



SEPTEMBER 2022

CALIFORNIA STATE WATER
RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN

DRAFT

State Water Resources Control Board's Racial Equity Action Plan

Acknowledgements

The State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board or Board) Racial Equity Action Plan was developed in partnership with employees and the communities they serve. Many dedicated their time and resources to attend one-on-one meetings with the diversity, equity, and inclusion consultants, contribute to the visioning and strategizing sessions, participate in government-to-government tribal consultations, attend public workshops to share their suggestions, and engage with the State Water Board to include the needs and priorities of communities most impacted in this plan.

Over 200 employees from the State Water Board and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (collectively, the Water Boards) participated in visioning and strategizing sessions, contributed to action planning workshops, and shared their action ideas during internal employee feedback sessions.

Approximately 200 community members attended the Water Boards July 2022 public workshops, either virtually or in person. The following community partners supported the planning, hosting, and development of the July 2022 public workshops.

- Alianza
- Central California Environmental Justice Network
- Community Water Center
- Pueblo Unido
- Restore the Delta
- Save California Salmon
- Self Help Enterprises

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Introduction

The Water Boards have a shared mission to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water. This mission is strengthened by a commitment to racial equity and environmental justice. The Water Boards acknowledge and condemn inequities, past and present, in water quality, access, and affordability, and are proactively working to eliminate the structures and practices that perpetuate these inequities.

The Water Boards envision a California where:

- race no longer predicts the access to, or quality of, water resources a person receives;
- race no longer predicts professional outcomes for Water Boards employees; and
- a racial equity lens is consistently applied to Water Boards' decision-making processes.

This Racial Equity Action Plan is a compilation of actions intended to advance the State Water Board's efforts to create a future where we equitably preserve, enhance, and restore California's water resources and drinking water for all Californians, regardless of race, and where race is not a predictor of professional outcomes for Water Boards employees. This Racial Equity Action Plan sets goals for the State Water Board to address racial inequities and identifies metrics to measure progress.

How We Got Here

On August 18, 2020, State Water Board staff presented an informational item to the State Water Board on a framework for addressing racial equity. The State Water Board acknowledged the historic effects of institutional racism that must be confronted throughout government and directed staff to develop a priority plan of action.

In fall 2020, the State Water Board's Executive Director, Eileen Sobeck, convened a Water Boards Racial Equity Team with the purpose of advancing racial equity both for the communities that the Water Boards serve, and internally within the organization. The Water Boards Racial Equity Team is comprised of Water Boards staff representing all levels of the organization and includes support staff, engineers, scientists, technologists, and executives. The Racial Equity Team has been tasked with three major priorities 1) establish a foundation of internal and external engagement that values listening and collaboration to drive action; 2) draft a resolution on racial equity to be considered for adoption by the State Water Board and leveraged by the nine (Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards) to adopt their own resolutions; and 3) develop racial equity strategies and action plans to drive efforts for the coming years.

The Water Boards reached a major milestone on November 16, 2021, when the State Water Board adopted the Racial Equity Resolution, "Condemning Racism, Xenophobia, Bigotry, and Racial Injustice, and Strengthening Commitment to Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion" ([rs2021-0050 \(ca.gov\)](#)). The Resolution directs staff to develop a plan of action to advance racial equity within the Water Boards.

In March 2022, the Water Boards Racial Equity Team began working with a diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant to articulate a vision and strategic directions that serve as the framework for our action planning.

Throughout spring 2022, Water Boards staff, community partners, tribes, and communities impacted by racial inequities began to identify draft actions to incorporate into a Racial Equity Action Plan. In April 2022, the Water Boards began soliciting requests for government-to-government tribal consultations. And in May 2022,

community partners and State Water Board management and staff came together for visioning and strategizing sessions, as well as a series of action planning workshops.

The Water Boards Racial Equity Team compiled draft actions through feedback from members of the public, tribes, and Water Boards staff and leadership and hosted four public workshops in July 2022 to present the draft action ideas. The Racial Equity Team collected public feedback to ensure actions in this plan match the assets and opportunities in the communities the Water Boards serve and have incorporated feedback into this document.

Next Steps

The Racial Equity Team aims to bring this plan to the State Water Board as an informational item in 2023. The board will not approve or deny the Racial Equity Action Plan. However, staff will update the Board on its implementation periodically.

The plan is a living document intended to be adjusted and modified over time. Although this is an Action Plan for the State Water Board, the Regional Water Boards have strongly supported the State Water Board's racial equity efforts and will leverage this plan to inform their own racial equity work, as they have the State Water Board's racial equity resolution.

How This Document Is Structured

Strategic Directions = How to approach the work of advancing racial equity.

Goals = Results the Water Boards aim to achieve.

Challenges= Existing barriers that need to be addressed.

Actions = Actions to achieve goals and overcome challenges.

Lead Role = Division or Office responsible for action implementation.

Supporting Role = Divisions or Offices to support action implementation.

Type = Each action is assigned a baseline type as of the end of 2022. Types indicate if an action already exists, is new, and if resources already exist, or are required. These types can help staff prioritize actions.

- Type A Actions: *Existing* programs, policies, or practices that can be implemented or expanded with *existing* resources and staff to complete this action.
- Type B Actions: *New* programs, policies, or practices that can be implemented with *existing* resources and staff to complete this action. New staff and resources would not be required.
- Type C Actions: *New or existing* programs, policies, or practices that require *new* resources and/or staff to complete this action.

Stages = The progress of each action is measured by project stages as of the end of 2022. Stages will be used to evaluate and monitor progress in the future.

- Stage Zero: Not yet started preparation or scoping
- Stage 1: Preparation, scoping, and data collection
- Stage 2: Securing funding, staff, and other resources for action; groundbreaking, beginning work for action
- Stage 3: Work in progress
- Stage 4: Action complete and/or at least one cycle of continuous action complete; monitoring and evaluation of action is complete or ongoing

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AB = Assembly Bill

ACS = American Community Survey

ALL = All Water Boards Divisions and Offices

BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color

CalEnviroScreen = California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool

CalEPA = California Environmental Protection Agency

Comms = Water Boards Communications Office

CRM = Constituent Relationship Management Software

DAC = Disadvantaged Community

DAS = Division of Admistrative Services

DDW = Division of Drinking Water

DEI = Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

DFA = Division of Financial Assistance

DIT = Division of Information Technology

DWQ = Division of Water Quality

DWR = Division of Water Rights

EEO = Equal Employment Oppportunity Office

EJ = Environmental Justice

EXEC = Water Boards Executive Office

GARE = The Government Alliance on Race and Equity

GO = Governor's Office

HR = Human Resources

IT = Information Technology

IVAN = Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods

KPI = Key Performance Indicator

NGO = Non-Governmental Organization

OCC = Office of Chief Council

OE = Office of Enforcement

OIMA = Office of Information Management and Analysis

OLA = Office of Legislative Affairs

OPA = Office of Public Affairs

OPP = Office of Public Participation

ORPP = Office of Research, Planning and Performance

RE = Racial Equity

Regions/Regional Water Boards = The Nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards in California:

Region 1: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Region 2: San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board

Region 3: Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Region 4: Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

Region 5: Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

Region 6: Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

Region 7: Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board

Region 8: Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board

Region 9: San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

RET = Water Boards Racial Equity Team

SGMA = Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

SJV = San Joaquin Valley

TA = Technical Assistance

UC = University of California

Water Boards = The California State Water Resources Control Board and Nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards in California

Strategic Direction #1

Integrating Racial Equity, Measuring Impact

Infusing the racial equity resolution throughout the Water Boards' policies, programs, and practices; measuring progress toward goals and adapting when necessary.

Goal 1a: Water Boards data are accessible, equitable, and culturally relevant.

CHALLENGE: The Water Boards are not collecting all the data needed to assess gaps in programs and policies related to racial equity or environmental justice. In addition, many staff lack experience and expertise with handling data and conducting analyses through a racial equity lens (Goal 1b). Before proposed revisions or actions for programs can be identified, the Water Boards need to understand the demographic and other relevant data associated with their programs and policies, and to evaluate the patterns that emerge from the data. To achieve true equity for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities, the Water Boards must also collaborate with BIPOC communities to co-create a framework for every aspect of its data process, including collection, governance, methods, interpretation, discovery, and visualization.

Actions	Lead Role	Supporting Role	Stage
A: Existing programs with existing resources to complete action			
Develop training and guidance for Water Boards staff to ensure data collection, methods, and visualizations (e.g., maps, factsheets, etc.) are accessible, equitable, culturally relevant, and reflective of open science principles.	OIMA	ORPP, Comms	Zero
Incorporate racial equity analysis into the annual Drinking Water Needs Assessment, including a measurement of the number of BIPOC communities impacted by primary and secondary contaminants and water unaffordability.	DDW	DFA, OPP	3
Include racial equity progress updates on State Water Board meeting agendas and liaison reports.	EXEC	ALL	Zero
Identify racial equity data gaps related to the administration of the state's water rights system.	DWR		1
B: New programs with existing resources to complete action			
Identify racial equity data gaps in water use efficiency and water loss regulations and the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).	ORPP		Zero
Gather and incorporate existing demographic data to measure and track demographic impacts of programs in underserved communities (i.e., non-urban, impoverished and economically displaced, farmworker, tribal, and BIPOC communities) and evaluate the disparate impacts based on socioeconomic conditions. In the dataset, include an overlay of climate-related impacts as a benchmark to measure progress.	OIMA	DFA, DDW, DWR, OE, ORPP	Zero

Identify gaps in existing opportunities for public participation in science and community data gathering programs and develop a plan to address gaps, develop new data collection methods, support existing programs, and incorporate community datasets into analyses.	OIMA	OPP, DWQ	Zero
C: New or existing programs needing new resources to complete action			
Identify, track, and evaluate data on key performance indicators to measure progress on Racial Equity Action Plan goals, in consultation with BIPOC communities.	OPP, OIMA	DFA	Zero
Create a public dashboard to communicate timelines and progress made on the Racial Equity Action Plan and on specific justice-related outcomes of Water Boards' policies and programs.	OPP, OIMA	DFA	Zero

Goal 1b: Programs and policies are evaluated and realigned to address racial injustices.

CHALLENGE: The Water Boards have acknowledged the role racism plays in creating and perpetuating systemic inequities in affordability, access, allocation, and protection of water resources. But there are gaps in the Water Boards' understanding of how programs and policies create and/or perpetuate existing inequities and the impacts these inequities have on Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities. In addition, Water Boards staff lack the information, data and/or training to: 1) apply a racial equity lens to their work, 2) align their programs and practices to advance racial equity, and 3) assess the effectiveness of the solutions they develop and the outcomes they create. These gaps in understanding contribute to systems that affect race-based disparate outcomes, including wealth, health, and environmental inequities. Before the State Water Board can realign its programs and policies, it must understand its role in creating and perpetuating inequities.

Actions	Lead Role	Supporting Role	Stage
A: Existing programs with existing resources to complete action			
Develop a racial equity toolkit, training, and guidance for Water Boards staff to examine disproportionate impacts of policies and programs on BIPOC communities. The toolkit should provide guidance to staff for how to undertake a retroactive equity analyses of programs and policies to establish a baseline.	RET		1
Apply racial equity toolkit to conduct a gap and impact analysis on all Water Boards' programs and policies.	EXEC	ALL	Zero
Use results from racial equity gap analysis to inform the prioritization of work in all programs and to recommend program changes to address racial inequities.	EXEC	ALL	Zero
Update the climate change resolution or develop a climate change action plan that addresses disproportionate impacts on BIPOC communities.	ORPP		1

Participate as partners in implementing the Environmental Justice Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and CalEPA.	OE		3
B: New programs with existing resources to complete action			
Ensure every policy, plan or permit includes a consideration of potential impacts to BIPOC communities and that approved permits do not perpetuate further long-term environmental injustices beyond the life of the permit.	EXEC		Zero
Regularly communicate to staff about their role in implementing the racial equity action plan and gauge where more support is needed.	EXEC		3
C: New or existing programs needing new resources to complete action			
Identify and prioritize waterbodies for the development of instream flow requirements that will protect BIPOC communities, tribal cultural resources, and related ecosystems.	DWR, OCC, OE		Zero
Apply racial equity lens to establish a baseline understanding of how Division of Water Rights, Division of Drinking Water, Division of Water Quality, and Division of Financial Assistance programs and policies are currently using race and demographic data along with programmatic data, and create a plan to integrate demographic data to inform decision making moving forward.	DWR, DDW, DWQ, DFA		Zero
Implement an organizational structure that creates internal capacity for ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion work and hire dedicated staff to oversee implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan.	EXEC		Zero
Document barriers to advancing racial equity goals and identify which barriers require approval or action by other state and local agencies or rulemaking processes (e.g., new legislation, California Department of Human Resources, State Personnel Board, Department of Technology, etc.).	EXEC OLA OCC	ALL	Zero
Develop and implement a process that outlines clear direction, follow-up steps, support resources, and meaningful corrections and consequences when State Water Board Divisions and Offices do not meet key performance targets related to the Racial Equity Action Plan.	EXEC	DAS, OIMA	Zero

Strategic Direction #2

Creating, Maintaining Spaces for Inclusion & Belonging

Addressing internal and external representation of Black, Indigenous, and people of color at all Water Boards' levels; elevating overall understanding of racial equity.

Goal 2a: Water Boards staff and leadership reflect the diversity of California.

CHALLENGE: To make decisions that equitably benefit Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities, the Water Boards must include and value Black, Indigenous, and people of color staff and leadership in decision-making. The Water Boards' workforce generally does not reflect the racial composition of California. United States Census Bureau data collected via the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) show that 37% of California's population is white, yet the Water Boards' workforce census data from 2020 show that 57% of the Water Boards' workforce and 69% of the Water Boards' management is white. Similarly, the 2019 ACS data show that 63% of California's population comprises Black, Indigenous, and people of color, compared to only 43% of the Water Boards' workforce and 31% of the Water Boards' management. When the Water Boards recruit, promote, and retain a diverse workforce, they are better able to understand and connect with the BIPOC communities they serve and improve their customer service and response. When a racial equity lens is applied internally, it will ensure the Water Boards has a diverse workforce that can advance their outward facing environmental justice work.

Actions	Lead Role	Supporting Role	Stage
A: Existing programs with existing resources to complete action			
Collect and evaluate anonymized data on the demographics of Water Boards staff. Disaggregate data by Region, Division, Office, position classification, etc.	DAS	OIMA, EEO	3
Review and revise the "Immediate Action Plan for Advancing Workforce Diversity" to improve effectiveness of strategies.	DAS		3
Increase recruitment for job openings and internship opportunities at high schools, community colleges, colleges, universities, faith-based groups, workforce development networks, and community-based groups that serve BIPOC communities in California.	DAS	ALL	3
Develop guidance and an ongoing outreach plan for prospective applicants on how to navigate the state's hiring process.	DAS		Zero
B: New programs with existing resources to complete action			
Develop a long-term diversity and equity recruitment and retention strategy that: creates a community-to-Water Boards pipeline and a staff-to-leadership pipeline; ensures equitable opportunities for BIPOC staff to apply for promotions; explores opportunities to expand available job classifications; and enhances staff engagement and satisfaction. Incorporate strategy into equitable workforce and succession plans.	DAS	ORPP	Zero
Require implicit bias and racial equity training for all hiring panelists and for all supervisors.	DAS	ORPP	Zero

C: New or existing programs needing new resources to complete action			
Increase resources for ongoing staff professional development, training, and education.	EXEC	DAS, ORPP	Zero
Develop a youth education and engagement program for students at the high school level.	DAS		Zero
Develop a workforce and leadership development program for BIPOC communities.	OPP	DDW, DFA, ORPP	Zero
Train and provide tools to executives, managers, and supervisors to build capacity to hire and retain a diverse workforce.	DAS	ORPP	Zero

Goal 2b: Foster a culture of inclusion and belonging.

CHALLENGE: In April and May 2020, CalEPA collaborated with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to survey staff of all CalEPA Boards, Departments, and Offices to establish baseline progress toward efforts to advance racial equity. Overall, the Water Boards’ staff survey responses indicate that more work is needed to further normalize racial equity, and the findings led to a specific recommendation for the Water Boards to center racial equity work on the perspectives and experiences of Black staff. In addition, the results indicated a need to train Water Boards staff to enhance their understanding of racial equity, racism, implicit bias, cultural competency, and similar concepts. The feedback about training was reinforced during racial equity employee listening sessions held in 2021. Overall, Water Boards staff strongly support additional training and tools for advancing racial equity and stronger communication with staff.

Actions	Lead Role	Supporting Role	Stage
A: Existing programs with existing resources to complete action			
Develop a mentorship program that allows employees, including BIPOC staff, to connect with others who may have similar experiences and to provide coaching on career growth and advancement.	DAS	ALL	Zero
Support employee participation and leadership in the creation of CalEPA affinity groups.		ALL	3
Develop educational materials for staff that improve understanding of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) process for submitting racial discrimination/harassment complaints.	EEO		1
Develop a method to collect feedback from staff about the Water Boards’ Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) processes, and to communicate any changes made to the EEO process.	EEO		Zero
Evaluate existing Training Academy courses and identify opportunities to incorporate content related to racial equity, environmental justice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.	ORPP		3
Develop and provide tools for implementing evaluations of managers related to their skills and abilities to foster environments of inclusion and belonging.	DAS	ORPP	Zero

B: New programs with existing resources to complete action			
Regularly communicate to staff about the importance of racial equity and environmental justice in their work and consistently emphasize racial equity as a top priority for the Water Boards.	EXEC		Zero
C: New or existing programs needing new resources to complete action			
Incorporate questions related to racial equity, inclusion, and belonging into the annual CalEPA staff engagement survey.	EXEC	DAS, OIMA	Zero
Create a framework for Water Boards affinity groups and support employee participation and leadership.	EXEC	ALL	Zero
Develop a required annual all-staff training that includes the role of government in perpetuating systemic racism in California land and water policy and management and how race affects Water Boards programs and policies. Engage with BIPOC communities and tribes in development of training. Ensure instructor pool is diverse.	ORPP	OPP	1
Develop supplemental trainings, videos, and/or best practice documents to increase cultural competency, normalize conversations about racial equity, foster cultural sensitivity and appreciation, and empower staff to apply a racial equity lens to their work. Engage with BIPOC communities and tribes in development of training. Ensure instructor pool is diverse.	ORPP	Comms	3

Strategic Direction #3

Activating BIPOC Community Wisdom and Sharing Power

Fostering open communications for voices of Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities; building power in BIPOC communities by cultivating authentic relationships and engaging communities as partners for racial equity; offering ongoing training, education, and dedicated resources to raise awareness of the Water Boards' role in managing the state's water resources; and incorporating wisdom from Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities in Water Boards' decision-making processes.

Goal 3a: Engage with BIPOC communities by providing effective language access services and accessible communications.

CHALLENGE: California is one of the most linguistically diverse states in the country with more than 200 spoken languages. The U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 estimates indicate that 44% of Californians ages five and older speak a language other than English at home. In addition to linguistic diversity, there also are many ways Californians communicate and receive information. The Water Boards' communication methods and styles are often too technical and difficult to understand and often do not reach or resonate with the communities they serve. To ensure the Water Boards can connect and communicate with all Californians, they must advance language access and further develop equitable and inclusive communications and engagement approaches.

Actions	Lead Role	Supporting Role	Stage
A: Existing programs with existing resources to complete action			
Develop training and guidance for Water Boards staff on language access laws and best practices.	OPP	EEO, OCC	3
Review and evaluate existing photo library inventory and identify gaps to diversify photos so that our communications material better reflect California's people.	Comms	OPA	Zero
Add racial equity, diversity, and inclusion guidance to the Water Boards' existing editorial style guide, including: plain language writing, using acronyms, a racial equity glossary of terms, culturally sensitive and gender-inclusive language, etc.	Comms, OPP	ALL	3
Expand language translation services to provide more opportunities to interact with and learn from communities the Water Boards serve.	OPP		1
B: New programs with existing resources to complete action			
Co-create and implement a plan to communicate proactively with BIPOC communities in a way that considers their unique needs. Include a mechanism for receiving community input.	Comms	OPP	Zero
Expand the Spanish language glossary and workshop water terminology with multilingual communities.	OPP		1
Expand the Water Boards' social media reach by increasing bilingual and multimedia content and working with external communicators and influencers interested in environmental justice.	Comms	OPA, OPP	Zero

Include racial equity-specific content and framing in Water Boards' communications channels (e.g., website, social media, etc.).	Comms	OPA, OPP	Zero
Create new public notice template using plain language and an intuitive layout, and include a section on racial equity impacts, impacts on disadvantaged communities, and how input will be considered.	EXEC, OPP	ALL	Zero
C: New or existing programs needing new resources to complete action			
Cultivate relationships with ethnic and multi-language media in BIPOC communities and build capacity to explain and contextualize water policy information.	OPA		Zero

Goal 3b: Remove barriers for community access and participation in water decision-making by providing resources for capacity building, including funding, training, and education.

CHALLENGE: The Water Boards' processes and policies, along with historical, linguistic, and economic inequities, often present barriers to meaningful participation where communities can easily understand the Water Boards' mission; contribute their expertise, experiences, and perspectives; and/or actively engage in decision-making with us. Such barriers include limited language offerings, use of technical jargon in Water Boards' materials, lack of internet or computer access to participate in virtual meetings, the time and places where meetings are scheduled (and potentially associated loss of wages due to participants taking time off to participate), lack of culturally relevant information, lack of financial support for community capacity building, lack of Black, Indigenous, and people of color representation at public meetings, etc. Establishing new, resilient systems will require equitable community representation and participation.

Actions	Lead Role	Supporting Role	Stage
A: Existing programs with existing resources to complete action			
Develop and maintain a list of pro-bono attorneys on the Water Boards' website.	OCC	DIT	Zero
Continue holding remote-accessible meetings and develop guidance for cohosting remote viewing locations to watch the virtual meeting. Host meetings at times and spaces that are accessible to community members. Consider allowing pre-recorded statements at meetings.		ALL	3
Evaluate and improve usability of the Water Boards website for those who have limited internet connectivity and access the website via mobile devices.	DIT		1
In coordination with BIPOC communities, non-governmental organizations and tribal governments, review press distribution lists with a racial equity lens and add contacts who represent and are connected with BIPOC communities.	OPA	OPP	Zero

Evaluate the frequency of enforcement staff attending and participating in community-based environmental violations monitoring meetings (IVAN meetings), and increase attendance where it isn't already occurring.	OE		Zero
B: New programs with existing resources to complete action			
C: New or existing programs needing new resources to complete action			
Develop an ongoing community capacity building fund to compensate community partners for their expert wisdom, time, and collaboration; provide travel stipends to community members; provide funding to community members to pay for amenities to reduce participation barriers; support community-led projects that address environmental injustices; and support community leadership in water decision making processes.	OPP	DFA, OE, Regions	1
Purchase constituent relationship management (CRM) software to improve, focus, and monitor engagement with BIPOC communities and tribes.	OPP	DIT	1
Develop a shared Water Boards calendar for all public meetings, milestones, and opportunities.	OPA, OPP	DIT	Zero
Develop videos to describe Water Boards processes, how decisions are made, and how people can be involved and post videos to the Water Boards' website.	Comms	OPP, ORPP	Zero
Develop a website governance framework to improve the user experience of the Water Boards website starting with pages related to Board meeting agendas and supporting materials.	DIT		Zero

Goal 3c: Consult, collaborate, and partner with BIPOC communities in decision-making processes.

CHALLENGE: The Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities the Water Boards' serve are local experts who have a deep understanding of their specific needs and strengths. Public feedback indicates that communities most impacted by the Water Boards' work are unclear about the board's role in managing water resources and how decisions may affect their community. In addition, Water Boards' decision-making processes and structures often do not center the expertise or vision of Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities. This creates a missed opportunity for BIPOC communities and tribes to incorporate community needs and priorities in Water Boards programs, policies, and decisions. Centering the Water Boards' work and decision-making on BIPOC communities ensures Water Boards' programs benefit all Californians. To achieve racial equity, the Water Boards must co-create frameworks that uphold equitable consultation, collaboration, partnership and empowerment of BIPOC communities and tribes from conception through implementation of our work.

Actions	Lead Role	Supporting Role	Stage
A: Existing programs with existing resources to complete action			
Provide briefings for legislators who represent geographic areas with a high percentage of BIPOC communities to help inform them of Water Boards' resources and community participation processes.	OLA	ALL	Zero
B: New programs with existing resources to complete action			
Develop training and guidance to improve the ability of Water Boards staff to work with BIPOC communities and tribes through the development of partnership frameworks; best practices for engagement; developing an outreach and engagement plan; developing tribal engagement plans to involve tribes respectfully in the decision making process; supplement the email list by adding curated interested parties list for Water Boards racial equity work; training for hosting public meetings; and tools for engagement.	OPP	ORPP	3
C: New or existing programs needing new resources to complete action			
Develop guidance for identifying, working with, and equitably compensating tribal cultural monitors.	OPP	DFA	Zero
Develop an outreach plan to raise awareness about State Water Board and Regional Water Board vacancies and the process to apply to be considered for a board member appointment.	EXEC, OCC, OPP	ALL	Zero