

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region
5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 576-2220

**Notice of Public Comment Period
Order No. R1-2026-0029
Water Code Section 13267 Investigative Order**

**Directing U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
to Submit Technical and Monitoring Reports
Pertaining to Discharges from Coyote Valley Dam**

Mendocino County

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (North Coast Water Board), proposes to issue Water Code Section 13267 Investigative Order No. R1-2026-0029 (Order) to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District (USACE). The order would direct USACE to submit technical, monitoring, and study reports pertaining to discharges from Coyote Valley Dam (CVD) and Lake Mendocino into the East Fork Russian River and the mainstem Russian River in Mendocino County.

This item is open for a 30-day written public comment period between **September 9, 2026**, and **October 9, 2026**. Comments and questions regarding the draft Order should be submitted to the North Coast Water Board email at NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov, Regarding: Comments on draft CVD Order No. R1-2026-0029.

Discharger and Facility Information

USACE is the owner and primary operator of CVD, a flood control and water storage facility located on the East Fork Russian River approximately one mile upstream from the confluence with the mainstem Russian River near Ukiah in Mendocino County. Lake Mendocino, formed by CVD, is a major impoundment designed for flood risk management, water supply storage, downstream flow maintenance, and public recreation. USACE directly controls all physical infrastructure and water management operations at the dam including the intake tower, control gates, outlet works, and

release schedules, which dictate the volume, timing, and sediment composition of water discharged into the East Fork Russian River and downstream watershed.

Elevated turbidity in Lake Mendocino and the Russian River downstream of CVD has been an ongoing environmental concern since CVD began operating in 1958. Dam releases and storm events mobilize fine sediments that remain suspended for extended periods, causing increases in turbidity downstream. These conditions impair aquatic habitat, degrade drinking water sources, and threaten protected salmonid species. Downstream turbidity also impacts public recreation, municipal water treatment, aquatic habitat, and other beneficial uses protected under the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan).

To address these water quality impacts, draft Order No. R1-2026-0029 requires USACE to provide technical and monitoring reports pursuant to California Water Code section 13267. The Order directs USACE to maintain a continuous online turbidity monitoring network across eight watershed locations and submit annual water quality analysis reports; conduct a three year assessment of turbidity impacts on salmonid rearing and spawning habitat; execute a Plume Transport and Dispersion Study to evaluate how turbidity plumes travel, mix, and dissipate in the Russian River; monitor adult and juvenile salmonid population trends in the Upper Russian River; and evaluate and report on both short-term and long-term operational adjustments and structural modifications that could reduce downstream turbidity releases from CVD.

Public Comment Procedures

Interested persons are invited to submit written comments and recommendations regarding draft Order No. R1-2026-0029. To be considered by North Coast Water Board staff, all written comments must be submitted electronically to NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov with the subject line **"Regarding – Comments on draft CVD Order No. R1-2026-0029"** no later than **5:00 p.m. on October 9, 2026**. All timely submitted written comments will be reviewed by staff and incorporated into the administrative record for this matter. Following the public comment period and consideration of any comments received, the Executive Officer will consider adoption of a final Order.

Document Review

The draft Order and related documents are available for public review on the North Coast Water Board website at:

(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_decisions/tentative_orders/)

Additionally, the draft Order and administrative file may be inspected at the North Coast Water Board office located at 5550 Skylane Blvd, Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. To schedule an appointment to inspect files at the Regional Board office, please call (707) 576-2220.

Accessibility Accommodations

Individuals requiring special accommodations or alternative communication formats should contact the front desk, at (707) 576-2220 or via email at NorthCoast@Waterboards.ca.gov at least 5 working days prior to the end of the comment period. TTY/TDD/Speech-to-Speech users may contact the California Relay Service at 1-800-735-2929 or voice line at 1-800-735-2922.

Valerie Quinto
Executive Officer

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