

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION**

73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260
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Public Notice 7-25-06
Notice Date: January 13, 2025

NOTICE OF CEQA SCOPING MEETINGS

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR
COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION USE ATTAINABILITY ANALYSIS TO MODIFY
BENEFICIAL USES IN THE SALTON SEA**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region (Colorado River Basin Water Board) staff will hold a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping meeting to discuss the development of a proposed amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region (Basin Plan). The proposed Basin Plan Amendment (Project) would designate the Inland Saline Water Habitat beneficial use and de-designate the Warm Freshwater Habitat beneficial use for the Salton Sea. Once adopted, the Basin Plan Amendment would be incorporated into Chapter 2 and 3 of the Basin Plan.

This scoping meeting will provide participants with opportunities to comment on: **(1)** the scope of the proposed Basin Plan Amendment; and **(2)** the scope and content of the “functionally equivalent” Substitute Environmental Document (SED) to be prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.5, and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15251, subdivision (g) and title 23, section 3777.

IN-PERSON MEETING

A CEQA scoping meeting will be held at the following date and time in person:

Date: Thursday, January 23, 2025
Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Location: North Shore Yacht Club
99155 Sea View Drive
Mecca, CA 92254

VIRTUAL MEETING

A second CEQA scoping meeting will be held at the following date and time, by video and teleconference:

Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025
Time: 10:00 AM
Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom Video and Teleconference

To participate remotely via video or phone, contact **Samantha Shapiro** at samantha.shapiro@waterboards.ca.gov or (760) 313-1297, no later than **5:00 pm** on **January 27, 2025**. Links for the meeting, including a phone call option, will also be posted on the Colorado River Basin Water Board's [Public Notice Page](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/public_notices) (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/public_notices).

BACKGROUND

The Basin Plan is the Colorado River Basin Water Board's guiding document for preserving and enhancing water quality in the region for the protection of beneficial uses for present and future generations. The Basin Plan specifies beneficial uses of groundwaters and surface waters; water quality objectives (WQOs) for protection of such uses; and implementation programs to achieve WQOs.

The Salton Sea is listed on section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA), also known as the 303(d) List of Impaired Waters, for several pollutants including salinity, nutrient impairments and low-dissolved oxygen, exceeding WQOs and impairing the beneficial uses of the water body. The average salinity from three sampling locations in the Salton Sea was roughly 75,000 mg/L of total dissolved solids in 2024.

The Salton Sea is a closed basin lake. The lake receives agricultural return flows from the Imperial and Coachella Valleys. Most of the overall flow into the Salton Sea is from the Imperial Valley as agricultural returns, municipal waste, and other industrial waste. Since the 1920s, the Salton Sea has had salinity at or above marine concentrations. High salinity has historically impaired aquatic life survival and development. The Salton Sea is a eutrophic lake, impaired by excessive nutrient loading which results in low dissolved oxygen, high ammonia levels, and a "rotten egg" odor associated with hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) emissions. Because the Sea has no outlet, salts accumulate in the lake or precipitate on the surface. The concentration of nutrients in the lake enhances eutrophic conditions, leading to algal blooms and low dissolved oxygen concentrations. Low oxygen concentrations have historically led to fish die-offs during the summer months and have contributed to geochemical gypsum blooms.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the scoping meeting is for Colorado River Basin Water Board staff to seek comment, questions, and inputs from public agencies, interested parties, and members of the public on the range of Project actions and alternatives, significant and cumulative impacts, and mitigation measures. Scoping may also assist the Colorado River Basin Water Board in resolving concerns of affected federal, state, and local agencies and other interested persons. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 3775.5.)

SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS

The Colorado River Basin Water Board will accept written and oral comments. Staff will solicit oral comments at the CEQA scoping meeting. Persons wishing to submit written comments are requested to do so as soon as possible, but no later than **5:00 pm** on **February 11, 2025**.

Interested persons may submit written comments via email to **Samantha Shapiro** at samantha.shapiro@waterboards.ca.gov, with the subject line: "**Comment Letter: CEQA Scoping Salton Sea UAA.**" Hand deliveries and mailed comments should be sent to the following address:

Samantha Shapiro
Environmental Scientist
California Regional Water Quality Control Board,
Colorado River Basin Region
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Written comments may also be faxed to the Colorado River Basin Water Board office at (760) 341-6820.

Colorado River Basin Water Board staff will not prepare written responses to comments received at this meeting or to written comments submitted during the comment period. However, Colorado River Basin Water Board staff will address all significant environmental impacts in the draft and final environmental documents.

ACCESSIBILITY AND LANGUAGE NEEDS

Individuals who require special accommodations or interpreter services to participate in this workshop, please contact **Mary Castaneda** via email Mary.Castaneda@Waterboards.ca.gov at least fourteen days prior the scheduled meeting to notify us that you will be utilizing these services. TTY users may contact the California Relay Service at 1 (800) 735- 2929 or voice line at 1 (800) 735-2922.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions concerning this matter, please contact **Samantha Shapiro** at (760) 313-1297 or by email at samantha.shapiro@waterboards.ca.gov. Please bring the preceding event information to the attention of any persons known to you who would be interested in this matter.

PROJECT VICINITY MAP: SALTON SEA WATERSHED

