

# OWTS Ad-Hoc Committee Quarterly Update

January to March 2022

## Purpose and Scope

Work with Permit Sonoma and County Counsel on: (i) the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) regulations; and (ii) evaluate options for allowing composting toilets. Engage with stakeholders.

The purpose of the OWTS Ad Hoc is to receive input from Permit Sonoma and agency staff, and to solicit input from stakeholders, including other public entities (e.g. water quality control boards, fish and wildlife agencies, etc.) and community members. The OWTS Ad Hoc will work with staff to refine the committee's Charter and to develop an action plan for Board consideration.

## Ad Hoc Members

Supervisor Hopkins  
Supervisor Rabbitt

## Attendees

### County Staff

- County Administrator's Office
  - Barbara Lee, CAO Climate Deputy
- Permit Sonoma
  - Tennis Wick, Director
  - Nathan Quarles, Deputy Director
- County Counsel
  - Jennifer Klein, Chief Deputy County Counsel
- As-needed subject matter support may also be provided by other departments and staff

### Other

- As-needed subject matter support may also be provided by community members

## Meetings Held

May 26, 2022, is the first OWTS Ad Hoc meeting.

## Status

State law mandates the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopt standards for regulation of onsite waste treatment systems (OWTS) commonly known as septic systems. The State Water Board, through its OWTS Policy, has required local jurisdictions to submit OWTS programs to the appropriate Regional Water Board (RWB) for review and approval.

The OWTS Policy establishes five risk-based tiers from Tier Zero to Tier Four. Tier Zero is for existing and properly functioning systems. Tier One establishes statewide standards for

new and replacement systems. Tier Two allows local agencies to establish different standards than Tier One, provided they create comparable protections. Tier Three establishes standards for impaired water bodies and provides three options. Tier Four sets standards for systems in need of corrective actions.

Permit Sonoma created a Tier Two Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) for review and approval by the RWB. Permit Sonoma presented the LAMP and accompanying OWTS Manual to the Board in several meetings. In the fall of 2019, the Board authorized staff to submit a revised LAMP and OWTS Manual to the RWB for consideration. In early 2020, the RWB denied the 2019 LAMP and OWTS Manual as submitted and provided direction on required amendments.

Permit Sonoma has been working on producing a revised draft of the LAMP and OWTS Manual. In 2020 and 2021, Permit Sonoma convened a small Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of four local designers and worked through many of the technical issues and concerns. In early 2022, Permit Sonoma release a revised draft to the Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAP) as a larger TAC. Over three hundred comments have been received. Staff are in the midst of reviewing and commenting on the LUAP comments.

<b>Upcoming Meetings</b>
To be scheduled.