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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contra Costa County Regional Alternative Compliance System Wins Prestigious CASQA Award for Innovative Stormwater Strategy

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CA – [INSERT DATE] – The Contra Costa County Regional Alternative Compliance (RAC) System has been honored with the 2025 California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA) Award for Outstanding Stormwater Financial Strategy, recognizing its groundbreaking approach to stormwater management and climate preparedness.

The RAC System, developed collaboratively by the Cities of San Pablo and Walnut Creek, unincorporated Contra Costa County, and the Contra Costa Clean Water Program (CCCWP), provides a flexible, market-based model that helps municipalities and developers meet strict post-construction stormwater treatment requirements under the San Francisco Bay Region Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit.

Instead of forcing every new project to squeeze stormwater treatment onto constrained sites, the RAC System enables the construction of larger, regional green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) projects. These facilities generate “compliance units” that can be purchased by developers or municipalities who need off-site treatment capacity. Buyers also contribute ongoing operations and maintenance fees, creating a dedicated, recurring funding stream for long-term facility upkeep.

“This award underscores the innovative and collaborative spirit behind the RAC System, which is setting a new standard for sustainable stormwater management,” said Rinta Perkins, Interim Program Manager, Contra Costa Clean Water Program. “By creating a market-based approach and dedicated funding stream for regional green infrastructure, we are achieving significant environmental benefits while advancing equity and cost-effectiveness for our communities.”

Why It Matters

- Large facilities can treat entire neighborhoods or industrial zones, achieving 20–30% reductions in PCBs and mercury and having a bigger impact where legacy pollution is greatest.

- Resources are directed to “pollutant hotspots” that often overlap with disadvantaged communities, improving water quality and community health, and resulting in fair access to the benefits.

- Compliance unit sales and property-tax assessed fees create reliable revenue to maintain infrastructure for decades, ensuring sustainable financing.

- The system brings together 21 Contra Costa cities and towns, the County, the Contra Costa County Flood Control & Water Conservation District, the San Francisco Estuary Institute, U.S. EPA Region 9, and leading consultants, including Geosyntec, EOA, Panorama Environmental, Kieser & Associates, and Troutman Pepper, showing how collaboration at this scale can drive innovation and be a model for other regions.

Backed by more than $1.6 million in U.S. EPA Water Quality Improvement Fund grants, the RAC System is being piloted now and is expected to expand countywide by 2026. It offers a replicable model for stormwater managers across California and beyond.

For more information on the RAC system, the designers, and the award, visit [Link to RAC System page (TBA)] or watch this video.

About the Contra Costa Clean Water Program (CCCWP):
CCCWP is a consortium of 21 municipal agencies and the Contra Costa County Flood Control & Water Conservation District. It leads regional efforts to comply with municipal stormwater permits and advance sustainable water quality solutions. To learn more about the program, visit ccleanwater.org