



Media Release

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

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Central Valley Water Board Adopts Waste Discharge Requirements for Irrigated Lands

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The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) has adopted new waste discharge requirements to protect ground and surface water from irrigated agricultural discharges.

The requirements apply to farmers in the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed who join an approved third-party group or coalition. Growers who do not join a coalition will be directly regulated by the Central Valley Water Board, and will be subject to higher costs. The Eastern San Joaquin River watershed has approximately 1 million acres of irrigated land.

The waste discharge requirements are the first in a series of such conditions which will address irrigated agricultural discharges throughout the Central Valley.

Farmers will be required to report their water quality protection practices to their respective coalition. And, growers who have not already implemented practices that protect water quality will be required to improve their practices. Because nitrates in groundwater are a serious concern in the Central Valley, all growers will be required to prepare nitrogen management plans. Farmers whose land lies above the most vulnerable groundwater aquifers will be required to submit information to the coalition on their nitrogen use efficiency. The coalition will prepare technical reports, conduct required studies and monitoring, and submit reports to the Central Valley Water Board on behalf of the growers.

The waste discharge requirements are the product of four years of dialogue among a variety of interested parties, as well as public input received at numerous Central Valley Water Board meetings.

“The Central Valley Water Board took an important step towards ensuring that our precious water resources are protected for current and future generations,” said Pamela Creedon, Executive Officer of the Central Valley Water Board. “We are committed to continuing to partner with the agricultural community, our sister agencies, and the environmental and environmental justice community to make this work.”

Creedon emphasized that protecting water quality and sustaining the agricultural economy are compatible goals.

“We need a clean and sustainable water source for all users of Central Valley waters including our drinking water supply, our industries, our fisheries, and agriculture. Equally important is our need for



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a vibrant agricultural sector that provides an economic engine for our Central Valley and feeds the citizens of our State, country, and the world,” she said.

The Central Valley Water Board is a California state agency responsible for the preservation and enhancement of quality in water resources.

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