

Response to Written Public Comments

Amendments to the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region to Incorporate Applicable Provisions of Statewide Plans and Policies and Improve Clarity

December 22, 2025

Introduction

On July 30, 2025, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) provided notice of opportunity for public review and comment on the proposed approval of a non-substantive amendment to the *Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region* (Basin Plan) to incorporate applicable provisions of statewide plans and policies, keep pace with changes in regulations, more accurately describe the physical and social characteristics within the region, improve the overall clarity of the Basin Plan, and comply with accessibility requirements. This amendment was described in the 2023 Triennial Review Staff Report and included in the Planning Program Workplan for Fiscal Years 2024-2027. The proposed revisions are non-substantive changes to the Basin Plan, because they are editorial in nature or incorporate provisions that were adopted by the State Water Board and are already in effect statewide. Consequently, the amendment will have no new regulatory effect.

The public review and comment period closed September 2, 2025. The State Water Board received three submittals containing written comments. Staff reviewed and considered all comments received, and while they are all valuable, they are not directly relevant to this amendment and therefore did not result in any changes to the posted document. This document summarizes comments received from all three comment letters, grouping similar comments into categories representing examples of comments received, followed by staff responses. Even though all comments received fall outside of the scope of this non-substantive amendment, staff have provided brief responses below. In addition, each comment letter has been forwarded to appropriate North Coast Water Board staff to facilitate scheduling of meetings with commenters and pursuit of program-specific follow up where appropriate.

Written comments were received in the comment period from the following:

Commenter Organizations	Submitted by	Date Received
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations Institute for Fisheries Resources	Lisa Damrosch	September 1, 2025
Environmental Protection Information Center Humboldt Waterkeeper Friends of the Shasta River Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center Klamath Forest Alliance	Amber Jamieson Jen Kalt Nick Joslin Nick Joslin Kimberly Baker	September 2, 2025

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Northern California Council, Fly Fishers International Save California Salmon California Sportfishing Protection Alliance	Dr. C. Mark Rockwell Regina Chichizola Angelina Cook	
Salmon Returning North Coast Salmon Rivers	Vivian Helliwell Andy Colonna	September 2, 2025

Comment Category: Basin Plan Amendment Requests

Watershed-specific Basin Plan Amendment Requests

Commenters provided numerous requests for substantive amendments to the Basin Plan for specific waterbodies. Requests were made for additional implementation measures to be added to existing watershed-specific total maximum daily load (TMDL) action plans, to designate waterbodies as Outstanding National Resource Waters, and to develop temperature and flow objectives for specific waterbodies, among other requests. Multiple comments were received related to the Scott River, Shasta River, Eel River, and Trinity River.

Other Substantive Basin Plan Amendment Requests

Commenters provided several recommendations for substantive changes to the Basin Plan in addition to the watershed-specific comments above. Comments included recommendations to amend the Basin Plan to improve criteria and standards to support the recovery and future abundance of salmon populations, ensure restoration projects provide benefits to rivers and aquatic life, include defined flow volumes to support salmon, and improve mechanisms for assessing cumulative impacts on salmon. While these comments fall outside of the scope of this non-substantive amendment, staff have provided a brief response below.

Staff Response

Thank you for taking the time to make specific suggestions for amendments to the Basin Plan. The recommendations in your comments would constitute a substantive update of the Basin Plan. This amendment only includes non-substantive changes to the Basin Plan with no regulatory effect.

During the Triennial Review of the Basin Plan, Basin Plan amendment project proposals are solicited for consideration. While proposals can be submitted at any time, the next Triennial Review for the North Coast Basin Plan is scheduled to begin in 2026. Staff will ensure that comments received during the current process are considered as part of the upcoming Triennial Review. Staff also recommend that the commenters submit these substantive Basin Plan amendment proposals, including additional details, using the North Coast Water Board's online form on their Triennial Review webpage: [Triennial Review | California Northcoast Regional Water Quality Control Board](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/triennial_review/) (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/triennial_review/).

Comment Category: General Recommendations for Improvements

Additional comments were received that were not requests for amendments to the Basin Plan. Commenters requested that the North Coast Water Board improve transparency, connectivity, and public accessibility and prioritize waterbodies for monitoring and evaluation based on their status under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Staff Response

Thank you for your comments for the North Coast Water Board. The Water Boards value transparency and accessibility and will continue to advance our efforts in these areas. Staff also appreciate the suggestion to add waterbodies with special status, such as a Wild and Scenic Rivers Act designation, to characteristics considered when prioritizing monitoring efforts.