

IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE

August 2016

This month's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) update provides a summary of significant activities of State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and North Coast, Central Coast, Los Angeles, Colorado River, Lahontan, Santa Ana, and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards') staff. Next month's report will present activities of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board ILRP.

STATE WATER BOARD

In July and August 2016, ILRP staff participated in several meetings including the California Certified Crop Advisor Board of Director's meeting, the Governor's Office of Research and Planning Biochar Advisory Committee meeting and the Department of Geography and the Environment/Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford to discuss the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Staff also met with the University of California Cooperative Extension Composting Education Program to discuss developing a research project to evaluate the role organic amendments, specifically compost, have in fertility planning. The research objective is to develop a data set that can be used to model nutrient release characteristics of various materials in order to make more precise recommendations for the use of these materials on irrigated lands. Staff has also been working on the California Bioresources Alliance steering committee to plan for the annual symposium scheduled for November 1 and 2, 2016 in West Sacramento.

NORTH COAST REGION

As of July 2016, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board had a total of 568 entities enrolled in the conditional waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for discharges from cannabis cultivation and associated activities. There are an additional 84 entities that have submitted a notice of intent but have not completed the enrollment process.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

On July 15, 2016, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board released draft general waste discharge requirements (GWDRs) and a related environmental impact report for public comment. The proposed GWDRs will require actions to control discharges sediment, nutrients, and pesticides from vineyard properties located in the Napa River and Sonoma Creek watersheds and implements total maximum daily loads completed for these watersheds. Third-party technical

assistance groups are expected to provide an important function by assisting producers in complying with the requirements of the proposed GWDRs. Staff is working with groups that have expressed an interest in filling this important function. The close of the public comment period on the draft GWDRs is August 29, 2016 and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board is currently scheduled to consider adoption of the draft GWDRs at its October 12, 2016 hearing. Project information, including a fact sheet, the draft vineyard permit, and environmental impact report can be found on the Regional Board website.

CENTRAL COAST REGION

On July 28, 2016, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) ILRP staff, presented staff's recommendation to the Central Coast Water Board as [item-6](#) regarding renewal the current Agricultural Order that will expire in March 2017. The board agreed with staff's approach to develop an order for approval in March 2017 that is largely unchanged from the current order, making changes to compliance dates, where necessary. The term of the March 2017 order will be five years. However, staff anticipates that this order will be renewed sooner, after current legal proceedings are resolved. Staff will host several outreach events to inform growers and interested parties on issues related to the Agricultural Order. Monitoring requirements in 2017 will include surface receiving water requirements that will largely be implemented by a cooperative, and groundwater monitoring requirements that will likely be implemented by individual growers.

LOS ANGELES REGION

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Los Angeles Water Board) staff continues working with the Discharger Groups regarding enrollment and re-enrollment of the growers in the Conditional Waiver, Order No. R4-2016-0143, adopted on April 14, 2016. Los Angeles Water Board staff had meetings and conference calls with the Discharger Groups regarding enrollment, farm evaluation plan templates, and new Waiver requirements compliance. Currently, the Los Angeles Water Board staff is working on two enforcement cases in Los Angeles County.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION

In June and July 2016, the Executive Officer of the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (Colorado River Basin Water Board) approved a compliance program plan and water quality monitoring and reporting plans from the Imperial Irrigation District- Imperial County Farm Bureau Coalition. Monitoring for general chemistry, bacteria, nutrients, some pesticides, toxicity, and selenium in the Imperial Valley began in July. Also, in July, the Colorado River Basin Water Board staff and USEPA staff discussed the Draft General Order of Waste Discharge

Requirements to replace the Conditional Waiver for the Palo Verde Valley. The USEPA staff was generally satisfied that the General Order is addressing DDT and toxaphene federal Clean Water Act section 303(d) listed impairments. Colorado River Basin Water Board staff is continuing with the development process and plan to bring the General Order before the Colorado River Basin Water Board in January or March 2017. In September 2016, staff is planning to present a Special Order for Board adoption that further clarifies the applicability of the Imperial Valley Conditional Waiver to stormwater discharges. Staff continues to review monitoring reports sent in by coalition groups.

SANTA ANA REGION

An informational workshop was held at the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (Santa Ana Water Board) meeting on June 10, 2016 so that agricultural representatives could present to the Santa Ana Water Board members and the public their ongoing work in the community to address surface water and groundwater quality issues. A technical presentation demonstrating a water quality indicator tool was highlighted. The Santa Ana Water Board considered and adopted the Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Agricultural Operations in the San Jacinto River Watershed ([Order No. R8-2016-0003](#)) and the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the waiver at their July 29, 2016 meeting. Santa Ana Water Board staff is now developing a 'notification of enrollment' letter to mail to a maximum of 185 potentially eligible enrollees who will be covered under the Conditional Waiver in the San Jacinto Watershed. In addition, Santa Ana Water Board staff continues to meet with agricultural stakeholders and aid encourage them to develop an agricultural coalition.

SAN DIEGO REGION

On June 13, 2016, the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board released the following documents for public comment: (1) [Tentative Order No. R9-2016-0004](#), *General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Commercial Agricultural Operations for Dischargers that are Members of a Third-Party Group*; (2) [Tentative Order No. R9-2016-0005](#), *General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Commercial Agricultural Operations for Dischargers Not Participating in a Third-Party Group*; and (3) [Tentative Resolution No. R9-2016-0136](#), *Adoption of a Negative Declaration and Initial Study for General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Agricultural Operations in the San Diego Region*. Written comments were due by 5:00 p.m. on July 29, 2016.