

Humboldt  
Baykeeper

Inland Empire  
Waterkeeper

Klamath  
Riverkeeper

Monterey  
Coastkeeper

Orange County  
Coastkeeper

Russian  
Riverkeeper

San Diego  
Coastkeeper

San Francisco  
Baykeeper

San Luis Obispo  
Coastkeeper

Santa Barbara  
Channelkeeper

Santa Monica  
Baykeeper

Ventura  
Coastkeeper

## Hold Polluters Accountable under State and Federal Water Laws

### In Brief

Despite strong federal and state laws on the books, many of California's waterways remain seriously polluted. This is due in part to inconsistent and incomplete enforcement. Enforcement currently focuses on discharges from pipes to surface waters ("point sources") while generally neglecting key polluted runoff ("non-point") sources, such as agriculture.

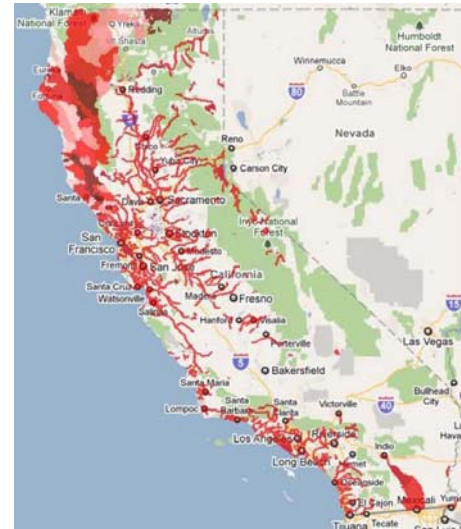
### Legal Landscape

The federal Clean Water Act and state Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act require California to implement and enforce programs to control water pollution. The Clean Water Act, enforceable through U.S. EPA, state and citizen action, focuses on "point source" discharges to surface waters, including storm water. State law, by contrast, requires controls on *all* pollution sources into *both* surface water and groundwater - but with fewer enforcement tools. The State Water Board provides enforcement reports and data for point source discharges online, through its California Integrated Water Quality System (CIWQS).

### Moving Forward

Accountability, transparency and enforcement are intertwined. As a result of calls for greater transparency, the State Water Board released region-based performance information in 2010, which showed that in 2009, only 15% of federally permitted wastewater facilities in the state were inspected. Additionally, over 1,500 violations by these facilities statewide are older than 18 months and have yet to be addressed. Making permits more clear is one tool for effective enforcement. For example, storm water permits should contain numeric pollution limits wherever feasible, as opposed to subjective conditions that make enforcement so staff-intensive. The State Water Board must also improve enforcement of conditions on polluted runoff (such as agricultural runoff) discharges, as well as all discharges to groundwater.

**Learn More.** Visit the State Water Resource Control Board's Enforcement page at [http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/enforcement/](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/enforcement/), its searchable CIWQS database at [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/ciwqs/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ciwqs/), its most recent Performance Report at [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/about\\_us/performance\\_report/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/about_us/performance_report/), and its impaired waters maps at [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml).



2010 Impaired California Waterways.  
SWRCB.

Key Issues: Water Quality, Enforcement, Government Transparency and Accountability