functions and authority, the State Water Board also implements the state drinking water program, administers California's water rights program, emergency management program, and provides or administers financial assistance in the form of grants and loans for projects that clean up and protect water quality and drinking water supplies and that otherwise protect water resources. The Executive Office of the State Water Board houses the Administrative Hearing Office, Communications Office, Office of Chief Counsel, Office of Delta Watermaster, Office of Enforcement, Office of Information Management & Analysis, Office of Legislative Affairs, Office of Research, Planning, and Performance.

Regional Setting

The Central Coast Water Board regional boundaries are based on watersheds making up the Central Coast Hydrologic Unit,[32] and water quality requirements are based on the unique differences in climate, topography, geology, and hydrology for each watershed. The Central

[31] https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_info/agendas/2026/aug/item08_att01b.pdf
[32] California Water Code section 13200. [Regional Board boundaries]. The Central Coast Region, which comprises all basins, including Carrizo Plain in San Luis Obispo and Kern Counties, draining into the Pacific Ocean from the southerly boundary of the watershed of Pescadero Creek in San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties to the southeasterly boundary, located in the westerly part of Ventura County, of the watershed of Rincon Creek.

Coast Region is an 11,274 square mile area covering the entirety of the coastal, valley and upland areas of Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties, southern Santa Clara County (south of Morgan Hill), as well as very small portions of San Mateo, Kern, and Ventura Counties that collectively make up the Central Coast Hydrologic Unit. It includes 378 miles of coastline between San Mateo and Ventura Counties, 2,360 miles of streams, 99 lakes, 50 wetlands and estuaries covering 8,387 acres, and 53 groundwater basins covering 3,559 square miles.

In the Central Coast Region climate is primarily governed by proximity to the Pacific Ocean with moderate rainfall and temperatures (Coastal Mediterranean) along the coast, coastal ranges and coastal valleys with more temperature and rainfall extremes (both highs and lows) in inland valleys and mountain ranges. Approximately 90 percent of agricultural, municipal, industrial, and domestic water supply comes from groundwater with the remaining portion derived from local reservoirs and imported water from the state and federal water projects in Central California, a significant portion of which is used for groundwater recharge.

The Central Coast Region is primarily a rural agricultural region that also includes urban and industrial land uses. Major industries include agriculture, and associated food processing, oil production, power production, military installations, technology-based and industrial services and manufacturing, and tourism. Urban areas include, but are not limited to, the Monterey Peninsula and city of Salinas, the city San Luis Obispo and Five Cities Area (i.e., Pismo Beach, Shell Beach, Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, and Oceano), Santa Barbara area coastal plain (i.e., Goleta, Santa Barbara, Summerland, Montecito and Carpinteria), city of Santa Cruz and adjacent communities of Soquel, Capitola and Aptos, and the cities of Watsonville, Morgan Hill, Gilroy, Hollister, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, King City, Paso Robles, Atascadero, Santa Maria, and Lompoc. Prime agricultural lands are dispersed throughout the region with significant areas concentrated in the Salinas, Pajaro, Santa Maria, Edna, and Santa Ynez river valleys. The Central Coast Region contains some of the most productive wine grape, berry (strawberry, raspberry, and blueberry), and vegetable agricultural areas in the state, nation, and world due to its Coastal Mediterranean climate conducive to a year-round growing season along portions of the coast for berries and various cool season vegetables such as lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, and celery.

The Central Coast Region also includes significant areas of open space and relatively pristine watersheds with abundant native plants and wildlife along the coast (e.g., Santa Cruz Mountains, Big Sur, Point Conception) and within State Park and National Forest lands (e.g., Big Basin Redwoods State Park, Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, Moss Landing State Wildlife Area, Montana de Oro State Park, Pinnacles National Park, Pfieffer Big Sur State Park, Los Padres National Forest, Carrizo Plain National Monument) as well as within privately owned land or preserves.

Ten watersheds within the Central Coast Region drain into Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary,[33] one of the largest marine sanctuaries in the world. Elkhorn Slough is one of the largest remaining tidal wetlands in the United States and one of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) designated National Estuarine Research Reserves. The region also includes the Morro Bay National Estuary[34] and its extensive wetland and salt marsh

[33] https://montereybay.noaa.gov/welcome.html
[34] https://www.mbnep.org/

habitats. Additionally, on November 30, 2024, NOAA designated the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary[35] which encompasses 4,543 square miles of coastal and ocean waters offshore. Collaboration with the national marine sanctuaries provides valuable opportunities for research, community engagement, and education and outreach activities.

Water Quality Issues

Waste discharges and associated water quality impacts are directly linked to anthropogenic land uses or activities such as agricultural production, waste management and disposal, mineral mining/extraction, oil production, industrial manufacturing, urbanized areas, energy production, construction (houses, buildings, roads), etc. The largest land use in the Central Coast Region, second only to open space, is irrigated agriculture. Consequently, some of the most significant and widespread issues of water quality impairments are associated with fertilizer nitrogen loading to groundwater and associated drinking water nitrate pollution as well as nutrient runoff causing degradation including eutrophication, toxic algal blooms, pesticide and pesticide toxicity pollution, and erosion and associated sediment discharges adversely impacting surface water and near shore aquatic habitats. Drinking water nitrate pollution is a significant problem that disproportionately impacts underrepresented and disadvantaged communities in rural areas.

Stormwater runoff to surface water and the Pacific Ocean from urbanized areas, industrial facilities, roads, and construction sites has the potential to contain various contaminants such as pathogens from pet waste, nutrients, pesticides, sediment, heavy metals, minerals, oil and grease, and numerous organic chemicals. Construction and even restoration activities within stream channels, wetlands and estuaries also have the potential to result in discharges of waste. Former and existing commercial, industrial and Department of Defense facilities have the potential to discharge various contaminants to surface water and groundwater, the most prevalent of which in the region are associated with the historical improper use and disposal of chlorinated solvents and other chemicals, as well as leaking above ground and underground fuel and oil storage tanks. Older landfills used to dispose of municipal and industrial waste prior to the advent of protective liner and cap design regulatory standards are also a source of waste discharges to surface water and groundwater as are the construction and operation of newer landfills but to a lesser extent with sufficient oversight. Municipal and industrial wastewater treatment and disposal and various drinking water treatment system technologies also result in waste discharges to surface water and groundwater that need to be appropriately designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to ensure waste discharges are minimized to the extent practicable and meet water quality standards.

In addition to providing technical and regulatory oversight of activities like those listed above, the Central Coast Water Board also focuses on ensuring protection of high-quality water resources and protected areas.

[35] https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/chumash-heritage/