
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY AND NOTICE OF BOARD WORKSHOP, LISTENING SESSIONS, AND OFFICE HOURS FOR THE NORTH COAST REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD'S DRAFT RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Water Board) is seeking input from Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other people of color (BIPOC) communities, California Native American Tribes (Tribes), and other community members on a draft Racial Equity Action Plan to advance racial equity in the North Coast Region. North Coast Water Board staff (Staff) will hold several public engagement events, as described in Sections III and IV below, to seek input on the Draft Racial Equity Action Plan for the North Coast Region during a 45-day public review period from **November 4 to December 19, 2024**.

I. QUICK INFORMATION

1. Review the Draft Racial Equity Action Plan on the North Coast Water Board's [Racial Equity webpage](https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/racial_equity/index.html) (https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/racial_equity/index.html).
2. Send written comments to RB1-Equity@waterboards.ca.gov by 5:00 pm on Thursday, December 19, 2024. More information in Section III, below.
3. Provide oral comments at the Board Workshop on December 4, 2024, and/or participate in staff-led hybrid listening sessions and virtual office hours. More information in Section IV, below.
4. Register to attend a listening session by completing the [online form](https://t.ly/m3Z2f) (<https://t.ly/m3Z2f>). Registration is highly encouraged but not required to attend.

II. BACKGROUND

Advancing racial equity is a priority for the North Coast Water Board and its staff. Through the adoption of a Resolution *Condemning Racism, Xenophobia, Bigotry, and Racial Injustice and Strengthening Commitment to Racial Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Anti-Racism in the North Coast Region* (Racial Equity

Notice of Public Comment Period
and Board Workshop,
Listening Sessions, and Office Hours

Resolution)¹ in February 2023, the development of a Racial Equity Action Plan, and other parallel initiatives, the North Coast Water Board is working toward a future where it equitably implements the Water Boards' mission to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses. The Racial Equity Resolution (1) acknowledges and condemns racism, xenophobia, bigotry, and racial injustice, (2) commits the North Coast Water Board to advancing racial equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and anti-racism, and (3) directs Staff to develop a Racial Equity Action Plan that "articulates a vision for racial equity and outlines specific actions to address North Coast Water Board systems that perpetuate racial inequities while establishing new, equitable, and resilient systems."

The draft Racial Equity Action Plan is the first version of a living document that outlines specific actions that Staff will take to advance racial equity in the North Coast Region. It was developed from BIPOC community guidance, Staff input, and the Racial Equity Resolution directives. The draft Racial Equity Action Plan is organized by Priorities, Goals, and Actions. The three overarching Priorities include (A) Improve Internal Administrative Processes and Organizational Culture to Promote Racial Equity Within the Workplace; (B) Advance Community Engagement, Collaboration, and Access; and (C) Incorporate Equity into Permits, Enforcement Actions, Watershed Planning, Policies, and Stewardship. Each of these Priorities contains several goals with specific actions, action examples or sub-actions, and performance indicators to specify how goals will be achieved.

III. PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD

Notice is hereby given that the North Coast Water Board will receive public comments on the Draft Racial Equity Action Plan for a 45-day period from **November 4 – December 19, 2024**.

Document Availability

The Draft Racial Equity Action Plan will be available on the North Coast Water Board's [Racial Equity webpage](https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/racial_equity/index.html) (https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/racial_equity/index.html). for a 45-day public review and comment period. The public comment period will close at 5:00 p.m. on December 19, 2024.

Please send comments by selecting from the following methods:

¹ The Racial Equity Resolution, Resolution No. R1-2023-0001, may be reviewed here: https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/02_2023/pdf/6/2301_racialequity.pdf.

Notice of Public Comment Period
and Board Workshop,
Listening Sessions, and Office Hours

1. Email up to 15 megabytes to RB1-Equity@waterboards.ca.gov and use the subject heading “Draft Action Plan Comments”
 - a. Follow [electronic submittal guidelines](#) for comments greater than 15 megabytes
(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications_and_forms/available_documents/pdf/2014/ECM_Letter-Guidelines.pdf)
2. Fax to 707-576-2069
3. Mail or hand deliver to: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, Attention: Draft Racial Equity Action Plan, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California 95403-1072, or 930 6th Street, Eureka, CA 95501.

IV. BOARD WORKSHOP, LISTENING SESSIONS, AND OFFICE HOURS

Notice is additionally hereby given that the North Coast Water Board will hold a Board workshop, two virtual listening sessions, and five virtual “office hours” during the 45-day public comment period. The purpose of the Board workshop and listening sessions is to:

1. Inform and invite comments and conversations from BIPOC communities, Tribes, community members, and the North Coast Water Board about the draft Racial Equity Action Plan; and
2. Create a space for BIPOC communities, Tribes, and community members to share their experiences, perspectives, and knowledge related to racial equity and environmental justice in the North Coast Region.

Board Workshop

The Board workshop will be held during the following North Coast Water Board meeting:

<u>Board Meeting Date:</u>	December 4, 2024
<u>Board Item Start Time:</u>	6:00 p.m.
<u>Physical Location:</u>	David C. Joseph Board Room 5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Video and teleconference options: The meeting may be viewed live at: <https://cal-span.org/>. If you wish to comment on the item from a remote location, please complete a virtual speaker card using the link on the meeting agenda, which will be posted 10-days prior to the December Board meeting on this webpage: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/.

Notice of Public Comment Period
and Board Workshop,
Listening Sessions, and Office Hours

The Board workshop will entail (1) a North Coast Water Board staff presentation on the North Coast Water Board's Racial Equity Initiative, Draft Racial Equity Action Plan, and associated public engagement opportunities; (2) opportunity for public input; and (3) discussion between the North Coast Water Board, Staff, and community members.

A quorum of North Coast Water Board members will be present at the Board workshop; however, no board action will be taken. Although no formal decisions will be made, the Board may provide direction to Staff. Staff will present a revised Racial Equity Action Plan that reflects public input received during the 45-day review period during a subsequent North Coast Water Board meeting, currently scheduled for April 2025.

Additional information about the Board workshop, including meeting procedures and information on making presentations, can be found on the North Coast Water Board's website.

Hybrid Listening Sessions

The two listening sessions will be held on the following dates and times both virtually over Zoom and in-person at 5550 Skylane Blvd, Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>Listening Session Date:</u> | November 13, 2024 |
| <u>Listening Session Start Time:</u> | 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. |
| <u>Virtual Location:</u> | Zoom² |

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <u>Listening Session Date:</u> | November 16, 2024 |
| <u>Listening Session Start Time:</u> | 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. |
| <u>Virtual Location:</u> | Zoom² |

The listening sessions will entail (1) a Staff presentation on the Racial Equity Initiative, Draft Racial Equity Action Plan, and associated public engagement opportunities; (3) opportunity for public input; and (3) small group discussions with the public on the Draft Racial Equity Action Plan and topics about water and equity. A quorum of North Coast Water Board members will not be present at the listening sessions.

² Virtual Listening Session Zoom links will be available on the North Coast Water Board's Racial Equity webpage here:
https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/racial_equity/index.html.

Virtual Office Hours

The five virtual office hours will occur during lunch hours during the 45-day review period from November 4 to December 19, 2024, on the following dates and times:

1. Office Hour Dates: **November 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22**
Office Hour Time: **12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**
Virtual Location: **[Zoom \(https://waterboards.zoom.us/j/92885620322\)](https://waterboards.zoom.us/j/92885620322)**

The virtual office hours are standing, unstructured opportunities for community members to share perspectives and knowledge, ask questions, or discuss the draft Racial Equity Action Plan with North Coast Water Board staff. Additional days and times are available upon request to meet with Staff during normal business hours.

V. ACCESSIBILITY AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

If you would like to request special accommodations, including language interpretation services, please call (916) 322-4265 at least five to ten days prior to the engagement event you plan to attend. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf users may contact the California Relay Service at (800) 735-2929 or voice line at (800) 735-2922.

VI. AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's website:
[North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Homepage](https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/)
(<https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/>)

Racial Equity Webpage:
[Racial Equity Webpage](https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/racial_equity/index.html)
(https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/racial_equity/index.html)

Electronic Submittal Required for Correspondence and Reports to the Regional Board:
[Electronic Submittal Required for Correspondence and Reports to the Regional Board](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications_and_forms/available_documents/pdf/2014/ECM_Letter-Guidelines.pdf)
(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications_and_forms/available_documents/pdf/2014/ECM_Letter-Guidelines.pdf)

Email List Subscriptions:
[Email List Subscription Form](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?qsp=north_coast)
(https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?qsp=north_coast)

Notice of Public Comment Period
and Board Workshop,
Listening Sessions, and Office Hours

VI. POTENTIAL FUTURE CHANGES TO THE NOTICED ITEMS

Any changes regarding the noticed items will be posted on the North Coast Water Board's website and noticed through the email distribution list. Any person desiring to receive future notices must sign up for the email distribution list by accessing the [Email List Subscription Form webpage](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?qsp=north_coast) (https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?qsp=north_coast) and subscribing to the "Racial Equity" email list.

VII. NORTH COAST WATER BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION

Please direct questions about this public notice, the Racial Equity Initiative, or the Draft Racial Equity Action Plan to Staff at RB1-Equity@waterboards.ca.gov. Please contact RB1-Equity@waterboards.ca.gov or Devon Rabellino at (707) 576-2701 at least three days before the scheduled engagement event for disability accommodations.