

2024–2026

**CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL
WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, RACIAL
EQUITY, AND TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT
ACTION PLAN**

INTRODUCTION

[The following is an excerpt from the [State Water Resources Control Board's Racial Equity Action Plan](#)¹, January 2023, p.3]

The Water Boards have a shared 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 acknowledge and condemn inequities, past and present, in water quality, access, and affordability, and are proactively working to eliminate the structures and practices that perpetuate these inequities.

The Water Boards envision a California where:

- race no longer predicts a person's access to, or quality of, water resources;
- Water Boards employees at all organizational levels reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of California; and
- a racial equity lens is consistently applied to Water Boards' decision-making processes.

The State Water Resource Control Board (State Water Board) Racial Equity Action Plan does not expand or modify the Water Boards' existing authorities, but rather it is a compilation of actions intended to advance the Water Board's efforts to create a future where we equitably preserve, enhance, and restore California's water resources and drinking water for all Californians, regardless of race, and where race is not a predictor of professional outcomes for Water Boards employees.

The State Water Board Racial Equity Action Plan sets goals for the Water Board to address racial inequities and identifies metrics to measure progress. Applying a "racial equity lens" means the Water Boards will consider a set of questions throughout its decision-making processes. The racial equity lens questions interrupt the impact of unintended consequences by taking into consideration the lived experiences and perspectives of the racially diverse communities the Water Boards intend to serve.

Environmental Justice, Racial Equity, and Tribal Engagement Action Plan for the Central Coast Water Board

The Central Coast Water Board has a long history of prioritizing environmental justice, racial equity, and engaging underrepresented communities², including

¹ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/racial_equity/docs/racial-equity-action-plan-final-en.pdf

² Underrepresented Communities include, but are not limited to, Disadvantaged Communities (DACs),

California Native American Tribes. The Central Coast Water Board's environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement action planning strategy builds upon the public input received on the State Water Board's Racial Equity Action Plan's "Strategic Directions" and public input received during the adoption of the Central Coast Water Board's Racial Equity Resolution R3-2023-0002.

BACKGROUND

In 2016, the State Water Board adopted [Resolution 2016-0010](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2016/rs2016_0010.pdf)³ that identified the human right to water as a top priority and core value of the state and regional Water Boards and affirmed the State Water Board's commitment to consider how its activities impact and advance the human right to safe, affordable and clean water to support basic human needs. In 2017, the Central Coast Water Board similarly adopted [Resolution 2017-0004](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2017/2017-0004_hrtw_fnl.pdf)⁴ to memorialize historical efforts and support current and future efforts to support the human right to water as a core value and direct its implementation in Central Coast Water Board programs and activities. These efforts to implement the human right to water provided a strong foundation to formally include environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement.

On November 16, 2021, the State Water Board adopted [Resolution 2021-0050](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2021/rs2021_0050.pdf)⁵ (State Water Board Racial Equity Resolution), Condemning Racism, Xenophobia, Bigotry, and Racial Injustice and Strengthening Commitment to Racial Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Anti-Racism. The State Water Board Resolution acknowledged the role racism has played in creating inequities in affordability and access to clean and safe water; committed to advancing racial equity within the State Water Board and the communities it serves; directed its staff to develop a racial equity action plan; and encouraged the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards to adopt similar resolutions.

In November 2021, the Central Coast Water Board convened a Racial Equity Working Group to conduct internal and external engagement to identify and prioritize opportunities to: 1) integrate racial equity into the Central Coast Water Board's programs and practices, and 2) develop a region-specific racial equity resolution. From December 2021 through December 2022, Central Coast Water Board staff conducted internal and external engagement to inform the racial equity resolution. During this time, staff met with community groups, organizations, and California Native American tribal representatives.

On February 16, 2023, the Central Coast Water Board adopted Resolution [R3-2023-0002](https://waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2023/r3-2023-0002.pdf)⁶ (Racial Equity Resolution) Condemning Racism, Xenophobia, Bigotry, and

Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs), Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs), Tribes, Environmentally Disadvantaged Communities (EnvDACs), and members of fringe communities.

³ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2016/rs2016_0010.pdf

⁴ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2017/2017-0004_hrtw_fnl.pdf

⁵ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2021/rs2021_0050.pdf

⁶ https://waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2023/r3-2023-0002.pdf

Racial Injustice and Strengthening Commitment to Racial Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Anti-Racism in the Central Coast Region. A key outcome described in the Central Coast Water Board's Racial Equity Resolution is to develop an action plan to advance environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement in the Central Coast Water Board's water quality programs and projects.

At the February 15-16, 2024 Central Coast Water Board Meeting, staff presented an Environmental Justice, Racial Equity, and Tribal Engagement Action Plan (Action Plan) and discussed a strategy to implement the action and optimize the use of limited resources focused on the following priorities:

- 1) Implement a highly coordinated environmental justice leadership team to support continuity and positive momentum to integrate environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement into organizational culture and water quality programs,
- 2) Consider the State Water Board's Racial Equity Action Plan as a starting point to leverage existing resources and avoid redundancy,
- 3) Focus resources on specific high priority actions, and
- 4) Utilize the Executive Officer's Report to provide updates to the Board and obtain public input.

Action Plan, Desired Results, and Specific Goals

The Central Coast Water Board's Action Plan is intended to be a dynamic document that staff can adjust based on emerging priorities, public input, and available resources to achieve the following desired results:

- The Central Coast Water Board effectively integrates environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement throughout the organization's policies, programs, practices, and decision making.
- Central Coast Water Board staff have a working knowledge of relevant environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement policies and practices and have tools and resources to integrate this knowledge into program implementation.
- The Central Coast Water Board provides meaningful opportunities for underrepresented communities to participate in and provide input on water quality issues that affect them.
- Central Coast Water Board staff and management reflect the diverse communities that we serve.

Based on the Strategic Directions identified in the State Water Board Racial Equity

Action Plan, Central Coast Water Board staff have identified specific regional goals for fiscal years 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. The Central Coast Water Board's Action Plan identifies specific actions to achieve these goals, as well as the lead and supporting programs responsible for the action, the project stage, and performance indicators. The dynamic nature of the Action Plan and the two-year time frame help to manage staff resources and workload. Additionally, the schedule and format presented in Table 1 are consistent with the State Water Board's Racial Equity Action Plan, which helps to inform collaboration and statewide resource sharing.

Strategic Direction #1 – Integrating Racial Equity, Measuring Impact

Infusing the Racial Equity Resolution throughout the Water Boards' policies, programs, and practices; Measuring progress toward goals, and adapting when necessary.

- *Goal 1a* – Identify a leadership team to share the role of advancing environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement.
- *Goal 1b* – Provide clear direction and guidance to Central Coast Water Board program managers and staff to integrate environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement into water quality programs.
- *Goal 1c* – Compile, develop, and maintain outreach and community engagement tools and resources for program staff.
- *Goal 1d* – Implement Human Right to Water Resolution R3-2017-0004.
- *Goal 1e* – Implement Assembly Bill (AB) 2108 to conduct equitable, culturally relevant outreach when considering proposed discharges of waste that may have disproportionate impacts on water quality in disadvantaged communities or tribal communities.
- *Goal 1f* – Coordinate with the State Water Board to leverage the Statewide Racial Equity Action Plan and related resources.

Strategic Direction #2 – Creating, Maintaining Spaces for Inclusion and

Belonging: Addressing internal and external representation of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) at all levels of the organization; Elevating overall understanding of racial equity.

- *Goal 2a* - Ensure all staff have knowledge of relevant Water Board policies related to environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement; Normalize discussions to consider these issues during program implementation.
- *Goal 2b* – Ensure all staff are trained in environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement.
- *Goal 2c* – Consider racial equity in workforce planning and development, and employment recruitment and retention activities.

Strategic Direction #3 – Activating BIPOC Wisdom and Sharing Power:

Fostering open communications for voices of BIPOC 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 Central Coast Water Board's role in managing the region's

water resources; and Incorporating wisdom from BIPOC communities in decision-making processes.

- *Goal 3a* - Provide easy public access to environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement data and information.
- *Goal 3b* - Consider environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement as part of every Board item.
- *Goal 3c* - Meet with community partners, environmental justice advocates, and tribal representatives to help identify priorities and effective outreach methods,
- *Goal 3d* - Conduct project-specific external engagement with underrepresented communities.
- *Goal 3e* - Prioritize financial and technical assistance to benefit underrepresented communities.
- *Goal 3f* - Consider opportunities for Board Members and staff to meet with underrepresented communities to listen and discuss community priorities.

STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

The Action Plan is further detailed in Table 1 and is intended to be a dynamic document that identifies specific actions, lead and supporting programs which are necessary to assist in the implementation of those actions, the project stage, and performance indicators. For the project stage, the Action Plan uses similar criteria as the State Water Board where Stage 1 = preparation or scoping not yet started; Stage 2 = preparation, scoping, data collection, securing funding and resources; Stage 3 = work in progress; Stage 4 = action complete and/or at least one cycle of continual action complete; monitoring and evaluation of action is complete or ongoing; and (R) = needs new personnel or new resources to start or complete action.

As a dynamic document, staff will adjust the Action Plan based on internal and external input, and available staff capacity and resources. Over the course of the next two years, it is anticipated that the staff participating on the Environmental Justice Leadership Team (Environmental Justice Coordinators - Angela Schroeter and Kathy Truong, Tribal Coordinator - Daniel Ellis) will each have the capacity to allocate approximately 4 hours per month to help lead the effort to develop and implement the Action Plan. Additional staff will participate as available, dependent on program and organizational priorities.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Moving forward, the Environmental Justice Leadership Team and staff will continue to work with management to prioritize the activities in the Action Plan. As a dynamic document, the Central Coast Water Board will share the Action Plan on the [Environmental Justice, Racial Equity, and Tribal Affairs web page](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/enviro_justice/enviro_justice.html)⁷ and provide updates on implementation to the public using the Environmental Justice email subscription list.

⁷https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/enviro_justice/enviro_justice.html

In addition, staff will meet with community partners and convene informal listening sessions to provide additional opportunities for public participation. Finally, staff will use the Executive Officer's Report as an opportunity to provide annual updates to the Board and public, reflect on accomplishments, evaluate performance metrics, and discuss emerging priorities.

TABLE 1.
CENTRAL COAST WATER BOARD
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, RACIAL EQUITY, AND TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN¹
FY 2024/2025 – FY 2025/2026

Action ²	Lead Role	Support Role	Stage ³	Performance Indicators ⁴
Strategic Direction #1 – Integrating Racial Equity, Measuring Impact				
a. Implement a highly coordinated environmental justice team with a shared leadership role to support continuity and positive momentum to integrate environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement into our organizational culture and water quality programs.	Environmental Justice Coordinator(s), Tribal Coordinator	Section Managers	3	- Environmental justice leadership team that includes representatives from each section and various levels of staff. - Regular attendance at Environmental Justice roundtable and Tribal Coordination meetings.
b. Provide clear direction and guidance to Central Coast Water Board program managers and staff to integrate environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement into water quality programs.	Environmental Justice Coordinator(s), Tribal Coordinator	Section Managers, Program Managers	3	% program prioritization plans that include specific activities to advance environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement. # programs represented on environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement Project Tracker

				to improve visibility and coordination.
c. Develop and maintain outreach and community engagement tools and resources for program staff and make them easily accessible on SharePoint. For example: implementation guides, maps and data to identify underrepresented communities, language isolation tools, outreach plan templates, and community partner lists.	Environmental Justice Coordinator(s), Tribal Coordinator	Office of Public Participation (OPP)	3	• # programs that access environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement resources. • # outreach plans created
d. Implement Human Right to Water Resolution No. R3-2017-0004.	CCAMP-GAP, Irrigated Lands Program, Site Cleanup Program, Enforcement Program	Environmental Justice Coordinator(s), Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience	3	• # drinking water wells tested as a result of Central Coast Water Board programs. • # households receiving replacement drinking water or treatment as a result of

		Program (SAFER)		Central Coast Water Board programs;
e. Implement AB 2108	Tribal Coordinator	Section Managers, Program Managers	3	• Develop template outreach letters that can be customized for various interested parties or projects. • Meet regularly with tribal representatives, community groups, and environmental justice organizations to provide updates on various Central Coast Water Board projects. • Develop an outreach training program for Central Coast Water Board staff. • # of staff completing the Environmental Justice Grant Tools for Community Action: Using EJScreen & CalEnviroScreen training
f. Coordinate with OPP to obtain support services, including outreach, facilitation, and translation services.	Program Managers	Environmental Justice Coordinator(s), Tribal Coordinator	3	• # programs coordinating with OPP to obtain support for specific projects.

Strategic Direction #2 - Creating, Maintaining Spaces for Inclusion & Belonging				
a. Ensure all staff have knowledge of relevant Water Board policies related to environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement; Normalize discussions to consider these issues during program implementation.	All Staff	Supervisors	3	• % staff who have reviewed the Central Coast Water Board's Human Right to Water Resolution No. R3-2017-0004, Racial Equity Resolution No. R3-2023-0002, and State Water Board Tribal Consultation Policy.
b. Include standing item to discuss environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement at Senior Management Meetings. c. Include quarterly topic on environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement at General Staff Meetings.	Environmental Justice Coordinator(s), Tribal Coordinator	Section Managers, Supervisors	3	• # senior and general staff meetings which include agenda items to discuss environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement.
d. Ensure all staff are trained in basic environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement.	All Staff	Supervisors	3	• % supervisors and staff that attend at least one racial equity or implicit bias training. • % staff that attend at least one tribal engagement training.

e. Support staff to attend specialized environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement training, and share lessons learned with the organization. For example: Facilitation Training, Results Based Accountability Training, US EPA Tribal Conference, etc.	Environmental Justice Coordinator(s), Tribal Coordinator	Assistant Executive Officer	3	# staff that have attended specific specialized environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement training and can share expertise.
f. Consider racial equity during the recruitment and employee interview process. Implement State Water Board's Immediate Action Plan for Advancing Workforce Diversity.	Hiring Supervisors	Assistant Executive Officer	3	# Central Coast Water Board management and staff reflect the diversity of the Central Coast Region. % Central Coast Water Board hiring events that integrate knowledge, skills, and abilities related to being a part of a diverse workforce and interacting with a diverse group of stakeholders (e.g. interview questions).
Strategic Direction #3 - Activating BIPOC Community Wisdom and Sharing Power				
a. Provide easy public access to environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement data and project information on website	Environmental Justice Coordinator(s), Tribal Coordinator	Admin Program	3	# of hits on environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement website. # updates provided to the environmental justice, racial

				equity, and tribal engagement subscription list
b. Consider environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement for every Board item	Program Managers	Section Managers	3	• % staff reports that include relevant environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement discussion. • # of staff reports that include translation, if appropriate. • # board items that utilize oral interpretation or translation services. • # projects utilizing linguistic isolation tools to inform oral interpretation and translation needs
c. Develop Community Partner Contact List for Central Coast Region; Meet with community partners, environmental justice advocates, and tribal representatives to help identify priorities and effective outreach methods.	Environmental Justice Coordinator(s), Tribal Coordinator	OPP, Section Managers, Program Managers	3	• # programs meeting with community partners. • # programs meeting with tribal representatives.
d. Conduct project-specific external engagement with underrepresented communities. See outreach project tracker.	Various staff	Section Managers, Program Managers	3	• # projects conducting external engagement with underrepresented communities.

e. Conduct project-specific external engagement with California Native American Tribes. (For example, conduct focused tribal outreach to individual Tribes to advance tribal beneficial uses (TBU) project, participate in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) process to designate the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.) See outreach project tracker.	Various staff	Tribal Coordinator, Section Managers, Program Managers	3	# projects conducting external engagement with tribal representatives.
f. Prioritize financial and technical assistance to benefit underrepresented communities.	Grants Program, CCAMP-GAP, Program Managers	Division of Financial Assistance (DFA)	3	# funding fairs to share funding grants and loans available to underrepresented communities. # grant projects and amount of funding awarded to benefit underrepresented communities in the Central Coast Region, including nonpoint source grant projects. # technical assistance requests submitted to DFA to benefit underrepresented communities in the Central Coast Region.

				# support letters to DFA for regional projects and facilities benefiting underrepresented communities in the Central Coast Region.
f. Consider opportunities for the Board Members and staff to meet with underrepresented communities and Tribes to listen and discuss community priorities.	Various Staff, Board Members	EO, AEO, Section Managers	3	# community gatherings, workshops, and listening sessions attended by staff or Board Members.

¹ The Environmental Justice, Racial Equity, and Tribal Engagement Action Plan is intended to be a dynamic working document that staff adjusts based on internal and external input, emerging priorities, and available staff capacity and resources. For more information, go to the Central Coast Water Board's website: https://waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/enviro_justice/enviro_justice.html

² Actions to overcome existing barriers and achieve goals. Actions are developed based on internal and external input, feedback from the Board, and identification of emerging priorities.

³ Stage 1: Preparation or scoping not yet started; Stage 2: preparation, scoping, data collection, securing funding and resources; Stage 3: Work in progress; Stage 4: action complete and/or at least one cycle of continual action complete; monitoring and evaluation of action is complete or ongoing; (R): Needs new personnel or new resources to start or complete action.

⁴ 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. Knowledge gained from tracking these performance indicators may result in the development of additional indicators and inform future iterations of the action plan.