Item #7
Consideration of a Resolution to Adopt the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters Portion of the 2026 California Integrated Report

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CALIFORNIA
Water Boards

Division of Water Quality | February 3, 2026

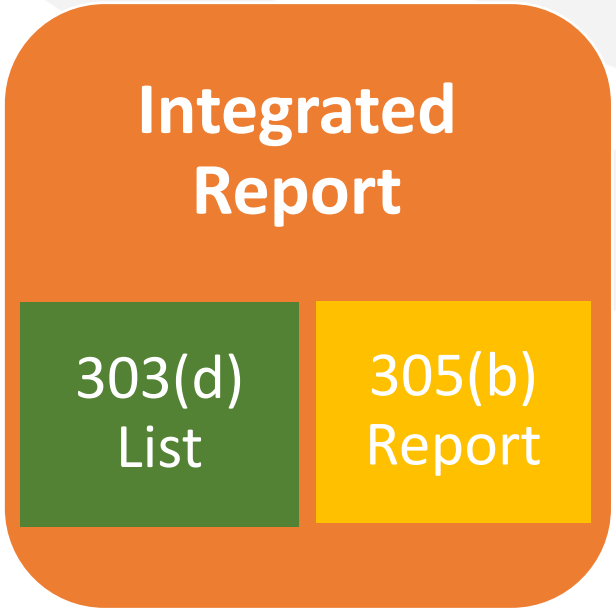
Presentation Outline

- Integrated Report Overview
- Summary Statistics
- Responses to Comments
  - 303(d) List Permit Nexus
  - Region-Specific Comments
  - Benthic Community Effects
- Program Improvements & Future Integrated Reports

The **Integrated Report** is prepared to meet Clean Water Act requirements.

303(d) List of Impaired Waterbodies

- Waters where beneficial uses are not supported.
- TMDLs or other restoration programs are required for impaired waters.
- Requires approval by State Water Board **and** United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).



305(b) Report

- Reports on the overall water quality of surface waters.
- Does not require State Water Board or USEPA approval.

Water Quality Control Policy for Developing California's Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List ("Listing Policy")
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2015/020315_8_amendment_clean_version.pdf

2026 Integrated Report – Timeline

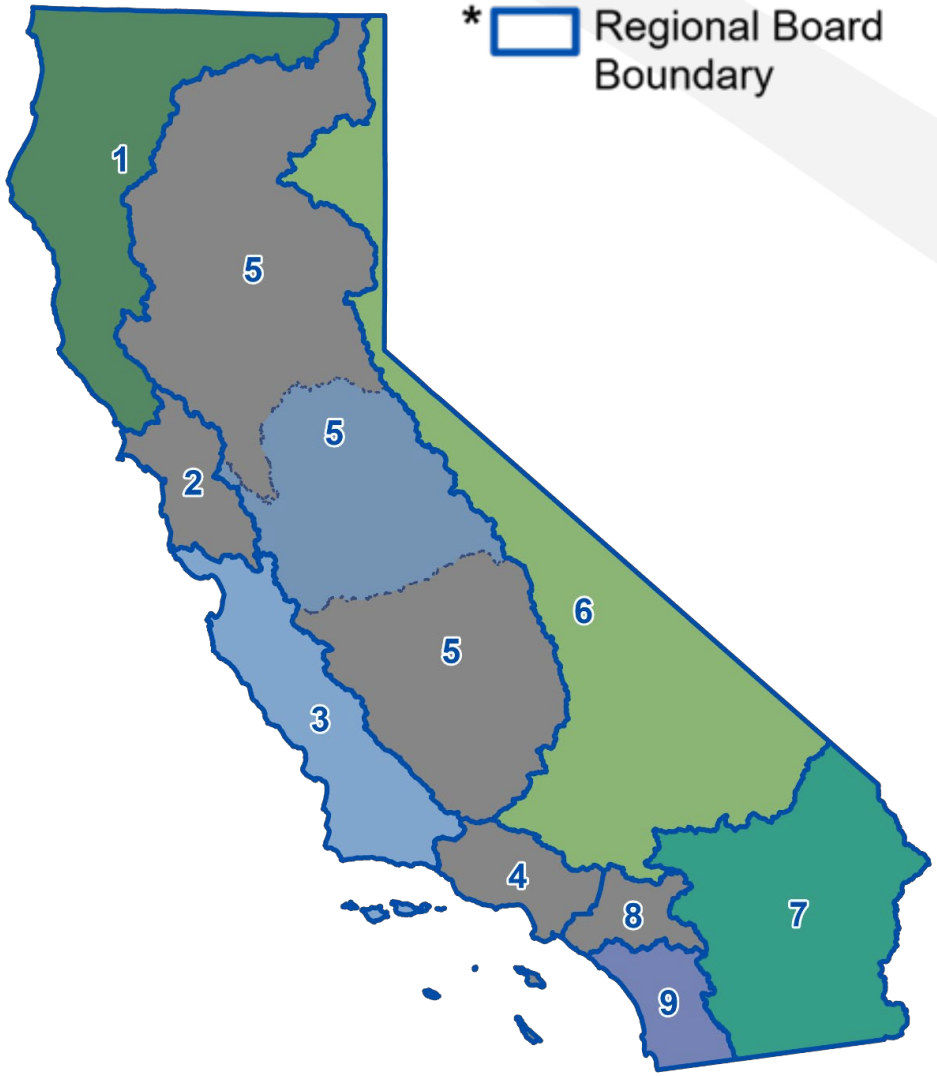
	April 18 - October 21, 2022	Data Solicitation Period
	January 30, 2025	Released Draft Integrated Report
	February 11, 2025	Staff Hosted Virtual Workshop
	March 18, 2025	Public Hearing
	April 2, 2025	Public Comment Period Deadline
	December 22, 2025	Release of Proposed Final Staff Report & Responses to Comments
	January 23, 2026	Release of First Revised Proposed Final Staff Report & Responses to Comments
We are here	February 3, 2026	State Water Board Meeting to Consider Adoption
	Before April 1, 2026	Submittal to USEPA

Documents and additional information available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/

Background: Condition Categories

1	At least **one** core beneficial use is **supported** and none are known to be impaired.
2	**Insufficient information** to determine beneficial use support.
3	There is insufficient data and/or information to make a beneficial use support determination but information and/or data indicates beneficial uses may be **potentially threatened**.
4	At least one beneficial use is not supported but a **TMDL is not needed**. **4a:** A TMDL has been developed and approved by USEPA, and the approved implementation plan is expected to result in full attainment of the water quality standard within a reasonable, specified time frame. **4b:** Another regulatory program is reasonably expected to result in attainment of the water quality standard within a reasonable, specified time frame. Requires USEPA approval. **4c:** The non-attainment of any applicable water quality standard for the waterbody segment is the result of pollution and is not caused by a pollutant.
5	At least one beneficial use is not supported and a **TMDL is needed**. **5r:** An Advance Restoration Plan (ARP) has been developed that includes a near-term plan or description of actions, with a schedule and milestones, that is more immediately beneficial or practicable to achieving standards than a TMDL. **5-bio:** Degraded biological populations and communities indicate that at least one aquatic life beneficial use is not supported. This impairment determination must be supported by at least one pollutant impairment for an aquatic life beneficial use on the same waterbody segment. A TMDL for the associated pollutant(s) may be used to further assess the association between the associated pollutant(s) and the degraded biological populations and communities and, as appropriate, help to restore the degraded biological populations and communities. A TMDL for the degraded biological populations and communities is not appropriate because TMDLs are intended for pollutants

2026 “On-Cycle” and “Off-Cycle” Regions



On-Cycle Assessments

- North Coast (1)
- Lahontan (6)
- Colorado River Basin (7)

Off-Cycle Assessments

- Central Coast (3)
- San Diego (9)
- Central Valley (5)
  San Joaquin River sub-basin

Not Assessed

- San Francisco Bay (2)
- Los Angeles (4)
- Santa Ana (8)
- Central Valley (5)
  Sacramento, Tulare, and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta sub-basins

Data Cut-Off Date: October 21, 2022

Summary Statistics

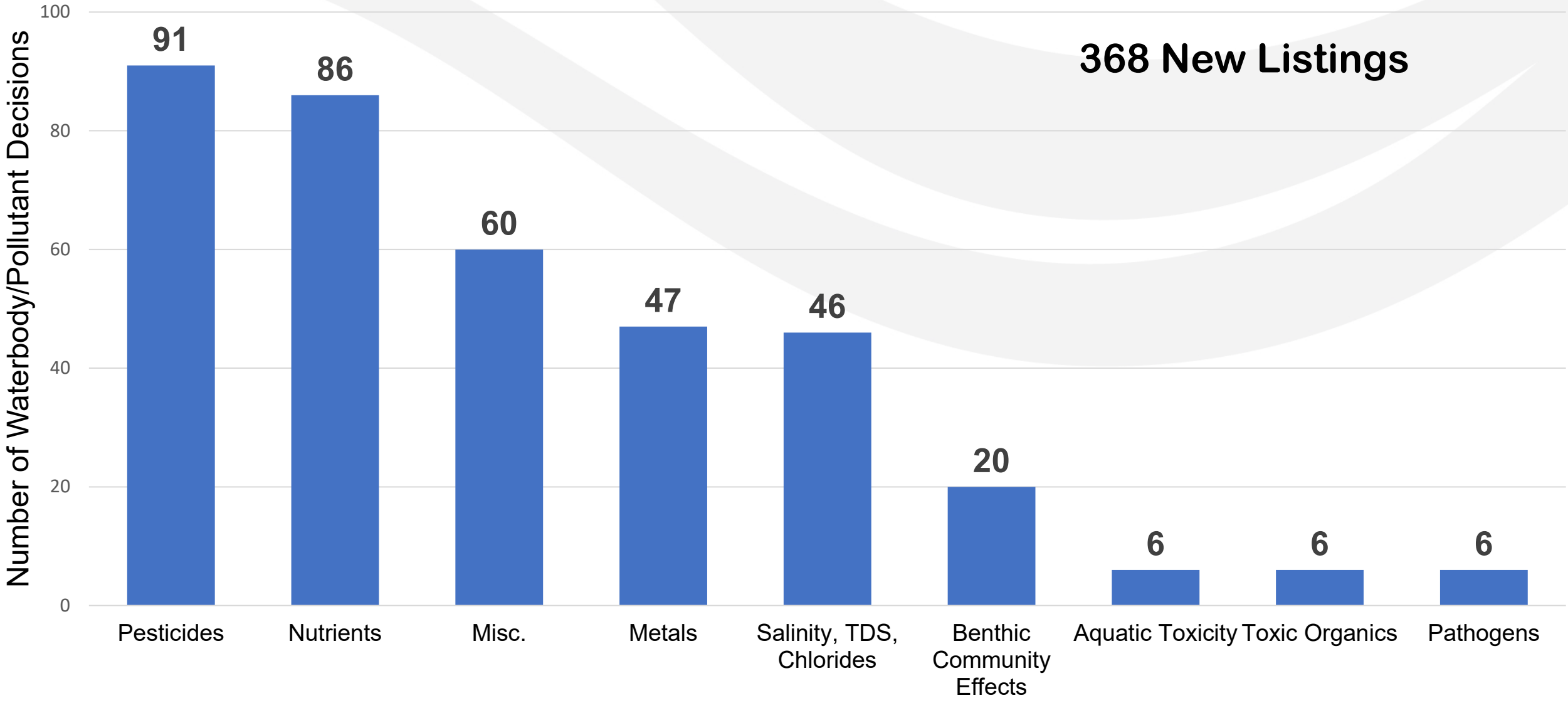
Statistic	2020-2022 Cycle	2024 Cycle	2026 Cycle
Data Rows Assembled	4,587,101	5,351,531	1,425,079
Waterbodies with Data Assessed	1,630	1,594	995
Lines Of Evidence Assessed	112,537	93,600	71,054
Waterbody-Pollutant Combinations Assessed	24,964	20,303	15,828

Summary Statistics: First Revised Proposed Final 2026 Integrated Report

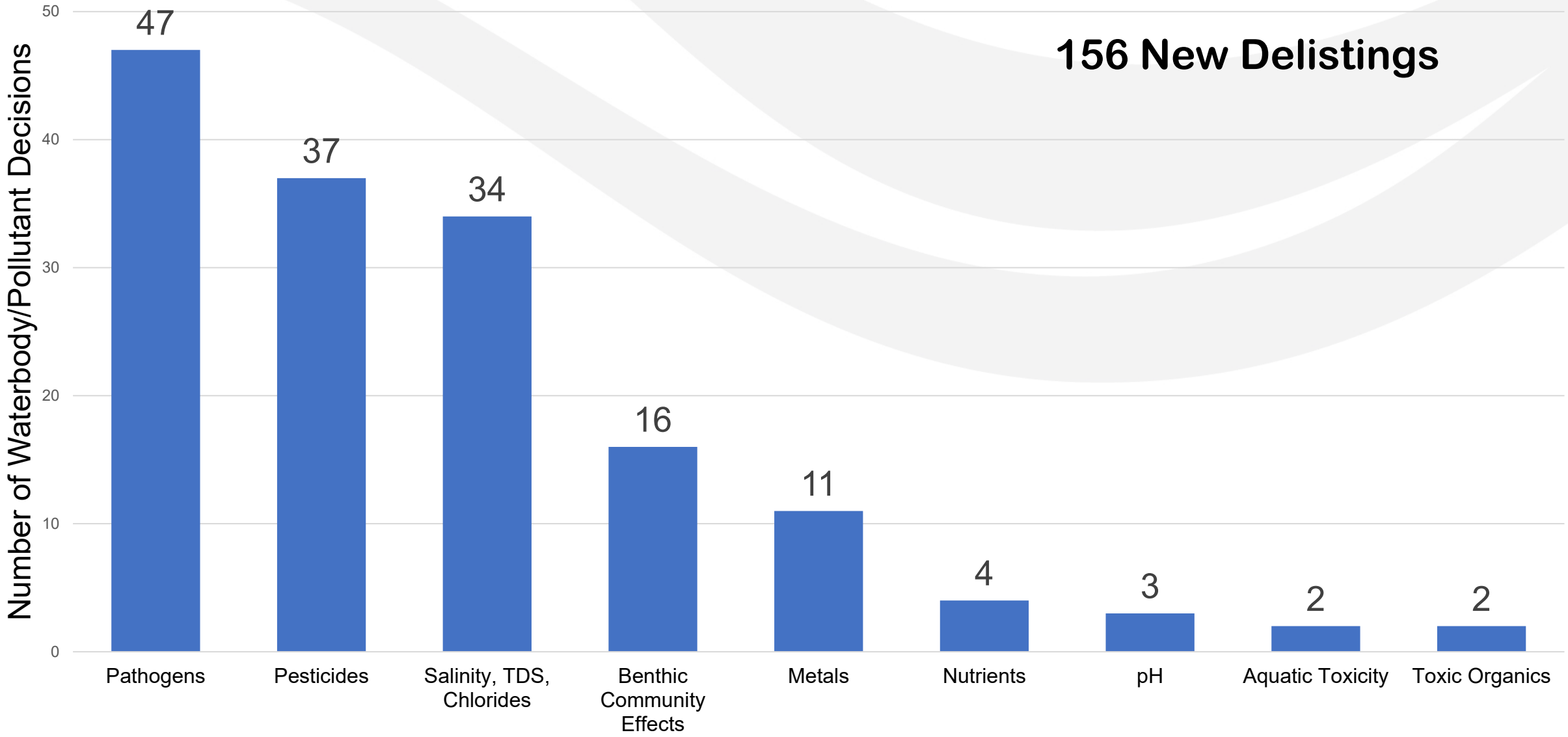
Region	Total 2024 Listings	New 2026 Listings	New 2026 Delistings	Total 2026 Listings*
North Coast	**217**	**71**	**9**	**278**
San Francisco Bay	476	0	0	476
Central Coast	**1,200**	**1**	**6**	**1,195**
Los Angeles	1,215	0	0	1,215
Central Valley	**1,246**	**109**	**95**	**1,260**
Lahontan	**256**	**141**	**39**	**358**
Colorado River Basin	**110**	**46**	**5**	**151**
Santa Ana	183	0	0	183
San Diego	**839**	**0**	**2**	**837**
TOTALS	**5,742**	**368**	**156**	**5,953**

Count of 2026 303(d) listings may not equal the addition of new listings and removal of delistings from the 2024 303(d) List due to waterbody segment splits, merges, or other miscellaneous changes.

Proposed 2026 New 303(d) Listings



Proposed 2026 New 303(d) Delistings



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303(d) List and Permit Nexus

- Staff researched and surveyed the following permitting programs to better understand how the 303(d) List is used in permits.
  - NPDES Stormwater
  - NPDES Non-Stormwater, including publicly owned treatment works
  - Waste Discharge Requirements
  - Irrigated Lands Regulatory
  - Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems
  - 401 Water Quality Certifications
  - Cannabis

303(d) List and Permit Nexus

303(d) List is used to automatically trigger new permittee obligations in some existing permits. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- To require monitoring and reporting for the listed pollutant(s).
- To require sources of the listed pollutant(s) to be identified.
- To increase the inspection frequency for construction sites.

303(d) List is used in the development of new permits. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- To help inform reasonable potential analysis, and along with other information, is used to determine if a receiving water limitation or effluent limitation is required.
- As partial justification, along with other information, for requiring best management practices or pollutant controls.

303(d) List and Permit Nexus

- Next Steps:
  - Continue to take into consideration other factors other than the 303(d) List to inform decision-making and permit requirements.
  - Where feasible, use the integrated report's data and information to inform new permit requirements.
  - Staff to continue coordinating with Water Board regulatory programs to help ensure that 303(d) listings are used appropriately.

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Region-Specific Responses to Comments

- North Coast Region
  - Bacteria assessment corrections.
  - Identified bacteria data that were not assessed this cycle and is prioritized for off-cycle assessment in 2028.
- Central Valley Region
  - Corrections to data where units were incorrectly interpreted as mg/L instead of µg/L.
- Lahontan Region
  - Corrections to *E. coli* assessments.

Region Specific Responses to Comments

- Colorado River Basin Region
  - Moved Whitewater River from Condition Category 3 to Condition Category 1.
  - Revised the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel for pyrethroids from “List” to “Do Not List” after determining data no longer represent current conditions due to management practice changes per Listing Policy Section 6.1.5.3.
- San Diego Region
  - Corrected administrative error by deleting an unnecessary orthophosphate decision.

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Benthic Community Effects (“BCE”)

- “A water segment shall be placed on the section 303(d) list if the water segment exhibits significant degradation in biological populations and/or communities as compared to reference site(s) and is associated with water or sediment concentrations of pollutants…” (Listing Policy Section 3.9)
- “The objective of this Act is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and ***biological*** integrity of the Nation's waters.” (Clean Water Act Section 101(a))
- The California Stream Condition Index (“CSCI”) is a well-established, peer-reviewed, and scientifically accepted tool to measure biological health consistent with the Listing Policy Section 3.9.

Graphic: SCCWRP, Bioassessment 101

2024 BCE Listings Results

- 44 waterbodies with impaired biology and associated pollutants were placed in Category 3.
- USEPA sent a letter of partial disapproval for this component of the List and moved the 44 waterbodies to Category 5 in their ATTAINS database.

2026 Refinements and Results

- January 2025 Draft: new waterbodies with impaired biology and associated pollutants were placed in Category 5.

- Proposed Final: reflects revisions including creation of subcategory 5-bio.

BCE Impairment Categorization

New condition subcategory named “5-bio”:

Degraded biological populations and communities indicate that at least one aquatic life beneficial use is not supported. This impairment determination must be supported by ***at least one pollutant impairment for an aquatic life beneficial use*** *on the same waterbody segment. A Total Maximum Daily Load for the associated pollutant(s) may be used to further assess the association between the associated pollutant(s) and the degraded biological populations and communities and, as appropriate, help to restore the degraded biological populations and communities.* ***A Total Maximum Daily Load for the degraded biological populations and communities is not appropriate because Total Maximum Daily Loads are intended for pollutants.***

BCE Impairment Identification

Place waterbodies into subcategory 5-bio for BCE when:

1. Benthic communities are degraded, as compared to reference sites.
   - Two CSCI scores are below the 10th percentile reference threshold (i.e., 0.79).
   - Waterbody is designated with COLD or WARM beneficial uses.
2. There is at least one pollutant impairment for a designated aquatic life beneficial use on the same waterbody.
   - Pollutant is impairing COLD, WARM, or other aquatic life beneficial uses including but not limited to SAL, EST, BIOL, RARE, MIGR, and SPWN.

Determining Pollutant Association for Impaired BCE

- “Association of chemical concentrations, temperature, dissolved oxygen, trash, and other pollutants shall be determined using sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.7, 6.1.5.9, or other applicable sections.” (Listing Policy section 3.9)
- An “association” is presumed when biology is degraded and there is a pollutant impairment for aquatic life beneficial use in the same waterbody segment.

BCE Categorization Summary

- Subcategory 5-bio:
  - If there is associated pollutants with degraded biology.
  - If there are both associated pollutants and pollution with degraded biology.

- Category 4c:
  - If pollution is the sole known cause of degraded biology.

- Category 3:
  - If there is no known associated pollutant or evidence of pollution causing the degraded biology.

Waterbody Types Assessed

- In the 2026 IR, CSCI data were assessed for:
  - Perennial and non-perennial wadeable streams designated with WARM and COLD uses.
    - Including modified and intermittent waterbodies.
- Changes reflected in the January 23, 2026 version of the Staff Report and Response to Comments.

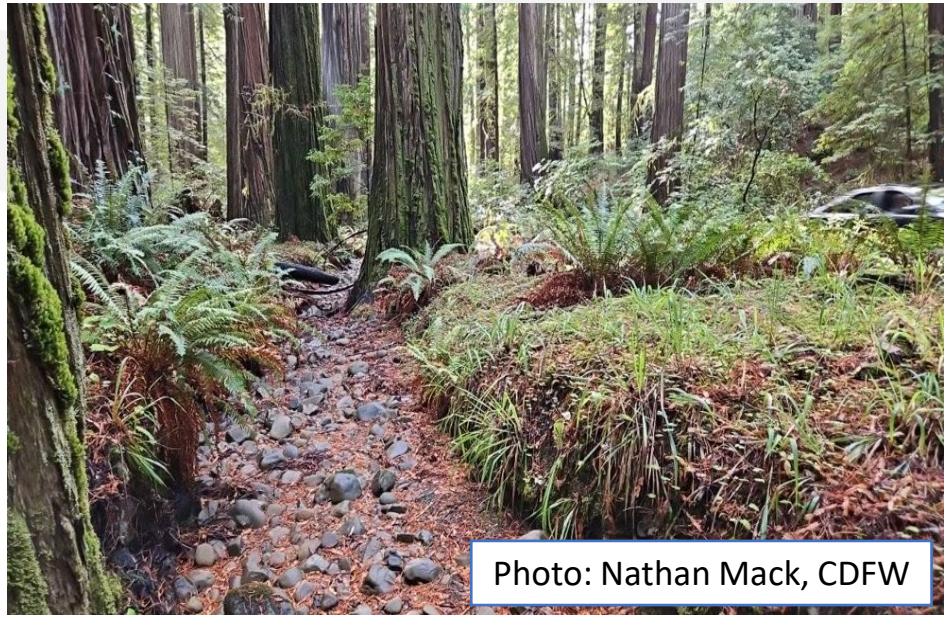

Photo: Nathan Mack, CDFW

Central Valley Floor Waterbodies

In the 2026 IR, Central Valley Floor streams with degraded biology were placed in Category 3 due to uncertainty about the applicability of the CSCI and statewide 10th percentile reference threshold.

Photo: SCCWRP, Mazor et al. 2025

Draft Resolution Language

Coordinate with the SWAMP Bioassessment Program, and the Bioassessment Working Group

Consider the applicability of the CSCI's 10th percentile reference threshold in specific waterbody types or ecoregions

Ensure scientific accuracy, public transparency, and consistency

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Program Improvements & Next Cycles

Active Program Improvements:

- Database modernization and automation improvements
- Efforts to improve data transparency and public engagement

2028 Integrated Report:

- On-Cycle: Central Coast, San Diego, San Joaquin River Delta and Tulare Lake Basin of Central Valley Region
- Off-cycle Assessments: North Coast, Los Angeles, Santa Ana
- Public draft expected early 2027

2030 Integrated Report:

- On-Cycle: San Francisco Bay, Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and Sacramento River watershed of the Central Valley Region
- Data solicitation is expected to begin in early March 2026 and close in early July 2026.

Staff Recommendation

Adopt the Resolution approving the proposed Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters portion of the 2026 California Integrated Report.

Questions
Oral Comments
Board Discussion