

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

**PRELIMINARY DRAFT
RESOLUTION NO. R3-2022-0012**

**CONDEMNING RACISM, XENOPHOBIA, BIGOTRY, AND RACIAL INJUSTICE
AND STRENGTHENING COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY, DIVERSITY,
INCLUSION, ACCESS, AND ANTI-RACISM**

WHEREAS, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region (Central Coast Water Board) finds that:

1. As part of the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), the shared mission of the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards), collectively Water Boards, is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations. In relation to this mission, the Water Boards accept responsibility for confronting structural and institutional racism and advancing racial equity.
2. On November 16, 2021, the State Water Board unanimously adopted Resolution No. 2021-0050 that articulates the State Water Board's commitment to racial equity, explains why this work is needed and offers a roadmap for how the State Water Board can (1) ensure its programs and policies preserve, protect, and restore California's water resources equitably for people of all races, and (2) create an equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplace where all employees feel they belong and their opportunities and professional outcomes are not predicted by their race. The State Water Board encouraged the nine Regional Water Boards to adopt this resolution, or a similar resolution.
3. Resolution No. 2021-0050 acknowledges, in part, the existence of systemic and institutional racism, disproportionate distribution of adverse environmental impacts based on race and disproportionate allocations of funding, resources and services based on race. The resolution affirms the Water Board's commitment to making racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and environmental justice central to our work, and explicitly condemns acts of racism, xenophobia, bigotry, and institutional and systemic racism that exist.
4. The Central Coast Water Board hereby acknowledges that findings 1-18 of Resolution No. 2021-0050 are true and correct and incorporates these findings by reference. The Resolution No. 2021-0050 is attached hereto as Exhibit A. The Central Coast Water Board provides additional findings below that are relevant specifically to the Central Coast Region.

5. The Central Coast Water Board implements regulatory activities and water quality projects in a manner that ensures the fair treatment of all people, including underrepresented communities. Underrepresented communities include but are not limited to Disadvantaged Communities (DACs), Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs), Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs), Tribes, Environmentally Disadvantaged Communities (EnvDACs), and members of Fringe Communities.¹

Acknowledging Racism and Racial Inequities in the Central Coast Region

6. California Native American Tribes have a rich history in coastal California for more than 10,000 years. Villages were located near fresh water and seasonal food sources, and tribes would often move to different sites throughout the year. Cultural teachings and significant knowledge about flora, fauna, and natural cycles of life along the coast was passed down over many generations. Despite a long tradition of stewardship of the land and its natural and cultural resources, the Central Coast Water Board recognizes that California Native American Tribes were brutally disrupted by the establishment of the Spanish Missions in the late 18th century, followed by Mexican ranchos, and as California became a state in 1850. This was devastating to California Native American Tribes and the landscapes they nurtured. Consistent with the State Water Board's Tribal Consultation Policy, the Central Coast Water Board recognizes the challenging history of Indigenous people in California, and we are committed to engaging in meaningful involvement and consultation with California Native American Tribes by recognizing each tribe's unique sovereign status, culture, history, knowledge and experience, and environmental and water concerns.
7. The history and demographics of agricultural areas in the Central Coast Region are strongly influenced by the Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Mexican immigrants who work in the fields harvesting fruits and vegetables and work in food processing facilities. While these farmworkers are essential to the economic engine of Central Coast's agricultural industry, the Central Coast Water Board acknowledges that they often face unsafe and unhealthy living and working conditions, especially related to poor air quality, poor water quality and exposure to pesticides and other chemicals. Additionally, farmworker communities often face significant challenges to achieve racial equity and inclusion in the communities where they live and work. Current data included in the Office of

¹ Disadvantaged Community: a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80% of the statewide annual median household income (Public Resources Code section 80002(e)); Severely Disadvantaged Community: a community with a median household income of less than 60% of the statewide average. (Public Resources Code section 80002(n)); Economically Distressed Area: a municipality with a population of 20,000 persons or less, a rural county, or a reasonably isolated and divisible segment of a larger municipality where the segment of the population is 20,000 persons or less with an annual median household income that is less than 85% of the statewide median household income and with one or more of the following conditions as determined by the department: (1) financial hardship, (2) unemployment rate at least 2% higher than the statewide average, or (3) low population density. (Water Code section 79702(k)); Tribes: federally recognized Indian Tribes and California State Indian Tribes listed on the Native American Heritage Commission's California Tribal Consultation List; EnvDACs: CalEPA designates the top 25 percent scoring census tracts as DACs. Census tracts that score the highest five percent of pollution burden scores but do not have an overall CalEnviroScreen score because of unreliable socioeconomic or health data are also designated as DACs (refer to the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Mapping Tool or Results Excel Sheet); Fringe Community: communities that do not meet the established DAC, SDAC, and EDA definitions but can show that they score in the top 25 percent of either the Pollution Burden or Population Characteristics score using the CalEnviroScreen 3.0.

Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's (OEHHA's) CalEnviroScreen mapping tool identifies communities that are disproportionately impacted by a combination of environmental stressors and socioeconomic disadvantages and confirms that contaminated drinking water sources disproportionately burden low income and Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities throughout California, further exacerbating persistent inequities. The Central Coast Water Board's human right to water resolution ([No. R3-2017- 0004](#)²), affirms the commitment to upholding California's human right to water law and demonstrates that every human being in California—including Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities—deserves safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitation purposes.

8. The contribution of Asian Americans to the agricultural growth of the central coast is well documented. In addition, Asian Americans played important historical roles on the Central Coast as miners, railroad workers, marina and pier builders, and laundry, market, and hotel workers. The Central Coast Water Board also recognizes that many Asian Americans also faced institutionalized discrimination. In 1942, the United States Government carried out one of the largest controlled migrations in history, requiring the removal of all persons of Japanese ancestry from areas of coastal California, resulting in the relocation of approximately 113,000 people. From Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties, approximately 2500 persons of Japanese ancestry were forced to relocate to internment camps established during World War II. Many families lost their property or were forced to sell their homes for a fraction of the current value. Later, many families returned to the Central Coast to restart their livelihoods and continue farming and other industries.
9. The Central Coast faces the threat and effects of climate change for the foreseeable and distant future. Additionally, the Central Coast Water Board recognizes that the most severe harms from climate change fall disproportionately upon underrepresented communities who are least able to prepare for, and recover from, heat waves, drought, poor air and water quality, flooding, and other impacts. The Central Coast Water Board is implementing a Climate Change Initiative to anticipate changes and identify risks to water quality associated with climate change and to adapt water quality programs to minimize impacts, such as: adding permit requirements for wastewater treatment facilities, landfills, and stormwater facilities; addressing water quality effects of fuel reduction activities; monitoring for Harmful Algal Blooms; prioritizing wastewater consolidation.
10. Diverse communities in the Central Coast Region access water resources to conduct tribal traditional and cultural activities, tribal subsistence fishing, and subsistence fishing for fish and shellfish. Limited access to piers, activities that reduce or restrict surface water flows and fish migration, and pollution from pesticides, oil drilling, and mining can impact access to subsistence fishing. Underrepresented communities may be at higher risk to exposure to contaminants through higher rates of use of natural aquatic resources to meet

² https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/hr2w/docs/r3_hr2w_res.pdf

subsistence needs. Conducting fish tissue monitoring studies and providing timely fish consumption advisories in the appropriate language is critical to inform the public of health risks. The Central Coast Water Board's Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program (CCAMP) is participating in fish tissue monitoring studies to evaluate contaminants in fish and shellfish focusing on areas used by underrepresented communities for tribal, subsistence, and sportfishing. To increase protection of tribal tradition and culture, tribal subsistence fishing, and subsistence fishing beneficial uses of Central Coast water bodies, the Central Coast Water Board has included these beneficial uses in the 2017 and 2021 Triennial Review. Specifically, the need to define these beneficial uses in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin (Basin Plan) and designate water bodies, as appropriate.

11. The Central Coast Water Board recognizes that there are longstanding racial and ethnic inequities regarding the right to nature and to healthy, natural spaces for recreation and enjoyment. Systematic racial and ethnic inequities have restricted Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities from accessing nature, as well as excluding these communities from direct and indirect health and environmental benefits of natural spaces. Data indicates that healthy areas with trees and forests, wetlands and marshes, waterways (e.g., streams, lakes, coastline), and wildlife diversity are less accessible to people of color, examples include water quality impacts associated with the Pinto Lake, Salinas River, Pajaro River, and Santa Maria River watersheds.
12. The Central Coast Water Board serves racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse communities in the Central Coast Region. United States Census Bureau data collected via the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) show that 45% of Central Coast Region's population is Hispanic. Additionally, the 2019 ACS data show that 44% of the Central Coast Region's population is white, 6% is Asian and 2% is Black. The Central Coast Water Board workforce does not reflect the diverse communities that we serve, and we acknowledge that a diverse workforce increases our collective knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to effectively engage stakeholders and protect water quality for all communities in the Central Coast Region. Therefore, consistent with the State Water Board's "Immediate Hiring Practices Action Plan for Advancing Workforce Diversity at the Water Boards," hiring managers and supervisors are taking specific short-term actions to improve workforce diversity while a more holistic plan is being developed by the Water Boards.

Advancing Racial Equity and Environmental Justice in the Central Coast Region

13. The Central Coast Water Board has a long history of prioritizing environmental justice issues and engaging underrepresented communities, especially related to protecting groundwater drinking water beneficial uses. In 2010, the Central Coast Water Board prioritized evaluating the impacts of waste discharges from irrigated agricultural operations, including nitrate pollution of drinking water, on underrepresented communities in rural agricultural areas of the Central Coast Region.

14. In 2012, the Central Coast Water Board participated in the Governor's Drinking Water Stakeholder Group to develop recommendations to address communities', with an emphasis on disadvantaged communities', challenges in dealing with nitrate contamination of drinking water supplies in the Tulare Lake Basin and Salinas Valley.
15. Between 2014 and 2017, the Central Coast Water Board organized and attended a series of environmental justice tours to engage directly with underrepresented communities in the Salinas Valley and to hear from community members how they are affected by water quality impairments, especially impacted sources of drinking water.
16. On January 26, 2017, the Central Coast Water Board adopted 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. Consistent with California Water Code section 106.3, subdivision (a), Resolution R3-2017-0004 adopts the human right to water as a core value and affirms the realization of the human right to water and protecting human health as the Central Coast Water Board's top priorities. In Resolution R3-2017-0004, the Central Coast Water Board committed to promote policies that advance the human right to water and to discourage actions that delay or impede opportunities for communities to secure safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes.
17. The Central Coast Water Board's Grants Program has supported environmental justice by prioritizing projects that benefit underrepresented communities and simplifying grant project administration to support grantees. In 2014, Central Coast Water Board staff established the Safe Drinking Water Grant Project to assist individuals and small communities affected by nitrate contamination in the Salinas Valley by providing interim replacement drinking water to underrepresented communities in the Royal Oaks/Las Lomas area, while the community members evaluated a long-term drinking water solution. The Grants Program has also prioritized grant funding in underrepresented communities across the Central Coast Region to implement urban stormwater runoff and capture, irrigated agriculture runoff and tailwater treatment, nonpoint source pollution control, and to address wetland and habitat degradation, and groundwater contamination in the Pajaro, Salinas, and the Santa Maria Valley areas.
18. In 2018, the Central Coast Water Board's Central Coast Ambient Monitoring and Assessment Program – Groundwater Assessment and Protection (CCAMP-GAP) Program coordinated with the Bay Foundation of Morro Bay (Bay Foundation) to establish the Central Coast Drinking Water Well Testing Program to provide free well testing to domestic well users and small water systems in the Central Coast Region to ensure safe drinking water. Consistent with the Central Coast Water Board's environmental justice priorities, the program prioritizes outreach to underrepresented communities.
19. In 2018, CCAMP-GAP coordinated with the Bay Foundation to prioritize grant

funds to increase environmental justice capacity and community engagement in the Central Coast Region. The Bay Foundation awarded grant funds to the Community Water Center to help establish a local office in the Central Coast Region to engage underrepresented communities and provide technical assistance to address inadequate source water protections, and to increase technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) capacity for community drinking water and wastewater providers.

20. In 2019, CCAMP-GAP coordinated with the State Water Board's Division of Financial Assistance and the Community Water Center to establish a Central Coast Region Bottled Water Program. The program works in close collaboration with the Central Coast Drinking Water Well Testing Program to conduct outreach to underrepresented communities and provide interim replacement drinking water to communities whose groundwater source of drinking water does not meet safe drinking water standards.
21. In the 2020-2022 Integrated Report for Clean Water Sections 303(d) and 305(b), the Central Coast Water Board prioritized TMDL projects to address threats to human health and to ensure the human right to water, including impairments that impact underrepresented communities.
22. In March 2021, the Central Coast wastewater consolidation (WWC) program was established. The WWC program facilitates the consolidation of inadequate onsite sewage treatment systems with existing sewer systems and is designed to reduce impacts to drinking water sources, including nitrate and bacteria pollution from inadequate onsite sewage treatment systems. The program implements Senate Bill 1215, which was signed into law in 2018, and prioritizes WWC projects that will benefit water quality in disadvantaged communities. To identify potential project areas and partners, Central Coast Water Board staff identify areas with onsite sewage treatment systems that are within disadvantaged community census block groups and near wastewater treatment facilities. Additionally, staff prioritize outreach to disadvantaged communities and facilities that serve disadvantaged communities.
23. In August 2020, the State Water Board established a State-wide Racial Equity Steering Committee and Working Group to (1) establish a foundation of internal and external engagement that values listening and collaboration to drive action; (2) draft a resolution on racial equity to be considered for adoption by the State Water Board and also encouraged the Regional Water Boards to adopt their own resolutions; and (3) develop racial equity strategies and action plans to drive the Water Boards' efforts to institutionalize racial equity.
24. From August 2020 to February 2022, the Central Coast Water Board participated on the State-wide Racial Equity Working Group and assisted in the implementation of internal and external listening sessions to solicit input on the challenges that Black, Indigenous, and people of color are facing and how the Water Boards can better facilitate equitable participation from these communities in their decision-making and policy development processes. During this time, the Central Coast Water Board also prioritized staff's participation in implicit bias and

racial equity training conducted by the State Water Board's Training Academy.

25. In July 2021, the Central Coast Water Board convened a staff-led regional Racial Equity Working Group. The Working Group's goals were to increase employee engagement, empower staff to lead a regionally focused Racial Equity Initiative, conduct internal and external engagement to identify and prioritize opportunities to integrate racial equity into Water Board programs and practices, and develop a draft Racial Equity Resolution for the consideration by the Central Coast Water Board.
26. In November 2021, the State Water Board adopted Resolution No. 2021-0050, Condemning Racism, Xenophobia, Bigotry, and Racial Injustice and Strengthening Commitment to Racial Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Anti-racism, and encouraged the Regional Water Boards to adopt their own resolutions and develop racial equity strategies and action plans to drive the Water Boards' efforts to institutionalize racial equity.
27. In December 2021 through February 2022, the Central Coast Water Board's Working Group members engaged Central Coast Water Board staff by gathering feedback through anonymous surveys and conducting racial equity discussions at program meetings to discuss workplace culture and to identify opportunities to integrate racial equity into Water Board programs and practices. Results from internal engagement included the following:
 - a. Central Coast Water Board staff stated that they find the organization inclusive and open; Staff described that the organization provides a safe space that encourages staff to share personal experiences, and they appreciate the opportunity to celebrate diversity and culture. Staff appreciate that Board Members and management prioritize environmental justice and racial equity and provide support and encouragement for employees to attend racial equity training, and that the Water Boards routinely prioritize technical assistance and grant funding for underrepresented communities.
 - b. Central Coast Water Board staff also stated that the organization must improve workforce diversity to be representative of the communities in the Central Coast Region; Staff emphasized the need to resolve continuing inequities related to access to safe and affordable drinking water, and the disparities related to drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. Staff also described that water quality programs must protect beneficial uses so that creeks are swimmable and fishable for all communities; Staff described that it is critical to improve outreach for underrepresented communities, especially related to translation services and accessibility to public meetings, so that all communities have a meaningful opportunity to provide input to decision making. Staff requested increased support and resources to engage more effectively with California Native American Tribes.
28. On April 21, 2022, staff provided a preliminary draft Racial Equity Resolution to the Central Coast Water Board, as part of the 2022 Environmental Justice and

Racial Equity Annual Update presented at a regularly scheduled Board Meeting for Board discussion and to invite input from the public.

29. [PLACEHOLDER TO INSERT DETAILS AND RESULTS OF EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT IN PROGRESS; PUBLIC NOTICE OF DRAFT RACIAL EQUITY RESOLUTION, AND PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES].

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Central Coast Water Board:

1. Condemns acts of racism, xenophobia, bigotry, white supremacy, and institutional and systemic racism; adopts racial equity, diversity, and inclusion as core values; and acknowledges the role of government agencies—including the Water Boards—in redressing racial inequities and dismantling institutional and systemic racism.
2. Commits to making racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and environmental justice central to our work as we implement our mission so that the access the Central Coast Water Board creates, and outcomes we influence, are not determined by a person's race and the benefits are shared equitably by all people.
3. Commits to centering our work and decision-making on Black, Indigenous, and people of color who are disproportionately represented in the most vulnerable communities and in unsheltered populations, while ensuring the full benefits of the Water Boards' programs for all people.
4. Reaffirms our commitment to upholding California's human right to water law, upholding the Central Coast Water Board's human right to water resolution, and demonstrating that every human being in California—including people from Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities—deserves safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitation purposes.
5. Reaffirms our commitment to the protection of public health, natural resources, and beneficial uses of waterbodies in all communities, and particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities disproportionately burdened by environmental pollution through: cleanup of contaminated soil, soil vapor and groundwater; control of wastes discharged to land and surface water; restoration of impaired surface waters and degraded aquifers; and promotion of multi-benefit water quality projects to increase access to parks, recreational and open spaces, greenways, and other green infrastructure.
6. Commits to continuing to implement the Central Coast Water Board's Climate Change Initiative to address the disproportionate effects of extreme hydrologic conditions and sea-level rise on Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities, prioritizing: the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible

drinking water and sanitation; sustainable management and protection of local groundwater resources; healthy watersheds; and access to surface waters that support subsistence fishing.

7. Reaffirms our commitment to improving communication, working relationships, and co-management practices with all California Native American Tribes, including seeking input and consultation on the Central Coast Water Board's programs to better protect California's water resources. The Central Coast Water Board recognizes our parallel relationship to the people we serve and values tribes' traditional ecological knowledge and historic experience with managing California's water resources since time immemorial.
8. Directs the Executive Officer to develop and implement a Racial Equity Action Plan that articulates a vision for racial equity and outlines specific actions the Central Coast Water Board will take to address Water Boards systems that perpetuate racial inequities while establishing new, resilient systems.
 - a. The plan shall address organizational culture and encourage staff to normalize conversations about racial equity, participate in implicit bias and racial equity training, and foster a workforce that competently integrates racial equity in the Central Coast Water Board's work.
 - b. The plan shall incorporate all aspects of our work, including, those detailed above in this resolution as well as basin planning, permitting, enforcement, compliance assurance, funding, site remediation and cleanup, and monitoring.
 - c. The plan shall include coordination with the State Water Board's Division of Administrative Services and Communications Office to consider strategies that increase workforce diversity and for effectively reaching and meaningfully engaging with Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities; involve and partner with tribes, and other interested persons in our decision-making processes; provide accessible, open and transparent opportunities for the public to participate in board meetings, hearings, and workshops; meeting the public in their communities and spaces to seek out their perspectives; support communities with building capacity to advance racial equity and environmental justice; improve our communications by providing more plain-language materials; and address barriers to public participation, including language, digital, location and time-of-day access.
 - d. The plan shall include goals, objectives, actions, timelines, and metrics.
 - e. The plan shall advance a framework of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement for our racial equity work by establishing metrics and using quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to measure and evaluate the Central Coast Water Boards' progress toward

implementing those metrics; equitizing our systems, practices, and policies; and diversifying the Central Coast Water Boards' workforce.

- f. Staff shall seek out and consider input from the public and in particular members of Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities to inform development of the action plan.
- g. Staff shall include a framework for analyzing the impact of Central Coast Water Board decisions and staff recommendations to the Board through a racial equity lens; asking impacted Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities how the actions we are considering may affect them; and incorporating this feedback into our decision-making processes.
- h. Staff shall report on the progress to develop the action plan to the Board no later than one year after the Board adopts this resolution, and staff shall report on implementation progress annually thereafter.

CERTIFICATION

The Executive Officer does hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution duly and regularly adopted at a meeting of the Central Coast Water Board on [Insert Date].

Matthew T. Keeling
Executive Officer

Exhibit A. [State Water Board Resolution No. 2021-0050](#)³

³ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2021/rs2021_0050.pdf