

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

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 16-17, 2026

Prepared on March 24, 2026

ITEM NUMBER: 11

SUBJECT: Executive Officer's Report to the Board

STAFF CONTACTS: Ryan Lodge
[805/549-3140 ryan.lodge@waterboards.ca.gov]

ACTION: Information/Discussion

KEY INFORMATION: This item presents a brief overview of issues that may interest the Board. Upon request, staff can provide more detailed information about any item.

Basin Planning Program Update on 2024 Triennial Review Priority List

[Jamie Pratt, 805-549-3761, jamie.pratt@waterboards.ca.gov]

The Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin (Basin Plan) is the Central Coast Water Board's foundational water quality control planning document. The Basin Plan establishes beneficial uses and water quality objectives (together with anti-degradation requirements called water quality standards) for waters of the state within the Central Coast region. Section 303(c) of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires that water quality standards be reviewed and revised, if appropriate, at least once every three years (called a triennial review of the Basin Plan). Section 13240 of the California Water Code (CWC) requires basin plans to be periodically reviewed and allows for their revision.

In 2024, the Central Coast Water Board staff implemented a triennial review of the Basin Plan wherein they considered public comments and Central Coast Water Board program input on the priority and resources needed to develop amendments to the Basin Plan. The next Triennial Review will be in late 2027. This update provides a mid-cycle progress report on the 2024 proposed amendments.

On October 17, 2024, the Central Coast Water Board prioritized the following five proposals to be considered for future Basin Plan amendments:¹

- Designate Tribal and Subsistence Fishing Beneficial Uses (proposal 3)
- Update Groundwater Basin Boundary Map and Table and Revisions for Table 3-6 Site-specific Groundwaters (proposals 10 and 24)
- Update Reference to Maximum Contaminant Levels (proposal 28)
- Establish State Water Quality Protection Areas (proposal 45)

The Central Coast Water Board prioritized five proposals in the 2024 Triennial Review. This prioritization was not an expectation that all five proposals would be fully developed into Basin Plan amendments before the next (2027) Triennial Review but instead an expectation to make progress on the technical and administrative work necessary to develop the proposals into Basin Plan amendments.

Since the 2024 Triennial Review, Basin Plan Program staff have made progress on each of the five prioritized proposals, as summarized below.

Designate Tribal and Subsistence Fishing Beneficial Uses: Staff worked on outreach and capacity building to support future efforts to designate Tribal Beneficial Uses (TBUs) in the Central Coast region, including the following actions:

- Participated in the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs (OPEETA) statewide call-a-thon, outreaching to tribal representatives in the Central Coast region and updating Tribal contact information.
- Provided feedback on the development of statewide guidance for TBU designations and participated in TBU Working Group meetings organized by OPEETA.
- Met with the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuaries tribal staff to discuss TBUs.
- Attended tribal-related state and federal agency webinars, summits, and public listening sessions to understand the broader context of working with tribes in the Central Coast region.

Meaningful engagement with California Native American Tribes is fundamental to the California Water Boards' mission. The Water Boards recognize and honor the knowledge and stewardship Tribal communities have brought to water resources since time immemorial. Tribal Beneficial Uses were created in direct response to Tribal feedback, and the official definitions will be developed in partnership with California Native American Tribes. In keeping with this history and out of respect for Tribal sovereignty, the Water Boards cannot propose or move forward with designating TBUs

¹ October 2024 Central Coast Water Board Meeting Agenda, see Item 11:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_info/agendas/2024/oct/agenda_oct_eng.pdf

for any waterbody without the request, consent, and leadership of the Tribe. This requirement for Tribal submittal of TBU designation requests is also established in the Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries (ISWEBE) provisions. To date, the Central Coast Water Board has received two requests to proceed with efforts to designate TBUs.²

As outreach and engagement efforts continue, staff have not yet identified the resources needed to conduct the research required for TBU designations. Because TBU designations must be led and supported by Tribes, progress on this project necessarily remains focused on outreach, trust-building, and supporting Tribes' ability to engage in future designation processes.

This approach ensures that any future work on TBU designations is carried out in alignment with Tribal sovereignty, Tribal timelines, and Tribal direction.

Update Groundwater Basin Boundary Map and Table and Revisions for Table 3-6 Site-specific Groundwaters: Staff developed a Project Charter for this work and identified technical staff roles in developing the Basin Plan amendment. The Project Charter identifies significant staff resources needed to develop technical justification for changes to the site-specific water quality objectives and potential pathways to implement this project. Due to the significant resources needed, the project is on hold until technical staff resources can be identified to lead the project.

Update Reference to Maximum Contaminant Levels: This Basin Plan amendment project has been drafted and, if adopted and approved, would incorporate maximum contaminant levels for disinfection byproducts and maximum residual disinfectant levels from the California Code of Regulations, title 22, as water quality objectives for the Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) beneficial use. On December 4, 2025, staff held a public workshop and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping meeting to seek early input on the environmental analysis for these proposed Basin Plan amendments.

The Project Report also proposes many editorial corrections and clarifications identified in various Triennial Review proposals that were not prioritized, but received support, including an update to the Central Coast Water Board's Vision section adding reference to current Central Coast Water Board priorities including the resolutions for the realization of the human right to water, environmental justice, and climate change resiliency, as well as our commitment to implementing the Tribal Consultation Policy.

Staff will release draft Basin Plan amendment documents for public comment in April 2026 and plan to bring the proposed Basin Plan amendments to the Central Coast Water Board at the regularly scheduled Board Meeting on August 20-21, 2026.

² TBU designation requests received: 1) In June 2024, submitted by Chairman Valentin Lopez, Tribal Chair of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band submitted and 2) in July 2024, submitted by Sam Cohen, Government and Legal Affairs Director of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians.

Establish a new State Water Quality Protection Area: Staff reviewed and evaluated, for accuracy and adequacy, a proposed nomination for the Point Sur State Water Quality Protection Areas (SWQPAs), specifically to designate this area as an *Area of Special Biological Significance* (ASBS). ASBS is a special designation for ocean waters to protect species or biological communities to the extent that maintenance of natural water quality is assured. SWQPAs are designated by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) in the Water Quality Control Plan for Ocean Waters of California (Ocean Plan), which generally prohibits the discharge of waste into an ASBS. The Regional Water Boards may provide recommendations to the State Water Board for new SWQPAs. Should the State Water Board approve a new SWQPA and amend the Ocean Plan, the Regional Water Board must then also amend its Basin Plan to include the designation.

In preparing a Project Report and recommendations for the Central Coast Water Board's consideration, staff reviewed current and historical State Water Board documents related to SWQPAs and the Ocean Plan, coordinated with State Water Board staff on guidelines and procedures for SWQPA nominations and designations, and developed a Draft Nomination Report for State Water Board staff review. Basin Planning Program staff also coordinated with Central Coast Water Board stormwater and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program staff, identified discharges to the ocean in the proposed areas, and met with responsible parties including California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and California State Parks. Additionally, staff onboarded a California Sea Grant fellow in February 2026, to assist with this project's development. Staff will continue to work on this Project Report and the recommendation for the Central Coast Water Board throughout the 2026 calendar year. Once the project report is completed, staff will bring the project report to the Central Coast Water Board with a recommendation for the Central Coast Water Board to either proceed with a recommendation to the State Water Board for this SWQPA designation or to take another action.

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD FUNDING INFORMATION

The State Water Board Division of Financial Assistance (DFA) administers a number of funding programs supporting wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects in addition to other water quality protection and restoration projects. See the [DFA website](#)³ for information regarding available loan and grant programs administered by the State Water Board.

State Water Board DFA maintains the following online dashboards tracking project funding applications and funded projects:

[Application Status Search Tool](#),⁴ allows users to search for the status of State Water Board drinking water and clean water State Revolving Fund (SRF) project applications

³ DFA website: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans

⁴ Application Search Tool: <https://public.waterboards.ca.gov/dfaAppSTAT/>

that have been submitted for funding consideration and are currently under review (this portal does not include approved projects).

[Program funding dashboard](#),⁵ documents funded projects and descriptions via pull down menu options and graphics by funding program and geographic area for the most recent fiscal year for which the funding cycle has ended.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Please see attachments 1 through 5 for performance measure information.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Table 1 - 401 Water Quality Certification Applications Received
2. Table 2 - 401 Water Quality Certifications Issued
3. Table 3 - Groundwater Section, Case Closure Performance Scoreboard
4. Table 4 - Groundwater Case Closures
5. Table 5 - Enrollments in General Orders/Waivers

r:\rb3\shared\board meetings\current agenda\2026\04 apr 16-17\item 11 eo report\item11_stfrpt.docx

⁵ State Water Board Division of Financia Assistance project funding dashboard: [2023-24 Performance Report | California State Water Resources Control Board](#)