

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

73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, California 92260
Phone: (760) 346-7491
Fax: (760) 341-6820

Public Notice 7-26-30
Issued on August 19, 2026

Comment Deadline:
September 17, 2026

Staff Contact:
Logan Raub
Logan.Raub@waterboards.ca.gov

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TENTATIVE WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS ORDER R7-2026-0020

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region (Colorado River Basin Water Board) is releasing for public review and comment Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements Order R7-2026-0020 (Tentative Order), for the following:

Discharger: Western Mesquite Mines, Inc.
Project: Western Mesquite Mines Pad 8/Section 16 Build Out Project
Imperial County
Associated Facility: Hard Rock Mine

HEARING PARTICIPATION

The Colorado River Basin Water Board will hold a public hearing to consider adoption of the Tentative Order at the date, time, and location specified below:

Date: October 13, 2026
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: Colorado River Basin Water Board's Boardroom
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Remote Participation Option Available
(See Instructions Below)

TENTATIVE WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS ORDER R7-2026-0020
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REMOTE PARTICIPATION OPTION

Although this public meeting will be conducted in-person, the public will also have the opportunity to participate remotely via the [ZOOM videoconferencing platform](https://zoom.us) (<https://zoom.us>), which is free to download. If you intend to speak, present oral comments or otherwise actively participate in this meeting, you will need to obtain ZOOM access prior to the meeting. For those who do NOT intend to actively participate, the meeting will be livestreamed via [Cal-Span](http://www.cal-span.org) (www.cal-span.org).

Please refer to the Colorado River Basin Water Board's [Remote Meetings](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/board_info/remote_meeting) page (www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/board_info/remote_meeting) for instructions on remote participation via ZOOM.

ORAL COMMENTS AT HEARING

All persons interested in the Tentative Order and/or this proceeding will be provided the opportunity to orally present general policy statements and legal arguments during the hearing, provided that they have submitted **Speaker Request Cards** (or the equivalent for virtual participation). Such comments will be limited to three minutes, though the Board Chair may grant additional time on a case-by-case basis.

To ensure accuracy of the record the Colorado River Basin Water Board requests that interested persons wishing to speak at the hearing provide a summary of their oral comments in writing before or during the hearing. However, interested persons do not need to submit written statements in order to speak.

If your comments will incorporate a short slideshow presentation or visual aids, please email these materials to Mary.Castaneda@waterboards.ca.gov no later than noon on the day before the meeting. These materials will not be admitted as evidence in the administrative record.

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

The Colorado River Basin Water Board will accept comments on the Tentative Order during a 30-day public comment period ending on **September 17, 2026**. All written comments must be received no later than **5:00 p.m.** Comments received prior to this deadline will be included in the administrative record. Untimely written comments will not be accepted, absent a showing of good cause and lack of prejudice to the parties.

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Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

By Mail: Colorado River Basin Water Board
Attn: Logan Raub
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, California 92260
By Email: Logan.Raub@waterboards.ca.gov
By Fax: (760) 341-6820

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Project is to construct Heap Leach Pad 8 (Pad 8) and fully develop a map section at the Western Mesquite Mine to increase gold leaching capabilities at the mine facility. The Project involves extending the current processing pads to the remainder eastern sliver of the area in Township 13 South, Range 19 East, Section 16, San Bernardino Base and Meridian. Project activities involve construction of Pad 8, construction of a synthetically lined internal berm to separate Pad 6 from Pad 8, and the potential construction of another Event Pond.

This Order is specifically for discharges of dredged or fill material associated with the construction of the Project. The actual siting, design, construction, use, monitoring, maintenance, closure, and post-closure requirements of the Project are separately regulated by another permit in accordance with California Code of Regulations (Title 27, § 22470, subd. (a); Title 27, § 22480, subd. (b)(3); and Title 27, § 22490). WDRs Order R7-2025-0005 was adopted by the Colorado River Basin Water Board on March 4, 2025.

The Project will permanently impact 26.34 acres (245,599 cubic yards) of waters of the state. Western Mesquite Mines, Inc. is proposing to preserve 345.2 acres of non-wetland waters as compensatory mitigation for the permanent impacts to waters of the state. The preservation of these resources will equate to a compensatory mitigation ratio of 13.1:1 for waters of the State. No temporary impacts are anticipated within the Project site. Construction of the Project is anticipated to start in October 2026, and the construction duration is estimated to take approximately 9 to 12 months.

NATURE OF HEARING

The Colorado River Basin Water Board's consideration of the Tentative Order is an adjudicative proceeding conducted in accordance with California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 648 et seq. The administrative record shall consist of all Board files,

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exhibits, and related agenda material. The Tentative Order will be considered via an “informal hearing.” (*Id.*, § 648.7; see also Gov. Code, § 11445.10 et seq.)

PARTIES TO PROCEEDING

The parties to this proceeding¹ are the Discharger (i.e., person to whom the Tentative Order is directed), and any additional persons that the Executive Officer, in consultation with the Board Chair, determines should be a “party.” (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 648.1, subd. (a).) Such additional persons are referred to as **Designated Parties**.

Unless they are formally recognized as a Designated Party, **interested persons are NOT considered “parties” to the proceeding**. This means that interested persons will ordinarily not be permitted to present evidence (e.g., photos, eyewitness testimony, etc.) for entry into the administrative record; again, oral comments are limited to general policy and legal statements. Interested persons are also not subject to cross examination but may asked to respond to clarifying questions from the Board Members. (*Id.*, § 648.1, subd. (d).)

To request Designated Party status, send a written application via email to Logan.Raub@waterboards.ca.gov as soon as possible, but no later than **September 17, 2026** (submitted concurrently with written comments and any proposed written evidence). The Executive Officer and Board staff will promptly respond to all timely applications and may request further information before the determination is made.

Designated Party status will only be granted if the applicant demonstrates that it is necessary and appropriate under the circumstances². An application will not be granted if it appears that such designation will impair the interests of justice and the orderly and prompt conduct of the proceeding. Additionally, the Executive Officer, in consultation with the Board Chair, may impose restrictions on the requestor’s hearing participation, including limiting or excluding the use of cross-examination and other procedures to

¹ An “adjudicative proceeding” is one in which the Board conducts an evidentiary hearing for determination of facts, resulting in the formulation of a decision in the form of an adopted order. (Gov. Code, § 11405.20; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 648, subd. (a).)

² The Board’s decision may include the following considerations: (1) whether the applicant will be substantially affected by issues addressed in the hearing; (2) whether the parties will adequately represent the applicant’s interests; (3) whether the applicant would present their own written evidence or witness testimony at the hearing; and (4) whether the applicant will seek to cross-examine the other parties’ witnesses.

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promote the orderly and prompt conduct of the proceeding. (Gov. Code, § 11440.50, subd. (c).)

ORDER OF PROCEEDING

Adjudicative proceedings are conducted in a manner deemed most suitable to the particular case with a view toward expeditiously securing relevant information without unnecessary delay and expense. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 648.5, subd. (a).)

This proceeding will be conducted in the following order: (1) opening statements by Board Chair, summarizing the subject matter and purpose of the hearing; (2) identification of all persons wishing to participate in the hearing; (3) administration of oath for all persons intending to speak at the hearing, including interested persons making oral comments; (4) presentations by staff; (5) comments and/or presentations by parties; (6) comments from interested persons; (7) Board Members' comments and discussion; (8) closure of hearing by Board Chair; and (9) voting by Board Members. In the event that the Tentative Order will be contested, the Executive Officer, in consultation with the Board Chair, will determine time allotments prior to the hearing.

SUBMISSION OF EVIDENCE

To avoid the introduction of surprise testimony and exhibits (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 648.4, subd. (a)), and to minimize the need for oral argument and testimony at the hearing, the parties shall submit all documentary evidence (Id., § 648.4, subd. (c)), witness information (Id., § 648.4, subd. (b)), and legal/technical memoranda to staff prior to the hearing date.

As noted above, the administrative record will consist of materials in the Board file for the Facility (at time of hearing).

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

The Tentative Order is posted to the Board's [Tentative Orders](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/board_decisions/tentative_orders/index.shtml) webpage (www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/board_decisions/tentative_orders/index.shtml). To receive a physical copy by mail, contact either Mary Castaneda at (760) 776 8945 or Mary.Castaneda@waterboards.ca.gov.

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ACCESSIBILITY AND LANGUAGE NEEDS

Individuals who require special accommodations or interpreter services to participate in this meeting, please contact **Mary Castaneda** via email at Mary.Castaneda@waterboards.ca.gov at least 10 days prior to 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 Logan Raub at (760) 776-8966 or Logan.Raub@waterboards.ca.gov. Please bring the foregoing to the attention of anyone you believe may be interested in this matter.

File: WDID No. 7A133173001, Western Mesquite Mines Pad 8/Section 16 Build Out Project, Board Order R7-2026-0020

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