

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION**

**STAFF SUMMARY REPORT: Jacob Henry, Katherine Ward
MEETING DATE: October 8, 2025**

ITEM: 6

**Site Cleanup Subaccount Program: Water Board Grant Program for Cleanup
Cases – Informational Item**

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DISCUSSION:

This item provides an overview of the Site Cleanup Subaccount Program (SCAP). The program provides grant funding to responsible parties across California that lack the financial resources to investigate and clean up contaminated sites. In 2014, the Legislature introduced SCAP, which is funded by a transfer from the Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund to a State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) subaccount on an annual basis. In recent fiscal years, SCAP has an annual appropriation of \$34 million. SCAP funding is available for site cleanup program sites overseen by all the Regional Water Boards and by local oversight programs. A total of 102 sites¹ across California have been funded by SCAP, including 22 sites in our Region.

State Board Resolution No. 2024-0023

Due to the high demand for SCAP funding, the State Water Board needed a way to prioritize which sites would receive grants. In August 2024, the State Water Board adopted Resolution Number 2024-0023 (Appendix A) that includes a ranking methodology to score and prioritize sites where the responsible party has applied for SCAP grant funding. Resolution Number 2024-0023 includes the following allocations of annual funding:

- 70 percent is for sites that were previously funded, determined to be at a critical juncture, and require additional funding
- 20 percent is for sites that have not yet received a grant
- 10 percent is for sites that do not have a responsible party

Regional Water Board SCAP Funding

In our Region, responsible parties for 75 sites have applied for grant funding since the program was created in 2014, and 22 sites have received grants. Twelve sites have active grants, and 10 sites had grants that have ended. In Fiscal Year 2024-25, the only SCAP grant funding provided to our Region was to 5 sites that were determined to be at a critical juncture and in need of additional funding. No new SCAP grants were awarded

¹https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/scap/docs/funded_projects.pdf

to our Region in Fiscal Year 2024-25. State Water Board is working on scoring all the applicants for the current fiscal year and will publish an updated list and grant award information in the coming months.

Ranking Methodology

Responsible parties for sites that have applied for SCAP funding are ranked using a scoring system at the start of each fiscal year. The scoring system is intended to prioritize sites with the highest risk as well as sites that are in disadvantaged and environmental justice communities. The total scores are based on points assigned to the following categories:

- Risk to human health, safety, and the environment
- Disadvantaged community status
- Environmental justice

The factors for the categories are described below.

Risk to Human Health, Safety, and the Environment (maximum 24 points)²

The human health, safety, and environmental risk ranking is based on groundwater, soil vapor and indoor air contamination at a site, and the threat or impact to drinking water and sensitive receptors.

Groundwater, soil vapor, and indoor air contamination for the chemicals of concern are compared to the applicable screening levels and points are assigned based on the order of magnitude of any exceedances. A site can receive a maximum of 15 points for groundwater and soil vapor contamination and a maximum of 5 points for indoor air contamination.

A maximum of 4 points can be awarded for a threat or impact to a sensitive receptor (e.g. children's daycare) within 200 feet of soil vapor or groundwater contamination or a drinking water supply well within 2,000 feet of groundwater contamination.

Disadvantaged Community Status (maximum 12 points)

Sites also receive points based on the economic status of their location. The disadvantaged community status for a project is determined by comparing the median household income for a census block group with the statewide median household income. Economically disadvantaged communities are those in which the median household income is less than 80 percent of the state median household income, while severely disadvantaged communities are those in which median household income is less than 60 percent of the state median household income. Sites in a disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged community receive 6 points or 12 points, respectively.

² Sites that score less than 10 points are not considered eligible for funding unless trichloroethene is present in indoor air above the U.S. EPA Accelerated Response Action Level.

Environmental Justice (maximum 12 points)

Sites also receive points if they are located in an environmental justice community, which is evaluated based on their CalEnviroScreen score. CalEnviroScreen scores are based on a model that calculates a score based on a pollution burden (exposure and environmental effects) and population characteristics (sensitive populations and socioeconomic factors). The ranking methodology uses the CalEnviroScreen percentile scores to determine the amount of points a site will receive, with a percentile score greater than 75 percent receiving 12 points.

Qualitative Considerations

In addition to the quantitative scoring, qualitative factors are also reviewed and include:

- Cost and potential environmental benefits of the proposed work
- Other available sources of funding
- Potential benefit to communities designated as small (less than 10,000 people)

Eligibility

To be eligible for a SCAP grant, a directive must be issued by a regulatory oversight agency (e.g., Regional Water Board, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), or local oversight program). After the site is scored and ranked, it will fall within one of these three categories:

- Eligible and funded in the current fiscal year
- Eligible and may be funded in a future fiscal year
- Not eligible for funding

Once a site is determined to be eligible for funding, the responsible party's ability to pay for the investigation and cleanup is evaluated by reviewing financial records.

Other Funding Mechanisms

There are limited sources of funding available to responsible parties for site cleanup sites in California. Other sources of funding include:

Equitable Community Revitalization Grants (ECRG) – These grants were awarded by the Department of Toxic Substances Control to public agencies or nonprofit entities from 2022 to 2024. Regional Water Board staff are providing regulatory oversight for 6 of 15 ECRG grant recipients, the other 10 sites are managed by the DTSC or local regulatory agencies. This grant funding program was not continued in 2025 due to state budget limitations, and it is not known if funding will be available in the future.

Brownfield Assessment Grants – These grants are awarded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to support cleanup at properties where reuse, redevelopment, and expansion may be complicated by contamination.

APPENDIX:

A. Resolution Number 2024-0023

Appendix A
Resolution Number 2024-0023