

AGUA CALIENTE BAND OF CAHUILLA INDIANS

TRIBAL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



December 28, 2016

Mary Lou Soscia
Columbia River Coordinator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
805 S.W. Broadway, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97205

Re: Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Comments on the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Federal Baseline Water Quality Standards for Indian Reservations.

Dear Ms. Soscia:

Thank you for providing the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (the "Tribe") the opportunity to review and comment on the *Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) regarding Federal Baseline Water Quality Standards for Indian Reservations*. Overall, the Tribe believes that the proposed rulemaking would have a positive impact at closing the gap in WQS for Indian reservations as well as providing protection to reservation waters afforded under the Clean Water Act. As stated in the ANPRM, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is seeking input on whether to establish Federal baseline WQS and how those WQS should be implemented. On behalf of the Tribe, I submit following comments on the ANPRM:

1. The Tribe believes that all components of water quality standards, including Designated Uses, Water Quality Criteria, Anti-degradation Requirements, and Implementation provisions should be included in the rulemaking process, especially the process for designating waters as Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW).
2. While the Tribe acknowledges the importance of water quality standards to protect, restore, and maintain waters of the United States, the Tribe believes that effective WQS should allow flexibility for specific cultural or traditional practices that are unique to the Tribe's Reservation, likely through the development of additional or refined criteria and uses.
3. The Tribe believes that the rulemaking should be consistent with and not any less protective than regional standards in order to protect specific designated uses and to minimize any potential confusion between jurisdictions and regulated entities.



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4. The Tribe supports the use of narrative water quality criteria that would allow the Tribe the flexibility needed to adapt to the unique water quality goals of any specific surface water to provide the needed protections.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. Please contact me at 760-883-1326 or via email at mpark@aguacaliente-nsn.gov if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

Margaret E. Park, AICP
Director of Planning & Natural Resources
**AGUA CALIENTE BAND
OF CAHUILLA INDIANS**

C: Tribal Council
Tom Davis, Chief Planning & Development Officer
John Plata, In-House Counsel