
State Water Resources Control Board

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY URGENCY CHANGE PETITIONS FOR PERMITS 12947A, 12949, 12950, AND 16596 (APPLICATIONS 12919A, 15736, 15737, AND 19351) OF SONOMA COUNTY WATER AGENCY

On August 31, 2026, Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) filed temporary urgency change petitions (TUCPs) with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Division of Water Rights (Division) requesting approval of temporary changes to water right Permits 12947A, 12949, 12950, and 16596 (Applications 12919A, 15736, 15737, and 19351) pursuant to California Water Code section 1435. The petitions seek temporary authorization to (1) modify the hydrologic index established in Decision 1610 that determines the water supply condition for the Russian River, and (2) reduce the seasonal minimum instream flow requirements in the Russian River under a *Normal* water supply condition.

The requested temporary modifications to the Decision 1610 requirements for the Russian River will be established using an alternate hydrologic index based on water storage in Lake Mendocino on the Russian River, rather than the current hydrologic index based on cumulative inflow into Lake Pillsbury on the Eel River.

The request to temporarily reduce the minimum instream flow requirements specified under the subject permits are due to constraints placed on Sonoma Water pursuant to the April 29, 2025, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Endangered Species Act Section 7(a)(2) Biological Opinion and Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Response for the Russian River Watershed Water Supply and Channel Maintenance Project (Biological Opinion). The requested changes to the instream flow requirements under a *Normal* water supply condition are as follows, from May 1, 2027 through the end of this Order (or October 15, 2027, whichever is first):

- Reduce the minimum instream flow requirements for the upper Russian River (from its confluence with the East Fork of the Russian River to its confluence with Dry Creek) from 185 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 125 cfs; and,
- Reduce the minimum instream flow requirements for the lower Russian River (from its confluence with Dry Creek to the Pacific Ocean) from 125 cfs to 70 cfs.

Sonoma Water proposes to implement the minimum instream flow requirement for the Russian River as a 5-day running average of average daily stream flow measurements, with the stipulation that instantaneous stream flows on the upper Russian River would be no less than 110 cfs and on the lower Russian River no less than 60 cfs. This would

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allow Sonoma Water to manage stream flows with a smaller operational buffer, thereby facilitating flow conditions that the Biological Opinion has concluded are conducive to the enhancement of salmonid habitat.

The proposed action to modify the hydrologic index would be in place for a period of 180 days, beginning on November 16, 2026, or later corresponding to the issuance of the Order. The proposed action to reduce the minimum instream flow requirements would begin May 1, 2027 and would be in place until the Order expires in approximately mid-May 2027.

More information regarding the TUCPs, including copies of the petitions, is available at: <https://www.sonomawater.org/tucp>

Pursuant to Water Code section 1438, subdivision (d), any interested person may file an objection to the temporary change. Objections filed in response to this notice should be submitted to the persons listed below by **4:30 p.m. on October 19, 2026**. Please be advised the State Water Board may issue an order approving or denying the TUCPs before the end of the noticing period. All objections received will be considered promptly, and an amended order may be issued if necessary to address objections.

State Water Resources Control Board
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For more information regarding this matter please contact Ken Emanuel at Kenneth.Emanuel@waterboards.ca.gov.

DATE OF NOTICE: September 17, 2026