



South Orange County Wastewater Authority

San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
Attn: Clerk of the Board / Agenda Comments
rb9agenda@waterboards.ca.gov

Subject: Joint Written Comment — Item 5, Super El Niño Status and Preparations
(October 14, 2026 Board Meeting)

Dear Members of the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board:

The undersigned South Orange County wastewater and water agencies submit this joint written comment on Item 5 — Super El Niño Status and Preparations, an informational item on the Board's October 14, 2026, agenda. We appreciate the Board's focus on regional preparedness for a potentially very strong El Niño during fall and winter 2026–2027, including risks of compound coastal flooding, storm-drain overload, increased inflow and infiltration (I&I) to sewer systems and treatment plants, and canyon or creek erosion that can expose collection pipes.

Together, we serve communities across South Orange County. Our shared systems of interest include collection systems, wastewater treatment and ocean discharge facilities. We are coordinating El Niño preparedness across our agencies and welcome the Board's invitation for wastewater operators to describe measures planned or underway to maintain operational integrity and permit compliance.

Joint preparedness focus:

1. **Treatment and discharge facilities.** SOCWA and its member and partner agencies are reviewing wet-weather readiness at our collective treatment facilities, including staffing and operations plans for elevated flows, equalization / wet-weather storage status capacity, and coordination on anticipated flow peaks.
2. **Inflow and infiltration (I&I).** Collection-system owners among the undersigned are emphasizing I&I awareness and reduction ahead of the wet season, consistent with Board staff themes of reducing I&I and protecting treatment capacity.
3. **Equalization and storage readiness.** We are confirming wet-weather equalization and recycled reservoir storage readiness so peak I&I does not compromise treatment or discharge compliance.
4. **Creek-bank exposure and collection integrity.** We are coordinating canyon and creek erosion risk — including along San Juan and Aliso Creek and other South County drainages — as a contingency planning priority for exposed or vulnerable sewer infrastructure.



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5. **Coastal / creek surge, outfall, and flood planning.** We are evaluating flood and surge risk to the Aliso Creek and San Juan Creek Ocean Outfall corridors, so critical facilities remain reachable and discharge integrity is protected during high-tide / high-storm compound events.
6. **Emergency supply procurement ahead of the storms.** We are securing critical emergency supplies before the wet season rather than during an event, when supply chains and delivery routes may be disrupted. This includes items such as backup generator fuel, bypass pumps and hoses, treatment chemicals, sandbags and flood barriers, spill-response and containment materials, and key spare parts, along with standby vendor and emergency purchasing arrangements so equipment and services can be mobilized quickly.
7. **WEROC coordination and shared resource inventory.** We are coordinating with the Water Emergency Response Organization of Orange County (WEROC) on storm readiness and emergency response. To support rapid mobilization, the undersigned agencies are developing a shared inventory management document that tracks available emergency equipment, supplies, and personnel resources across agencies, so resources can be identified and moved quickly to where they are needed during a storm event.

To support a coordinated regional response, the undersigned agencies hold regional coordination monthly meetings focused on El Niño preparedness and lessons learned through this special weather event. These meetings bring together operations, emergency management, and leadership staff to share readiness status, review the shared resource inventory, follow-up on field inspections, align with WEROC, and resolve gaps before storms arrive, so that South Orange County agencies respond as one region rather than individually.

The undersigned support the Board's Practical Vision emphasis on climate-impact mitigation and clear communication with permittees. We are available to provide further operational details at the October 14 discussion if useful to the Board, and we will continue coordinating so South Orange County wastewater systems remain prepared for the coming season.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Boone

Amber Boone
SOCWA General Manager

CC: SOCWA Board of Directors