

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD**

**SAN DIEGO REGION**

**RESOLUTION NO. R9-2024-0097**

**SUPPORTING AN ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT THE PRACTICAL  
VISION AND OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025**

**WHEREAS:**

1. The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region (San Diego Water Board) staff developed a Practical Vision to guide efforts toward addressing the highest priority projects.
2. The San Diego Water Board adopted a Resolution in Support of San Diego Water Board's first Practical Vision titled "Healthy Waters, Healthy People" on November 13, 2013 (Resolution No. R9-2013-0153).
3. The San Diego Water Board endorsed an update to the Practical Vision in September 2021 through adoption of Resolution No. R9-2021-0007.
4. The Operational Plan for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (FY 24-25) commits to advancing 21 projects, including Practical Vision and core program projects (Attachment 1 - Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Operational Plan Projects).
5. Projects included in the FY 24-25 Operational Plan were selected considering the Key Beneficial Uses and Areas established in San Diego Water Board Resolution No. R9-2017-0030<sup>1</sup> and guidance from the Practical Vision Priority Setting Team.
6. The Operational Plan commits 17 percent of available staff resources to priority Practical Vision and core program projects in fiscal year 24-25 (Attachment 1).
7. Section 13168 of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act states that "[t]he state board shall allocate to the regional boards from funds appropriated to the state board such part thereof as may be necessary for the administrative expenses of such boards. The regional boards shall submit annual budgets to the state board."
8. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) has final allocation authority on the distribution of most staffing resources throughout the State and Regional Water Boards. State Water Board Resolution No. 2012-0061 delegates the authority to conduct and supervise the activities of the State Water Board to the

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<sup>1</sup> San Diego Water Board Resolution No. R9-2017-0030 can be accessed electronically at the following webpage:

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water\\_issues/programs/key\\_areas/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water_issues/programs/key_areas/)

Executive Director of the State Water Board. Subject to the direction of the State Water Board, the Executive Director oversees and approves the State Water Board's day-to-day budgeting and staff allocation. Occasionally, statutory requirements (such as Water Code section 13260, subdivision (d)(2)(B)), the State budget and/or the Governor will directly specify the board(s) that will be assigned additional resources.

9. The San Diego Water Board is allocated 69 Personnel Years of staffing resources and 7 part time temporary help positions in FY 24-25.
10. Regional Water Board budgets are allotted in programmatic areas, making it difficult for the San Diego Water Board to link budget dollars to the desired outcomes of the Practical Vision. The annual Operational Plan represents an effort to enrich budget and performance integration. The State Water Board initiated efforts to evaluate the fees collected, Water Board expenditures, and align Water Board resources, priorities, and workload outputs statewide through the [Resource Alignment Project](#).
11. The State and Regional Water Boards annually engage in a Budget Change Proposal (BCP) process to recommend new positions for legislative authorization.
12. The Practical Vision and Operational Plan identify goals and actions that are critical to the success of the mission of the San Diego Water Board. In doing so, they also identify critical underfunded needs to achieve those goals.
13. The most critically underfunded water quality issue continues to be the addressing the impacts of transboundary flows of pollution and waste, implementation and enforcement of the NPDES Permit for South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant and supporting Tijuana River Valley Recovery Strategy projects to cleanup and restoration of the Tijuana River Valley. To address the severe environmental impact of the transboundary flows within our limited authority, the San Diego Water Board has internally redirected the work of three full time Water Resource Control Engineers for NPDES Permit compliance and the finalization for the Water Quality Restoration Plans for Bacterial Indicators and Trash for Board consideration by December 2024. In addition, other staff are being assigned from each Branch for project specific work to address sediment, trash, flood damage and transboundary pollution issues.
14. Regulation of irrigated lands, restoration of wetlands, and public engagement (especially efforts involving Tribal Nations, racial equity and environmental justice, and underrepresented communities) are additional key efforts that are not adequately supported with staff funding and contracting resources. Each of these projects require a sustained level of effort over multiple years to achieve their goals. The most essential and long-term work for achieving success of Practical Vision includes leveraging community-based partnerships to generate engagement and collaboration.
15. On May 10, 2024, [Governor Newsom's](#) revised balanced state budget included cuts to "...one-time spending by \$19.1 billion and ongoing spending by \$13.7 billion through 2025-26. This includes a nearly 8% cut to state operations and a targeted elimination of

10,000 unfilled state positions, improving government efficiency and reducing non-essential spending.” For the State and Regional Boards, this has meant limitations in hiring for even recently vacated positions in core regulatory competencies. The San Diego Water Board is currently unable to fill 4 vacancies in wetlands protection, underground storage tanks, and Basin Planning. Operational Plan projects that will be affected by the delays in hiring or potential vacancy elimination include updates to the Basin Plan for designation of Tribal Beneficial Uses and the development of the Santa Margarita River Nutrients Water Quality Restoration Plan.

16. The level of effort dedicated in the Practical Vision Projects of the Operational Plan is a minimum effort and tenuous. Should higher priority work demand, the level of effort on these projects would necessarily decrease, if not stop altogether. The core work of the San Diego Water Board remains a priority. Should major adjustments to the Operational Plan become necessary, they will be presented in the monthly Executive Officer’s Report.

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:***

1. The San Diego Water Board endorses the use of an Operational Plan to implement the Practical Vision to prioritize work. Attachment 1 lists the staff resources necessary to implement the Practical Vision and the Board’s priorities, while continuing to meet core regulatory requirements.
2. The San Diego Water Board endorses aligning staff resources with its priorities to advance both the highest priority Practical Vision projects and the core programmatic work.
3. Board Members request the Executive Officer continue to explore all available resources to move forward high priority projects, including but not limited to advancing the regulation of irrigated lands, restoration of wetlands, and the full engagement of interested persons. The Executive Officer should coordinate these efforts with the State Water Board’s [Resource Alignment Project](#) as appropriate, and continue to work within the BCP process.
4. Board Members will also seek ways to augment the efforts of the Executive Officer to implement the Practical Vision such as exploring opportunities for partnerships and ways to leverage existing resources and statewide or multi-regional efforts.

I, David W. Gibson, Executive Officer, do hereby certify the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region, on August 14, 2024.

**TENTATIVE**

David W. Gibson  
Executive Officer