

# ...working Together

## Glossary of Water Words

**Administrative Civil Liability (ACL):** Fines imposed by the Boards related to violations of permit conditions, standards, or time schedules.

**Anti-degradation Clause:** Part of federal and state water quality standard requiring a balancing of the public's interest before allowing water quality to be degraded. The Water Boards policy on anti-degradation is often referred to as 68-16, after the resolution that first adopted it.

**The Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act:** State law requiring state entities such as the Water Boards to notify the public of upcoming meetings and to conduct them in public.

**Beneficial Uses of Water:** The uses of water protected against degradation, such as: domestic, municipal, agricultural and industrial supply; power generation; recreation; aesthetic enjoyment; navigation and preservation of fish and wildlife, and other aquatic resources or preserves.

**California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA):** Often referred to simply as Cal/EPA, the umbrella agency responsible for protecting environmental quality throughout the state. Cal/EPA acts at the agency level for the five state boards, departments and office within it. These are the Department of Toxic Substances Control, Department of Pesticide Regulation, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, Air Resources Board, and the California Water Boards.

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):** The established state policy of environmental protection. CEQA requires the review, identification, and mitigation of potential effects of proposed projects on the environment.

**California Water Code (CWC):** Compilation of statutes related to water resources.

**Cease and Desist Order (CDO):** Order issued by Regional Boards for violation or threatened violation of waste discharge

requirements and NPDES permits. The order requires the discharger to comply immediately, comply in accordance with a time schedule or in the event of a threatened violation, take remedial or preventive action.

**Citizen Monitoring:** Efforts made by community volunteers to monitor the local water quality conditions.

**Clean Water Act (CWA):** Federal legislation to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the surface waters of the United States. The stated goals of the Act are that all waters be fishable and swimmable.

**Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO):** An order which requires a discharger to clean up waste, abate its effects, and, in a case of threatened pollution, take necessary remedial action.

**Conditional Waiver:** Method of regulating discharges of waste that could also affect water quality. Alternative to Waste Discharge Requirements. Functionally very similar to waste discharge requirements.

**Discharger:** Any person who proposes to discharge or discharges waste that could affect the quality of California waters. The term also includes any person who owns, or is responsible for the operation of, a waste management unit.

**Draft WDRs:** A preliminary set of waste discharge requirements drafted and published by the State Water Board or Regional Board and is subject to public review and comment before final action on the application

**Environmental Impact Report (EIR):** A document required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that assesses the environmental effects of a project proposed to be approved or carried out by a state or local agency.

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## **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):**

Required by the National Environmental Policy Act, this document analyzes the effects of major federal projects on the environment. It must be filed with the President and the Council on Environmental Quality, and made available to the public.

## **Environmental Protection Agency**

**(U.S. EPA):** Federal regulatory agency responsible for protecting environmental quality throughout the nation. It acts in an oversight role to state environmental agencies that carry out federal laws.

**General Permit:** A set of general Waste Discharge Requirements that is applicable to a class or category of dischargers.

**Groundwater:** The supply of water found underground, usually in aquifers, which supply wells and springs.

**Low Impact Development (LID):** Storm water management practices in land development conducted to minimize impacts on the natural environment.

**Mitigation:** Steps taken to reduce adverse impacts on the environment.

**Municipal Discharge:** Discharge of effluent from treatment plants that receive wastewater from households, commercial establishments, and industries.

## **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES):**

A provision of the Clean Water Act that prohibits discharge of pollutants into waters of the United States unless a permit is issued that complies with the Clean Water Act. The State and Regional Boards issue WDRs that serve as NPDES permits in California.

**Negative Declaration:** A statement provided by a CEQA lead agency indicating that the proposed project has no significant environmental impacts.

**Nonpoint Source Pollution:** Pollution which cannot be traced back to a discrete origin or source (e.g., a pipe) such as stormwater runoff, water runoff or failed septic systems.

**Nonpoint Sources:** Diffuse pollution sources that are not subject to NPDES permitting. The pollutants are generally carried off the land by runoff. Common non-point sources are agriculture, forestry, mining, dams, and stormwater runoff from non-urbanized areas.

**Ocean Plan:** The water quality control plan for California's near-coastal waters, first adopted by the State Water Board in 1972.

**Once Through Cooling (OTC):** Water (fresh or saline) that is withdrawn from a river, stream or other water body, or a well, that is passed through a steam condenser one time, and then returned to the stream or water body some distance from the intake. Once-through cooling water is used to exchange the heat from the steam condensers commonly used in power production plants to the cooler water.

**Order:** Adjudicatory decision issued by a Water Board or its delegated staff.

**Pollution:** The alteration of the quality of waters of the state to the degree that the beneficial uses are unreasonably affected or water quality standards are violated.

## **Porter Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter Cologne Act):**

Anti-pollution legislation enacted by the California Legislature in 1970. It provides a framework for the regulation of waste discharges to both surface and ground waters of the state. It further provides for the adoption of water quality control plans and the implementation of these plans by adopting waste discharge requirements for individual dischargers or classes of dischargers.

## **Publicly-Owned Treatment Works (POTWs):**

A wastewater treatment plant that is owned by a state, unit of local government or Indian Tribe, usually designed to treat domestic wastewaters. The term also may include devices and systems used by those entities in the storage, treatment, recycling and reclamation of municipal sewage or liquid industrial wastes.

**Public Notice:** A notice which describes the activity for which approval is being sought or the action that is being proposed, identifies the person, business, or local government seeking

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approval of a specific course of action, and the statutory authority involved. Moreover, it typically states the location and time where the proposed activity or action will be considered and how public comments may be submitted.

**Public Records Act:** Enacted by the California Legislature in 1967 to ensure that citizens could gain prompt access to government records and documents upon request. Government agencies have 10 days to respond to a Public Records Act request.

**Public Trust:** The right of the state to protect the public interest in navigation, commerce, and fishing of navigable waters and their tributaries, and, more recently, to a broader range of values.

**Receiving Waters:** A river, lake, ocean, stream or other watercourse into which effluent is discharged.

**Recycled Water:** Water that is used more than one time before it passes back into the natural hydrologic system and is suitable for a beneficial use due to treatment.

**Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Boards):** The nine Regional Boards located throughout California are defined by watersheds, and are responsible for enforcing water quality standards within their boundaries.

**Resolution:** A formal action that is adopted by the State or Regional Board on a variety of official matters. Resolutions are used to approve basin plans and to award grants and loans.

**Riparian Water Rights:** Rights that come with the ownership of land adjacent to a water source wherein owners of land adjacent to a stream have the right to make reasonable use of a correlative share of the natural flow stream.

**Sewage:** The waste and wastewater produced by residential and commercial sources and discharged into sewers.

**Sewage Treatment Plant:** A facility designed to receive wastewater from domestic and industrial or commercial sources and to treat it by removing materials that could damage water quality and threaten

public health if they were discharged into receiving streams or bodies of water.

**Small Community Grant Program:**

Most recently funded by Proposition 40 and Proposition 50, it provides grant assistance for the planning, design, and construction of publicly-owned wastewater treatment and collection facilities. Grants are available for small communities (i.e., with a population of 20,000 persons, or less) with financial hardship (i.e., annual median household income is 80 percent of the statewide median household income, or less).

**Stakeholder:** Any organization, governmental entity, or individual that has an interest in, or may be impacted by, an official State Board or Regional Board action.

**State Revolving Fund (SRF):** This program, capitalized in part by federal funds, provides low-interest loans for construction of publicly owned wastewater treatment and water recycling facilities, for implementation of nonpoint source and storm drainage pollution control management programs, and for the development and implementation of estuary conservation and management programs.

**Storm Water Discharges:**

Wastewater discharges originating as a result of storm induced flow that accumulates pollutants as it traverses the geography of an area or a watershed.

**Surface Water:** All water naturally open to the atmosphere (rivers, lakes, reservoirs, ponds, streams, impoundments, seas, estuaries, etc.).

**Thermal Plan:** Common name for the Water Quality Control Plan for Control of Temperature in the Coastal and Interstate Waters and Enclosed Bays and Estuaries of California, last amended by the State Water Board in 1975.

**Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL):** An evaluation of the condition of an impaired surface water on the Section 303(d) List that establishes limitations on the amount of pollution that water can be exposed to without adversely affecting its beneficial uses, and

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allocating proportions of the total limitation among dischargers to the impaired surface water.

**Triennial Review Process:** A process with its origins in the Clean Water Act of reviewing the efficacy and currency of the provisions in Basin Plans and statewide plans on a three year cycle, and updating as appropriate.

**Underground Storage Tank (UST):**

A tank located at least partially underground and designed to hold gasoline or other petroleum products or chemicals.

**Urban Runoff:** Storm water from city streets and adjacent domestic or commercial properties that carries pollutants of various kinds into the sewer systems and receiving waters.

**Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR):**

The order adopted by the Regional Boards that regulates discharges of waste to surface water and discharges of waste to land. WDRs are often synonymous with "permits." WDRs that regulate point source discharges to waters of the United States also serve as permits under the federal Clean Water Act.

**Water Quality Certification:** State certification required by the Clean Water Act that a federally permitted activity meets state water quality standards.

**Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan):**

Each Regional Board establishes the beneficial uses of the waters within the region. The plan contains numeric and/or narrative water quality objectives and spells out a program by which the objectives can be achieved within their boundaries. The State Water Board also adopts water quality control plans (e.g., the Ocean Plan).

**Wildlands:** Forests, brush and grasslands with little human intrusion.

**303 (d) List:** List of waters that do not meet applicable water quality standards with technology-based controls alone. List required by section 303 (d) of the federal Clean Water Act. Water bodies on the 303(d) list require development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

**13267 Order:** Order issued by a Regional Board to a discharger requiring submission of reports concerning an existing, suspected, or planned discharge into the state's waters. The number 13267 refers to the applicable section of the California Water Code.

