
State Water Resources Control Board

NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

SOLICITATION OF INPUT REGARDING POTENTIAL ACTIONS TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY FROM SUCTION DREDGE MINING

Tuesday, January 17, 2017

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
The Falls Event Center
4105 W Figarden Drive
Fresno, CA 93722

Wednesday, January 18, 2017

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Elks Lodge
2055 Elks Drive
San Bernardino, CA 92404

Wednesday, January 25, 2017

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Redding City Chambers
747 Auditorium Drive
Redding, CA 96001

Monday, February 6, 2017

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Joe Serna Jr. - CalEPA
Headquarters Bldg.
Byron Sher Auditorium
1001 I Street, Second Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) staff will hold public workshops to solicit input on what actions the State Water Board should take to protect water quality from suction dredge mining. These meetings will not be attended by a quorum of State Water Board members. The locations and times of the meetings are provided above. If additional public meetings are scheduled, a separate notice will be issued.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF WORKSHOPS

The use of vacuum or suction dredge equipment has been statutorily prohibited in California since 2009 in accordance with Fish and Game Code section 5653.1, subdivision (b). Effective January 1, 2016, Senate Bill 637 amended Section 5653 of the Fish and Game Code and added section 13172.5 to the Water Code, effectively providing a framework, of which these workshops are a necessary part, to lift the statutory prohibition on suction dredge mining. Input will assist the State Water Board in determining how to regulate suction dredge mining to protect water quality.

At the workshops, staff of the State Water Board and Department of Fish and Wildlife will jointly present information related to regulation of suction dredge mining. Following the presentation, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and/or provide suggestions. Time limits may be imposed to ensure that all persons have the opportunity to speak.

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION AT WORKSHOPS

State Water Board staff is seeking input on potential State Water Board regulatory actions that may allow suction dredge mining while protecting water quality, including but not limited to input on equipment, practices, monitoring, and targeted prohibitions. Examples include:

- Should the State Water Board issue a permit?
- What types of equipment should be permitted for use?
- Should certain protective practices be required? If so, what kind?
- Should monitoring be required? If so, what kind?
- What prohibitions, if any, should apply? For example, should the State Water Board:
 - Prohibit the use of, or method of using, certain types of equipment?
 - Prohibit dredging where existing high concentrations or measures of mercury, sediment, turbidity, and/or trace metals impair the water body and impact its beneficial uses, such as:
 - no dredging at all in such a water body or the impaired segment of the water body; or
 - no dredging within a specified distance upstream of such water a body or a water body segment;
 - Prohibit dredging a specified distance upstream of drinking water system water intakes;
 - Prohibit dredging a specified distance from California Native American Tribal land boundaries; and/or
 - Prohibit dredging in waters with elevated fish or aquatic invertebrate tissue mercury levels.

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

State Water Board staff will also accept input and recommendations through written comments. Written comments should be submitted no later than noon on **Tuesday, February 28, 2017** to the following address with the following title: “**DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING POTENTIAL ACTIONS TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY FROM SUCTION DREDGE MINING**” on the correspondence:

State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Quality - NPDES Unit
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

Written comment letters may also be submitted by email to suctiondredgecommentletters@waterboards.ca.gov (if less than 15 megabytes in total size). For email submittals, please indicate in the subject line: “**COMMENT LETTER– DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING POTENTIAL ACTIONS TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY FROM SUCTION DREDGE MINING.**” Couriers delivering hard copies of public comment letters must check in with CalEPA Building lobby security personnel, at 1001 I Street, Sacramento CA 95814. Couriers must request security staff to contact Russell Norman or Philip Isorena (contact information below).

For future notices about the subject workshops, interested parties may subscribe to the “Suction Dredge Mining” Lyris list located at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

These workshops are for informational purposes and no formal action will be taken. There will be no sworn testimony or cross-examination of workshop participants, but State Water Board staff may ask clarifying questions.

WEBCAST OF WORKSHOP

A broadcast of the Sacramento workshop to be held on February 6, 2017 will be available at:

<https://video.calepa.ca.gov>.

PARKING AND ACCESSIBILITY

All meeting facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who require special accommodations at any of the facilities are requested to contact Esther Tracy by December 16, 2016 at (916) 341-5908 or Esther.Tracy@waterboards.ca.gov.

A map and directions to the meeting locations can be found at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/npdes/suction_dredge_mining.shtml.

REQUEST FOR RSVP

Reservations are not required for these workshops. However, to ensure that the facility will accommodate all interested attendees, we would appreciate an RSVP (including workshop date, your agency, and number planning to attend) sent to the following email address:

suctiondredgeworkshopRSVP@waterboards.ca.gov.

WORKSHOP AGENDA AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

The workshop agenda will be provided at the meetings. The agenda and supporting materials will also be available at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/npdes/suction_dredge_mining.shtml.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please direct questions about this notice to Russell Norman at (916) 323-5598 or

Russell.Norman@waterboards.ca.gov, or Philip Isorena at (916) 341-5544 or

Philip.Isorena@waterboards.ca.gov.