

Central Valley Regulatory Update: *What's Next for Clean Water Agencies*



Overview

- Permitting Initiatives
- CV-SALTS
- Planning Program
- Enforcement Changes and Priorities, Delta Activities, Integrated Report



Fall-run Chinook Migration, Feather River (photo courtesy of DWR)

Permitting Initiatives



- Large Domestic GO (Groundwater Quality Protection Program)
- Municipal General Order (NPDES Program)
- Receiving Water Limits Strategy
- Wastewater Needs Assessment

Large Domestic General Order (GQP Program)

- General Order R5-2026-0023
(Adopted on June 4, 2026)
- Domestic Wastewater Treatment Facilities with flows ≥ 0.1 million gallons per day
(Large WWTPs)
- Provides a streamlined permitting option for approximately 200 facilities within the Central Valley



Municipal General Order (NPDES Program)

- NPDES Permit R5-2023-0025, up for renewal in late 2028.
- Continues to be an essential way to maintain permit consistency and reduce backlog concerns
- Usage
 - 9 NOAs last year
 - 6 NOAs scheduled for this year with an additional 3 likely moving from individual permits to MGO



City of Live Oak's WWTP

Receiving Water Limits Strategy

- Individual analysis for each permit
- Limits may be removed or remain under Porter-Cologne as appropriate
- Continued evaluation of receiving water limits alongside reasonable potential analysis and potential groundwater issues
- Revisions of template language to be consistent with revised strategy



Cosumnes River

Wastewater Needs Assessment

Assessment Status

- Phase I (**complete**) established statewide criteria for failing and at-risk systems
- Phase II (**in process**) will map systems of concern and develop cost estimates
- Many Central Valley systems show capacity, compliance, and infrastructure deficiencies
- Findings will shape modernization needs and statewide funding priorities

Central Valley Impacts

- Likely increased regulatory workload due to follow-up evaluations
- Opportunity for long-term infrastructure investments, ranging from collection system maintenance to recycled water upgrades
- Outcomes will align with ongoing Municipal GO and Large Domestic GO implementation
- Coordination with CV-SALTS for groundwater and salinity protection

CV-SALTS



- Modesto Management Zone Order
- Remaining Priority 1 and 2 Basins
- Salinity Activities

Modesto Management Zone Order

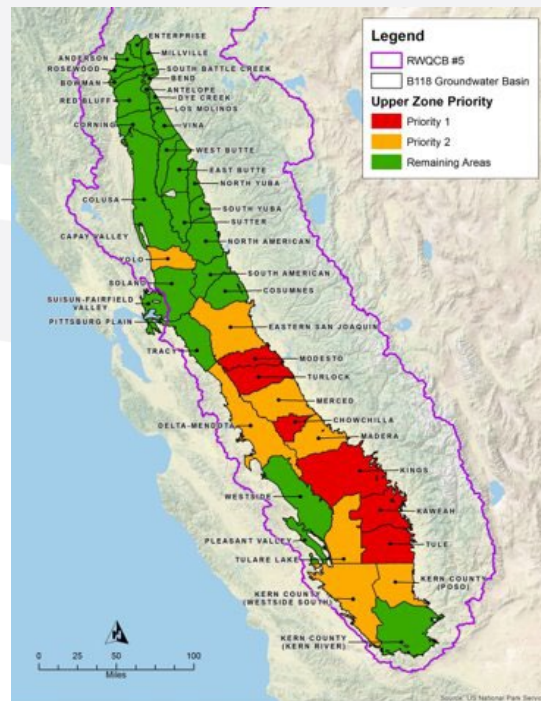


Sewer System Tour

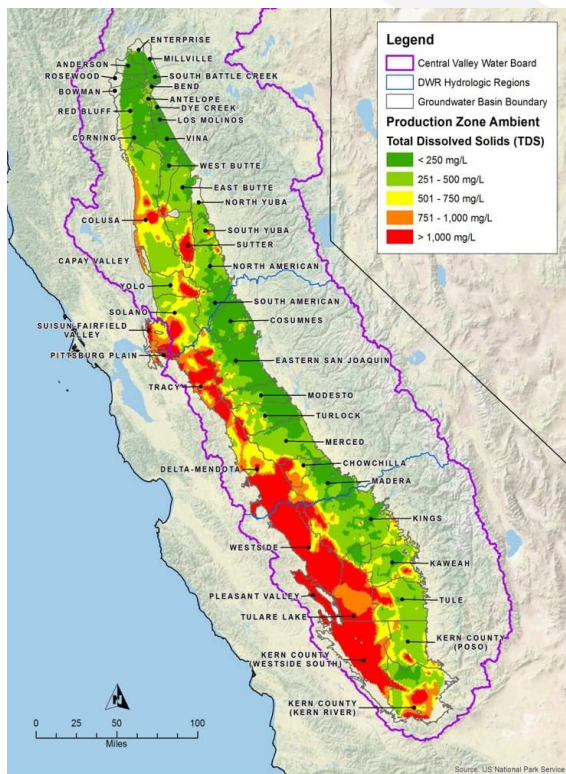
- Modesto Management Zone Order
- Completed reviews of Priority 2 Final Management Zone Proposals (FMZPs)
- Permitting pathway selection for Priority 1 & 2 permittees

Remaining Priority 1 Basins, Priority 2 Basins

- Single batch permitting action planned for remaining Priority 1 basins based on Modesto Management Zone Order
- Priority 2
 - **February 2026:** All Priority 2 Final Management Zone Proposals (FMZPs) submitted.
 - **2 July 2026:** FMZPs formally accepted/approved by Central Valley Water Board
 - **Current:** Development of Management Zone Implementation Plans
 - **Early 2027:** Review of Priority 2 Management Zone Implementation Plans



Salt Control Program



- 3,029 Active Permittees in Salt Control Program
- Archetype Report for the Prioritization and Optimization Study
- Process streamlining and timelines for beneficial use evaluation for future salt management BPAs
- Bureau of Reclamation Management Agency Agreement

Planning Program



- Delta Methylmercury Program Reconsideration
- Tribal Beneficial Uses
- Triennial Review
- HABs and Cyanobacteria Blooms

Delta Methylmercury Program Reconsideration

- Scientific peer-review revisions complete
- Load and wasteload projected allocations not achievable by 2030; refinement of these underway
- Extension of final attainment timeline under evaluation to better reflect tributary inputs and system dynamics
- Emphasis on feasible long-term expectations, reduced burdens on in-Delta communities, protection of beneficial uses
- Next steps include completing revised Staff Report, holding public comment period, and initiating Basin Plan/TMDL adoption and approval processes



Cache Creek Settling Basin (photo courtesy of DWR)

Tribal Beneficial Uses

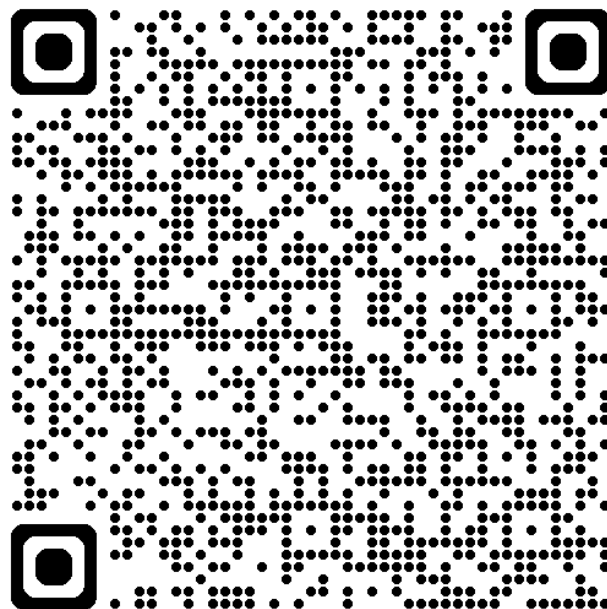
- Regional Board staff working on Tribal Beneficial Use (TBU) designations, prioritizing CUL
- Active tribal engagement/consultation
- Aligning TBU work with triennial review commitments
- Current focus on waterways meeting COMM and REC-1 usages



Native American Indians performing at the State Capitol, Native American Indian Day (photo courtesy of DWR)

Triennial Review

- Solicitation comment period is in progress (until Oct 2, 2026)
- Draft Workplan, Staff Workshop, Proposed Workplan, Draft RTC, to be developed through 2027
- Adoption planned late 2027
- Ongoing discussion about existing/proposed criteria, beneficial use re-evaluations, temperature, aquatic life, 304(a) considerations, mandatory minimum penalty implications



Involvement in HABs and Cyanobacteria Blooms

- Monitoring & Assessment: routine sampling, monitoring partnerships
- Incident Response & Reporting: statewide HAB reporting framework, including bloom tracking, sample analysis, and coordinated response
- Public health coordination
- Pollution prevention, watershed management & coordination on statewide cyanotoxin management initiatives



Eastman Lake

Region-wide evaluation process for the Municipal and Domestic (MUN) beneficial use

- Limited MUN (LMUN) Basin Plan Amendments have been on hold since July 2018, Board plans to review status
- Review for more robust evaluation components for designation changes
- Holds utility for recycled water projects
- Review implementation requirements for water quality objectives following revisions



Other Matters: Enforcement, Delta Activities, Integrated Report

Regional Enforcement Priorities

- Enhance engagement with disadvantaged and environmental justice communities
- Advance the CV-SALTS compliance initiative
- Address Mandatory Minimum Penalties within 18 months of discovery
- Address Class A violations, those posing an immediate threat to water quality or human health, in a timely manner



Delta Priorities

- Delta RMP to continue monitoring and special studies (now in 11th year)
- FHAB monitoring and education in the Delta
- Continued interagency collaboration for monitoring



Integrated Report

- 2024 Cycle: Current 303(d) List
- 2026 Cycle: Submitted to USEPA.
- 2028 Cycle: Delta and Tulare Lake Basin assessments.
 - Staff Report scheduled to go out Winter 2027, with adoption in Winter 2028
- 2030 Cycle: Sacramento River Watershed assessments.
 - Data solicitation closed August 2026.
 - Evaluation and assessment scheduled for Fall 2026 – Fall 2028.
 - Public review and comment period scheduled for Spring 2029.



Thank you!

