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## North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

### **NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY AND PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF DRAFT ORDER NO. R1-2026-0015**

### **WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS FOR NONPOINT SOURCE DISCHARGES AND OTHER CONTROLLABLE WATER QUALITY FACTORS RELATED TO TIMBER HARVESTING AND ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY HUMBOLDT REDWOOD COMPANY LLC IN THE UPPER ELK RIVER WATERSHED HUMBOLDT COUNTY**

#### ***I. Background***

On June 19, 2019, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Water Board) adopted Order No. R1-2019-0021, *Waste Discharge Requirements for Nonpoint Source Discharges and Other Controllable Water Quality Factors Related to Timber Harvesting and Associated Activities Conducted by Humboldt Redwood Company, LLC In the Upper Elk River Watershed Humboldt County* (Elk River WDR). Discharges from Timber Harvesting on Humboldt Redwoods, LLC timberlands in the Elk River watershed must be covered under the Elk River WDR.

The Elk River WDR is a critical regulatory mechanism intended to implement the Action Plan for the Upper Elk River Sediment TMDL (TMDL Action Plan), which the Board adopted on May 12, 2016. The Elk River WDR incorporates TMDL hillslope targets and load allocation and includes measures to prevent sediment discharge from all aspects of Humboldt Redwood Company's timber harvest and related activities in the Elk River Watershed and promote watershed restoration.

Section I.J of the Elk River WDR states, "HRC may propose and submit for approval by the Regional Water Board, alternative measures that can be demonstrated to provide beneficial uses protection and nuisance abatement that is equal or better than that provided by these specific requirements." HRC has submitted alternative measures for Riparian Zone Protection and Wet Weather Requirements as discussed below.

Proposed Order No. R1-2026-0015 revises Order No. R1-2019-0021 to incorporate those proposed alternative measures and updates the Order to omit outdated findings and requirements. In addition, the Monitoring and Reporting Program has been moved from Section IV of the Order to Attachment C.

## **II. Public Review and Comment Period**

**Notice is hereby given** that the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Water Board) opens a **30-day** public comment period regarding draft Order No. R1-2026-0015, *Waste Discharge Requirements for Nonpoint Source Discharges and Other Controllable Water Quality Factors Related to Timber Harvesting and Associated Activities Conducted by Humboldt Redwood Company, LLC in the Upper Elk River Watershed, Humboldt County.*

The draft Order is available on the [Private Forest Lands California Northcoast Regional Water Quality Control Board webpage](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/forest_activities/private_forest_land/#permitting)

([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water\\_issues/programs/forest\\_activities/private\\_forest\\_land/#permitting](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/forest_activities/private_forest_land/#permitting)). Strikeout-underline versions showing the draft revisions to Order No. R1-2019-0021 will be provided upon request.

This item will be open for public comment between **March 2, 2026 and April 1, 2026**. The Regional Water Board is accepting written comments related to the draft revisions to the existing Order. Written comments must be received no later than 5:00 PM on April 1, 2026. Except at the discretion of the Regional Water Board Chair, written material received after the above date will not be accepted. If the Chair chooses to accept late written material, that material will not be incorporated into the administrative record if doing so would prejudice any party or the Board. The Chair may choose to modify this rule upon a showing of severe hardship (California Code of Regulations, Title 23, sections 648.1 and 648.4). Comments and questions regarding the draft Order should be directed to Jim Burke at [James.Burke@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:James.Burke@waterboards.ca.gov). Send comments by selecting from the following methods:

- Email up to 15 megabytes to [NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov) and use the subject heading "Elk River WDR Public Comments"
- Follow [electronic submittal guidelines](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications_and_forms/available_documents/pdf/2014/ECM_Letter-Guidelines.pdf) ([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications\\_and\\_forms/available\\_documents/pdf/2014/ECM\\_Letter-Guidelines.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications_and_forms/available_documents/pdf/2014/ECM_Letter-Guidelines.pdf)) for comments greater than 15 megabytes
- Fax to 707-576-2069
- Mail or Hand Deliver to: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, Attention: Elk River WDR, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California 95403-1072

### **III. Public Hearing**

A public hearing to consider adoption of a draft Order is scheduled for the Regional Water Board's **May 7 and 8, 2026** Board Meeting, or as announced in the Regional Water Board's agenda. This public meeting is currently scheduled to take place in-person and via video and teleconference in Humboldt County (hearing location to be determined), but the format may be changed in the future. Please follow the [North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board website](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/)

([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board\\_info/board\\_meetings/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/)) for information on how to participate in the meeting and any updates regarding this agenda item, including hearing location.

Additional information on the hearing and consideration of adoption meeting can be found at the Regional Water Board's website. Any person desiring to receive future notices about changes to the date, time, location, or format of the public workshop and hearing should sign up for the e-mail list, as described below. Updates will also be posted on the Regional Water Board's website.

### **IV. Availability of Documents and Information**

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's website:

[Homepage California North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/)

(<https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/>)

Forest Activities webpage:

[Private Forest Lands California Northcoast Regional Water Quality Control Board webpage](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/forest_activities/private_forest_land/#permitting)

([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water\\_issues/programs/forest\\_activities/private\\_forest\\_land/#permitting](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/forest_activities/private_forest_land/#permitting))

Electronic Submittal Required for Correspondence and Reports to the Regional Board:

[Electronic Submittal Required for Correspondence and Reports to the Regional Board](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications_and_forms/available_documents/pdf/2014/ECM_Letter-Guidelines.pdf)

([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications\\_and\\_forms/available\\_documents/pdf/2014/ECM\\_Letter-Guidelines.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications_and_forms/available_documents/pdf/2014/ECM_Letter-Guidelines.pdf))

Email List Subscriptions:

[Email List Subscription Form | North Coast Regional Board](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg1_subscribe.html)

([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/reg1\\_subscribe.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg1_subscribe.html))

### **V. Potential Future Changes to Noticed Items**

Any changes regarding the noticed items will be posted on the Regional Water Board's website and noticed through the email distribution list. Any person desiring to receive future notices must sign up for the email distribution list by assessing the Email List

Subscription Form webpage and subscribing to the “Elk River Waste Discharge Requirements” email list.

**VI. North Coast Water Board Contact Information**

Please direct questions about proposed Order to Jim Burke, Senior Engineering Geologist, Southern Nonpoint Source and Forestry Unit Supervisor at (707) 576-2289 or [James.burke@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:James.burke@waterboards.ca.gov) or Nathan Jacobsen, Senior Staff Counsel at (916) 341-5181 or [Nathan.Jacobsen@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Nathan.Jacobsen@waterboards.ca.gov).

Any person who is disabled and requires special accommodations to participate in the North Coast Water Board’s meetings and hearings should contact Emma Cianfichi at [Emma.Cianfichi@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Emma.Cianfichi@waterboards.ca.gov) at least three days before the scheduled event.