

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

**STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 20 - 22, 2019**

Prepared on February 25, 2019

**ITEM NUMBER:** 15

**SUBJECT:** Field Trip to the Community Water Center, Watsonville Office

**STAFF CONTACT:** Angela Schroeter, (805) 542-4644  
[Angela.Schroeter@Waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Angela.Schroeter@Waterboards.ca.gov)

**ACTION:** Discussion/Informational

**SUMMARY**

The Central Coast Water Board will participate in a field trip to the Community Water Center's (CWC<sup>1</sup>) new office located at 406 Main Street, Suite 421, Watsonville, CA 95076. The purpose of the field trip is to update the Board on CWC's activities to assist disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the Central Coast region.

The public is invited to attend the field trip; however, space is very limited, and transportation will not be provided. Persons interested in participating in the field trip must RSVP by March 15, 2019 at Noon by emailing the Clerk to the Board at [Tammie.Olson@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Tammie.Olson@waterboards.ca.gov).

**DISCUSSION**

The lack of reliable drinking water and wastewater systems is severe and widespread in rural areas of the Central Coast region, especially the Salinas Valley. As discussed at the January 31-February 1, 2019 board meeting, the Central Coast Water Board is committed to implementing the human right to water (HRTW) law. Severe and widespread nitrate pollution impacts to groundwater make the implementation of the HRTW law exceptionally challenging in portions of the region that rely on domestic and small system wells for their drinking water, especially where these impacts affect DACs. Implementing programs to ensure safe drinking water is also a critical component of the Central Coast Water Board's two-part strategy to address the region's severe groundwater nitrate problem:

---

<sup>1</sup> CWC is an EJ organization founded in 2006 to develop and support community-driven solutions to address the ongoing drinking water problems of California's San Joaquin Valley communities. CWC's vision is that all communities have access to safe, clean, and affordable water and their mission is to act as a catalyst for community-driven water solutions through organizing, education, and advocacy. For more information about CWC, go to their website at <https://www.communitywatercenter.org/>.

1. Provide interim replacement drinking water to protect human health for well users impacted by nitrate pollution; and
2. Reduce nitrate loading to groundwater to restore groundwater quality and protect current and future drinking water sources;

Note that addressing just the first component of this strategy, replacement water, does not remedy the underlying problem of nitrate loading, and creates an unending cycle of dependence on expensive treatment or other replacement drinking water strategies.

Many DACs lack the necessary technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) resources and capacity to identify, fund, and implement solutions that will effectively resolve their drinking water and wastewater issues. To address this need, in September 2018, the Central Coast Water Board selected CWC and allocated approximately \$385,809 in CCAMP-GAP funds to grow stable, long-term regional environmental justice (EJ) capacity in the Central Coast region to assist local DACs in securing safe drinking water and wastewater solutions. The grant provides funding for the first year, with an additional \$359,000 allocated for a second year conditioned upon the successful implementation of year one and availability of funds.

Consistent with the State and Regional Water Board's EJ goals and the Central Coast Water Board's HRTW Resolution No. R3-2017-0004<sup>2</sup> and 2019 HRTW Work Plan, CWC will assist DACs with funding, planning and regulatory permitting and compliance relevant to securing reliable, safe and affordable drinking water. Similarly, CWC will assist DACs in obtaining necessary TMF support for wastewater projects in cases where systems are inadequate or failing, such that human health and water supplies and quality are protected. CWC will also coordinate with existing local EJ leaders, consultants and partner organizations to leverage funding and in-kind services, establish grants, implement projects, and build long-term relationships among public agency, non-profit, and private organizations to resolve the drinking water and wastewater problems in DACs. Most importantly, CWC will assist DACs in building strong foundations for community outreach/engagement, stakeholder participation, and leadership development, and provide continuous local stability to ensure long-term EJ organizational capacity.

## CONCLUSION

This field trip provides the Central Coast Water Board a window into CWC and the EJ capacity building efforts funded through the recent CCAMP-GAP-funded contract. The Central Coast Water Board is committed to implementing the HRTW law and is also committed to implementing the Central Coast Water Board's two-part strategy to address the region's severe groundwater nitrate problem. The CWC contract establishes their Watsonville office and increases regional long-term EJ capacity to assist local DACs in securing safe drinking water and wastewater solutions.

Staff will provide regular updates to the Board on CWC's progress.

---

<sup>2</sup> Resolution No. R3-2017-0004 Adopting the Human Right to Water as a Core Value and Directing Its Implementation in Central Coast Water Board Programs and Activities

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board\\_decisions/adopted\\_orders/2017/2017-0004\\_hrtw\\_fnl.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2017/2017-0004_hrtw_fnl.pdf)