

Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report

April 18, 2019

Regional Water Board Office

5550 Skylane Blvd, Suite A

Santa Rosa, CA

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: Resolution No. R1-2019-0024 Adopting the Human Right to Water as a Core Value and Directing its Implementation in North Coast Regional Water Board Activities and Authorizing the Executive Officer to Enter into a Memorandum of Mutual Understandings with the North Coast Resource Partnership (*Charles Reed*)

BOARD ACTION: The Board will consider adoption of Resolution No. R1-2019-0024.

BACKGROUND: Access to water and sanitation are recognized as human rights, reflecting the fundamental nature of these basics needs in every person's life. Lack of access to safe, sufficient and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene facilities has a devastating effect on the people's health, dignity and prosperity, and has significant consequences for the realization of other human rights. The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) undertakes a wide range of activities, projects, and actions that involve protecting and ensuring this human right to sanitation and hygiene facilities and to safe, clean, and affordable water for individuals and communities.

On February 16, 2016, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopted a resolution (State Water Board Resolution No. 2016-0010) that identified the human right to water as a top priority and core value of the State and Regional Water Boards, 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, and directed the State and Regional Water Boards to implement the human right to water in Water Board programs and activities.

In addition to the challenge of accessing safe drinking water, many of the communities and counties of the north coast region face financial hardship and are considered small and economically disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged. Most of these communities have limited funding and staff resources to plan and implement capital improvement projects that address present and future threats to groundwater and surface water supplies. This creates many challenges for the Regional Water Board, the counties and the communities to protect water quality and beneficial uses. It is clear that many of these communities need administrative, financial, and technical assistance to plan and implement capital improvements, to apply for grants and/or loans, and to operate and maintain constructed facilities.

Beginning in 2016, Regional Water Board staff began to devote dedicated staff resources to strengthen existing partnerships with state, federal, or local agencies, non-profit organizations, and other technical service providers to support disadvantaged communities in the north coast region and promote the human right to water. Regional Water Board staff continue to actively coordinate with the State Water Board's Division of Financial Assistance, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and non-profit organizations like, the North Coast Resource Partnership, California Rural Water Association, and Rural Community Assistance Corporation to deliver financial and technical assistance to communities applying for grant and loan funding for water and wastewater infrastructure projects.

The North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) is a stakeholder-driven collaboration among local government, watershed groups, resource conservation districts, Tribes and interested partners focused on sustainable resource planning and local project implementation in NCRP's North Coast Region, which mirrors the boundaries of the North Coast Regional Board and consists of seven North Coast counties: Del Norte, Siskiyou, Modoc, Humboldt, Trinity, Mendocino, and Sonoma. As described in the North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (NCIRWMP), NCRP partners pursue a regional approach to water management planning to most efficiently align local, regional, statewide water resource priorities. This regional approach has proved effective with NCRP having invested since 2004 over \$67 million of local, state, and federal funding in projects in its North Coast Region to develop solutions to failing water and wastewater infrastructure, degraded ecosystems, emission reduction, and community health and safety.

The NCRP adheres to the NCIRWMP Memorandum of Mutual Understandings (MoMU), signed by over 100 agencies, special districts, Tribal organizations, non-governmental organizations, watershed groups, and other stakeholders. Though Regional Water Board staff periodically participates in NCRP meetings and supports the NCIRWMP, the Regional Water Board is not yet a signatory to the MoMU. The MoMU signifies support by each of these entities for the NCIRWMP Plan and process. The NCRP decision support structure consists of a Policy Review Panel (PRP), which serves as the governing body for the regional NCRP process; an Executive Committee, which provides day-to-day leadership for the NCRP; a Technical Peer Review Committee (TPRC), an advisory body to the PRP that provides scientific and technical expertise to the NCRP; and project staff, consultants, and stakeholders throughout the North Coast Region.

DISCUSSION: Adoption of this Resolution will affirm the human right to water including the right to sanitation and hygiene facilities as a core value and affirms the human right to water and protecting human health as a top priority for the North Coast Regional Water Board. This Resolution directs staff to prioritize regulatory programs to prevent and address discharges that could threaten human health by causing or contributing to pollution or contamination of drinking water sources. This Resolution also directs staff to

engage in partnerships with other governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, impacted communities and other stakeholders to implement the Human Right to Water objectives in Regional Water Board programs and projects. Adoption of this Resolution is consistent with State Water Board Resolution No. 2016-0010 and satisfies the request from the State Water Board's Office of Public Participation for Regional Water Boards to individually adopt Human Right to Water resolutions that are in line with the State Water Board Resolution No. 2016-0024.

Adoption of this Resolution will also authorize the Executive Officer to enter into the NCIRWMP Memorandum of Mutual Understandings (Appendix M-NCRP Governing Documents). As a signatory to the MoMU, we will be able to better align our water quality improvement priorities with NCRP's funding priorities resulting in a coordinated effort to plan and implement projects that achieve direct water quality benefits.

A copy of the Resolution was posted on the Regional Water Board website on April 3, 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Adopt Resolution No. R1-2019-0024, as proposed.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

1. Proposed Resolution No. R1-2019-0024
2. North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
https://northcoastresourcepartnership.org/site/assets/uploads/2018/04/NCIRWMP_PhaseIII_Aug14_final_w_appendix.pdf