



## Board begins CEQA Process for Bay-Delta Plan Update

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**SACRAMENTO** – In its continuing effort to address the prolonged decline of native fish and the deteriorating ecosystem in the Lower San Joaquin River and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta watershed, the State Water Resources Control Board [announced plans](#) Friday to develop a draft environmental impact report and hold a public scoping meeting on August 10 for a proposed regulation to implement the Bay-Delta Plan’s Lower San Joaquin River flow and southern Delta salinity objectives.

The board adopted an [updated Bay-Delta Plan](#) and an environmental review document in December 2018 that establish water quality standards and flow objectives for the Lower San Joaquin River and its three salmon bearing tributaries, the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced Rivers. The changes also included southern Delta salinity objectives for the reasonable protection of agriculture in the southern Delta. Worsening drought conditions and existing flow objectives (established in 1995) that are insufficient to protect fish and wildlife amplify the need to act as soon as possible.

The proposed regulation would implement the 2018 update by assigning responsibilities to water right holders. While the regulation is for the benefit of the environment, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the board to assess if the regulation could cause potentially significant adverse environmental impacts beyond what was identified in the 2018 environmental review.

At the August 10 public meeting, board staff will solicit input on the content and scope of this environmental assessment, as well as additional data and recommended alternatives. Written comments are being accepted until noon on August 12.

The environmental assessment is expected to take approximately one year from the start of the CEQA process. Timelines for components of the updated Bay-Delta Plan, such as compliance methods, were discussed at the public [board meeting](#) on December 28, 2021. The environmental assessment process is expected to take approximately one year. The board will continue to consider voluntary proposals if presented as a means of implementing the

objectives established in 2018 for the San Joaquin River and its three major tributaries.

More information about the Bay-Delta Plan is available on the board's [website](#).