AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 22, 2021

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 8, 2021

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE-2021-22 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 377

Introduced by Assembly Member Robert Rivas (Principal coauthor: Senator Hertzberg) (Coauthor: Assembly Member Lee) (Coauthors: Assembly Members Bloom and Lee)

February 1, 2021

An act to add Article 3.5 (commencing with Section 13150) to Chapter 3 of Division 7 of the Water Code, relating to water quality.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 377, as amended, Robert Rivas. Water quality: impaired waters. (1) Under existing law, the State Water Resources Control Board and the 9 California regional water quality control boards regulate water quality and prescribe waste discharge requirements in accordance with the federal national pollutant discharge elimination system (NPDES) permit program established by the federal Clean Water Act and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Existing law requires each regional board to formulate and adopt water quality control plans for all areas within the region, as provided.

This bill would require all California surface waters to be fishable, swimmable, and drinkable attain applicable beneficial uses by January 1, 2050, as prescribed. 2050. The bill would prohibit require the state board and regional boards from authorizing boards, when issuing an NPDES discharge, or permit, a waste discharge requirement or requirement, or a waiver of a waste discharge requirement for a

discharge, requirement, to require that the discharge to surface water that causes or contributes does not cause or contribute to an exceedance of an applicable water quality standard in receiving waters, or from authorizing and to not authorize the use of a best management practice permit term to authorize a discharge to surface water that causes or contributes to an exceedance of an applicable water quality standard in receiving waters. The bill would prohibit, on or after January 1, 2030, a regional water quality control plan from including a schedule for implementation for achieving a water quality standard for a surface water of the state that was adopted as of January 1, 2021, and would prohibit a regional water quality control plan from including a schedule for implementation of a water quality standard for a surface water of the state that is adopted after January 1, 2021, unless specified conditions are met. The bill would prohibit an NPDES permit, waste discharge requirement, or waiver of a waste discharge requirement to *discharge to a surface water of the state* from being renewed, reissued, or modified to contain effluent limitations or conditions that that, among other things, are less stringent than those in the previous permit, requirement, or waiver, except as specified.

(2) Existing law authorizes the imposition of civil penalties for violations of certain waste discharge requirements and requires that penalties imposed pursuant to these provisions be deposited into the Waste Discharge Permit Fund, to be expended by the state board, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for specified purposes related to water quality. For violations of certain other waste discharge requirements, including the violation of a waste discharge requirement effluent limitation, existing law imposes specified civil penalties, the proceeds of which are deposited into the continuously appropriated State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account, which is established in the State Water Quality Control Fund.

This bill would require, by January 1, 2030, the state board and regional boards to develop an Impaired Waterways Enforcement Program to enforce all remaining water quality standard violations that are causing or contributing to an exceedance of a water quality standard. *standard in a surface water of the state*. To ensure any water segments impaired by ongoing pollutants are brought into attainment with water quality standards, the bill would require the state board and regional boards, by January 1, 2040, to evaluate the state's remaining impaired *state surface* waters using a specified report. The bill would require, by January 1, 2040, the state board and regional boards to report to the

Legislature a plan to bring the final impaired water segments into attainment by January 1, 2050. The bill would create the Waterway Attainment Account in the Waste Discharge Permit Fund and would make moneys in the Waterway Attainment Account available for the state board to expend, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to bring remaining impaired water segments into attainment in accordance with the plan. The bill would create in the Waterway Attainment Account the Waterway Attainment Penalty Subaccount, composed of penalties obtained pursuant to the Impaired Waterways Enforcement Program, and would make moneys in the subaccount available for the state board to expend, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for purposes of the program. The bill would require, by January 1, 2040, and subject to a future legislative act, 50% of the annual proceeds of the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account to be annually transferred to the Waterway Attainment Account. The bill would require the state board, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to expend 5% of the annual proceeds of the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account to fund a specified state board program.

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Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the 2 following:

3 (1) Water is a necessity of human life, and every Californian 4 deserves access to clean and safe water. Yet climate change 5 jeopardizes the quality and safety of our water. Climate change is impacting the state's hydrology to create water resource 6 7 vulnerabilities that include, but are not limited to, changes to water 8 supplies, subsidence, increased amounts of water pollution, erosion, 9 flooding, and related risks to water and wastewater infrastructure 10 and operations, degradation of watersheds, alteration of aquatic 11 ecosystems and loss of habitat, multiple impacts in coastal areas, 12 and ocean acidification. 13 (2) Many aspects of climate change and associated impacts will

14 continue for centuries, even if anthropogenic emissions of 15 greenhouse gases are reduced or stopped. Given the magnitude of 16 climate change impacts on California's hydrology and water 17 systems, the state's climate change response should include attainment of water quality standards to allow the state's
 watersheds to resiliently adapt to forthcoming and inevitable
 climate change stressors.

4 (3) The federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Sec. 1251 et seq.) 5 was enacted on October 18, 1972, to establish the basic structure 6 for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United 7 States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. The 8 objective of the federal Clean Water Act is to restore and maintain 9 the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. To achieve that objective, Congress declared a national 10 goal that the discharge of pollutants into navigable waters be 11 12 eliminated by 1985.

13 (4) California has long been a national and international leader 14 on environmental stewardship efforts, including the areas of air 15 quality protections, energy efficiency requirements, renewable energy standards, and greenhouse gas emission standards for 16 17 passenger vehicles. The program established by this act will 18 continue this tradition of environmental leadership by placing 19 California at the forefront of achieving the nation's goal of making 20 all waterways swimmable, fishable, and drinkable.

(5) The State Water Resources Control Board, along with the
nine California regional water quality control boards, protect and
enhance the quality of California's water resources through
implementing the federal Clean Water Act, as amended, and
California's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Division
7 (commencing with Section 13000) of the Water Code).

(6) The State Water Resources Control Board's mission is to
"preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water
resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment,
public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water
resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and
future generations."

(7) Under Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act (33
U.S.C. Sec. 1313(d)), California is required to review, make
changes as necessary, and submit to the United States
Environmental Protection Agency a list identifying water bodies
not meeting water quality standards (303(d) list). California is
required to include a priority ranking of those waters, taking into
account the severity of the pollution and the uses to be made of

1 those waters, including waters targeted for the development of 2 total maximum daily loads (TMDLs). 3 (8) As of the most recent 2018 303(d) list, nearly 95 percent of 4 all fresh waters assessed in California, and over 1,400 water bodies, 5 are listed as impaired, with only 114 TMDLs having been approved 6 since 2009 in California. Of 164,741 assessed miles of rivers and streams, 82 percent were impaired. Of 929,318 assessed acres of 7 8 lakes, reservoirs, and ponds, 93 percent were impaired. Of 575,000 9 assessed acres of bays, harbors, and estuaries, 99 percent were 10 impaired. Of 2,180 assessed miles of coastal shoreline, 93 percent 11 were impaired. Of 130,084 assessed acres of wetlands, 99 percent 12 were impaired. 13 (b) (1) In honor of the federal Clean Water Act's 50-year 14 anniversary, it is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this act 15 to recommit California to achieve the national goal to restore and 16 maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the 17 state's waters by eliminating the discharge of pollutants into 18 impaired waterways. 19 (2) It is further the intent of the Legislature in enacting this act 20 to require that the State Water Resources Control Board and the 21 California regional water quality control boards meet the national 22 goal of achieving swimmable, fishable, and drinkable waters 23 restoring applicable beneficial uses in surface water by no later 24 than January 1, 2050. 25 SEC. 2. Article 3.5 (commencing with Section 13150) is added 26 to Chapter 3 of Division 7 of the Water Code, to read: 27 28 Article 3.5. State Waters Impairment 29 30 13150. All California surface waters shall be fishable, 31 swimmable, and drinkable attain applicable beneficial uses by 32 January 1, 2050. To bring all water segments into attainment with 33 this requirement, the state board and regional boards shall comply 34 with the requirements of this article. 35 13151. (a) (1) The state board and regional boards shall not 36 do either boards, when issuing an NPDES permit, shall comply 37 with both of the following: 38 (A) Authorize an NPDES Shall require that the discharge to a

- 39 surface water of the United States that causes or contributes does
 - 97

not cause or contribute to an exceedance of an applicable water
 quality standard in receiving waters.

3 (B) Authorize an NPDES permit that uses Shall not authorize

the use of an alternative compliance determination, safe harbor
"deemed in compliance" term, or any other best management
practice permit term to authorize a discharge to a surface water of
the United States that causes or contributes to an exceedance of

8 an applicable water quality standard in receiving waters.

9 (2) (A) Paragraph (1) does not prohibit enhanced watershed 10 management programs or watershed management programs from 11 being used as a planning tool for achieving compliance with

12 applicable water quality standards in receiving waters.

(B) Paragraph (1) does not prevent NPDES permittees from
using best management practices to meet applicable water quality
standards in receiving waters.

16 (C) Paragraph (1) does not apply to salt and nutrient
17 management-plans plans, including the program of implementation,
18 approved as of January 1, 2021, that include alternative compliance
19 options.

20 (b) The state board and regional boards shall not do either of 21 the following:

(1) Authorize a permit that does not include monitoring
sufficient to demonstrate compliance with water quality standards
and, unless infeasible, that does not include end-of-discharge pipe
monitoring.

26 (2) Authorize a permit unless it establishes criteria for, and27 requires, monitoring to evaluate compliance with water quality28 standards.

29 (c) (1) The state board and regional boards shall not do either

30 boards, when issuing a waste discharge requirement or waiver of

31 *a waste discharge requirement, shall comply with both* of the 32 following:

33 (A) Authorize a waste discharge requirement or waiver of a
 34 waste discharge requirement for a Shall require that the discharge

to a surface water of the state that causes or contributes does not

36 *cause or contribute* to an exceedance of an applicable water quality

37 standard in receiving waters.

38 (B) Authorize a waste discharge requirement or waiver of a

39 waste discharge requirement that uses Shall not authorize the use

40 of an alternative compliance determination, safe harbor "deemed

1 in compliance" term, or any other best management practice permit

term to authorize a discharge to a surface water of the state that
causes or contributes to an exceedance of an applicable water
quality standard in receiving waters.

5 (2) (A) Paragraph (1) does not prevent a waste discharge 6 requirement or waiver of a waste discharge requirement from using 7 best management practices to meet applicable water quality 8 standards in receiving waters.

9 (B) Paragraph (1) does not apply to salt and nutrient 10 management-plans plans, including the program of implementation, 11 approved as of January 1, 2021, that include alternative compliance 12 options.

13 13152. (a) (1) Notwithstanding Section 13242, on and after 14 January 1, 2030, a regional water quality control plan, including 15 the program of implementation, shall not include a schedule for 16 implementation for achieving a water quality standard for a surface 17 water of the state that was adopted in an approved regional water 18 quality control plan as of January 1, 2021. It is the intent of the 19 Legislature in enacting this requirement to ensure that all water 20 quality standards in effect as of January 1, 2021, are fully 21 implemented and achieved by January 1, 2030.

(2) Paragraph (1) does not apply to salt and nutrient management
 plans plans, including the program of implementation, approved
 as of January 1, 2021, that include a time schedule for compliance.

(b) The state board and regional boards shall only include in a
regional water quality control plan a schedule for implementation
of a water quality standard *for a surface water of the state* that is
adopted after January 1, 2021, if all of the following conditions
are met:

30 (1) The schedule for implementation of the water quality
31 standard is the shortest time necessary, and in no instance exceeds
32 five years.

(2) The schedule for implementation is necessary for the
 permittee to undertake physical construction that is necessary to
 achieve compliance with the water quality standard.

36 (3) The water quality standard is not substantially similar to a37 water quality standard that was in effect as of January 1, 2021.

38 (c) (1) An NPDES permit, waste discharge requirement, or
 39 waiver of a waste discharge requirement *to discharge to a surface* 40 *water of the state* shall not be renewed, reissued, or modified to

contain effluent limitations or conditions that are satisfy any of the
 following:

3 (A) Are less stringent than the comparable effluent limitations 4 or conditions in the previous permit, requirement, or waiver, including, but not limited to, if the implementation of the less 5 stringent effluent limitation or condition would result in a violation 6 7 of an applicable water quality standard in receiving waters. waiver. 8 (2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), an NPDES permit, waste 9 discharge requirement, or waiver of a waste discharge requirement may be renewed, reissued, or modified to contain a less stringent 10 effluent limitation or condition applicable to a pollutant if any of 11

the following apply:
(B) Are less stringent than required by effluent limitation

guidelines promulgated under Section 304(b) of the federal Clean
 Water Act (33 U.S.C. Sec. 1314(b)) in effect at the time the permit

16 *is renewed, reissued, or modified.*

(C) The implementation of the limitation or condition would
result in a violation of a water quality standard under Section 303
of the federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Sec. 1313) to those
waters.

(2) A permit with respect to which paragraph (1) applies may
be renewed, reissued, or modified to contain a less stringent
effluent limitation or condition applicable to a pollutant if any of
the following apply:

(A) Material and substantial alterations or additions to the
 permitted facility occurred after permit issuance that justify the
 application of the less stringent effluent limitation or condition.

(B) Information, other than revised regulations, guidance, or
test methods, is available that was not available at the time of
permit issuance that would have justified the application of the
less stringent effluent limitation or condition at the time of permit
issuance.

33 (C) The permit issuer determines that technical mistakes or

34 mistaken interpretations of law were made in issuing the permit

35 in accordance with Section 402(a)(1)(B) of the federal Clean Water

36 Act (33 U.S.C. Sec. 1342(a)(1)(B)).

37 (D) The less stringent effluent limitation or condition is 38 necessary because of events over which the permittee has no

38 necessary because of events over which the permittee has n 39 control and for which there is no reasonably available remedy.

1 (E) The permittee has received a permit modification pursuant

to Section 301(c), 301(g), 301(h), 301(i), 301(k), 301(n), or 316(a)
of the federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Secs. 1311(c), 1311(g),

4 1311(h), 1311(i), 1311(k), 1311(n), and 1326(a)).

5 (F) The permittee has installed the treatment facilities required 6 to meet the effluent limitations or conditions in the previous permit

7 and has properly operated and maintained the facilities but has

8 nevertheless been unable to achieve the previous effluent9 limitations or conditions, in which case the limitations or conditions

10 in the renewed, reissued, or modified permit may reflect the level

11 of pollutant control actually achieved, but shall not be less stringent

12 than required by effluent limitation guidelines promulgated under

13 Section 304(b) of the federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Sec.

14 1314(b)) in effect at the time of permit renewal, reissuance, or 15 modification.

(3) Subparagraphs (B) and (C) of paragraph (2) do not apply to
a revised waste load allocation or an alternative grounds for
translating water quality standards into effluent limitations or
conditions unless both of the following are satisfied:

(A) The cumulative effect of the revised allocation or alternative
 grounds results in a decrease in the amount of pollutants discharged
 into receiving waters.

(B) The revised allocation or alternative grounds is not the result
of a discharger eliminating or substantially reducing its discharge
of pollutants due to complying with the requirements of the federal
Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Sec. 1251 et seq.) or for reasons

27 otherwise unrelated to water quality.

28 (d) The state board and regional boards shall not authorize an

29 NPDES permit, waste discharge requirement, or waiver of a waste

30 discharge requirement that does not include a complete

31 antidegradation analysis as set out in State Water Resources

32 Control Board Resolution No. 68-16 and Administrative Procedures

33 Update 90-004.

34 13153. (a) (1) By January 1, 2030, the state board and regional

35 boards shall develop an Impaired Waterways Enforcement Program

to enforce all remaining water quality standard violations pursuantto Chapter 12 (commencing with Section 1825) of Part 2 of

38 Division 2 and Article 1 (commencing with Section 1323) of 1212 (commencing with Section 13300) of

39 Chapter 5 that are causing or contributing to an exceedance of a

40 water quality-standard. standard in a surface water of the state.

1 (2) An enforcement action taken pursuant to the program shall 2 result in sufficient penalties, conditions, and orders to ensure the 3 person subject to the enforcement action is no longer causing or 4 contributing to an exceedance of a water quality-standard. standard 5 in a surface water of the state.

6 (3) A discharger shall remain liable for a violation of a water
7 quality standard until sampling—at the point of discharge
8 demonstrates that the discharge is no longer causing or contributing
9 to the exceedance. exceedance in a surface water of the state.

(4) A discharger shall not be responsible for natural sources
of pollution in surface waters of the state if the discharger can
demonstrate all of the following:

(A) Natural sources are not caused or mobilized by
anthropogenic activity contributing to a water quality standard
exceedance in receiving waters.

(B) Anthropogenic sources to a surface water of the state are
controlled and do not cause or contribute to an exceedance of an
applicable water quality standard in receiving waters.

19 (*C*) The discharge is consistent with any applicable waste load 20 allocation assigned through a total maximum daily load.

21 (4)

(5) Penalties obtained pursuant to the program shall be deposited
 into the Waterway Attainment Penalty Subaccount, which is hereby
 created in the Waterway Attainment Account. Moneys in the
 subaccount shall be available for the state board to expend, upon
 appropriation by the Legislature, for purposes of the program.
 (5)

(6) The state board and regional boards may issue an
enforcement order pursuant to Chapter 12 (commencing with
Section 1825) of Part 2 of Division 2 or Article 1 (commencing
with Section 13300) of Chapter 5 that includes a compliance
schedule deadline that extends beyond January 1, 2030, to a
discharger for a discharge that is causing or contributing to an
exceedance of a water quality standard.

35 (b) (1) By January 1, 2040, to ensure any water segments 36 impaired by ongoing legacy pollutants and nonpoint source 37 pollution are brought into attainment with water quality standards, 38 the state board and regional boards shall evaluate the state's 39 remaining impaired *state surface* waters using the most current 40 integrated report.

1 (2) The state board and regional boards shall, by January 1,

2 2040, report to the Legislature in compliance with Section 9795 3 of the Government Code a plan to bring the final impaired water 4 segments into attainment by January 1, 2050.

5 (3) The requirement for submitting a report imposed under 6 paragraph (2) is inoperative on January 1, 2044, pursuant to Section 7 10231.5 of the Government Code.

8 (c) (1) The Waterway Attainment Account is hereby created 9 in the Waste Discharge Permit Fund. Moneys in the Waterway 10 Attainment Account shall be available for the state board to expend, 11 upon appropriation by the Legislature, to bring remaining impaired 12 water segments into attainment in accordance with the plan 13 submitted pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (b), subject to 14 subdivision (d). 15 (2) (A) By January 1, 2040, subject to a future legislative act,

16 50 percent of the annual proceeds of the State Water Pollution 17 Cleanup and Abatement Account shall be annually transferred to 18 the Waterway Attainment Account.

19 (B) This paragraph shall become inoperative January 1, 2051, 20 or when all water segments are in attainment with water quality 21 standards, whichever comes first.

22 (d) Moneys in the Waterway Attainment Account shall be 23 expended by the state board, upon appropriation by the Legislature, 24 to bring impaired waterways into attainment with water quality 25 standards to the maximum extent possible. Moneys expended from 26 the account shall address or prevent water quality impairments or 27 address total maximum daily loads under the federal Clean Water 28 Act (33 U.S.C. Sec. 1251 et seq.). Moneys in the account shall 29 only be expended on the following:

30 (1) Restoration projects, including supplemental environmental 31 projects, that improve water quality.

32 (2) Best management practice research innovation and incentives

33 to encourage innovative best management practice implementation. 34

- (3) Source control programs.
- 35 (4) Identifying nonfilers.
- 36 (5) Source identification of unknown sources of impairment.

37 (6) Enforcement actions that recover at least the amount of

38 funding originally expended, which shall be deposited into the

39 Waterway Attainment Account.

1 (7) Competitive grants to fund projects and programs for 2 municipal separate storm sewer system permit compliance 3 requirements that would prevent or remediate pollutants, including 4 zinc, caused by tires in the state. Priority shall be given to 5 applicants that discharge to receiving waters with zinc levels that exceed the established total maximum daily loads and to projects 6 7 that provide multiple benefits. 8 (e) The state board shall, upon appropriation by the Legislature, 9 expend 5 percent of the annual proceeds of the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account to fund the state board's 10 SWAMP - Clean Water Team Citizen Monitoring Program in 11 12 order to inform the integrated report. 13 13154. For purposes of this article, the following definitions 14 apply: 15 (a) "Best management practice" means a practice or set of practices determined by the state board or a regional board for a 16 17 designated area to be the most effective feasible means of 18 preventing or reducing the generation of a specific type of nonpoint 19 source pollution, given technological, institutional, environmental, 20 and economic constraints. (b) "Drinkable" applies to waters subject to a regional water 21 22 quality control plan and means that the waters are drinkable to the 23 extent required by the regional water quality control plan. 24 (e) 25 (b) "Integrated report" means the state report that includes the list of impaired waters required pursuant to Section 303(d) of the 26 27 federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Sec. 1313(d)) and the water 28 quality assessment required pursuant to Section 305(b) of the 29 federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Sec. 1315(b)). 30 (d)31 (c) "NPDES" means the national pollutant discharge elimination 32 system established in the federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Sec. 33 1251 et seq.). 34 (e) 35 (d) "Regional board" means a California regional water quality control board. 36 37 (f) 38 (e) "Regional water quality control plan" means a water quality 39 control plan developed pursuant to Section 13240.

40 (g)

1 (f) "State board" means the State Water Resources Control 2 Board.

3 (h)

4 (g) "State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account"
5 means the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account
6 created pursuant to Section 13440.

7 (i)

8 (h) "Supplemental environmental project" means an 9 environmentally beneficial project that a person subject to an 10 enforcement action voluntarily agrees to undertake in settlement

11 of the action and to offset a portion of a civil penalty.

12 (j)

13 (i) "Waste Discharge Permit Fund" means the Waste Discharge
 14 Permit Fund created pursuant to Section 13260.

15 (k)

16 (*j*) "Waterway Attainment Account" means the Waterway 17 Attainment Account created pursuant to paragraph (1) of

18 subdivision (c) of Section 13153.

19 (/)

- 20 (k) "Waterway Attainment Penalty Subaccount" means the
- 21 Waterway Attainment Penalty Subaccount created pursuant to
- 22 paragraph -(4) (5) of subdivision (a) of Section 13153.

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