

Top Water Quality Stories for February 2026

- **DWR Releases Water Conservation Surveys due 2/27**
- **SWRCB Reissuing Wastewater Rates Questionnaire**
- **SWRCB Releases Draft Nonpoint Source Plan incl. PFAS**
- **SWRCB Opens 2025 VAR Portal, Responses due 4/30**
- **SWRCB Launching Inland Nutrient Rulemaking**
- **CASA Regulatory Workgroup Meeting Next on 2/19**
- **CASA Calendar and Upcoming Events**
- **CASA's December and January Regulatory Newsletters**



DWR Issues Surveys to Evaluate Impacts of Water Conservation

Last month, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) released three surveys for agencies to provide input on the impacts of water conservation and declining flows to your Collection Systems, Treatment Facilities, and Water Reuse/Recycle Facilities. The final surveys reflect extensive direction from CASA and the water community to the DWR research team, and your participation would be very much appreciated. These surveys build off of the ones the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) issued in 2020 that resulted in this linked report, as part of their "Making Water Conservation a Way of Life" regulation. This 2026 initiative is part of DWR's broader SB 1157 studies to evaluate the economic benefits and impacts associated with achieving the 2030 indoor residential water-use standard of 42 gallons per capita per day, under SB 1157, with a final

report due to the legislature in 2028. PDFs of the collections, treatment, and reuse surveys are linked to organize your answers for the online submission. Thank you for your time to participate in this initiative- it is critical for providing researchers with comprehensive information from around the state in order to best evalute the impacts of decreasing the indoor water use standard at the end of the decade. Please reach out with questions, comments, or feedback.

SWRCB Expected to Re-issue Wastewater Rates Questionnaire

In late March or early April, we anticipate the SWRCB will re-issue their voluntary Wastewater Rates Questionnaire. The SWRCB last sent a wastewater rates questionnaire in 2018, which resulted in this linked data visualization tool and rate data repository. From preliminary discussions with SWRCB staff, they are inclined to re-issue the questionnaire in a shortened streamlined form that will include prior years to backfill essential data missing since the previous issuance. We anticipate the Summit Partners will review a draft of the 2026 version in early March for the SWRCB to release in early spring. More details will be forthcoming, but please plan now for your agency to participate in this critical initiative! Please reach out for further information.

CASA Toxicity Subgroup Hosting RBI Presentation on Cerio

On February 9, the CASA Toxicity Subgroup will meet at 1 PM for Part 2 of RBI's presentation regarding their recently completed technical report, attached, on the five performance metrics (PMs) that were in the Final Expert Report to the SWRCB for the 2020-23 Cerio Study of chronic toxicity testing with ceriodaphnia dubia. Building from RBI's November 2025 presentation to our subgroup, they will provide a more in-depth look at each of the PMs, particularly with respect to issues of interest to your agency such as: locating specific PM data within your typical laboratory toxicity report, using these metrics to determine if test results are reliable and reproducible, steps agencies and toxicity testing laboratories have implemented to address low-performing test results, and practical responses when results "Fail" the TST or exceed chronic toxicity effluent limits, targets, or triggers. Contact Cam Irvine and Paul Bedore in advance with any specific questions or topics from the report you would like to see addressed. If you need meeting information, please reach out for more details and the meeting link.

CASA & SMC Collaborative Exfiltration Research Workshop

On February 10, CASA and the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition (SMC) will co-host a cross-sector workshop at SCCWRP in Costa Mesa focused on advancing our shared understanding of bacteria in the environment during wet weather events. This collaborative effort marks a significant step for the wastewater and stormwater sectors to move forward with science-based solutions for protecting public health and California's waterways. Panelists will engage in plenary sessions and breakout groups to address two primary technical objectives: (1) identifying

the most significant technical challenges to quantifying exfiltration and its transport to receiving waters, and (2) determining which research projects should be prioritized for collaboration between the stormwater and wastewater communities. To facilitate these technical discussions, participants have been provided with background materials and recent journal articles covering topics such as HF183 in stormwater discharges, sanitary sewer biofilms, and prototype samplers for measuring pipe segment volume loss. CASA looks forward to the insights gained from this opportunity for coordinated inquiry between our two sectors. Afterwards, we will provide an update to our Collection Systems Workgroup via e-mail and to our Regulatory Workgroup at our next meeting on February 19. Please reach out with questions, concerns, or for more details.

Summit Partners Hosting 2/11 Cross-Media "BACEN" Webinar

On February 11, the Clean Water Summit Partners (CASA, BACWA, CVCWA, Clean Water SoCal, and CWEA) will host a collaborative webinar focused on the critical intersection of biosolids, air quality, climate, energy, and nutrient (BACEN) issues. The event will explore how local California agencies are navigating complex regulatory and technical challenges while maintaining resilience, supporting state climate objectives, and ensuring service affordability. The webinar will feature a "systems-thinking" integrated approach to wastewater management, moving beyond traditional silos. Presentations will be delivered on the following: (1) Wastewater Treatment 101, (2) Nutrient Management & Air Emissions, (3) Organic Waste Diversion, and (4) Biogas & the Circular Economy. Members and interested parties are encouraged to register here to participate in this important cross-sector dialogue. Please reach out with questions, concerns, or for more details.

SWRCB Nonpoint Source Plan, incl. PFAS; Comments due 2/12

On February 12, per the Notice, comments are due to the SWRCB for their Draft 2025-2030 Nonpoint Source (NPS) Program Implementation Plan. The five-year strategic plan is a critical roadmap that outlines the state's approach to addressing water quality impairments from non-permitted sources, including agriculture, forestry, and onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS). Of particular interest to the clean water community are the provisions related to Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) and the intersection of NPS pollution with traditional wastewater infrastructure. The plan also emphasizes targeted assessments of OWTS in high-risk watersheds to address bacteria and nitrate impairments, along with prioritizing technical and financial assistance for septic-to-sewer conversions in disadvantaged communities. The NPS plan also has a section on Constituents of Emerging Concern (CEC) that designate PFAS as a high-priority CEC due to evolving toxicology and the lack of universal enforceable California or federal health standards. The plan identifies wastewater treatment plants as "identifiable point sources" that contribute to the presence of these constituents in the environment, noting the NPS program's strategy is to

improve the understanding of the "presence, frequency of occurrence, source, fate, and transport" of these chemicals through non-point channels like atmospheric deposition and runoff. The plan also acknowledges wastewater facilities will play a central role in the broader monitoring framework to manage these "forever chemicals." CASA is currently reviewing the draft with a select group of members and attorneys to identify potential impacts to member agencies, particularly regarding cross-media impacts and salt/nitrate management strategies. Written comments are due to the SWRCB on Thursday, February 12. The draft plan can be found on the SWRCB NPS program page. Please reach out with questions, concerns, or for more details.

CalEPA Announces 2026 Vapor Intrusion Public Workshops

On February 12, the California EPA (CalEPA) Vapor Intrusion Workgroup (Workgroup) will host the first of five virtual public workshops to share and gain input on their efforts to address vapor intrusion (VI) at contaminated sites. This series follows the Kickoff Workshop held on July 24, 2025, where the Workgroup provided updates on VI strategies and gathered public feedback to inform the future workshop series. Accordingly, the upcoming sessions will feature introductory training, community engagement, and technical presentations on holistic management tools. The 2026 series is currently scheduled to cover VI Cleanup Case Basics (Feb 12), VI in the Community (Feb 25), Conceptual Site Models (March 10), Paths to Closure (May), and VI Data (June). Public notices with registration information will be shared prior to each workshop. Please reach out with any questions or for more details.

CWEA Collection Systems Fundamentals Workshop Series

On February 25, the California Water Environment Association (CWEA) will host the second of five workshops in 2026 as part of their Collection Systems Fundamentals Workshop Series. These in-person events will provide a critical training opportunity for early-career professionals and those seeking Collection System Maintenance Certification. Led by industry expert William Kleinau, the one-day workshops cover essentials from safety to spill response, aligning with the updated Grade 1-3 KSA (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities) categories. Attendees can earn up to 7.8 contact hours. Several dates remain open across the state: February 25 (Sacramento, SacSewer), April 29 (City of Fresno), May 13 (City of Thousand Oaks), and June 10 (Petaluma). Early bird registration is available for each session until approximately six weeks before the event, with member rates starting at $210. Agencies are encouraged to register staff early to secure the best value and ensure participation in these high-demand sessions. Please reach out with questions, concerns, or for more details on coordinating attendance for your team.

SWRCB Opens 2025 VAR Portal, Required Submissions due 4/30

On April 30, responses are due for the SWRCB's 2025 Volumetric Annual Report (VAR). The SWRCB's Recycled Water Policy requires wastewater and recycled water permittees (including wastewater permittees that do not produce any recycled water) to annually report monthly volumes of influent, wastewater produced, and effluent, including treatment level and discharge type. The 2025 VAR is in the same format as the previous year and requires the entry of volumes in acre-feet per month for influent, effluent, and if applicable, recycled water use. The VAR portal can be accessed through the GeoTracker Electronic Submittal of Information (ESI). Additional information, including the Help Guide and Webinar training for submitting the VAR, as well as data from 2019 to 2024, can all be found on the SWRCB's VAR webpage. Annual Report through the volumetric annual report module in GeoTracker by April 30, 2026. For assistance with submitting the 2025 Volumetric Annual Report or any questions, email DWQ-recycledwater@waterboards.ca.gov.

SWRCB Announces Inland Nutrient Rulemaking and Workshops

The SWRCB's February Executive Director's Report, announces the initiation of a rulemaking project to establish numeric water quality objectives and a program of implementation for harmful algal blooms (HABs) and cyanotoxins. Previously known as the Biostimulation, Cyanotoxins, and Biological Conditions Provisions, the project has been narrowed to focus specifically on critical HAB impacts while providing a flexible implementation program to control environmental factors such as nutrients. These inland nutrient regulations will apply to rivers, lakes, inland surface waters, enclosed bays, and estuaries statewide, and it is being developed as a statewide water quality control plan and policy for water quality control. The primary objective is to reduce the occurrence of HABs and enhance protections for municipal and domestic drinking water supplies, as well as water contact recreation. This initiative comes in response to a significant surge in HAB reports, which have increased by approximately 200 percent since 2021. Staff plan to host outreach meetings later in 2026 to discuss the project's scope and content. CASA and the Summit Partners will be tracking this development closely, particularly for the ramifications on nutrient management for member agencies and regarding flexible implementation tools. More information is available on the SWRCB's project webpage. Please reach out with questions, concerns, or for more details.

SWRCB Posts Summary of 2025 Stormwater Capture Workshop

On January 22, the SWRCB released a "What We Heard" summary document following the Stormwater Capture and Use Workshop held on November 18, 2025. The workshop was a key component of the Strategy to Optimize Resource Management of Stormwater (STORMS) program, focusing on identifying barriers and opportunities to increase stormwater capture across the state. While the summary does not represent final staff conclusions or priorities for the STORMS unit, it serves as a foundational reference for future policy development and

stakeholder engagement. A recording of the full November workshop is archived here for those who were unable to attend. CASA continues to track the STORMS program as it relates to integrated water management and potential impacts on wastewater agencies. Please reach out with questions, concerns, or for more details.

SWRCB Rescinds Pre-Treatment Questionnaire, Next Steps

On January 26, the SWRCB's Office of Enforcement sent out a voluntary "preliminary treatment/headworks" survey about which many members expressed concern to CASA and the other Summit Partners. The Summit Partners were able to connect with the SWRCB to learn more about the survey and convey our concerns. As a result, the SWRCB rescinded the survey and will work with the Summit Partners to refine it further, then re-send it for voluntary participation later in 2026 after coordinating more on messaging, timing, and distribution. Please reach out if you have additional questions.

SWRCB Conducts WWNA AG Meeting Focused on Phase 2 Scope

On January 30, CASA and the Central Valley Clean Water Association (CVCWA) submitted comments to the SWRCB regarding the scoping of Phase 2 for their Wastewater Needs Assessment (WWNA). While expressing appreciation for enhanced communication and the re-issuance of the wastewater rates questionnaire, CASA and CVCWA identified several areas where the assessment's framework requires refinement to better reflect the clean water community's operational reality. A primary focus of the letter is the need for distinct terminology that differentiates the WWNA's academic data-gathering goals from formal regulatory and enforcement actions. To avoid confusion with existing legal definitions, CASA and CVCWA proposed replacing the labels of "Inadequate" and "At Risk" with more proactive designations. We also offered technical recommendations for analyzing Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) data, with the support of Mike Flores at HDR. CASA and CVCWA look forward to continued dialogue with the SWRCB to reach consensus on these analytical methodologies as the project enters Phase 2. Please reach out to with any questions regarding these comments.

SWRCB Adopts 2026 Integrated Report on 2/3

On February 3, the SWRCB adopted the 2026 California Integrated Report and 303(d) list. While this year's "on-cycle" assessments primarily focused on receiving waters within the North Coast, Lahontan, and Colorado River Basin regions, where there are less CASA members discharging, the SWRCB approved a new approach to prior listings of impairments for benthic communities, in response to USEPA's prior partial disapproval of the 2024 Integrated Report. In the RTC and revised 2026 Integrated Report Staff Report, the revisions to the Benthic Community Effects (BCE) assessment methodology formalized a new "Category 5-bio" subcategory and specific reclassifications for constructed

channels and Central Valley floor streams. The new Category 5-bio listings will not result in traditional TMDL's but rather provide the Regional Water Quality Control Boards and the regulated community more flexibility for addressing associated water quality impairments. Looking ahead to the 2028 Listing Cycle for the Central Coast, Central Valley, and San Diego regions, the data solicitation period closed last October, and we expect the draft report due in early winter 2027. Please reach out with questions, concerns, or for more details.

2026 Regulatory Meeting Dates

Numerous regulatory meeting schedules have been released for 2026. Here they are for quick reference: SWRCB Meetings (First and Third Tuesday of the month, typically) OPC Meetings (March 23, June 16, September 22, and December 8), SWRCB Water Quality Fees Quarterly Schedule (March 5, June 12, July 30, and September 16 adoption), SWRCB CWSRF DFA Quarterly Environmental Package Webinar (February 12, May 14, August 13, and November 12), the California Water Quality Monitoring Council (February 26, May 28, August 27, and November 19), CalEPA Vapor Intrusion workshops (February 12 & 25, March 10, May, and June), and the SCCWRP Commission (March 6, June 6, September 4, and December 4).

SWRCB Agenda Roundup and Executive Director's Reports

Here are the recent SWRCB agendas: January 6, January 21, and February 3. Their next meetings are on February 18 and March 3. The SWRCB Executive Director's reports are linked for January and February, and they feature a URL to the SWRCB's current statewide and regional policies calendar, which provides the latest updates on current proceedings and calendar estimates for upcoming rulemakings.

CASA Calendar

February 9	CASA Aquatic Toxicity Subgroup (Performance Metrics presentation)
February 11	Summit Partners BACEN Webinar
February 12	CASA Air Quality, Climate Change, and Energy Workgroup (Virtual)
February 19	CASA Regulatory Workgroup Meeting (Virtual)
February 23-24	CASA DC Policy Forum (Washington, DC)

March 12	CASA Air Quality, Climate Change, and Energy Workgroup (Virtual)
March 19	CASA Regulatory Workgroup Meeting (Virtual)

Upcoming Events

February 10	CASA-SMC Exfiltration Workshop
February 12	Cal EPA Vapor Intrusion Workshop #1
February 12	SWRCB Nonpoint Source Program Comment Deadline
February 12	SWRCB CWSRF Environmental Package Webinar
February 25	CWEA Collection Systems Fundamentals (Sacramento)
February 25	Cal EPA Vapor Intrusion Workshop #2
February 26	California Water Quality Monitoring Council
March 3	SWRCB Meeting
March 5	SWRCB WQ Fees Workshop
March 6	SCCWRP Commission
March 17	SWRCB Meeting
March 23	OPC Meeting

For more information please reach out to the CASA Regulatory Team:

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