

CALIFORNIA STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD



2023-2025

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN

2025 ANNUAL UPDATE



Acknowledgements

The State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board or Board) Racial Equity Action Plan was developed in partnership with employees and the communities they serve. Many people dedicated their time and resources to contribute to the visioning and strategizing sessions, participate in government-to-government Tribal consultations, attend public workshops, submit public comments, and engage with the State Water Board in various other ways to ensure that this plan reflects the needs and priorities of the communities most impacted by our work. The Water Boards acknowledge and thank our community partners, community members, California Native American Tribes, and Water Boards staff for their continued support and engagement throughout the implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan.

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Thank you to the staff throughout the Water Boards' regions, divisions, and offices that contributed to this report:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (regional water boards), collectively known as the Water Boards, share a mission to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water. This mission is strengthened by a commitment to racial equity and environmental justice. *Racial equity* is achieved when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved. *Environmental justice* means the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. The Water Boards envision a future where California's water resources and drinking water are equitably preserved, enhanced, and restored for all Californians, regardless of race; where race is not a predictor of professional outcomes for Water Boards employees; and, a racial equity lens is consistently applied to Water Boards' decision-making processes.

Between 2020 and 2023 the State Water Board engaged with its employees, the public, and with California Native American Tribes to develop a [Racial Equity Resolution](#) and associated [Racial Equity Action Plan](#). The Racial Equity Action Plan has been in effect for three years, and this annual report outlines the progress made in 2025. The Racial Equity Action Plan establishes three strategic directions the State Water Board will take to approach the work of advancing racial equity:

1. Integrating racial equity and measuring impact by infusing considerations throughout policies, programs, and practices; and monitoring progress.
2. Creating and maintaining inclusive spaces by addressing representation within the Water Boards and elevating understanding of racial equity.
3. Activating community wisdom and sharing power by removing barriers for participation and incorporating input.

The Racial Equity Action Plan sets goals for each strategic direction that the Water Boards aim to achieve and outlines actions to overcome existing barriers and achieve these goals. Every action has a division or office responsible for leading the implementation of that action. On a quarterly basis, representatives from all regions, divisions, and offices of the Water Boards meet to coordinate on environmental justice and racial equity through the Environmental Justice Roundtable. The Environmental Justice Roundtable serves as the main internal convening place for the implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan and other related racial equity and environmental justice efforts across the Water Boards. Through this roundtable, quarterly written updates are developed and shared internally to support ongoing coordination and accountability.

Reflections on Year 3 Implementation

The Water Boards have been working hard to implement the State Water Board's 2023–2025 Racial Equity Action Plan for the third year, aiming to bring about significant and permanent organizational changes. The first year of implementation was dedicated to improving coordination and alignment, building internal capacity, expanding engagement, and using racial equity tools to embed a racial equity lens throughout all programs and projects. The second year of implementation continued to build on these efforts and maximize new opportunities to advance racial equity through the Water Boards' work. The third year of implementation has made additional progress towards racial equity actions, with more actions completed than in the previous year.

Key accomplishments for 2025 include:

Improving coordination and alignment:

The Water Boards use existing structures like program roundtables to coordinate on racial equity and are establishing additional working groups that will provide additional support to ensure consistent approaches to advancing equity within Water Boards' work.

- Multiple regions, divisions, and offices established employee workgroups to inform and guide their region, division, or office's direction towards advancing racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and environmental justice [\[Action 8\]](#).
- All Water Boards' roundtables include a standing agenda item to discuss racial equity and incorporate racial equity into their workplans or charters [\[Action 29\]](#).
- The racial equity data subcommittee of the Environmental Justice Roundtable continued its work to ensure intra-agency coordination on equity data projects, improve consistency, and reduce duplicative efforts [\[Action 2\]](#).

Fostering workplace equity and inclusion:

The State Water Board is continuing to build individual and organizational capacity for internal workforce equity. Internal workforce equity refers to the intentional actions and policies organizations implement to ensure diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within the workforce. This includes fostering a culture where employees feel valued and supported, and addressing systemic barriers to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within organizational structures and practices.

- Racial equity support lunches are held monthly to provide a supportive space for Water Boards staff and help normalize conversations about racial equity [\[Action 8\]](#).
- Many Water Boards staff lead or participate in the California Environmental Protection Agency's Affinity Groups: Concerned Black Employees, Hispanic and Latinx Unidos, LGBTQIA2S+, Multi-cultural, and Women in the Workplace.
- The State Water Board's executive team, consisting of leaders from all divisions and offices, hosted two open houses during the spring and winter of 2025. These events are a time for employees to constructively engage, build community, and develop connections amongst the workforce.

- The State Water Board celebrated the inaugural Golden Water Bear Awards during its Winter Open House. This peer-driven program recognizes State Water Board employees who are resilient under pressure, adaptable, demonstrate humility, quiet strength, endurance through change, and resourcefulness.
- The State Water Board launched the 3rd Advancing Racial Equity train-the-trainer cohort.
- Executive-level subcommittees were formed to enhance organizational capacity through co-strategizing and showcasing specific equity initiatives within regions, divisions, and offices.
- Training in advancing racial equity, communication, and engagement have been made available to all staff, with instructors and on an on-demand basis through the Water Boards' Training Academy.

Expanding engagement:

The State Water Board developed resources to support meaningful engagement with communities and Tribes last year. Staff continue to use the developed resources and explore ways to engage with affected communities and Tribes. Many regions, divisions, and offices focused on building relationships with communities and Tribes that may have been underrepresented in decision-making processes. This proactive engagement allows staff to understand community interests, provides opportunities to inform people of the Water Boards and its work, and hopefully leads to increased engagement in specific projects.

- Equitable engagement plans with increased language access in Punjabi and Spanish were implemented within the Tule, Kern County, and Kaweah subbasins for the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act to ensure affected communities and Tribes are engaged in decision-making processes [[Action 15](#)].
- Enhanced community and tribal engagement plans were implemented in the updates to the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan [[Action 21](#)].
- The Wastewater Needs Assessment aims to better understand wastewater infrastructure needs across California, particularly in small, disadvantaged, and underserved communities. The Wastewater Needs Assessment established a qualitative statewide baseline of wastewater conditions by compiling data and developing a framework to evaluate system inadequacy, risk, potential solutions, and costs. This effort produced a statewide list of priority wastewater infrastructure projects for potential funding and the first statewide gap analysis to help inform regulatory and resource investment priorities. The WWNA is being completed in two phases. The Phase 1 Report was published in late 2025. [[Action 4](#)]
- Support for some under-resourced urban retail water suppliers working to comply with the Board's Making Conservation a California Way of Life regulation. [[Action 16](#)]

Using racial equity tools:

The Water Boards continue to explore and implement analyses of data collected by programs, demographic data, and other relevant environmental data, to understand the impacts on communities of color and to incorporate a racial equity lens to inform decision-making.

- The Division of Drinking Water is incorporating equity impact analysis into the development of Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for hexavalent chromium and Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The analysis focuses on identifying disproportionate impacts on vulnerable communities, using data to assess costs and benefits across different systems, and applying a framework that evaluates data availability, risk, and cost feasibility through an equity lens. [\[Action 22\]](#)
- The California Integrated Report assesses California's surface water quality, combining the federal Clean Water Act's (CWA) Section 305(b) and 303(d) list of impaired waters. The Division of Water Quality has been working to incorporate demographic data into the Integrated Report, including identifying impaired waters that disproportionately burden historically excluded or disadvantaged groups. [\[Action 3\]](#)
- The Division of Water Rights, in collaboration with the Office of Research Planning and Performance and the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs, is developing an economic impact analysis of potential long-term minimum flows in the Scott and Shasta Rivers (BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 2024-0036). The analysis is incorporating a Tribal equity lens to capture some impacts that standard economic analyses often overlook, including items such as health cost savings, cultural connections, and the ability to pass down traditions to future generations. An equity data specialist has been assigned to focus exclusively on equity within the economic analysis, with ongoing collaboration underway to gather Tribal community perspectives.

Advancing equitable outcomes in existing programs:

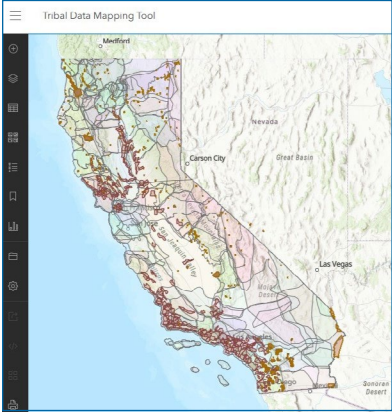
The Water Boards have increasingly incorporated equity considerations into their programmatic work as internal capacity to understand and apply equity concepts has increased.

- The draft Bay-Delta Plan includes definitions for Tribal Beneficial Uses and a specific section for tribal engagement and incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge into implementation measures [\[Action 21\]](#).
- In 2025, the Division of Water Quality used 319(h) funds to implement priority pollution-prevention projects across the state. The Nonpoint Source grant program funded the East Fork San Gabriel River for Trash TMDL implementation and recreational improvements project, an environmental justice priority for the State and the Los Angeles Region.

- The Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) drinking water program has increased its focus to help people who rely on domestic wells. This includes implementation of two new state laws: SB 664 and AB 2454. SB 664: Requires owners of domestic wells who provide drinking water to tenants to meet certain safety standards. AB 2454: Requires owners of private domestic wells that serve rental properties in certain areas to take part in a water testing program. The State Water Board developed a [webpage with a map](#) identifying eligible well testing programs to assist domestic well users in obtaining free well testing.
- The Division of Water Quality’s Strategy to Optimize Resource Management of Stormwater (STORMS) team has led to the development of an Urban Stormwater Infiltration Policy. The proposed Urban Stormwater Infiltration Policy will include a risk-based framework to clarify when and where it is safe to implement a stormwater infiltration system. The Urban Stormwater Infiltration Policy addresses distributional justice and ensures benefits and burdens are shared fairly, not just in affluent communities.

Beyond the Racial Equity Action Plan

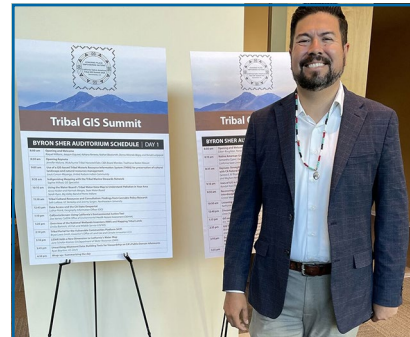
The State Water Board continues to find opportunities to embed equity where it can, in addition to the 53 actions identified within this Racial Equity Action Plan.

-  **Mapping Tools to Explore Beneficial Use Attainment:** The Division of Water Quality developed a [beneficial uses mapping tool](#) to help identify waterbody segments for possible future Tribal Beneficial Use designations. The mapping tool overlays existing designated beneficial uses with waterbody segments where data show beneficial uses are supported, impaired, or lack sufficient data. Using the beneficial uses mapping tool, staff in the Office of Information, Management, and Analysis began working with staff from the Integrated Report and the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs to develop the Tribal Beneficial Uses-specific section of the [Tribal Water Data Project’s Map](#). The mapping tool serves as a tool designed for Tribes to find and access data that they might need for the Tribal Beneficial Uses process. The interactive Map includes curated data layers that have been requested by tribal partners and that may be useful for California Native American Tribes doing environmental or water related work.
- **Water Rights Data Transparency:** The Division of Water Rights is actively working on the Updating Water Rights Data for California (UPWARD) project, which will significantly enhance access to information and materials. UPWARD includes a new water rights data system (Cal-WATRS) and involves digitizing over 7 million records that are currently accessible only in person at the California Environmental Protection Agency headquarters. UPWARD established a user advisory group, and an initial version of Cal-WATRS is anticipated for public review in 2025. The Division is also revising Senate Bill 88 Water Measurement and Reporting Regulations to clarify requirements and ensure reported data align with Cal-WATRS. Additional efforts are underway to promote more equitable access to water diversion data. For example, staff

launched pilot projects to test how telemetry data can be reported and used to model instream flows and promote local watershed management. Equitable data transparency is the practice of managing, using, and sharing data in an open, ethical, and inclusive manner to ensure fair outcomes and prevent the perpetuation of systemic biases and inequalities.

- **Water Rights Enforcement:** The Division of Water Rights enforces water rights permits to ensure water rights holders are adhering to the conditions within their permits and applicable regulations. This is vital for preventing unauthorized diversions and maintaining stream flows necessary to support ecosystems and endangered fish species. Staff continue to evaluate and update enforcement communications and procedures to ensure materials are accessible and understandable for people who may face language barriers or lack legal representation. Simplifying enforcement messaging can improve compliance with permits and regulations, reduce frustration, and build trust.
- **Delta Cyanobacteria Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring Strategy:** The Division of Water Rights is coordinating with the Delta Stewardship Council on a harmful algal bloom monitoring strategy in the Delta. The collaboration involves several California Native American Tribes, community groups, academics, and state and federal agencies. This strategy promotes data sharing and identifies ways to mitigate the effects of harmful algal blooms in the Delta. Because the amount of water available in a water body can influence the presence of harmful algal blooms, coordination with the Division of Water Rights and major water users is critical to ensure management approaches can be adapted to varying hydrologic conditions.
- **Including Racial Equity in Duty Statements:** Multiple divisions and offices continue to add racial equity language to duty statements. For example, “Conduct community and Tribal outreach and engagement, establish and maintain partnerships, and foster open communication with voices from historically underserved and disadvantaged communities, including conducting outreach and analyses and developing findings consistent with Water Code section 13149.2. Conduct programmatic assessments and identify actions to implement the Water Board’s Racial Equity Resolution, Racial Equity Action Plan, Human Right to Water Resolution, and Climate Change Resolution in integrated water resource management.”
- **Establishing Division and Office-Specific Racial Equity Teams:** Multiple divisions and offices established internal teams to advance equity projects and initiatives. For example, the Division of Water Quality established an Advancing Racial Equity team to incorporate equity considerations into its core workload.
- **Website Performance and Accessibility:** The Division of Information Technology expanded its access to, and utilization of, multiple site auditing and monitoring tools like Google 4 Analytics Suite, Site Improve auditing platform, and Google Lighthouse. These tools allow the Water Boards to more efficiently evaluate and report on performance, usability, security, accessibility, and search engine optimization issues and opportunities. As a result, the Water Boards can better address site-wide issues, such as broken or stale links and pages, thereby greatly enhancing performance for users with limited internet connectivity. The auditing and monitoring tools also help the Water Boards pinpoint specific performance issues that could be addressed during a webpage redesign.

- Tribal Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Summit:** The first California Native American Tribal GIS Summit, led by Dr. Donna Begay Miranda and co-hosted by the Water Boards’ Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs, was held on July 31 – August 1, 2025, at the Cal EPA building in Sacramento. The Summit highlighted how GIS can support Tribal sovereignty, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation while fostering partnerships. This hybrid event gathered over 510 participants including, 90 California Native American Tribes, along with federal, state, nonprofit, and academic partners.



- California Native American Day:** The 58th Annual Native American Day, held on September 26, 2025, at the California State Capitol, celebrated California Native American Tribes with cultural performances, ceremonies, and elder recognition, drawing over 4,500 participants. The event was hosted by the California Tribal Chairpersons Association and the California Native American Caucus, with support from Tribes and State agencies. For over 10 years, the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs has led the effort to coordinate the Cultural Heritage Pavilion, which creates a space for Tribal cultural practitioners to demonstrate cultural practices, such as, tule boat making, bear grass braiding, basket weaving, language revitalization, rawhide work, and other cultural practices. The Cultural Heritage Pavilion aims to foster cultural understanding and respectful engagement with California Native American Tribes.



- Tribal Beneficial Uses:** To support the Tribal Beneficial Uses designation process, the Water Boards have been engaging with Tribes to develop a Guide to Protecting Waters for Tribal Beneficial Uses. The goals of this guidance document include streamlining and expediting the Tribal Beneficial Uses designation process, clarifying the level of information and CEQA needed, addressing concerns regarding scale of designations, fostering consistency across the state, and respecting Tribal sovereignty and strengthening relationships with Tribes. Additionally, in 2025 the State Water Board approved adoption of Tribal Beneficial Uses definitions into the Central Coast Regional Water Board and the Colorado River Regional Water Board basin plans. Several Water Boards continue to partner with Tribes to designate specific waterbodies with Tribal Beneficial Uses.

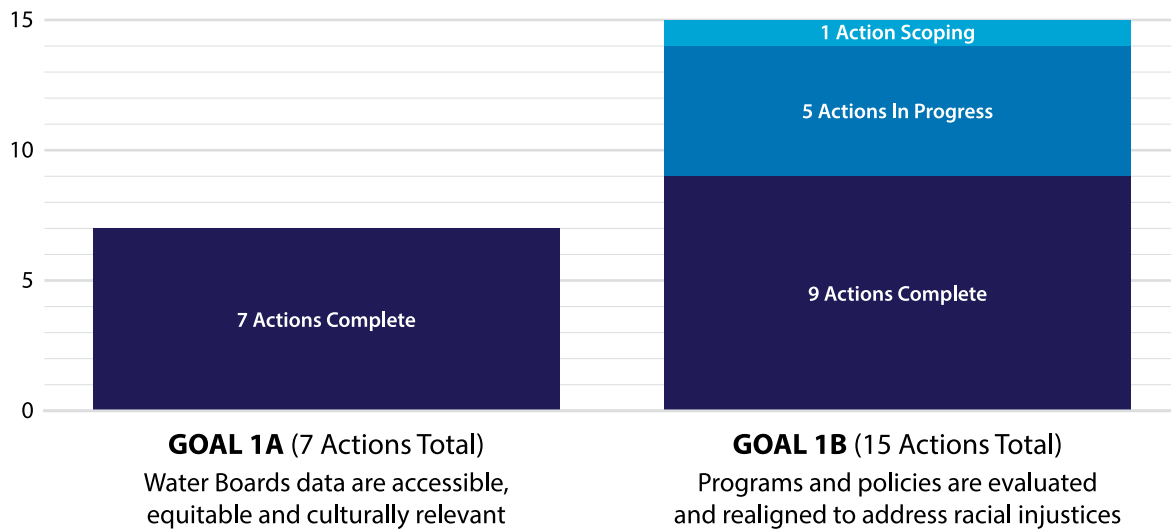
SUMMARY OF ACTION PROGRESS MADE IN 2025

Stages		# Actions within stage (2023)	# Actions within stage (2024)	# Actions within stage (2025)
1	Preparation or scoping not yet started	1	1	0
2	Preparation, scoping, data collection, securing funding and resources	4	2	1
3	Work in progress	35	21	14
4	Action complete and/or at least one cycle of continual action complete; monitoring and evaluation of action is complete or ongoing	13	29	38

Table 1: Defines the stages of completion and how many actions are within each stage at the end of 2023, 2024, and 2025.

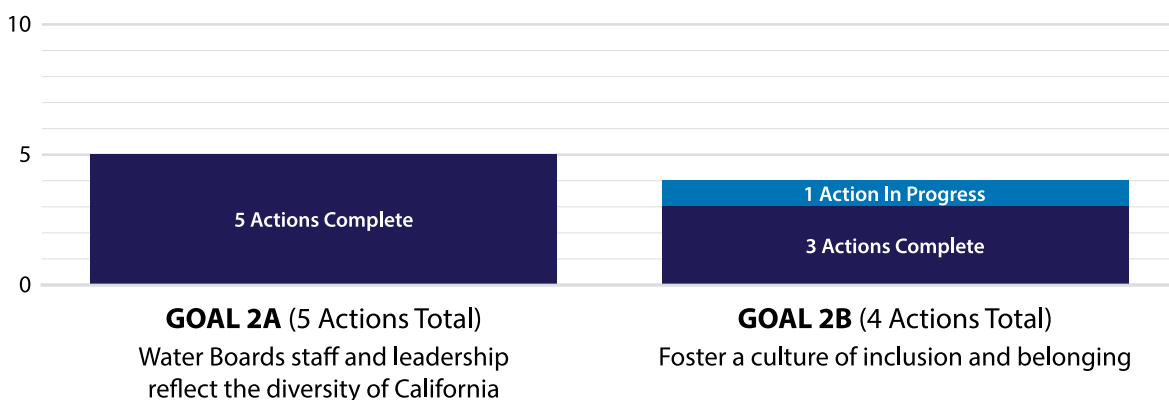
**Strategic Direction #1:
INTEGRATING RACIAL EQUITY, MEASURING IMPACT**

Infusing racial equity throughout the Water Boards’ policies, programs, and practices; measuring progress toward goals and adapting when necessary.



**Strategic Direction #2:
CREATING, MAINTAINING SPACES FOR INCLUSION & BELONGING**

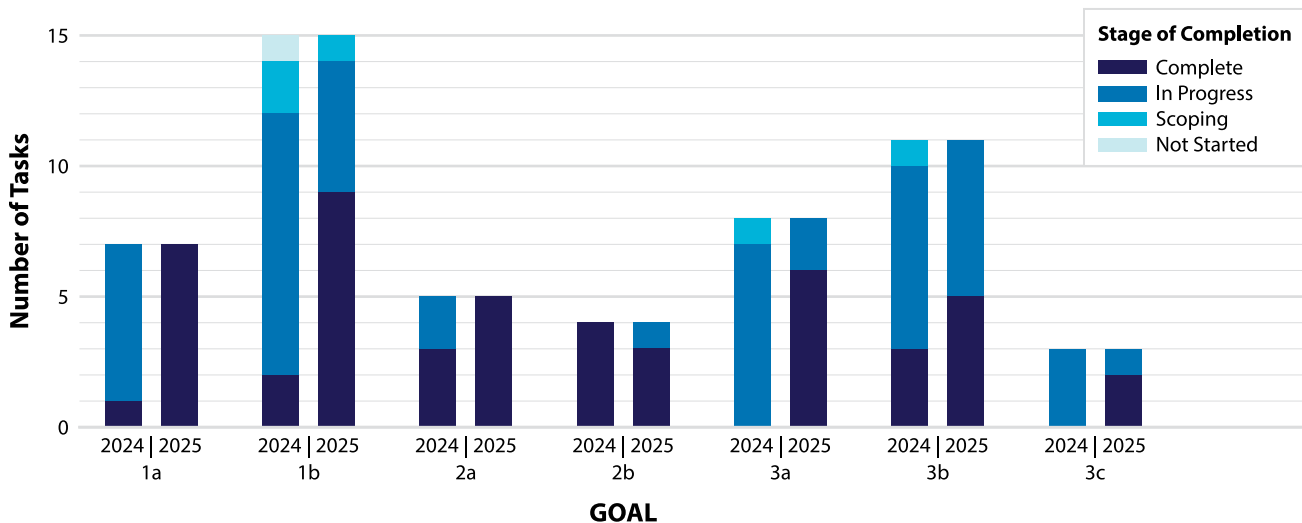
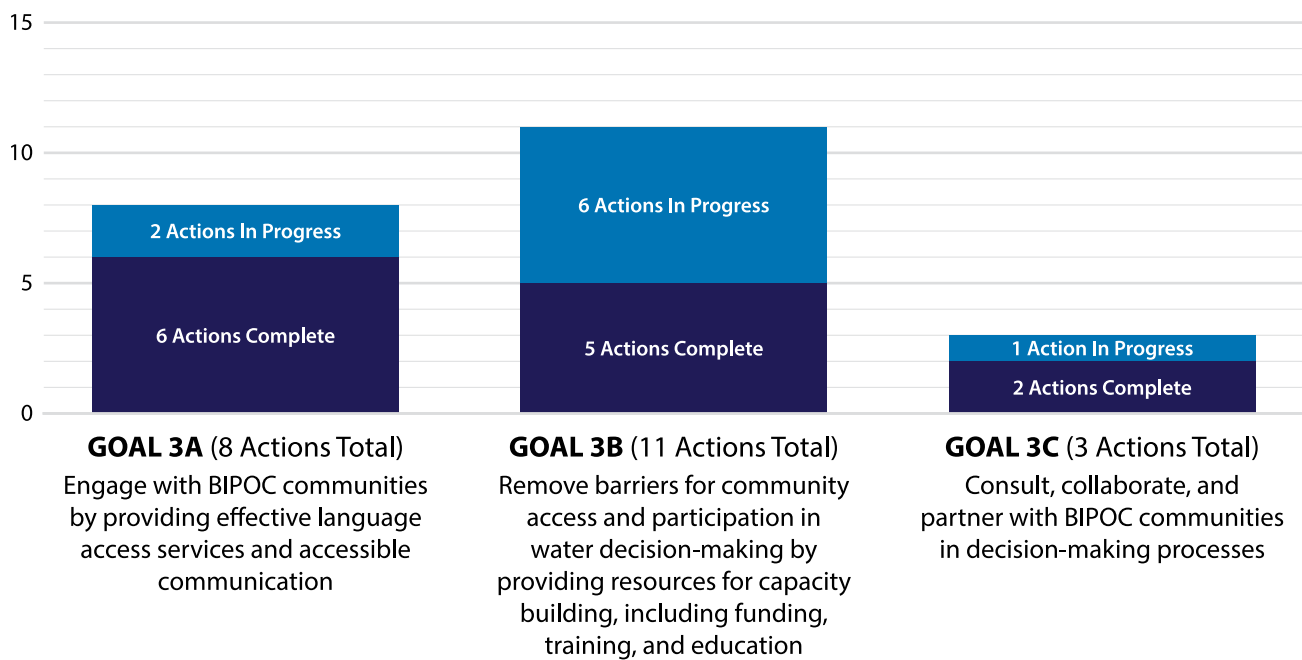
Addressing internal and external representation of Black, Indigenous, and people of color at all Water Boards’ levels; elevating overall understanding of racial equity.



Strategic Direction #3:

ACTIVATING BIPOC COMMUNITY WISDOM AND SHARING POWER

Fostering open communications for voices of Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities; building power in BIPOC communities by cultivating authentic relationships and engaging communities as partners for racial equity; offering ongoing training, education, and dedicated resources to raise awareness of the Water Boards’ role in managing the state’s water resources; and incorporating wisdom from Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities in Water Boards’ decision-making processes.



Graph of the number of tasks at each stage of completion for 2024 and 2025

Strategic Direction #1:

INTEGRATING RACIAL EQUITY, MEASURING IMPACT

Infusing racial equity throughout the Water Boards’ policies, programs, and practices; measuring progress toward goals and adapting when necessary.

GOAL 1A:

Water Boards data are accessible, equitable and culturally relevant

ACTION 1			
<p>Update the State Water Board’s racial equity webpage to include a page for tracking and measuring progress on the Racial Equity Action Plan.</p> <p>LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs</p>			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs updates the racial equity webpage to include the annual report and an interactive report dashboard before each annual update to the State Water Board.

ACTION 2			
<p>Develop and implement a Racial Equity Data Action Plan. At a minimum, the Racial Equity Data Action Plan must do the following: (1) Develop training and best practices guidance for Water Boards staff on incorporating racial equity concepts into the planning and design of data collection methods and visualizations (e.g., maps, factsheets, etc.) projects. (2) Identify and expand existing opportunities for public participation in science and community data gathering programs to develop new data collection methods, support existing programs, and incorporate community datasets into the database. (3) Create a publicly accessible data catalog tool/interface that includes existing demographic data, Water Boards program data, and other available data (such as heat maps or flood hazard maps) to inform the implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan.</p> <p>LEAD: Office of Information Management and Analysis</p>			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Equity Data Action Plan has been developed. The [Equity Data Handbook](#) is an online repository that includes best practices, guidance, and resources to help Water Boards staff incorporate racial equity concepts, principles, and practices into their data-related work. The Handbook does not provide a single method or process recommendation for doing data-intensive work with an equity lens because a “one size fits all” approach is not effective or equitable. Rather, the Handbook provides curated resources and recommendations to consider so that each practitioner and/or project team can use the methods that best suit the specific objectives, needs, and audience of the data, products and/or services in development. The Office of Information Management and Analysis will attend various program roundtables in 2026 to provide Water Board Staff with education and training on how to utilize the Equity Data Handbook. The Data Hub is complete and methodologies and use-cases for the tools are described in the Equity Data Handbook. Additionally, the training titled, Analyzing Data for Racial Equity was offered, and resources shared in the training are posted in the Equity Data Handbook for future reference.

ACTION 3

Incorporate racial equity analysis into the 305(b)/303(d) Integrated Report to identify impacted waters in Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), and disadvantaged communities, starting by identifying data gaps. The Integrated Report is a document with a comprehensive review of surface water quality and includes a list of currently impaired water bodies by pollutant type.

LEAD: Division of Water Quality

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Division of Water Quality has integrated racial equity data into the 305(b) and 303(d) reports by overlaying demographic data onto the 305(b) and 303(d) report maps. This ensures that Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, and disadvantaged communities have access to a comprehensive review of surface water quality issues by pollutant and waterbody combination.

ACTION 4

Identify and assess available data to identify racial equity data gaps related to water quality.

LEAD: Division of Water Quality

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The California Integrated Report is a data-driven document developed by the State Water Board that assesses California’s surface water quality, combining the federal Clean Water Act’s (CWA) Section 305(b) water quality report and the Section 303(d) list of impaired waters. The Division of Water Quality has been integrating demographic and equity-focused data into the Integrated Report. This includes information on impaired waters affecting disadvantaged groups, which helps inform monitoring groups about potential pollutant sources and water quality monitoring data gaps.

ACTION 5			
<p>Include a Racial Equity Action Plan progress update at a State Water Board meeting. The update should include any barriers, such as funding or legislation, encountered as the plan is implemented.</p> <p>LEAD: Executive Office</p>			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

State Water Board divisions and offices will present an update to the State Water Board as an information item at a 2026 Board meeting.

ACTION 6			
<p>Incorporate racial equity analysis into the annual Drinking Water Needs Assessment, including a measurement of the number of BIPOC communities impacted by primary and secondary contaminants in drinking water and water unaffordability. Work with U.S. EPA to implement a similar analysis to federally regulated Tribal water systems.</p> <p>LEAD: Division of Drinking Water</p>			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Annual Drinking Water Needs Assessment is a core component that guides and informs the implementation of the SAFER drinking water program. The Needs Assessment is comprised of four core components: the Failing Water System List, the Risk Assessment, the Cost Assessment, and the Affordability Assessment. This includes a measurement of the number of Black, Indigenous and other communities of color impacted by primary and secondary contaminants in drinking water and affordability. The 2025 Needs Assessment has been finalized, and its results are reflected in the SAFER Dashboard which presents public water system information. The list of failing systems is updated daily using the State Water Board’s criteria for failure. The other SAFER statuses of water systems are based on the results of the Risk Assessment, which is refreshed

quarterly as new data becomes available, including median household income data. Currently, there are 322 systems that are failing and have been designated as serving a disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged community. The Division of Drinking Water is exploring the ability to track the number of Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color that are served by a water system on the failing list. The Division of Drinking Water is also exploring affordability for all community water systems and schools, including Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color.



ACTION 7

Assess race/ethnicity data and other relevant demographic data, associated with the communities that benefit from funding administered by DFA. Existing annual funding reports and plans will be the primary mechanism to report these data on a project specific basis, where appropriate. In addition, summaries for the funding program will be provided.

LEAD: Division of Financial Assistance

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Division of Financial Assistance applied this action to several funding programs:

- **Annual Fund Expenditure Plan:** The Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) drinking water program’s annual Fund Expenditure Plan summarizes demographic information for projects funded in the previous fiscal year and provides a geographic distribution of projects funded since 2019. The Division of Financial Assistance is collaborating with the Office of Information Management and Analysis to enhance the analysis and presentation of this information.
- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund** and **Drinking Water State Revolving Fund:** The annual reports for these funds include summaries of demographic information for both programs based on communities benefitting from the executed funding agreements. The Division of Financial Assistance uses data on identity characteristics, median household income, and poverty level. The Clean Water State Revolving Fund program offers low-cost financing for a wide variety of water quality projects. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program assists public water systems in financing the cost of drinking water infrastructure projects needed to achieve or maintain compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act requirements.
- **Orphan Site Cleanup Fund:** The Division of Water Quality and Division of Financial Assistance are identifying and prioritizing funding for orphan cleanup sites located in disadvantaged and environmental justice areas. The Orphan Site Cleanup Fund provides financial assistance to eligible applicants to clean up sites contaminated by leaking petroleum underground storage tanks where there is no financially responsible party, and the applicant is not eligible for the Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund.
- **Site Cleanup Subaccount Program (SCAP):** In August 2024, the State Water Board adopted Resolution 2024-0023 that establishes a new ranking methodology for the Site Cleanup Subaccount Program. This program primarily funds the cleanup of contaminated sites when the party responsible has no or limited ability to pay for the cleanup. The methodology used to establish funding priorities provides greater weight to projects in economically disadvantaged and environmental justice communities.

GOAL 1B:
Programs and policies are evaluated and realigned to address racial injustices

ACTION 8			
Deputy directors and directors should regularly discuss their division or office’s progress with their staff on actions identified in the Racial Equity Action Plan and gauge where more support is needed.			
LEAD: ALL			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

Discussions about opportunities to consider and address racial injustices in programs and policies continue to take place at various levels and coordination spaces within the Water Boards:

- **Internal coordination:** Divisions and offices regularly discuss and implement new approaches with their programs. All program roundtables now have racial equity as a standing agenda item. State Water Board briefings now include considerations of racial equity impacts. Coordination meetings, such as the Deputy Management Committee and the Management Coordinating Committee, regularly discuss racial equity and environmental justice. The Environmental Justice Roundtable serves as a quarterly internal coordination meeting to discuss progress made towards advancing equity and justice. The State Water Board’s Strategic Work Plan includes considerations for equity.
- **Division, region, and office-specific workgroups:** Multiple regions, divisions, and offices have established employee workgroups to inform and guide their division, office, or region’s directions towards advancing racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and environmental justice.

ACTION 9			
Develop a racial equity toolkit for all Water Boards staff to consider racial equity in their day-to-day work.			
LEAD: Office of Information Management and Analysis			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Equity Data Handbook includes best practices, guidance, and resources to help Water Boards staff incorporate racial equity concepts, principles, and practices into their data-related work. The Equity Data Handbook is an internal online document that provides curated resources and recommendations to consider so that each project team can use the methods that best suit the specific objectives, needs, and audience of the data, products and/or services in development.

ACTION 10

Develop training and guidance for how to implement the racial equity toolkit to examine potential disproportionate impacts of policies and programs on BIPOC communities.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Equity Data Handbook (formerly the Equity Data Toolkit) was completed in 2025. In 2026, the Office of Information, Management, and Analysis will travel throughout the program roundtables to provide training and guidance on implementing the Equity Data Handbook.

ACTION 11

Select, train, and support a second cohort of Water Boards staff to deliver “Advancing Racial Equity at the Water Boards” trainings.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs developed a Racial Equity Train-the-Trainer program to equip Water Boards staff with the skills to deliver a three-part racial equity course to their colleagues. The program aims to build internal capacity to deliver racial equity training to as many staff members of the Water Boards as possible. This course, titled “Advancing Racial Equity at the Water Boards,” was adapted from a similar course developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency and adds content specific to the Water Boards. It is an opportunity to engage with peers who are exploring and developing a shared understanding of fundamental racial equity concepts, a model of change to become an antiracist organization, and an overview of racial equity tools. In 2025, the “Advancing Racial Equity at the Water Boards” curriculum accepted applications for its upcoming cohort and prepared an extensive schedule for engagement and learning. In 2026, the cohort will begin their train-the-trainer program. Additionally, all regions, divisions, and offices will have the opportunity to participate in the newly developed “Advancing Racial Equity at the Water Boards” series.

ACTION 12

Develop a racial equity training plan for staff that will guide efforts to develop and coordinate a racial equity curriculum through the Training Academy. Elements may include analysis of what trainings are effective; what trainings should be required; how often people should get training; which current courses could be modified to incorporate more content related to racial equity; how racial equity goals should inform the selection, onboarding, and evaluation of instructors and vendors providing materials or courses; and what educational content could be developed or made available.

LEAD: Office of Research, Planning, and Performance

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Research, Planning, and Performance houses Training Services, which leads a robust employee training and development program that anticipates organizational needs. The Office evaluated current courses, instructors, and processes to identify opportunities for incorporating best practices and content related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. They also incorporated feedback from surveys, course evaluations, and committee meetings into the course development process, discussions with vendors, and instructor expectations. The Office piloted new courses and worked closely with vendors to ensure courses reflect the Water Boards’ equity goals. The Office of Research, Planning, and Performance, along with the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs, developed and executed a Water Board workplace equity course for Water Boards’ management. These Offices will collaborate with sponsors of new courses to ensure that equity components are incorporated.

ACTION 13

As appropriate, ensure that priorities and actions within the State Water Board’s annual Strategic Work Plan reflect this action plan.

LEAD: Office of Research, Planning, and Performance

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

This is an ongoing project. The Office of Research, Planning, and Performance develops the State Water Board’s Strategic Work Plan annually for the Executive Director and coordinates with programs to effectively incorporate equity considerations. Strategic Work Plans can be found on the [State Water Board Priorities webpage](#).

ACTION 14

Develop a plan to identify climate change impacts (related to State Water Board authorities) and how they may potentially disproportionately impact BIPOC communities or interests.

LEAD: Office of Research, Planning, and Performance

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Research, Planning, and Performance provides consultation to Water Boards’ units and programs to help them advance climate resilience and equity. It also connects employees with academics, community organizations, and advocates, and helps to coordinate the work of Water Boards that intersects climate change and racial equity. A forthcoming climate change resolution will further advance Action 14 and may serve as a resource for Water Boards employees, informing procedures and policy recommendations. The new resolution may incorporate concepts and lessons learned from the previously conceived Climate and Racial Equity Strategy. For more information, please visit the [Climate Change webpage](#).

ACTION 15

In basins where State Water Board intervention into groundwater management (through SGMA authorities) is likely, engage with BIPOC communities that may be affected.

LEAD: Office of Sustainable Groundwater Management

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

Office of Sustainable Groundwater Management staff conducted outreach and engagement for multiple probationary groundwater basins, including Kern, Chowchilla, and Kaweah. This included supporting probationary hearings with interpretation services, plain-language materials, and remote community participation. These efforts were coordinated with trusted non-governmental organizations to address safety and privacy concerns.

ACTION 16

Assess potential equity impacts of the proposed urban water use efficiency regulation.

LEAD: Office of Research, Planning, and Performance

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The State Water Board approved a regulation to make water conservation a California way of life on July 3, 2024, to boost California’s water resilience amid climate change. In 2025, employees worked to support suppliers’ compliance and to support collaboration at multiple levels.

ACTION 17

Pilot the racial equity toolkit to identify program-specific actions, priorities, and metrics, and realign programs and practices to advance racial equity, and assess the effectiveness of programs.

LEAD: Division of Water Quality

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Division of Water Quality has been developing resources to aid in identifying data gaps, establishing metrics for accountability, and setting programmatic milestones to advance environmental justice actions. The Division is still in the process of developing a formal racial equity toolkit and results-based accountability approach in response to feedback from pilot programs. This racial equity toolkit has different uses than the equity data handbook developed by the Office of Information, Management and Analysis, as it focuses on identifying environmental justice-related data gaps and incorporates racial equity throughout the Division’s water quality programs. The Division intends to prioritize this pilot action in 2026, now that it has staff dedicated to racial equity, and now that the Equity Data Handbook has been completed. Training on the handbook will be provided to the various water quality programs.

ACTION 18

Provide guidance to Regional Water Boards on the consideration of impacts to BIPOC communities and environmental justice when addressing impaired waters through development of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) or other actions to restore clean water. Use prioritization to inform allocation of funding for environmental cleanup projects.

LEAD: Division of Water Quality

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Division of Water Quality continues to provide guidance and implement this action through the development of resources. To support this effort, the Division of Water Quality developed the Prioritization Framework for Plans to Restore Impaired Waterbodies, which includes environmental justice and racial equity prioritization criteria in TMDL development and created a map that identifies the overlap between existing beneficial uses and impaired waterbodies. The Division of Water Quality has also been leading efforts to discuss environmental justice and racial equity in program roundtables, including actions such as developing resources for these discussions, identifying opportunities for collaboration, and assessing funding processes to identify potential inequities. An example of this is the formation of an Equity Subcommittee for the 401 Water Quality Certification Roundtable, where the subcommittee assesses whether program fees are equitable for certain project applicants.

ACTION 19

Participate as partners in implementing the Environmental Justice Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency.

LEAD: Office of Enforcement

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Environmental Justice Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding establishes a collaborative framework for joint environmental justice activities, encompassing enforcement, inspections, and community outreach. The primary goal is to strengthen enforcement and ensure compliance in environmental justice communities. The Memorandum of Understanding outlines an agreement between federal and state agencies to devise environmental justice strategies, specifically aimed at safeguarding the health of residents in communities

disproportionately burdened by pollution. Annual progress reports on these initiatives are made available to the public. As a direct result of participating in the Memorandum of Understanding, the Office of Enforcement participated in approximately 70 community and agency meetings and completed 7 inspections in economically disadvantaged communities in 2024.

The Office of Enforcement actively participates in standing meetings of various community organizations, including meetings of Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods (IVAN) networks. Spanning seven locations across the state, these networks serve as resources, connecting communities with individuals who can address local environmental concerns. In addition to attending regular community-focused meetings, the Office of Enforcement is committed to addressing community concerns and participating in the Rapid Response Team. This team is mobilized in response to urgent environmental threats or community concerns that require immediate attention from both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA).

ACTION 20

Consider impacts to BIPOC communities, Tribal beneficial uses and cultural resources, and related ecosystems when developing, implementing, and enforcing instream flow requirements, consistent with all applicable laws and requirements, including those related to water rights, basin planning, public trust resources, and endangered species.

LEAD: Division of Water Rights

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

Division of Water Rights work related to instream flow requirements continued in the Scott River, Shasta River, and Clear Lake watersheds. The Division implemented emergency minimum instream flow requirements for the Scott and Shasta Rivers (effective January 2025–January 2026). The Division also collected public input on a scientific basis for a report on permanent minimum instream flow requirements for the rivers. In Clear Lake, the Division continued to collaborate with California Native American Tribes and community members on data collection, habitat needs, and a study of groundwater-surface water interactions. The Division also participated in a series of workshops to discuss co-management in the Clear Lake region. Information on efforts in these watersheds is available on the [Water Board’s website](#).

ACTION 21

Establish a single point of contact in the Division of Water Rights to serve as a coordinator on Bay-Delta Tribal and BIPOC engagement to improve communication and outreach and conduct Tribal outreach under AB 52 and B-10-11 for the Bay-Delta Plan implementation regulation for Lower San Joaquin River flows and Southern Delta Salinity.

LEAD: Division of Water Rights

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The single point of contact has been appointed, and the coordination is ongoing. The Division of Water Rights held a series of technical working meetings from January through March 2025 to receive further input from the water community, including water users, environmental groups, and California Native American Tribes, on draft updates to the Bay-Delta Plan following a multi-day public workshop held in late 2024. Additionally, staff have proposed incorporating the Tribal Tradition and Culture Tribal Beneficial Use into the Bay-Delta Plan.

ACTION 22

Incorporate racial equity analysis when developing maximum contaminant levels using available data and as data and methods allow.

LEAD: Division of Drinking Water

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Division of Drinking Water will continue to incorporate racial equity analyses for Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) as data becomes available. Implementing equity analysis in MCL development involves integrating racial and socioeconomic fairness into setting drinking water standards. For the state Water Board, this is accomplished by focusing on disproportionate impacts on vulnerable communities and using data to assess costs and benefits across different systems. The Division of Drinking Water is currently developing MCLs for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) and hexavalent chromium.

Strategic Direction #2

CREATING, MAINTAINING SPACES FOR INCLUSION & BELONGING

Addressing internal and external representation of Black, Indigenous, and people of color at all Water Boards’ levels; elevating overall understanding of racial equity.

GOAL 2A:

Water Boards staff and leadership reflect the diversity of California

ACTION 23

Review existing data, and new data to be collected and produced by CalHR, on demographics of Water Boards staff. Disaggregate data by Region, Division, Office, position classification, etc. and publish findings to the Racial Equity Webpage.

LEAD: Division of Administrative Services

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The data collection and analysis have been completed, and the work is ongoing. The Division of Administrative Services will take steps to strengthen the assessment and communication of progress related to equity and workforce diversity.

ACTION 24

Review and revise the “Immediate Action Plan for Advancing Workforce Diversity” to improve the long-term effectiveness of strategies to recruit, promote, and retain BIPOC staff.

LEAD: Division of Administrative Services

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The revision was completed, and the work is ongoing. The Division of Administrative Services will continue to expand and strengthen its recruitment efforts to better support the hiring of Black, Indigenous, and other staff of color, recognizing the need to build upon existing strategies. To support promotion and retention, the Division will continue to leverage the mentorship program and increase awareness by sharing information about the program with interested staff groups, such as CalEPA Affinity Groups.

ACTION 25

Increase recruitment for job openings and internship opportunities at high schools, community colleges, colleges, universities, workforce development networks, and community-based groups that serve BIPOC communities in California. Collaborate with Regional Water Boards on future recruitment efforts.

LEAD: Division of Administrative Services

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

Recruitment efforts have increased, and this work is ongoing. The Division of Administrative Services participated in 34 job fairs in 2025. The Division of Administrative Services will expand its recruitment efforts for Black, Indigenous, and other candidates of color by broadening outreach channels, strengthening relationships with diverse professional and community organizations, and refining recruitment practices to reach a wider and more diverse applicant pool, building upon and improving existing strategies.



ACTION 26

Update the Water Boards’ website to include additional guidance for prospective applicants on how to navigate the state’s hiring process, with a focus on successfully applying for Water Board positions.

LEAD: Division of Administrative Services

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Division of Administrative Services has developed a webpage to help job candidates navigate the application process. The webpage can be [accessed here](#).

ACTION 27

Require implicit bias and racial equity training for all hiring panelists, supervisors, and State and Regional Board Members.

LEAD: Division of Administrative Services

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

Immediate Action Plan for Advancing Workforce Diversity contains the requirements for all hiring panelists and supervisors to take implicit bias and/or equity training [[Action 24](#)]. These courses are regularly offered through the Water Boards’ Training Academy.

**GOAL 2B:
Foster a culture of inclusion and belonging**

ACTION 28

Develop a mentorship program that allows employees, including BIPOC staff, to connect with others who may have similar experiences and to provide coaching on career growth and advancement.

LEAD: Division of Administrative Services

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The mentorship program was developed, and the work is ongoing. The mentorship program has experienced continued growth over the past two years. To increase visibility of the program Division of Administrative Services staff will expand their reach to staff groups, such as CalEPA Affinity Groups. Management from the Division of Administrative Services has committed to presenting the mentorship program to the CalEPA Hispanic and Latinx Affinity group in 2026, as well as to any other Affinity Group that may be interested in a presentation on this program.

ACTION 29

Update roundtable charters or workplans to include racial equity and include racial equity discussions as a standing agenda item on roundtables.

LEAD: Division of Water Quality

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

In 2025, the Division of Water Quality has integrated environmental justice and racial equity topics as a standing discussion at each of the water quality program roundtables. The Division of Water Quality has also distributed an internal racial equity survey to better understand the needs of the roundtables and how they can align their programs more effectively with the State Water Board’s racial equity goals.

ACTION 30

Distribute the second, biannual racial equity survey to the Water Boards to measure staff understanding of racial equity.

LEAD: Office of Information Management and Analysis

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

This effort has been adopted on a larger scale by CalEPA, which will conduct this second survey. The Office of Information Management and Analysis will continue to work closely with CalEPA to assist in the development and analysis of this survey and its results.

ACTION 31

Develop educational materials for staff to improve understanding of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) processes for submitting racial discrimination/harassment complaints and following up after a complaint has been submitted.

LEAD: Equal Employment Opportunity

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

These materials were developed, and the work is ongoing in nature. Water Boards staff are required to take annual training on equal employment opportunities, racial discrimination, and harassment. In 2025, the Equal Employment Opportunity Office conducted training and education throughout the Water Boards’ regions, divisions, and offices.

Strategic Direction #3

ACTIVATING BIPOC COMMUNITY WISDOM AND SHARING POWER

Fostering open communications for voices of Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities; building power in BIPOC communities by cultivating authentic relationships and engaging communities as partners for racial equity; offering ongoing training, education, and dedicated resources to raise awareness of the Water Boards’ role in managing the state’s water resources; and incorporating wisdom from Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities in Water Boards’ decision-making processes.

GOAL 3A:
Engage with BIPOC communities by providing effective language access services and accessible communication

ACTION 32			
Cultivate relationships with ethnic and multi-language media in BIPOC communities and provide opportunities for them to understand and contextualize water policy information.			
LEAD: Communications Office			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Communications Office continued its outreach to media outlets throughout the state to expand its media relationships and encourage local reporting on water quality issues impacting Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color. The State Water Board’s Office of Sustainable Groundwater Management has increased its media contacts and coverage of groundwater issues, especially by Spanish-speaking media, in basins currently before the Board in the state intervention process. Through its contacts, the Office helped reporters understand the structure of the Water Boards, how to navigate the Water Boards’ websites, and the types of stories relevant to their geographical and thematic areas of interest.

ACTION 33

Review and evaluate existing photo library inventory and identify gaps to diversify photos so that our communications material better reflect California’s people. Create guidance for staff on use of culturally sensitive imagery, such as for Native American ceremonies, and avoiding images that reinforce racial stereotypes.

LEAD: Communications Office

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Communications Office reviewed photographs and graphics on the Water Boards’ most mature social media channels, Twitter (now X), and Instagram, to evaluate their diversity and inclusion. That review found that much of the imagery on the Water Boards’ social media channels depicts the natural environment and does not feature people.

ACTION 34

Add racial equity, diversity, and inclusion guidance to the Water Boards’ existing editorial style guide, including plain language writing, using acronyms, a racial equity glossary of terms, and culturally sensitive and gender-inclusive language, etc.

LEAD: Communications Office

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Writer/Editor in the Communications Office is developing a comprehensive style guide for the Water Boards. The comprehensive style guide includes a chapter on diversity, equity, and inclusion in all communications, and a glossary of terms. The draft style guide also includes chapters on plain language and writing style that were adapted from the Associated Press Style for the needs of Water Boards. It also includes chapters on communications planning and brand identity.

ACTION 35

Revise the Water Boards’ public comment webpages and instructions to better describe the process and improve access to participation.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

While public comment webpages have not yet been updated, the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs updated the [Water Boards’ public engagement webpage](#) to improve access to information. The webpage provides information about the Water Boards, accessing language services, participating in public processes, and general contact information in English and Spanish. The Water Boards are continuing to explore various opportunities to improve the digital public comment experience.

ACTION 36

Create a new public notice template to be used by Water Boards staff. The template will use plain language, have an intuitive layout, communicate potential racial equity impacts, and explain how participant input will be considered.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs, the State Water Board Clerk, and the Office of Chief Counsel are actively working on this project and have released a public notice template for staff to use. The public notice templates are written to be more readable, concise, and clear for the public. The templates also include standardized language for requesting language access services and accommodations. This work is ongoing and expanding into building templates for other types of notices.

ACTION 37

Finalize the language access guidance document and deliver training to Water Boards staff on language access laws and best practices.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Language Access Policy and staff protocol have been developed. The Language Access Policy will take effect in early 2026, and subsequent staff training sessions will be offered in late 2026. This Policy outlines the Water Boards commitment to ensuring meaningful access to programs, services and public engagement for individuals with limited English proficiency or other communications needs, in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements.

ACTION 38

Implement a form that the public can use to request language services. Distribute the form via public notices, the Water Boards website, and social media.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs has developed an online form that the public can use to request language services for translation or interpretation needs and to submit complaints regarding language services. The form is available in six languages: Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Punjabi. The [online public request form for language services](#) can be found on the Water Boards’ websites.

ACTION 39

Expand the Spanish language glossary to include more terminology related to water. Use glossary to ensure consistent and accessible use of terminology.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs has completed its Spanish-language water glossary and continues to regularly add new terms. The glossary is used to provide guidance to Spanish language interpreters and translators, ensuring consistency with the Water Boards’ Spanish language terminology. The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs will vet the terminology with Spanish-speaking communities to ensure alignment in understanding of terms and will publish the glossary online for use as a resource. The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs will develop similar water glossaries for the top languages spoken in California to ensure consistency in terminology.



GOAL 3B:

Remove barriers for community access and participation in water decision-making by providing resources for capacity building, including funding, training, and education

ACTION 40			
<p>Improve Water Board participation in community-based environmental violations monitoring meetings (IVAN meetings).</p> <p>LEAD: Office of Enforcement</p>			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Enforcement collaborates with various California Environmental Protection Agency boards, departments, and offices to attend regular community Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods (IVAN) meetings and other meetings of community organizations with environmental concerns. The intent is to gather and address environmental complaints. When necessary or appropriate, the Office of Enforcement assumes a leadership role in addressing community concerns related to water pollution arising from these meetings.

ACTION 41			
<p>Develop a guidance document for improving and streamlining enforcement complaint process to improve responsiveness to community complaints.</p> <p>LEAD: Office of Enforcement</p>			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Enforcement continues to refine complaint reporting and processing procedures, providing direct access to the California Environmental Protection Agency’s complaint tracking system through its public website. Progress on this action was limited due to staff turnover and the onboarding process.

ACTION 42

Develop a form for members of the public to submit questions or requests. Distribute the form via public notices, the Water Boards website, and social media.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs currently manage ombudsperson phone calls and emails from the public. As questions and concerns arise, the Office directs the member of the public to the appropriate region, division, or office. An online form is being developed to streamline this process and develop template responses for commonly asked questions and requests. The online form will enable better routing and tracking of public inquiries and is currently being reviewed internally.

ACTION 43

Continue to update the external contact list on a quarterly basis and expand curated lists for groups and leaders working on racial and environmental justice.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs compiled an external contact list for Water Boards staff to utilize for enhancing their project outreach efforts. This external contact list can be used by staff to create tailored project contact lists. The contact list includes organizations representing various interests, expertise, and geographic areas. Categories include community organizations, non-governmental organizations, government agencies, schools/academia, advocacy groups, and Tribal interest groups.

ACTION 44

Coordinate the second cohort of the Facilitation and Training Pool to train Water Boards staff on how to engage with communities effectively, how to design and manage engagement processes, and how to navigate challenging conversations.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs is building the capacity of all Water Boards staff to engage effectively with communities, Tribes, and other interested parties. In 2023, a cohort within the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs pursued and obtained a Professional Certificate in Public Engagement for Government through the Davenport Institute in Pepperdine University’s School of Public Policy. The Office is leveraging the expertise gained through this certificate program to develop a public engagement and environmental justice manual and training curriculum, which will be made available to all Water Boards staff. Supplementary templates and resources to support effective public engagement practices will also be developed and made available to Water Boards staff.

ACTION 45

Develop guidance and templates for developing outreach and engagement plans that support equitable public participation, engagement, and community and Tribal partnerships.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

Assembly Bill 2108 added sections 189.7 and 13149.2 to the Water Code, compelling the Water Boards to undertake meaningful outreach when considering discharges of waste that may disproportionately impact water quality in disadvantaged or Tribal communities. The Water Boards are now required to develop a concise summary of anticipated water quality impacts on these communities and identify measures to address such impacts within their authority. To ensure effective engagement, the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs developed guidance for best practices in community and Tribal outreach. The guidance document is not a prescriptive checklist, but rather a flexible tool to be used in developing an engagement plan. The guidance document was accompanied by a project plan template that models a format staff can use to track and manage their projects from start to completion. The template can be downloaded as an Excel document and used as a tool to collect community profiles and water quality data, as well as organize and plan outreach and engagement activities.

Many programs continue to utilize these tools to implement enhanced engagement strategies. The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs is developing a public engagement and environmental justice manual that incorporates these tools.

ACTION 46			
<p>Develop a template and guidance for creating and using community profiles to inform engagement strategies, for planning equitable and accessible meetings, and for using plain language in document development.</p> <p>LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs</p>			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs developed this action as part of its outreach and engagement guidance described in the Action above.

ACTION 47			
<p>Create a local workforce development pilot through the SAFER drinking water program to address barriers to maintaining sustainable drinking water solutions in small, disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs</p>			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs, the Division of Drinking Water, and the Division of Financial Assistance are exploring opportunities to collaborate and leverage resources developed by the California Workforce Development Board and other organizations addressing workforce development needs in California. Many of the efforts proposed under this action are currently being undertaken by the California Workforce Development Board’s California Water, Wastewater, and Energy Workforce Program, which focuses on developing trained workers to secure jobs in the publicly owned utility, water, and wastewater industries throughout California. The State Water Board is actively monitoring local pilot programs and continues to seek opportunities to support local workforce efforts. More information can be found on the [California Workforce Development Board’s California Water, Wastewater, and Energy Workforce Program webpage](#).



ACTION 48

Develop a community capacity building pilot fund to: 1) compensate Tribal and BIPOC community partners for their time and expertise; and 2) support Tribal- and community-led projects that address environmental clean-up projects.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs is currently piloting an effort to compensate community partners for their time and expertise as part of the SAFER drinking water program. The goals of the Community Partner program are to partner with local leaders to enhance how SAFER gathers information and expertise from hard-to-reach or rural communities; facilitate community involvement to drinking water decisions; build local community outreach and engagement capacity; identify and communicate potential risks, issues, or delays impacting drinking water solutions; and catalyze collaborative solutions in drinking water challenges. In 2025, two Community Partners were hired and onboarded to conduct a community outreach campaign to promote public participation for a Southwest Tulare County drinking water regionalization effort. Their outreach included community listening sessions, a survey, door-knocking, and attendance at water system board meetings. Their involvement in this regionalization project has strengthened communication between the boards of local water systems and the residents, as the Community Partners have been able to elevate residents’ concerns and facilitate responses. The Community Partners’ term is scheduled to continue through Spring 2026 and a report documenting the lessons learned by the pilot will follow the completion of the pilot program.

Grant Solicitation Program for Tribes and Environmental Justice Communities

On March 17, 2026, the State Water Board adopted Resolution 2026-0009, establishing a one-time pilot program to develop a new grant solicitation. This solicitation will distribute \$5 million from the Cleanup and Abatement Account (CAA). The Cleanup and Abatement Account, created by Water Code Sections 13440-13443, provides funding to cleanup or abate water pollution when there are no viable responsible parties available to undertake the work. The CAA is funded through court judgments and administrative civil liabilities issued by the State Water Resources Control Board and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards. The pilot grant program will award \$5 million to projects that benefit disadvantaged environmental justice communities or Tribal communities. Eligible projects must cleanup or abate the effects of waste on waters of the state and must include outreach and engagement components.



ACTION 49

Purchase constituent relationship management (CRM) software to improve, focus, and monitor engagement with BIPOC communities and Tribes.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Division of Information Technology, in collaboration with the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs, is working to find the appropriate software that will meet the Water Boards’ needs for tracking engagement with communities and Tribes. In the interim, the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs is using SharePoint lists to accomplish this task.

ACTION 50

In consultation with BIPOC communities, non-governmental organizations, and Tribes, expand press distribution lists with a racial equity lens and add media contacts who represent and are connected with BIPOC communities.

LEAD: Communications Office

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Communications Office added media representatives from media outlets reporting on issues affecting disadvantaged and/or Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color to its press distribution lists.

**GOAL 3C:
Consult, collaborate, and partner with BIPOC communities
in decision-making processes**

ACTION 51

Implement Assembly Bill 2108 (2022) by developing guidance on using racial equity data to identify potential environmental justice water quality impacts, engage with communities potentially impacted, and develop findings based on data and outreach.

LEAD: Division of Water Quality

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

This project is being completed as part of the Racial Equity Data Action Plan under [Action 2](#). Additionally, the Division of Water Quality established its own advancing racial equity team to support the implementation of Assembly Bill 2108 throughout the Division. For example, the racial equity team will coordinate with the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs as they develop a list of contacts for outreach, ensuring that Tribes and communities are aware and can provide input on statewide water quality projects.

ACTION 52

Provide briefings for legislators who represent geographic areas with a high percentage of BIPOC communities to help inform them of Water Boards’ resources and community participation processes, and to better understand barriers to implementation and hear suggestions for how to overcome them.

LEAD: Office of Legislative Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Legislative Affairs is in the process of briefing and providing helpful information to state legislators. This includes providing information on projects funded in legislative districts and assisting State Water Board staff who testify in committee hearings. 2025 has seen the start of a new legislative session, along with new members of the Legislature.

ACTION 53

Update Tribal Affairs webpage to include a table of current Tribal consultation opportunities for all Water Boards projects subject to AB 52.

LEAD: Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs has developed an interactive Tribal consultation dashboard that includes a list of current Tribal consultation opportunities. The goal of the interactive dashboard is to create a centralized location for communicating opportunities for Tribal consultation, thereby bringing greater transparency, consistency, coordination, and fostering better collaboration with Tribes.

Appendix A

REGIONAL WATER BOARD SUMMARY



While this annual report focuses on the State Water Board’s Racial Equity Action Plan, various efforts to advance racial equity and environmental justice are underway across the nine regional water boards. Multiple regional water boards are currently developing or have completed their own racial equity resolutions and action plans. Several regional water boards also developed internal working groups, embedded equity considerations in existing programs, and have incorporated discussions about racial equity and environmental justice considerations into internal standing meetings. Table 2 includes information on formal actions regional water boards have made to advance racial equity.

Appendix A includes general updates on efforts within regional water boards to advance racial equity and environmental justice and is not an exhaustive list.

Regional Water Board	Working Group	Resolution	Action Plan
1 North Coast	Complete	Complete	In Progress
2 San Francisco	Complete	Not Applicable*	Complete
3 Central Coast	Complete	Complete	Complete
4 Los Angeles	Complete	In Progress	Not Started
5 Central Valley	Complete	Complete	Complete
6 Lahontan	Complete	Complete	In Progress
7 Colorado River	In Progress	Not Started	Scoping
8 Santa Ana	Complete	Complete	Complete
9 San Diego	Complete	Not Applicable**	In Progress

Table 2: Status of formal actions made by regional water boards.

* The San Francisco Bay Water Board received feedback from community organizations and members to prioritize developing and implementing a racial equity action plan over a resolution.

** The San Diego Water Board’s Practical Vision Chapter 4 Implement Racial Equity and Environmental Justice Measures, Resolution R9-2021-0007.

REGION 1: North Coast Water Board

The North Coast Water Board has established a racial equity workgroup that is advancing efforts to address environmental justice and racial equity within the Region. The Region has a Tribal coordinator, as well as racial equity and environmental justice coordinators. The Executive Officer continues to support elevating racial equity as one of the cross-program priorities in the North Coast Water Board’s work planning. The Racial Equity Action Plan was presented before the Regional Board at the April 2025 Board meeting. Since the presentation of the Action Plan, the Regional Board has prioritized and made progress on actions including maintaining an internal Racial Equity Awareness Discussions group; increasing Tribal Coordinator time for engagement; outreaching to BIPOC communities; optimizing meeting times/locations for BIPOC and Tribal participation; supporting Tribal grant efforts; and establishing a form to record and track actions taken to implement the Action Plan.

REGION 2: San Francisco Bay Water Board

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board's Strategic Workplan is a roadmap that guides the Water Board in achieving its mission to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of the Bay Area's water resources. The Strategic Workplan identifies our commitment to racial equity and environmental justice as an organizational priority. In all our work, we strive to advance environmental justice, racial equity, and climate change resilience. We track progress and report to the San Francisco Bay Water Board annually. The region prioritizes program activities to protect water quality and beneficial water uses in communities that have experienced historical racism and environmental injustices. These communities are currently faced with complex water quality challenges such as the potential mobilization of contamination from sea level rise and groundwater rise. The San Francisco Bay Water Board's Recruiting Racial Equity team implements the Region's recruitment strategy to recruit a diverse pool of candidates for vacant positions.

The San Francisco Bay Water Board participates in coordinated multi-agency efforts with U.S. EPA, CalEPA, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, and others to engage in racial equity and environmental justice work such as the ongoing clean-up of contamination at the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in San Francisco.

The San Francisco Bay Water Board has identified 101 of our 628 active Site Cleanup Program sites are in environmental justice communities. Staff have continued to prioritize these and track cleanup progress with the goal of ensuring that cases are moving forward so that possible health and environmental exposures are identified and addressed as quickly as possible. We required remediation at 5 sites and closed 3 sites. The San Francisco Bay Water Board continues to push for investigation and mitigation measures to identify and quickly address any exposures at sites located in disadvantaged communities.

The San Francisco Bay Water Board signed a Statement of Resolution in 2025 for a formal dispute the Water Board and the Department of Toxics Substance Control had with the U.S. Army at the former Oakland Army Reserve Base and resolved a dispute that had been ongoing with the Army since 2017. The dispute centered upon the Army's refusal to acknowledge the unacceptable health risks posed by polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination in sediment to people consuming fish caught in the Bay. The Water Board insisted that the Army needs to cleanup PCB contaminated sediments so that the East Bay Regional Park District, who is the scheduled property recipient, can redevelop Parcel 1 into an urban park that will serve the West Oakland community. As part of the dispute resolution, the Army agreed that the cleanup of Parcel 1 sediments should address fish consumption risks. The Navy also agreed to assess active remedial alternatives for sediment contamination. PCB sediment cleanup at Parcel 1 will reduce health risks to the West Oakland Community, which has disproportionately been affected by environmental injustices.

The San Francisco Bay Water Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the State Water Board, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the San Francisco Bay Water Board, the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (a resident led community-based environmental justice organization), and Radius Recycling Inc regarding metal recycling operations in West Oakland. The parties meet regularly and seek continued and expanded collaboration with each other to address impacts caused or posed by metal shredding operations in West Oakland.

REGION 3: Central Coast Water Board

The Central Coast Regional Water Board's Environmental Justice Leadership team provided an update to their Board at the February 2025 Board Meeting on the working Racial Equity Action Plan. The Working Racial Equity Action Plan is a working document that staff will adjust based on available staff capacity and resources. The Central Coast Water Board does not currently receive any personnel or contract resources to implement environmental justice, racial equity, or Tribal engagement activities. Over the next two years, it is anticipated that staff participating in the environmental justice leadership team will work on the action plan on a volunteer basis, adjusting the Working Racial Equity Action Plan based on internal and external input, available staff capacity, and resources. At the June 2025 Board Meeting, the Board discussed enforcement priorities and confirmed the high priority to address violations associated with discharges that impact water quality in underrepresented communities. Board Members also directed the Enforcement Program to prioritize settlement projects that 1) implement the human right to water, 2) implement climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, 3) implement sustainable water management measures, 4) provide habitat restoration and enhancement, and 5) provide water quality benefits to underrepresented communities.

REGION 4: Los Angeles Water Board

The Los Angeles Regional Water Board's Racial Equity and Environmental Justice Working Group meets to advance equity and justice initiatives, including the development of a racial equity resolution. The Los Angeles Water Board prioritizes cleanups in disadvantaged communities, engages in outreach to California Native American Tribes, and uses tools like CalEnviroScreen 4.0 to address pollution burdens. Programs such as the Senate Bill 1215 Wastewater Consolidation Program focus on providing sewer services to disadvantaged areas. Additionally, the board ensures enhanced public participation and outreach in multiple languages, prioritizing community concerns in permitting and decision-making processes. They also respond to stormwater complaints and participate in emergency response efforts related to wildfires and storms.

REGION 5: Central Valley Water Board

The Central Valley Region just reformed the Environmental Justice and Racial Equity Working Group. This group keeps the region's program managers on track to reach their racial equity goals. The main focuses across programs are improving outreach, prioritizing sites based on environmental justice and racial equity goals and encouraging work to be conducted with an environmental justice-related lens, when possible. Environmental justice and racial equity began after the Central Valley Regional Board adopted a resolution and action plan. Within the Action Plan, each program has goals that are reported to the Board. Many programs are currently finalizing priority lists for sites and are learning how to use new tools.

REGION 6: Lahontan Water Board

The Lahontan Regional Racial Equity Working Group has been meeting monthly to develop a strategy that addresses racial equity. This strategy includes increasing employee awareness about racial equity, incorporating racial equity into regional goals, identifying paths for integrating racial equity into decision-making processes, and providing regular updates at our monthly all-staff meetings. Since the adoption of the Lahontan Regional Racial Equity Resolution on August 20, 2024, members of our Racial Equity Working Group updated our racial equity and environmental justice webpage. The Racial Equity Working Group has also been working toward the development of a Racial Equity and Environmental Justice Action Plan (Action Plan) for the Region. Subcommittees within the Racial Equity Working Group are focused on 1.) community outreach, 2.) Tribal outreach, and 3.) developing an initial draft of the Action Plan.

An update by the Racial Equity Working Group was presented at the August 2025 Board Meeting to discuss group activities since the adoption of the regional Racial Equity Resolution in 2024. Lahontan Water Board staff also released an Initial Draft of the Regional Racial Equity and Environmental Justice Action Plan (Action Plan), which contains proposed actions, supporting ideas, and measurements of success, including metrics, milestones, data, and other indicators that can be used to indicate successful completion of actions or to track progress toward actions over time. The purpose of our Racial Equity Resolution and Action Plan is to formalize the Lahontan Region's commitment and efforts to advance racial equity and environmental justice for the Lahontan Region. The Initial Draft Action Plan was completed in August and was translated into Spanish by the Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs. The initial draft was posted on the Racial Equity and Environmental Justice webpage, along with a survey in both Spanish and English, seeking input and ideas for the Action Plan. The Racial Equity Working Group is now incorporating comments received from the public on this initial draft into our next version of the Action Plan.

The Lahontan Board adopted the 2025 Triennial Review in July 2025. The Triennial Review prioritizes working with the Mono Lake Kootzaduka'a Tribe to designate Tribal Beneficial Uses (TBUs) for waterbodies in the Mono Lake Basin, including Mono Lake. The Triennial Review also prioritizes working with other Tribes in the Lahontan Region to identify and designate other water bodies in the Lahontan Region with TBUs. Staff recently met with the Kootzaduka'a Tribe to re-initiate the project to designate TBUs in the Mono Basin. Draft Guidelines for designating TBUs are under Tribal review. Staff will work with the Tribe to augment their revitalization plan with details and descriptions of TBUs that are consistent with the guidelines. This may result in Mono Basin waterbodies being designated with T-SUB as probable future Beneficial Uses.

Other program areas that have promoted racial equity and environmental justice in the Lahontan Region include the Leviathan Mine and Enforcement programs. The Leviathan Mine cleanup program staff continues to work with the Washoe Tribe. The staff seeks input from Tribal officials regarding site cleanup and protection of downstream water quality. The Lahontan Regional Board recently approved a settlement agreement between Caltrans and the North Tahoe Public Utility District for \$850,000, paid by the discharger, to carry out a Supplemental Environmental Project in a disadvantaged community. This project will fund the construction of public restrooms and drinking fountains at Secline Beach in Tahoe.

REGION 7: Colorado River Water Board

Within the Colorado River Regional Water Board, staff have been continuously reaching out to environmental justice organizations to create partnerships in the region, eager to learn more about ongoing local environmental health programs and disseminate outreach materials. Regional staff are pursuing partnerships to share upcoming meeting information, current projects, and provide more details about the work that the Regional Board undertakes. The Environmental Justice Coordinator attended the Imperial Valley Equity and Justice Five-Year Anniversary and Calexico office opening on Friday, August 1st. This was an opportunity to connect with environmental justice community organizers, learn more about their ongoing programs with Lithium Valley, and explore opportunities for future partnership.

Staff and leadership attended Salton Sea Hydrogen Sulfide Mapping Workshops at the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Tribal Hall and the Mecca Boys and Girls Club. We were invited by environmental justice program managers at Alianza. This workshop included presentations and discussions about the Salton Sea Environmental Timeseries project and research from professors at UCLA, Loma Linda University, and Brown University. These workshops focused on community-based participatory environmental health research for odor mapping and sharing community science data. Presentations also included environmental health education, HEPA filter sign-ups, and educational presentations about how to get involved in government agency public participation. We were also able to connect with local researchers for sampling efforts and to share data with the Regional Board regarding the Salton Sea. Staff are planning to attend the second annual Healthy Desert, Healthy You Environmental Health Summit. The Region's Executive Officer, Michael Placencia, will participate in a panel discussion about "Safe Water for All: Addressing Infrastructure, Contaminants, and Community Health." Staff will attend panels, tabling, and meet with Coachella Valley environmental health practitioners.

A major focus of regional outreach is to provide straightforward and up-to-date information about regional programs, current projects, and upcoming public participation opportunities. The Environmental Justice Coordinator is in the drafting stage of creating water quality standards and monitoring fact sheets. The Environmental Justice Coordinator created a regional Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program fact sheet, which was translated into Spanish. NPDES unit leadership created a regional fact sheet of permits being worked on during the fiscal year 2025-2026. The primary goal is to ensure that the information included is easy to understand and accessible in Spanish, as the website may initially appear intimidating for community members to navigate. The Region hopes that this can also serve as a way to share updated contact information and help spark questions or input from community members and local organizations.

The Environmental Justice Coordinator is collaborating with regulatory leadership to identify the language needs for outreach within each community in the Region. All languages, not including Spanish and English, are found at under 5% usage in our major regional communities. However, the high percentage of community members, environmental justice groups, and community groups that primarily speak Spanish reflects our need to further engage in outreach, workshops, and meetings with a dedicated Spanish speaker in our office or through language access services. The Region plans to engage in outreach to local schools and community colleges during the 2025-2026 academic year to support youth environmental education and share more information about careers at the Water Boards.

REGION 8: Santa Ana Water Board

The Santa Ana Region is in the process of reorganizing its racial equity internal workgroup, as it was formed and headed by our recently retired Executive Officer, Jayne Joy. Since the adoption of the Racial Equity Resolution in March 2024, the Region has completed its Action Plan.

REGION 9: San Diego Water Board

The San Diego Region's Racial Equity Team is finalizing the region's internal Equity Goals to roll out to staff in the next year. These goals will help guide staff on how they should consider equity and environmental justice in their daily work. The goals have been reviewed by an internal advisory team, the Region's Executive Officer, and the Office of Public Equity Engagement and Tribal Affairs.

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN | 2025 ANNUAL UPDATE

Appendix B

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Racial Equity Action Plan published in January 2023, included performance indicators for each action. Performance indicators are quantitative performance measures and qualitative targets to assess progress and evaluate each action’s success. Due to the diversity of actions included in this plan, measurements of success include metrics, milestones, data, and other indicators that can be used to indicate successful completion of actions or to track progress toward actions over time.

During the first year of Action Plan implementation, Water Board staff discovered that the performance indicators identified when the actions were first developed were not the most meaningful for measuring progress. Many actions will require the collection of data over time to inform future development of meaningful performance targets. For those actions, quantifiable measurements (e.g., number of permits, percent of staff) have been included in the narrative progress summary section of the report to establish a baseline measure from which to evaluate the action’s success in future years. To ensure their utility, metrics may be added or changed over time. Knowledge gained from tracking these performance indicators may result in the development of additional indicators and inform future iterations of the action plan.

Table 2: Performance Indicators for Actions in the 2023–2025 Racial Equity Action Plan.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
1	Update the State Water Board’s racial equity webpage to include a page for tracking and measuring progress on the Racial Equity Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage updated.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
2	<p>Develop and implement a Racial Equity Data Action Plan (REDAP). At a minimum, the REDAP must do the following: (1) Develop training and best practices guidance for Water Boards staff on incorporating racial equity concepts into the planning and design of data collection methods and visualizations (e.g., maps, factsheets, etc.) projects. (2) Identify and expand existing opportunities for public participation in science and community data gathering programs to develop new data collection methods, support existing programs, and incorporate community datasets into the database. (3) Create a publicly accessible data catalog tool / interface that includes existing demographic data, Water Boards program data, and other available data (such as heat maps or flood hazard maps) to inform the implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate draft REDAP to Water Board organizations by January 2023. • Develop REDAP best practices draft guidance by February 2023. • Deliver beta version REDAP best practices training online by March 2023. • Build online platform for public access to REDAP priority data catalog and visualization tools by February 2023.
3	<p>Incorporate racial equity analysis into the 305(b)/303(d) Integrated Report to identify impacted waters in BIPOC and disadvantaged communities, starting by identifying data gaps. The Integrated Report is a document with a comprehensive review of surface water quality and includes a list of currently impaired water bodies by pollutant type.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly identified or prioritized waters in BIPOC and disadvantaged communities in the Integrated Report.
4	<p>Identify and assess available data to identify racial equity data gaps related to water quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWQ units/programs that have completed data needs assessments. • Types and # of datasets assessed. • Process for ground truthing data sets developed.
5	<p>Include a Racial Equity Action Plan progress update at a State Water Board meeting. The update should include any barriers, such as funding or legislation, encountered as the plan is implemented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial Equity Action Plan update held at a State Water Board meeting in 2024.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
6	Incorporate racial equity analysis into the annual Drinking Water Needs Assessment, including a measurement of the number of BIPOC communities impacted by primary and secondary contaminants in drinking water and water unaffordability. Work with U.S. EPA to implement a similar analysis to federally regulated tribal water systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each future Needs Assessment will include the evaluation. • Types of data incorporated into the Needs Assessment.
7	Assess race/ethnicity data and other relevant demographic data, associated with the communities that benefit from funding administered by DFA. Existing annual funding reports and plans will be the primary mechanism to report these data on a project specific basis, where appropriate. In addition, summaries for the funding program will be provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Funding program reports/plans that include racial, ethnic, and other demographic information.
8	Deputy directors and directors should regularly discuss their division’s or office’s progress with their staff on actions identified in the Racial Equity Action Plan and gauge where more support is needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division and office senior leaders meet regularly with program leaders to discuss racial equity progress and resource needs to complete actions.
9	Develop a racial equity toolkit for all Water Boards staff to consider racial equity in their day-to-day work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolkit developed.
10	Develop training and guidance for how to implement the racial equity toolkit to examine potential disproportionate impacts of policies and programs on BIPOC communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training developed. • # Staff trained. • # Programs that have piloted the toolkit.
11	Select, train, and support a second cohort of Water Boards staff to deliver “Advancing Racial Equity at the Water Boards” trainings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Water Boards staff trained.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
12	Develop a racial equity training plan for staff that will guide efforts to develop and coordinate a racial equity curriculum through the Training Academy. Elements may include analysis of what trainings are effective; what trainings should be required; how often people should get training; which current courses could be modified to incorporate more content related to racial equity; how racial equity goals should inform the selection, onboarding, and evaluation of instructors and vendors providing materials or courses; and what educational content could be developed or made available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan developed.
13	As appropriate, ensure that priorities and actions within the State Water Board’s annual Strategic Work Plan reflect this action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Strategic Work Plan actions that reflect use of a racial equity lens.
14	Develop a plan to identify climate change impacts (related to State Water Board authorities) and how they may potentially disproportionately impact BIPOC communities or interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan developed.
15	In basins where State Water Board intervention into groundwater management (through SGMA authorities) is likely, engage with BIPOC communities that may be affected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type and # of engagement efforts made to engage with BIPOC communities and groups. • # Meetings or workshops in communities where residents are predominantly BIPOC.
16	Assess potential equity impacts of the proposed urban water use efficiency regulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the degree data allows, consider equity in analyses done related to the rulemaking.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
17	Pilot the racial equity toolkit to identify program-specific actions, priorities, and metrics, and realign programs and practices to advance racial equity, and assess the effectiveness of programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desired outcomes and accountability metrics are developed using results-based accountability approach for each DWQ program. Type and # of metrics developed by engaging with U.S. EPA to implement the Justice 40 initiative for federally funded programs (e.g., nonpoint source grants, ocean beach monitoring grants, water quality management planning). The Justice 40 initiative includes distributing 40% of federal funds to disadvantaged communities. Process established for ground truthing data sets.
18	Provide guidance to Regional Water Boards on the consideration of impacts to BIPOC communities and environmental justice when addressing impaired waters through development of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) or other actions to restore clean water. Use prioritization to inform allocation of funding for environmental cleanup projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised guidance to Regional Water Boards on setting priorities to address impaired waters through the development of TMDLs or other restoration actions. Prioritization factors should include impacts to BIPOC communities and consider environmental justice. Revised TMDL program guidance for the development of TMDL implementation plans to include consideration of BIPOC communities and environmental justice. Consider revising the implementation plan guidance in A Process for Addressing Impaired Waters in California (adopted by SWB Resolution 2005-0050).
19	Participate as partners in implementing the Environmental Justice Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff participation in EJ community listening sessions. Staff participation in EJ Enforcement Rapid Response Team. Participation in community outreach training for enforcement staff. # Multimedia inspections in overburdened communities.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
20	Consider impacts to BIPOC communities, tribal beneficial uses and cultural resources, and related ecosystems when developing, implementing, and enforcing instream flow requirements, consistent with all applicable laws and requirements, including those related to water rights, basin planning, public trust resources, and endangered species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and update a webpage that identifies streams with ongoing instream flow development activities.
21	Establish a single point of contact in the Division of Water Rights to serve as a coordinator on Bay-Delta tribal and BIPOC engagement to improve communication and outreach and conduct tribal outreach under AB 52 and B-10-11 for the Bay-Delta Plan implementation regulation for Lower San Joaquin River flows and Southern Delta Salinity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Division coordinator. • Number of consultation requests and engagements related to development of the Sacramento River watershed and interior Delta (Sac/Delta) Bay-Delta Plan Staff Report. • Include a chapter in the Sacramento/Delta Staff report focused on BIPOC and disadvantaged community issues.
22	Incorporate racial equity analysis when developing maximum contaminant levels using available data and as data and methods allow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each future maximum contaminant level will include a racial equity analysis when data and methods allow.
23	Review existing data, and new data to be collected and produced by CalHR, on demographics of Water Boards staff. Disaggregate data by Region, Division, Office, position classification, etc. and publish findings to the Racial Equity Webpage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate Action Plan is revised and distributed to all Water Boards hiring managers.
24	Review and revise the “Immediate Action Plan for Advancing Workforce Diversity” to improve long-term effectiveness of strategies to recruit, promote, and retain BIPOC staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track the number and type of recruitments, such as in-person job fairs and visits.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
25	Increase recruitment for job openings and internship opportunities at high schools, community colleges, colleges, universities, workforce development networks, and community-based groups that serve BIPOC communities in California. Collaborate with Regional Water Boards on future recruitment efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track the number and type of recruitments, such as in-person job fairs and visits.
26	Update the Water Boards’ website to include additional guidance for prospective applicants on how to navigate the state’s hiring process, with a focus on successfully applying for Water Board positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan to provide and require implicit bias and racial equity training for staff by January 2024.
27	Require implicit bias and racial equity training for all hiring panelists, supervisors, and State and Regional Board Members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan to provide and require implicit bias and racial equity training for staff by January 2024.
28	Develop a mentorship program that allows employees, including BIPOC staff, to connect with others who may have similar experiences and to provide coaching on career growth and advancement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance on the Water Board’s internal mentoring program is finalized.
29	Update roundtable charters or workplans to include racial equity and include racial equity discussions as a standing agenda item on roundtables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of roundtables with updated charters and/or workplans to include racial equity.
30	Distribute the second, biannual racial equity survey to the Water Boards to measure staff understanding of racial equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey response rate above 60%.
31	Develop educational materials for staff to improve understanding of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) processes for submitting racial discrimination/harassment complaints and following up after a complaint has been submitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials developed.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
32	Cultivate relationships with ethnic and multi-language media in BIPOC communities and provide opportunities for them to understand and contextualize water policy information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Direct conversations with ethnic and multi-language media professionals in BIPOC communities. • # Articles published in new multi-language media outlets.
33	Review and evaluate existing photo library inventory and identify gaps to diversify photos so that our communications material better reflect California’s people. Create guidance for staff on use of culturally sensitive imagery, such as for Native American ceremonies, and avoiding images that reinforce racial stereotypes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a baseline by counting the number of photos featuring people of color posted on social media in 2022. In 2023, compare progress to the baseline. • Diversify photos used on social media to better reflect the demographics of California (25% increase in people of color photos used).
34	Add racial equity, diversity, and inclusion guidance to the Water Boards’ existing editorial style guide, including plain language writing, using acronyms, a racial equity glossary of terms, and culturally sensitive and gender-inclusive language, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisions to the editorial style guide completed. • In 2023, create a rollout plan for distributing and explaining the style guide to all Water Boards staff by January 2024.
35	Revise the Water Boards’ public comment webpages and instructions to better describe the process and improve access to participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage revisions completed.
36	Create a new public notice template to be used by Water Boards staff. The template will use plain language, have an intuitive layout, communicate potential racial equity impacts, and explain how participant input will be considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public notice template completed.
37	Finalize language access guidance document and deliver training to Water Boards staff on language access laws and best practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance completed.
38	Implement a form that the public can use to request language services. Distribute the form via public notices, the Water Boards website, and social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online form published.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
39	Expand the Spanish language glossary to include more terminology related to water. Use glossary to ensure consistent and accessible use of terminology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # New terms added every quarter.
40	Improve Water Board participation in community-based environmental violations monitoring meetings (IVAN meetings).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and track participation in IVAN meetings and training by Water Boards staff.
41	Develop guidance document for improving/streamlining enforcement complaint process to improve responsiveness to community complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplicate complaint pathways eliminated, outdated complaint links removed, and email addresses from Water Board web pages are updated. • Guidance document disseminated and implemented.
42	Develop a form for members of the public to submit questions or requests. Distribute the form via public notices, the Water Boards website, and social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online form published.
43	Continue to update the external contact list on a quarterly basis and expand curated lists for groups and leaders working on racial and environmental justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # New contacts added to list per quarter.
44	Coordinate the second cohort of the Facilitation and Training Pool to train Water Boards staff on how to engage with communities effectively, how to design and manage engagement processes, and how to navigate challenging conversations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Staff members trained and certified as Water Boards facilitators. • # Meetings, workshops, and trainings facilitated by Facilitation and Training pool members.
45	Develop guidance and templates for developing outreach and engagement plans that support equitable public participation, engagement, and community and tribal partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed best practices guidance document.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
46	Develop a template and guidance for creating and using community profiles to inform engagement strategies, for planning equitable and accessible meetings, and for using plain language in document development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed pilot strategy document.
47	Create a local workforce development pilot through the SAFER drinking water program to address barriers to maintaining sustainable drinking water solutions in small, disadvantaged communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed pilot strategy document.
48	Develop a community capacity building pilot fund to: 1) compensate tribal and BIPOC community partners for their time and expertise; and 2) support tribal- and community-led projects that address environmental clean-up projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed funding pilot charter presented to the Board.
49	Purchase constituent relationship management (CRM) software to improve, focus, and monitor engagement with BIPOC communities and tribes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed procedures for inputting data and using tool.
50	In consultation with BIPOC communities, non-governmental organizations, and tribes, expand press distribution lists with a racial equity lens with BIPOC communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # New media contacts that represent and are connected with BIPOC communities.
51	Implement Assembly Bill 2108 (2022) by developing guidance on using racial equity data to identify potential environmental justice water quality impacts, engage with communities potentially impacted, and develop findings based on data and outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # New resources developed providing guidance on implementation of Assembly Bill 2108. Type and # of DWQ templates updated (e.g., project charters, outreach plans) to include racial equity and environmental justice data considerations.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
52	Provide briefings for legislators who represent geographic areas with a high percentage of BIPOC communities to help inform them of Water Boards' resources and community participation processes, and to better understand barriers to implementation and hear suggestions for how to overcome them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Briefings held. • Geographic diversity of participants' elective office included in briefings. • Diversity of type of elective offices contacted.
53	Update Tribal Affairs webpage to include a table of current tribal consultation opportunities for all Water Boards projects subject to AB 52.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage completed.