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Secretary for  
Environmental Protection

# State Water Resources Control Board

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**Arnold Schwarzenegger**  
Governor

## **NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE CENTRAL COAST REGION TO ESTABLISH TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS (TMDLs) AND A LAND DISTURBANCE PROHIBITION FOR SEDIMENT IN PAJARO RIVER (INCLUDING LLAGAS CREEK, RIDER CREEK, AND SAN BENITO RIVER)**

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) will now accept comments on a proposed amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the Central Coast Region that would establish TMDLs and a land disturbance prohibition for sediment in the Pajaro River. The proposed amendment and the State Water Board item language and draft resolution are available on the State Water Board's Web site at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/tmdl/tmdl.html> or by request. The proposed amendment was adopted by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) on December 2, 2005. The State Water Board expects to consider the proposed amendment at a future meeting. Notice of that meeting will be published separately.

The Pajaro River, Llagas Creek, Rider Creek, and San Benito River are not meeting water quality standards due to elevated levels of sediment. The beneficial uses impaired by sediment are: cold fresh water habitat, migration of aquatic organisms and spawning, reproduction, and/or early development of fish. This proposed amendment addresses the impairment of these beneficial uses by incorporating TMDLs and a land disturbance prohibition for sediment in the Pajaro River, accompanied by an implementation plan to meet water quality objectives within forty-five years. The numeric targets established by these TMDLs interpret narrative water quality objectives for sediment in the Basin Plan. These TMDLs use multiple numeric targets within two categories: suspended sediment concentration and streambed characteristics.

The implementation measures are divided into actions by source categories. Parties engaged in irrigated agricultural and timber harvest activities must implement management measures and perform monitoring and reporting pursuant to their existing waivers. The Cities of Watsonville, Hollister, Gilroy, and Morgan Hill must implement management practices consistent with and required by Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permits (MS4), and must submit annual reports as required by such permits. Their Storm Water Management Programs must include specific actions to reduce sediment discharges. The Central Coast Water Board staff will review the existing Waste Discharge Requirements for sand and gravel mining operations and will revise or require activities to: (1) assess cumulative impacts, including fluvial geomorphic impacts, upon the beneficial uses of the San Benito River; (2) mitigate the

impacts identified; and (3) monitor the effectiveness of mitigation activities. Owners and operators of pasture and range lands, where grazing activities occur, must comply with the land disturbance prohibition. Owners and operators of rural properties and roads must comply with the land disturbance prohibition. Owners and operators of unpaved roads within the San Benito River watershed, and paved and unpaved roads within the Corralitos Creek and Rider Creek watersheds, must comply with the land disturbance prohibition. Owners and operators of properties where hydromodification activities occur must comply with the land disturbance prohibition. The land disturbance prohibition takes effect three years following approval of the TMDLs by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Central Coast Water Board staff will develop a monitoring program to measure in-stream numeric targets within five years following the TMDLs' approval. The Central Coast Water Board staff will conduct a review every three years beginning three years after the TMDLs are approved. Central Coast Water Board staff will utilize required reports, as well as other available information, to review implementation efforts of responsible parties and progress being made towards achieving the allocations. The Central Coast Water Board has committed to continuing three-year reviews until the TMDLs are achieved.

Comment letters to the State Water Board must be received by 5 p.m. on September 1, 2006. After the September deadline, State Water Board staff will not accept additional written comments unless the State Water Board determines that such comments should be accepted or unless changes are made to the proposed resolution before the State Water Board meeting. Please send comments on the proposed amendment to: Song Her, Clerk to the Board, by email at ([commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov)), (916) 341-5620 (fax), or addressed to State Water Resources Control Board, 1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. Please also indicate in the subject line, "Comment Letter - Sediment TMDLs in the Pajaro River."

Please direct questions about this notice to Michael Buckman, Division of Water Quality, at (916) 341-5479 or ([mbuckman@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:mbuckman@waterboards.ca.gov)) or Senior Staff Counsel Steven H. Blum at (916) 341-5177 or ([sblum@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:sblum@waterboards.ca.gov)).

August 4, 2006  
Date



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Song Her  
Clerk to the Board