



---

## North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

August 18, 2021

Richard Finch  
PO Box 1015  
Garberville, CA 95542

Certified Mail #7016 2070 0000 6486 2302

Dear Richard Finch:

**Subject: Notice of Violation and Transmittal of Inspection Report for July 19, 2021 Inspection of Humboldt County Assessor's Parcel 220-061-006**

**File:** Cannabis Program Inspections, Humboldt County, July 19, 2021, CIWQS Place ID No. 875371

### **THIS LETTER REQUIRES THAT YOU ACT WITHIN 30 DAYS**

This letter is to notify you of observed violations of the requirements listed below, and cited in Attachment A, at the property identified as Humboldt County Assessor's Parcel Number: 220-061-006 (the Property):

1. California Water Code (Water Code) Section 13260

On July 19, 2021, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) staff (Staff) inspected the Property and observed cannabis cultivation in hoop houses. Accordingly, this letter directs you to address the violations noticed herein. Within 30 days, please contact Regional Water Board staff to discuss your plan to correct the observed violations.

### **Background**

On July 19, 2021, staff from the Regional Water Board, accompanied by staff of CDFW, State Water Board Division of Water Rights, and personnel of various law enforcement agencies, inspected the Property. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate onsite development and conditions, and to identify and assess any impacts or threatened impacts to the quality and beneficial uses of waters of the state. During the inspection,

---

GREGORY A. GIUSTI , CHAIR | MATTHIAS ST. JOHN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

staff observed cannabis cultivation operations of sufficient size and scope to require regulatory coverage under the Cannabis General Order.

Attached is a copy of the water quality inspection report (Attachment B –Facilities Inspection Report and Attachment C – Inspection Photolog). Please review the inspection report carefully and completely. The inspection report contains recommendations for correcting observed violations and advises you of the Regional Water Board permits necessary for instream work and projects/activities that result in discharges of waste to receiving waters.

### **Relevant Requirements**

During the inspection, Regional Water Board staff identified several features and conditions on the Property that represent violations of water quality requirements and regulations. Attachment A – Regulatory Citations, provides references to these, and related, requirements and regulations.

### **Observed Violations**

As documented in the July 19, 2021 inspection report, Regional Water Board staff observed violations of the California Water Code 13260 at the location identified in the inspection report as cultivation area.

### **Directive to Respond Within 30 Days**

Based on the observations detailed in the attached inspection report, the Regional Water Board has determined that, pursuant to Water Code sections 13260<sup>1</sup> and 13264<sup>2</sup>, you are required to respond to this NOV within 30 days by EITHER:

- 1) Enrolling the Property under the Cannabis General Order by submitting the appropriate fee (see below) and providing the information required in the online application: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/cannabis/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cannabis/)

---

<sup>1</sup> Water Code section 13260 states, in relevant part: (a) All of the following persons shall file with the appropriate regional board a report of the discharge, containing the information which may be required by the regional board: (1) Any person discharging waste, or proposing to discharge waste, within any region that could affect the quality of the waters of the state, other than into a community sewer system.

<sup>2</sup> Water Code section 13264 states, in relevant part: (a) No person shall initiate any new discharge of waste or make any material changes in any discharge...prior to the filing of the report required by Section 13260 and no person shall take any of these actions after filing the report but before whichever of the following occurs first: (1) The issuance of waste discharge requirements pursuant to Section 13263.

Upon completion of the application through the online portal, you will receive a Notice of Receipt confirming your application and providing you a Fee Payment Application Number. When you submit the fee for this enrollment, you must include the Fee Payment Application Number on your electronic payment, check, or money order(s). All checks or money orders shall be made payable to: "State Water Resources Control Board," and shall be delivered by U.S. Mail to: Accounting Office, Attn: Water Quality Fees – Cannabis General Order, P.O. Box 1888, Sacramento, CA 95812-1888;

- 2) Filing a Report of Waste Discharge to obtain individual Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) specific to the Property and submitting the appropriate fee. Since this option is project-specific, you will need to contact staff at [Katherine.hawken@waterboard.ca.gov](mailto:Katherine.hawken@waterboard.ca.gov) for further instructions and to determine the appropriate application fee;

OR

- 3) Providing information demonstrating why regulatory coverage is not needed for the parcel identified above. **If you have received a Notice to Abate Nuisance from the County**, will no longer be cultivating cannabis, and will restore the Property in compliance with the Water Boards' Cannabis Cultivation Policy (Policy), please provide a written response, including a copy of the County's notice and any other supporting documentation, including photos if relevant, explaining why you are not seeking regulatory coverage for the parcel identified above and how the Property will be restored in compliance with the Policy.

Application fees submitted pursuant to Options 1 or 2, above, must be submitted to the State Water Board within 30 days of submitting the online application or Report of Waste Discharge. Failure to submit the application fee within 30 days will result in the application being voided and will thus constitute a failure to comply with the above directive pursuant to Water Code sections 13260 and 13264.

Failure to comply with Water Code sections 13260 and 13264 may result in an administrative civil liability under Water Code sections 13261 and 13265 not to exceed \$1,000 per violation for each day in which each violation occurs.

### **Additional Potential Liabilities**

The Regional Water Board is in the process of considering whether the violations of the Water Code and the Basin Plan warrant further enforcement. We encourage you to take steps, to correct the violations as soon as possible, securing any applicable permits from this and other agencies prior to conducting work. Please note that the existing conditions, as observed and documented in the Inspection Report, may represent continuing violations of the Water Code and Basin Plan.

Please note that correcting the conditions of non-compliance at the Property does not preclude enforcement for the violations alleged in this notice. As noted above, the Regional Water Board reserves its right to fully enforce the law against any violation and threatened violation by taking enforcement actions such as a cleanup and abatement order, time schedule order, administrative civil liabilities, and referral to the California Attorney General's office. Administrative civil liabilities may be assessed on a daily basis in the amount up to \$5,000 for each day the violation occurs or up to \$10 per gallon, but not both pursuant to Water Code section 13350.

### **Inspection Report Recommendations**

As mentioned above, the July 19, 2021 Inspection Report provides recommendations to correct the alleged violations, as well as to address features and conditions that threaten to impact water quality. **Within 30 days of this letter**, please advise Regional Water Board staff Katherine Hawken of your intentions, plan, and schedule to implement recommendations in the inspection report. If you have questions about what is required of you to comply with the requirements outlined above, and to advise as to your plan and schedule to correct the alleged violations, please contact Regional Water Board staff Katherine Hawken by email at [Katherine.Hawken@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Katherine.Hawken@waterboards.ca.gov) or by phone at 707-445-6127.

Future correspondence regarding this matter will be sent to you at this address unless an alternative address is provided to the Regional Water Board. Failure to accept mail from the Regional Water Board is not a valid excuse for non-compliance with any future enforcement orders, and a failure to respond or otherwise appear at a future enforcement proceeding could subject you to a default order and the imposition of administrative civil liability.

You may also contact me at [Mona.Dougherty@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Mona.Dougherty@waterboards.ca.gov) or by phone at 707-445-6129. Additionally, we are available to meet with you if you wish to discuss this letter or our waste discharge regulatory programs in further detail.

Sincerely,

Mona Dougherty, P.E.  
Senior Water Resource Control Engineer

Attachments: Attachment A - Regulatory Citations  
Attachment B – Facilities Inspection Report  
Attachment C – Inspection Photolog

Certified Mail – Return Receipt requested

**cc: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board**

[Northcoast.Cannabis@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Northcoast.Cannabis@waterboards.ca.gov)

Claudia Villacorta, [Claudia.Villacorta@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Claudia.Villacorta@waterboards.ca.gov)

Kason Grady, [Kason.Grady@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Kason.Grady@waterboards.ca.gov)

**Division of Water Rights**

Stormer Feiler, [Stormer.Feiler@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Stormer.Feiler@waterboards.ca.gov)

Taro Murano, [Taro.Murano@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Taro.Murano@waterboards.ca.gov)

Richard Ramirez, [Richard.Ramirez@Waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Richard.Ramirez@Waterboards.ca.gov)

Gagan Bhullar, [Gagan.Bhullar@Waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Gagan.Bhullar@Waterboards.ca.gov)

**Department of Fish and Wildlife**

David Manthorne, [David.Manthorne@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:David.Manthorne@wildlife.ca.gov)

## Attachment A – Regulatory Citations

Regulatory Section	Citation
California Water Code Section 13260	<p>“(a) Each of the following persons shall file with the appropriate regional board a report of the discharge, containing the information that may be required by the regional board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) A person discharging waste, or proposing to discharge waste, within any region that could affect the quality of the waters of the state, other than into a community sewer system.</li><li>(2) A person who is a citizen, domiciliary, or political agency or entity of this state discharging waste, or proposing to discharge waste, outside the boundaries of the state in a manner that could affect the quality of the waters of the state within any region.”</li></ul>
California Water Code Section 13261(a)	<p>“A person who fails to furnish a report or pay a fee under Section 13260 when so requested by a regional board is guilty of a misdemeanor and may be liable civilly in accordance with subdivision (b).”</p>

**FACILITIES INSPECTION REPORT**

Region/Office: 1	Status: Performed	Reg. Measure ID: 444326
Program Type: IRRICANNABIS	WDID:	Order Number:
Scheduled Insp. Date:	Actual Insp. Date: 07/19/2021	

**Discharger Information**

Party ID: 624890	Discharger Organization Name: Richard Finch	
Address: P.O. Box 1015	City, State, Zip: Garberville, CA 95542	
Discharger Contact Person:	Discharger Contact Phone:	

**Facility Information**

Place ID 875371	Facility Name: Richard Finch (220-061-006-000)		
Address: 6695 Briceland-Thorne Road	City, State, Zip: Garberville, CA 95542-9611		
County: Humboldt	Latitude: 40.10451	Longitude: -123.90867	Method: Map Interpolation (digital)

**Lead Inspector Information**

Lead Inspector Party ID: 569684	Lead Inspector Name: Katherine Hawken		
Inspector Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State	<input type="checkbox"/> State Contractor	<input type="checkbox"/> EPA Contractor
	<input type="checkbox"/> EPA and State (EPA Lead)	<input type="checkbox"/> EPA and State (State Lead)	<input type="checkbox"/> EPA (Regional)

**INSPECTION TYPE**

Inspection Type: Miscellaneous inspection

**VIOLATIONS**Were Violations noted during this inspection?  Yes  No

Violation ID	Violation Type	Occurrence Date	Rank	Description
1093264	Unauthorized Discharge	07/19/2021	B	Cannabis cultivation of sufficient size and scope to require regulatory coverage under Order No. WQ 2019-0001-DWQ.

### INSPECTION SUMMARY (REQUIRED) (500 character limit)

**Observations**

I observed a cultivation area with a drying shed and seven hoop houses full of cannabis plants on an excavated flat (Photo 1). I observed that trees uphill of the cultivation area had been removed, and noted areas of loose, eroding soil on the hillside (Photo 2). I observed a watercourse running through the property. At 40.1043, -123.9082 Decimal Degrees I observed black poly line in the watercourse (Photo 3).

### GENERAL NOTES (OPTIONAL) (2000 character limit)

**Recommendations:**

1. If the property owner and/or tenant(s) plan to continue cultivating cannabis on the Property, enroll for coverage under the State Water Board’s Order WQ 2019-0001-DWQ, General Waste Discharge Requirements and Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Waste Associated with Cannabis Cultivation Activities here: <https://public2.waterboards.ca.gov/cgo>
2. Relocate all cannabis cultivation materials , including water diversion infrastructure, outside of the riparian setbacks. Work with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the State Water Board Division of Water Rights on permitting options for any instream diversions.
3. Revegetate soil exposed as a result of cannabis cultivation activities with native vegetation by live planting, seed casting, or hydroseeding.

**For Internal Use (Optional)**

Reviewed By:	(1)	(2)	(3)
CIWQS Entry Date:		Regional Board File Number:	CIWQS Inspection ID:

Attachment C

Richard Finch July 19, 2021 Inspection Photo Log  
Photos Taken by Kate Hawken



Photo 1:  
Cultivation  
area with  
hoop houses  
and drying  
shed



Photo 2:  
Trees  
removed  
uphill of  
cultivation  
area

Attachment C



Photo 3:  
Black poly  
line in  
watercourse