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CALIFORNIA ADOPTS FIRST-OF-KIND WINERY RULES TO PROTECT CALIFORNIA'S WATERS

January 21, 2021 (Sacramento, CA) – The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopted its first statewide rules to manage waste from winemaking and protect California's rivers and groundwater.

Winery wastewater contains a number of harmful pollutants, including salts, bacteria, high strength biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), total suspended solids (TSS), abnormal pH, and nitrogen that can contribute to harmful algal blooms in California's rivers, lakes, and streams. This waste can also further degrade groundwater in communities already challenged with accessing safe drinking water.

There are approximately 4,580 California wineries and nearly 560,000 acres of vineyards that produce a variety of grapes for the wineries. To-date, wineries have only been regulated on a case-by-case basis by California's nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards), leaving only 589 (16%) of all wineries in California with permits to protect water quality.

Even after these rules take effect, less than half of all California wineries – an estimated 1,480 – are expected to be regulated by these new rules.

The State Water Board's adoption of this new Order also comes on the heels of a nearly 100,000 gallon spill of wine into the Russian River last January 2020. These new rules help fill existing regulatory gaps and protect California's waters, though California Waterkeeper organizations remain concerned that these rules do not go far enough.

"This Order leaves the Water Boards to regulate in the dark, with virtually no groundwater monitoring requirements for a majority of the wineries," said Kaitlyn Kalua, Policy Manager of California Coastkeeper Alliance. "Without monitoring data, we simply do not and cannot know the scale of the impacts to water quality."

"Every winery should be required to submit effective spill prevention and containment plans to protect our waterways," said Jaime Neary, Policy Analyst of Russian Riverkeeper. "Last year, we had a 97,000 gallon cabernet spill that turned the river red. Accidents do happen and this is not something we want to see happen again in our watershed, or anywhere in California."

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ABOUT CALIFORNIA COASTKEEPER ALLIANCE - California Coastkeeper Alliance is a statewide voice for our waters. With the federal administration working against our environmental laws, CCKA defends and expands California's protective legislation and strengthens the function of our State Water Board. We represent local Waterkeepers, empower communities towards a #TrashFree2030, and advocate with companies through the Blue Business Council. Together, we fight for swimmable, fishable, and drinkable waters for Californians today – and for future generations. California Coastkeeper Alliance is a 501(c) (3)

nonprofit organization. For more information, visit cacoastkeeper.org and follow us on Twitter [@CA_Waterkeepers](https://twitter.com/CA_Waterkeepers).

ABOUT RUSSIAN RIVERKEEPER - Russian Riverkeeper has been fighting since 1993 to ensure a thriving river community and your rights to swimmable, fishable, and drinkable waters. Russian Riverkeeper is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. For more information, visit russianriverkeeper.org and follow us on Twitter [@RRRiverkeeper](https://twitter.com/RRRiverkeeper).