

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION
RESOLUTION NO. R2-2025-0020**

ADOPTION OF INITIAL STUDY AND SUBSEQUENT NEGATIVE DECLARATION for:

**CONDITIONAL WAIVER OF WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRAZING
OPERATIONS IN THE NORTH SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION (NAPA RIVER,
SONOMA CREEK, PETALUMA RIVER, AND TOMALES BAY WATERSHEDS, AND
ALL GRAZING OPERATIONS IN POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE)**

WHEREAS:

1. The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) is considering adoption of the Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for Grazing Operations in the North San Francisco Bay Region (Conditional Waiver) pursuant to Water Code section 13269. The Water Board prepared an Initial Study and Subsequent Negative Declaration to assess potential environmental effects of adoption and implementation of the Conditional Waiver.
2. The Conditional Waiver consolidates and renews the existing grazing waivers for the Tomales Bay watershed (Tomales Bay, Lagunitas Creek, Walker Creek, and Olema Creek) (Tomales Bay Grazing Waiver) and the Napa River and Sonoma Creek watersheds (Napa and Sonoma Grazing Waiver). The existing grazing waivers established conditions for grazing operations to minimize and control discharges of animal waste and sediment runoff, including the following: evaluation of operating practices; identification of comprehensive site-specific pathogen and sediment control measures; development of a schedule for the implementation of management actions; and annual reporting on actions taken. The grazing waivers also implement Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for the Tomales Bay, Napa River, and Sonoma Creek watersheds.
3. The Water Board analyzed potential environmental effects of the Tomales Bay Grazing Waiver and the Napa and Sonoma Grazing Waiver in a negative declaration adopted in 2008 (Resolution No. R2-2008-0053) (2008 ND) and a mitigated negative declaration adopted in 2011 (Resolution No. R2-2011-0059) (2011 MND), respectively, and addenda to those documents. The consolidation of the existing grazing waivers will not result in any new or substantially more severe impacts or require new mitigation measures. The consolidation is a change to increase administrative efficiency and does not require additional environmental review.
4. The Conditional Waiver also expands the scope of coverage to include grazing operations in the Petaluma River watershed and grazing operations within the Point Reyes National Seashore that do not discharge to Tomales Bay (an

additional estimated 44,500 acres). The expansion of coverage is necessary to implement the Petaluma River Pathogens TMDL and is consistent with the National Park Service's Water Quality Strategy for Managing Ranching Operations to protect water quality. The potential environmental impacts of the expansion of coverage were not analyzed in the 2008 ND or 2011 MND.

5. The grazing program expansion to the two new areas is the focus of the Initial Study and Subsequent Negative Declaration. The expanded scope of coverage for grazing operations and the other minor changes do not involve new significant environmental impacts, a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects, or new mitigation measures that were previously found to be infeasible. Under these circumstances, the Water Board may prepare a subsequent negative declaration, an addendum to the 2008 ND and 2011 MND, or no further documentation.¹
6. As the lead agency, the Water Board prepared the draft Initial Study and Subsequent Negative Declaration to supplement the environmental analyses in the 2008 ND and 2011 MND. The Initial Study and Subsequent Negative Declaration analyzes potential environmental effects associated with the expansion of the scope of coverage for grazing operations under the Conditional Waiver and other minor changes. Copies of the 2008 ND and 2011 MND, and their addenda, are available at the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board, located at 1515 Clay Street Suite 1400, Oakland, California.
7. On February 21, 2025, the Water Board circulated the draft Initial Study and Subsequent Negative Declaration for a 30-day public comment period through the State Clearinghouse and through email to all known interested parties. The draft Initial Study and Subsequent Negative Declaration was also made available on the Water Board's website and hard copies were available upon request.
8. The Water Board considered all written comments received on the draft Initial Study and Subsequent Negative Declaration and supporting documents.
9. The Water Board considered all testimony and evidence at a public hearing on July 9, 2025.
10. The Initial Study and Subsequent Negative Declaration reflects the independent judgment of the Water Board.
11. The Water Board finds that, on the basis of the whole record, there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment. The Initial Study and Subsequent Negative Declaration, all supporting documentation, and the record of proceedings are available at the Water Board's office located at 1515 Clay Street Suite 1400, Oakland, California. The custodian of records is Melinda Wong.

¹ CEQA Guidelines section 15162, subdivision (b)

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Water Board hereby adopts the Initial Study and Subsequent Negative Declaration for the Conditional Waiver.
2. Water Board staff shall file a Notice of Determination with the Office of Planning and Research in accordance with section 15075 of the CEQA guidelines.

I, Eileen White, Executive Officer, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region, on July 9, 2025.

Eileen White
Executive Officer