

Oral Public Comments from Community Engagement Events Proposed Resolution No. R1-2023-0001

This document compliments the *Response to Written Comments on Draft Resolution* document, which presents verbatim the written comments that were submitted. The statements and questions in this document were recorded on paper by Regional Water Board staff and represent comments made by participants of the four community engagement events for the Draft Racial Equity Resolution. Regional Water Board staff later transcribed comments into this document, maintaining the original words in the written notes except where words are added, in parentheses (), for clarification. Notes from the three listening sessions are not attributed to the individuals who provided the comments.

Regional Water Board Workshop, October 7, 2022

- Ria Espinoza, Equity Arcata: Inquired if Regional Water Board members read a land acknowledgement during the board meeting and recommended reviewing Cal Poly-Humboldt's land acknowledgement video guide and visiting the Wiyot Heritage Center in Loleta, California. Supports the Regional Water Board's Racial Equity Initiative.
- Kasil Willie, Save California Salmon: Likes the "Acknowledging Native American Colonization, Genocide, and Resiliency" section in the Draft Racial Equity Resolution and encourages the Board and its staff to learn from tribes in the North Coast Region.
- Konrad Fisher, Water Climate Trust: Likes the commitment to improving the effectiveness of Tribal Beneficial Uses and the "Acknowledging Native American Colonization, Genocide, and Resiliency" section in the Draft Racial Equity Resolution. Recommends that the Regional Water Board and its staff be upfront and clear about what we can commit to and offer to advance equity through its Racial Equity Initiative.

In-Person Listening Session, Blue Lake, California, October 18, 2022

- Cultural shift is needed at the Water Board in Agency; be proactive in outreach and building relationships
- Be proactive not reactive
- Have tribal members on staff and the Board
- Representation inspires
- Learn from the tribes
- LAFCO (Local Agency Formation Commission) - water districts lack People of Color (POC), push racial equity
- Improve diversity in Water Board staff and programs

- Water Boards did not provide enough locations for listening sessions; not enough locations, Hoopa would have been a good location.
- Offer childcare during these sessions
- Community engagement meetings as a racial equity action
- Need to be there in communities longer; two hours is not enough in these communities.
- Do field trips with communities.
- Attend tribal council meetings on reservations.
- Hybrid meetings would be helpful.
- Community center could allow for participation in hybrid meetings.
- Education regarding connection to water for kids, is important!
- Do a public interest campaign like "got milk."
- Access to commenting and coming to listening sessions is limited, only privileged people can come.
- Who knows about the Water Boards? Communities and their members are not aware of the Water Boards or what they do and, therefore, cannot effectively engage.
- Go to the communities.
- Do more outreach.
- Concerned about planning too much, Water Boards need to do more listening to the public.
- What are the racist policies? Education on allocation of water and understanding the history.
- How will we know changes are having impacts?
- Remote, rural areas have different issues than urban areas.
- We need private water systems funding after wildfires.
- Water Boards should allow for comments outside of business hours.
- Communities need water rates that are affordable.
- Form partnerships- change the power structure.
- Shift (way of thinking) to recognize location, land, and watershed.
- Is the Water Boards' Racial Equity process aligned with GARE?
- How to live process, how to include community?
- Don't do (Racial Equity Resolution) for yourselves (Regional Water Board).
- Education with water curriculum including water rights for humans, fish, and habitat.
- Too many studies, families concerned.
- Pressure is power.
- Community members want tribal members in positions of power; need a council or advisory board.
- Demystify the board member application process - make it known.
- Knowing your watershed is important- how do we shape how the youth think about water?
- Public access to get water for tribal ceremonies is limited.
- Drinking water at schools is inadequate (suggest hydration stations).

- Positive things about water: kayaking Humboldt Bay, Hog Island Oyster Farm, Salmon river feeding and sustaining tribes and recreations, intertribal rafting youth camps, aquaculture project in Arcata, sustainability raised seafood.
- There is not enough water for everyone and the river.
- Disrupted cultural connection- disconnected from spring water (water source) by construction of roads.
- Hmong communities lack access to agricultural water.
- Shasta River adjudication.
- (Issuing involving water supply for) pot/marijuana farms vs people for water.
- Tribes should have special/exclusive access to beneficial uses and water quality.
- Wells are running dry and people are stressed about losing supplies.
- Understanding spirituality of water is being missed, it needs to be a higher priority.
- Enforcement and Complaint response is lacking in rural remote areas.
- (There is) historical racism (in access to) water in Reservation.
- Climate change and cost of solar.
- Experiences with water: Eating fish at the mouth of the Klamath and Trinity.
- History of water rights- acknowledgment (of systemic racism), undo (racist policies), and protect (equitable access to water).
- We have been coming to Water Board meetings for 20 years and nothing has changed.
- (Recognize disproportionate impacts at) detention and incarceration sites.
- (Recognize) marginalized identities.
- (Acknowledge) regional identities.
- Acknowledgement of tribal historical connection, deep resolution.
- Social aspects and access are important to identity.
- Inequity in poor infrastructure, ag (agriculture), poor wastewater treatment facilities on Klamath, which are old and outdated.
- Racist comments regarding basic infrastructure to community.
- Less pressure of fisheries.
- Access to cultural materials depend on amount of water (willow roots, reeds, eels, acorns, rocks) on the Klamath and salmon rivers.
- Hmong and tribal members gather at the spit.
- City of Arcata- exemptions?
- Wildfire is making water quality more fragile, susceptible. Ceremonial access is threatened and not respected.
- Klamath alfalfa- flood irrigation cause toxic algae. Also, biggest use of clean water and is legal.
- Negative- bacteria levels closes oyster farm, moonstone beach from cattle impacts (little river).
- Times when you can't eat fish from Klamath.
- Outer Ear infection from rafting on the Klamath.
- Algal Blooms in Creeks- toxicity, ecological impacts.
- Concerned about contaminants.
- Lack of clean abundant water.

- Taste of the fish in Klamath (is poor).
- Native (people are) restricted to access, some permits (are) not necessary.
- Water reconciliation.
- Crop-specific regulation (needed)- cannabis.
- Could we establish recommendations or requirements for water districts?
- Including collective interest.
- Tribal families pumping water from streams.
- Hydropower, forks of salmon.

In-Person Listening Session, Happy Camp, California, October 19, 2022

- Sometimes tribes are forced to demystify their practices that have successfully managed the lands for thousands of years - person with power decides what is the truth.
- History is invaluable for knowledge - not always written and oral as an option.
- Facts and figures given more credence by government.
- Plenty of permits that are not enforced enough.
- Consultation- decisions need to be made together.
- Too many permits (hoops) required to improve conditions.
- No observable actions or treatments are happening.
- Working with the government means "hurry up and then wait."
- Lack of burning and understanding for the past 120 years.
- Tribes shouldn't be required to share Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)/cultural management practices - they want to work with us.
- People that want to do the right thing have to jump through hoops, however, to do bad is easy.
- Actions have to be made by citizens and not government agencies or the public like press releases or media attention on water quality and rights issues.
- Coordination between agencies and resources.
- We have to enforce the regulations.
- Can't regulate flow, but TMDL has language.
- We need crops but for us, not to export.
- Medicine man needs river.
- Salmon not spawning in the Scott River.
- Water Quality in the Scott- tributaries ran dry because of irrigation, droughts make it worse, and water rights to the entire creek.
- Klamath Watershed in battle with Paper mill and town of Weed.
- Affluence and privilege needed to engage with getting access to water.
- Corporate interest in water in North Coast Region is political.
- When snow is low, pressure for water is high.
- Snowpack is gone quicker.
- Alfalfa and cattle get the water instead of people.
- Community suffers and need to buy water.

- Double standards with enforcement of water allocation in the Scott and Shasta Watersheds.
- Human use of water should be priority over cows and alfalfa.
- "How come that river is dry but there is a lake in that guy's yard" - flood irrigation.
- We need more flow.
- Irrigation district- water available? Water quality?
- Water drying up, people won't admit to climate changes or other ecological changes.
- People steal water with no fines.
- Human use of water should be top priority for Montague and Shasta Rivers.
- Still not enough from agencies.
- Taking away this way of life, kids won't be able to catch fish, traditional fishermen lose their livelihood and identity.
- Gold Rush and timber industry now equal fire industry from mismanagement of forests. They believe in suppression not preventative measures.
- Danger to Happy Camp.
- Alfalfa farmers cut up to 4 times per year.
- Big ranchers take advantage of policies.
- Media shows tribes versus farmers, as "us" versus "them."
- Sense of time differs between the government and tribes.
- TEK known well in advance of western knowledge.
- Clean water is needed for ceremonies.
- We (tribes) depend on water for livelihood, health, and religion.
- Rain rock is in Fort Jones Museum, stolen approximately 40 years ago.
- No acknowledgement for religion or culture.
- Few generations of (cattle) ranchers while we (tribes) have been here since time immemorial.
- New generation need to fix old mistakes.
- We (tribes) never took more than what was needed.
- We need to put world back on axis.
- Can't fish Coho here, but you can kill thousands with no consequences (USFWS).
- Racial connections- tribal fisheries.
- 2021 resiliency plan (led to) no change or vision.
- Lobbyists = farmers who are feeding misinformation.
- We wouldn't knock down church doors, but others will dam our rivers, preventing ceremonial practices. "Our Church is that river."
- (We have) pride in Mt. Shasta watershed.
- Pollution is both permitted and unpermitted with lack of enforcement and waiver after waiver.
- Funding to local agencies to enforce and ticket/fine.
- Timber industry (turned in-) to a fire industry.
- Water in canal (leaks in-) to ground- line canal to put in river, may limit bacterial growth.
- Can't drink water plus being charged money for water.

- Pressure on areas of the delta have turned political, taking away from more significant water quality and rights issues.
- Water quality is very poor, there are fish kills, and not safe to drink in Montague.
- After Slater Fire the river turned to mud and Elk Creek is vulnerable.
- This is an urgent issue, we can't wait.
- Needs to fix roads and prevent erosion.
- Dams mean stagnant and green water.
- Issues are beyond just water- trees, fires, and burning.
- Indian Creek flowing higher now, from less trees due to fire.
- Must address upslope issues.
- Water quality from dams going over the top creates algae.
- Shasta River - blue ribbon fishing capital of the world but now there is no fishing.
- Use best water to flood irrigate (glacial river) which means waste into the river.
- Toxic algae affect the ability for the medicine man to do ceremonial practices.
- The ditches are clean water with fish in them.
- Using Shasta River as conduit for hot reservoir (temperature).
- Opinions of water from the 18th century.
- 1914 water rights issues.
- To have clean water we must limit use.
- Farmers won't share water.

Virtual Listening Session, Zoom, October 25, 2022

- Native perspective is important in these resolutions and policies.
- Fire science: would like to see science, technology, math, engineering include Indigenous TEK (Traditional or Tribal Ecological Knowledge): fire science; decolonize our way of thinking of these topics.
- Recognizing TEK as a senior practice and way of knowing to modern sciences.
- Communities strategize themselves about who speaks first to ensure that everyone feels safe.
- Request more tribal representation on the Board.
- Flyers were only ready about 10 days before the meetings, which prevented community members to get the word out. It would be beneficial to commit to getting flyers and other materials available at least two weeks before events.
- We need the ability to do video commenting I think and we need easy-to-read short documents on important issues. It is like we have to learn a new language just to try to have clean water and a voice.
- Consider changing the way things are organized (not following status quo).
- Consultation can be done minimally or more comprehensively; do consultation in the spirit of consultation rather than checking the box.
- Reach out to non-federally represented tribes.
- Press release would have been helpful.
- Accessibility for native peoples to be in these spaces is an issue.

- Hoopa High School has a great cafeteria and gym where we could host meetings; Blue Lake is good and workable, but we (Regional Water Board) are invited to Hoopa to host meetings and this will go a long way to draw a larger community audience and to further building partnerships.
- Native peoples should feel invited into governmental spaces.
- Support for the metaphor of the “lens of racial equity.”
- Should be more than one representative of native communities; one person can’t do the job; every federally recognized tribe should have a representative with equal rights and decision-making power.
- The teleconference situation is helpful even when in person. There can still be people conference in that would be inclusive and more participation.
- Consultation means something to every agency and you can tell how much they care by how they "consult." Just sending a letter and checking a box means to me they don't really want to engage the tribes. And respected.
- Would be great to find a way to have something for the kids to do during meetings so mothers can bring their children; have childcare available.
- It would be nice to have security at meetings to help make people feel safer and more comfortable, especially in more conservative areas where meetings are held (Yreka, etc.).
- Protecting for recreational uses also protects for cultural uses.
- Accessibility to water in the rivers and to traditional foods.
- Affluence is a big factor. Communities without access to clean drinking water are generally less affluent communities.
- Klamath was inaccessible due to mudslide.
- When flows drop, cultural beneficial uses get impacted.
- Language should reflect nature of stolen lands in the context of attempted genocide
- Hoopa and others have Public Service Announcements (PSAs); newspapers also do PSAs.
- Acknowledging the cultural importance of the health of the river is important.
- Native peoples feel about their home like others might feel about a loved one.
- They have a different point of view and lifestyle and they are afraid of native peoples...so I feel like they don't understand what the river means to our people.
- Metaphor: if a community's church blows up, who makes the decision on how it gets rebuilt?
- Identity, religion.
- Issue of freedom of religion.
- Native peoples have had the most sophisticated management practices of natural resources for thousands of years (e.g. fire science, basket weaving).
- Sovereignty should be recognized.
- Unrecognized tribes/organizations should also be recognized.
- Quotes from people that are willing to provide them are powerful and improve transparency, accuracy; refers to written comments too rather than summarizing them.

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- Hear from State Board that Consultation is only necessary when required by law; we should consider consultation even when CEQA doesn't require it (e.g., updating Waivers). Resolution should suggest this.
- That happens a lot as far as comments not being properly written down and addressed especially if they are difficult to address.
- Agricultural chemicals and pollution need to be seriously regulated.
- Regulatory management of water resources where impacts have already been determined, should be addressed swiftly to reverse the inequity. Too many concessions by regulators that have happened over decades, coupled with too little movement by violators to undo issues has just kept the racial inequity intact.
- Low water levels and high water temperatures are an attack on food sovereignty and traditional ways of life.
- Challenges to water quality or access to water can occur when the community cannot get assistance or even the foresight to address poor quality water systems. Lacking the sophistication to look for grants, etc. means a community may be stuck with what they have even if it's not good quality; communities are rural, remote, have poor internet and often need assistance; it's not enough just to point people to options.
- Health of waters and watersheds correlate to the health of native peoples; water quality is a public/native health issue.
- Toxic algae in the rivers affects accessibility to clean water.
- Fisherman get sick when using rivers with toxic algae.
- How do we make decisions that make the procedures/participation reflect the extensive senior water rights and management practices that have existed for thousands of years?

List of Oral Public Comments from Community Engagement Events