

## **IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE**

### **February 2017**

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

### **STATE WATER BOARD**

On February 1, 2017, ILRP staff attended the State Water Board annual fee stakeholder meeting. Each February the State Water Board Fee Unit holds a general water quality fees stakeholder meeting to present the initial look at the January Proposed Budget impact to fees. A second general fees stakeholder meeting is proposed for June that looks at the impact of the May Revised Budget. A third general fees stakeholder meeting is typically held in August after the budget is signed.

On February 2 – 4, 2017, ILRP staff proctored a California Association of Pest Control and Certified Crop Adviser's Exam for the International and California/Arizona license/certification. The exam was held in Ventura and included a special Board of Directors meeting and an agricultural related field trip.

On February 8, 2017, ILRP staff participated in a California Agricultural Partnership Forum meeting that included staff from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, US Environmental Protection Agency Region 9, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The meeting reviewed a draft framework and discussed other examples to draw from to inform our "team concept. The goal is to develop a "Team Concept" to: promote and foster wide participation and use of NRCS conservations plans and practices, with the involvement of local Resource Conservation Districts and other third-party certification groups to help growers/producers understand and implement management practices r to achieve water quality protection goals and comply with ILRP discharge permit requirements.

On February 16, 2017, ILRP staff participated in a Concentrated Animal Facility/Dairy Program roundtable with Regional Board staff. The main topics of discussion were related to fees and information management solutions.

On February 21, 2017, ILRP staff participated in a separate fee meeting requested by key agricultural coalitions and stakeholders. Meeting participants included Water Board management and Fee Unit staff.

On February 22, 2017, ILRP staff participated in the regular quarterly Certified Crop Adviser Board of Directors meeting held at the Farm Bureau office in Sacramento.

## **NORTH COAST REGION**

As of February 1, 2017, the North Coast Water Board had a total of about 1045 entities enrolled in the conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for discharges from cannabis cultivation and associated activities. 592 of the 1045 are enrolled via a third party, with the remainder enrolled as individuals. There are an additional 452 entities that have submitted a notice of intent but have not completed the enrollment process.

## **SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION**

The public comment period on the San Francisco Bay Water Board's draft general waste discharge requirements (GWDRs) for vineyard properties closed on December 12. The proposed GWDRs implement sediment TMDLs adopted for the Napa River and Sonoma Creek watersheds. Staff is working to respond to comments received on the draft GWDRs and draft environmental impact report (DEIR). Comment letters received on the GWDRs and DEIR, a permit fact sheet, and other related [program information](#) is posted on the Regional Board website.

## **CENTRAL COAST REGION**

The Central Coast Water Board will consider a new waiver of waste discharge requirements for irrigated agriculture at the March 7-9, 2017 meeting. The proposed order replaces the current WDRs that expire on March 15, 2017. The proposed order is much like the order it is replacing; however, the proposed order has an expansion of the total nitrogen applied reporting requirement to nearly triple the number of ranches required in the current order. The proposed order also includes a new surface water monitoring requirement for six neonicotinoid pesticides and toxicity testing using the indicator species *Chironomus* spp., which is sensitive to neonicotinoids; the Cooperative Monitoring Program implements the surface water monitoring requirements on behalf of growers. Neonicotinoid and pyrethroid pesticide use have increased dramatically in the past five years in the central coast region, with chlorpyrifos use falling during the same time period. The proposed order requires two rounds of groundwater well sampling in 2017 of the primary irrigation well and all domestic use wells located on each ranch. Two third party cooperatives have submitted concept proposals to conduct groundwater well monitoring on behalf of growers.

## **LOS ANGELES REGION**

The Los Angeles Water Board staff reviewed and approved the Notice of Intent (NOI), the Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MRP), and the Quality Assurance Project Plan

(QAPP) submitted by the Ventura County Agriculture Irrigated Lands Group (VCAILG). The Regional Board staff sent a Notice of Applicability (NOA) to VCAILG on December 16, 2016. The Regional Board staff are currently working on: reviewing the Groundwater Quality Trend Monitoring Plan, submitted by VCAILG on October 14, 2016; preparing multiple enforcement cases for failure to enroll in the Conditional Waiver, Order No. R4-2016-0143, adopted on April 14, 2016; and preparing multiple notices to growers in the Los Angeles County to re-enroll in the Conditional Waiver. On January 30, 2017, at a meeting organized by the Nursery Growers Association Los Angeles County Irrigated Lands Group (NGA-ILG) for their members, the Regional Board staff presented the requirements of the newly adopted Conditional Waiver.

### **COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION**

On December 19, 2016, the Colorado River Water Board staff sent out 360 registered letters to agricultural property owners that are out of compliance with the Imperial Valley Agricultural Waiver. Most landowners have enrolled their property with the Imperial Irrigation District-Imperial County Farm Bureau Coalition; no landowners have requested individual coverage under the Imperial Valley Waiver. Agricultural property owners who have not filed for coverage were given 30 days to comply with the agricultural waiver requirements. Staff has received about 30 inquiries and provided information on how to comply with the Waiver. Staff will be following up with enforcement against the non-filers as matter of priority.

The Colorado River Basin Water Board held two informational workshops (one in English on February 8, 2017, and one in English with Spanish translation on February 9, 2017) as part of an essential outreach and education effort. These workshops took place before any additional enforcement against agricultural property owners who have not filed for coverage under the Coachella Valley Agricultural Waiver. The Coachella Valley Irrigated Lands Coalition and the State Water Board Office of Public Participation participated in the workshops.

Colorado River Basin Water Board staff are continuing with the development process of a General Order of Waste Discharge Requirements to replace the Conditional Waiver for the Palo Verde Valley. A draft of the proposed WDRs Order and supporting CEQA documents have been reviewed by the Board's management team. Staff are revising the draft based upon management comments.

### **SANTA ANA REGION**

The Santa Ana Water Board Lake Elsinore and Canyon Lake nutrient TMDLs (Order No. R8- 2004-0037) allocates a portion of the nitrogen and phosphorus loads to agriculture, and the Water Board's conditional waiver of WDRs for San Jacinto River agricultural operations Order No. R8-2016-0003 (CWAD) is the primary mechanism directing compliance of the San Jacinto River Watershed agricultural operations. The

TMDL is undergoing a technical evaluation to possibly establish revised or new allocations, and both agricultural coalition representatives and CWAD-ILRP staff are involved in this process as taskforce members. Several reports are being distributed to the TMDL taskforce that require comment and response. During January and February Board staff started to review this information and data to gain better understanding of the technical components of the CWAD and become engaged in the TMDL revision.

## **SAN DIEGO REGION**

The San Diego Water Board issued a [Notice of Applicability](#) to the San Diego Region Irrigated Lands Group to be certified as a Third-Party Group pursuant to the requirements of 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 in the San Diego Region* (Third-Party General Order). The Commercial Agriculture Regulatory Program staff continues its public outreach to encourage growers to enroll in either the Third-Party General Order, or Order No. R9-2016-0005: *General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Commercial Agricultural Operations for Dischargers Not Participating in a Third-Party Group in the San Diego Region* (Individual General Order), and to assist growers with questions regarding the Third-Party General Order and the Individual General Order.