



# Media Release

## **New water quality requirements proposed for North Coast vineyards**

### ***Draft order designed to protect water quality and temperature of streams***

July 10, 2023

Contact: [Blair Robertson](#) – Information Officer

**SANTA ROSA** – The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board is [inviting public comment](#) on a draft order that proposes new requirements for vineyards to safeguard water quality. The requirements, which could be modified after public comments are received and reviewed, will be considered for adoption by the North Coast Water Board later this year.

The [Proposed General Order for Waste Discharge Requirements for Commercial Vineyards](#), or draft vineyard order, the first of its kind for the [region](#), is the result of collaboration among the North Coast Water Board, vineyard owners and stakeholders committed to sustainable practices that protect the environment. The draft order was developed through a series of stakeholder efforts that culminated in the formation of a technical advisory group in the summer of 2022 to address components of the program.

Under the draft order, vineyard owners would be required to implement certain management practices, such as placing ground cover around their vines during winter to mitigate potential water quality impacts associated with agricultural activities. Vineyard owners would also be required to establish or maintain setbacks to riparian areas, which help maintain cool temperatures in streams.

“This draft order has been a truly collaborative effort that, if adopted, will ensure vineyards are doing everything possible to preserve and enhance water quality,” said Valerie Quinto, executive officer of the North Coast. “Without appropriate controls, cultivation of wine grapes can result in the discharge of sediment and agricultural chemicals and, by removing trees near streams and the subsequent shade they provide, increase the water temperature to levels that threaten the health and survival of aquatic life.”

Through widespread enrollment in voluntary sustainability programs such as Fish Friendly Farming, California Certified Sustainable, LODI RULES, and Sustainability in Practice (SIP), more than 80% of North Coast vineyards are already implementing



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 100, Sacramento, CA 95812-0100 • [www.waterboards.ca.gov](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov)



conservation practices. Surface and groundwater monitoring required by the proposed Order would verify that these practices are protective of water quality.

Of the 65,000 acres of vineyards in the North Coast Region, 95% are within the Navarro and Russian River watersheds, which provide habitat for threatened and endangered salmon species but are considered impaired for sediment and temperature.

The public is encouraged to provide comments during the 45-day public comment period, which will end on August 14 at 5 p.m. The board will host a [public workshop](#) during its board meeting on Aug. 3 or Aug. 4 at 9 a.m. Following the close of the public comment period, staff will revise the draft order and draft report with a projected Board adoption hearing scheduled for December.

*The North Coast Water Board is a regulatory agency committed to protecting and enhancing water quality in Northern California's coastal region. The Board focuses on protecting water quality, enforcing environmental regulations, and collaborating with stakeholders to achieve long-term water quality goals.*