

Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

June 15, 2023

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT and NOTICE OF CEQA SCOPING MEETING

Regarding
**General Waste Discharge Requirements for
Vegetation and Sediment Management Activities Associated with
Fire Fuel Reduction and Flood Control for the Central Coast Region**

Este es un anuncio de la Junta de Control de la Calidad del Agua de la Costa Central: se le informa a todas las personas interesadas, que el personal está organizando una reunión para recopilar y oír comentarios del público referidos a los impactos potenciales y significativos al medio ambiente que puedan ser causados por la implementación desarrollo de requisitos generales de descarga de desechos para actividades de manejo de vegetación y sedimentos asociadas con la reducción de combustible para incendios y el control de inundaciones. El personal quiere oír comentarios en forma temprana en el proceso para determinar si estos impactos potenciales al medio ambiente puedan ser evitados o disminuidos. Si necesita más información por favor llame a Kim, Kim.Sanders@waterboards.ca.gov

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region (Central Coast Water Board) staff will do the following:

- Issue this Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for general waste discharge requirements for vegetation and sediment management activities associated with fire fuel reduction and flood control¹ (proposed General WDRs), for the waters of the state within the geographic boundary of the Central Coast Region; and
- Host a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping meeting² to seek input on the actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects to be analyzed in depth in an EIR for the proposed General WDRs.

¹ Vegetation management in riparian zones, wetlands, or other waters of the state not regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

² The Central Coast Water Board is conducting the scoping meeting consistent with Public Resources Code section 21104(a) and California Code of Regulations, title 14, sections 15082 and 15083.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION of a DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The Central Coast Water Board will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report for the proposed General WDRs. The Notice of Preparation will be submitted to the State Clearinghouse with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (see Attachment 1).

NOTICE OF CEQA SCOPING MEETING

The Central Coast Water Board will host a CEQA scoping meeting via Zoom. This virtual meeting will consist of a presentation regarding the development of the proposed General WDRs, and an opportunity for meeting participants to provide oral comments regarding the scope and information to be included in the DEIR.

Virtual Meeting:

July 18, 2023

4 p.m. – 6 p.m. PDT

Use this link to join the Zoom Meeting:

<https://waterboards.zoom.us/j/93589152252?pwd=bDcrREJrS0lxeTV5N29UYnUzT0VrUT09>

Zoom Meeting ID: 935 8915 2252

Zoom Meeting Passcode: 284275

How to Submit Written Comments

Written comments regarding CEQA scoping elements for the forthcoming proposed General WDRs may be submitted **on or before August 18, 2023**, via e-mail to Kim Sanders at Kim.Sanders@waterboards.ca.gov or by postal mail, addressed to Kim Sanders at 895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-7906.

Language Services

Non-English language interpretation can be provided for the virtual meeting. If you require non-English-language interpretation, please contact Kim Sanders on or before July 5, 2023, at Kim.Sanders@waterboards.ca.gov.

Background

Discharges of waste that include discharges of dredge and fill material, to waters of the state, are subject to Central Coast Water Board regulation via section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) when a federal agency has issued a permit under CWA section 404. Discharges of waste to waters of the state that do not invoke CWA section 404 cannot be regulated by section 401 of the CWA. However, discharges of waste to waters of the state may be subject to regulation via WDRs pursuant to the California Water Code (Water Code).

Development and adoption of individual WDRs is a process that requires significant staff resources and can take approximately nine to eighteen months to complete, including Central Coast Water Board adoption. Whenever possible, it is more efficient to

regulate a category of discharges that have the same or similar operations, waste type(s), and treatment standards using general WDRs. Development and issuance of the proposed WDRs will be via general WDRs and will provide the Central Coast Water Board staff with an efficient regulatory mechanism for certain types of discharges of dredge and fill material not regulated under CWA sections 404 and 401.

The Central Coast Water Board is developing the proposed General WDRs for the regulation of discharges associated with vegetation and sediment management activities necessary for fire fuel reduction and flood control. Vegetation management activities involve similar types of discharges and require similar mitigation techniques to avoid, minimize, and/or compensate for their adverse impacts to water quality and the beneficial uses of water. Discharges associated with vegetation and sediment management activities are appropriately regulated under the proposed General WDRs because they are similar in nature, frequent, and ongoing throughout the Central Coast Region. Vegetation and sediment management discharges can be regulated using similar discharge restrictions that will be described in the proposed General WDRs. Development of the proposed General WDRs will require compliance with CEQA. The DEIR will analyze the potential effects of the proposed actions required by the proposed General WDRs for issuance of a permit for covered General WDRs actions but will not analyze the impacts of those covered actions.

The proposed geographic scope of the DEIR is the entire Central Coast Region. The Central Coast Water Board has regulatory authority over Santa Cruz County, Monterey County, San Luis Obispo County, Santa Barbara County, and portions of San Mateo County, San Benito County, Santa Clara County, Kern County, and Ventura County.

Purpose of CEQA Scoping

The CEQA scoping meeting will provide participants with an explanation and understanding of the scope of the forthcoming proposed General WDRs and an opportunity to comment on the appropriate scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the DEIR pursuant to CEQA.³ The purpose of the DEIR document is to identify significant adverse environmental impacts associated with a proposed project and identifying how to avoid or mitigate those impacts.

Accordingly, CEQA scoping meetings are helpful to the Central Coast Water Board for the purposes of identifying:

1. A range of foreseeable management measures that persons and entities might potentially need to implement to reduce vegetation and sediment discharges as a result of fire fuel load and flood control management activities in and around waters of the state within the Central Coast Region;
2. Significant, adverse environmental impacts that could occur from implementing any of the actions identified above in 1) and if so, mitigation measures that would minimize potentially significant environmental impacts; and

³ Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.

3. Alternatives that could reduce or minimize the adverse environmental impacts of the management measures.

Central Coast Water Board staff will solicit input from the virtual attendees on the three categories identified above, and the Central Coast Water Board will consider this information when analyzing the potential environmental impacts of proposed General WDRs.

The CEQA Process

In compliance with CEQA, Central Coast Water Board staff will

- Hold this scoping meeting and publish the attached Notice of Preparation,
- Prepare and circulate the DEIR,
- Receive DEIR public comments during 45-day review period, and
- Prepare the Final EIR including responses to comments on the DEIR.

Who Should Attend?

All individuals interested in vegetation and sediment management activities associated with fire fuel reduction and flood control in and around waters of the state within the Central Coast Region should attend. This includes tribal representatives, representatives of municipalities, counties and other public agencies/entities, representatives of environmental groups, and members of the public.

Procedural Matters

Public participation will be virtual. A brief presentation will be made to provide an overview of the proposed General WDRs and the CEQA process. Afterwards, Central Coast Water Board staff will solicit public comments on the CEQA scoping elements of the forthcoming proposed General WDRs. Oral comments will be noted and considered at the meeting, and written comments will be accepted as described above. The presentation slides will be available by request following the meeting.

Future Notices

The virtual public meeting will occur at the time and date noted above. Any change in the date, time, or virtual meeting login information will be noticed through the proposed General WDRs email subscription list. Parties interested in receiving future notices, including changes to this notice of the CEQA scoping meeting, must sign up for the email distribution list using the [subscription form⁴](#), select the box for “Veg. & Sediment Removal General Order” and provide the required information.

Contact Information

For questions regarding CEQA scoping or the forthcoming proposed General WDRs, please contact Kim Sanders at Kim.Sanders@waterboards.ca.gov or at (805) 542-4771.

⁴ Subscription form for the email distribution list:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?qsp=central_coast

Attachment 1 - Notice of Preparation

See form on next page.

Notice of Preparation

Notice of Preparation

To: _____ From: _____

(Address) (Address)

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

_____ will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study (is is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to _____ at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: _____

Project Applicant, if any: _____

Date _____

Signature



Title _____

Telephone _____

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.