

IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE

February 2020

This month's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program update provides a summary of significant activities of State Water Board from January 15, 2020 to February 15, 2020; and, the North Coast, San Francisco Bay, Central Coast, Los Angeles, Lahontan, Colorado River Basin, Santa Ana and San Diego Water Boards' from December 15, 2019 to February 15, 2020. Next month's report will present activities of the Central Valley Water Board's Program and cover the time-period from January 15, 2020 to March 15, 2020.

STATE WATER BOARD

State Water Board staff are expanding the GeoTracker database to centralize and streamline reporting for the program.

The State Water Board has a contract with University of California, Davis, to investigate potential threats to water quality from composting manure versus stockpiling the same material. UCD submitted the work plan to State Water Board staff in mid-February to detail the investigation. The research should commence shortly after staff acceptance of the work plan. The final report is expected in early 2022; the results may inform changes to the Composting General Order and orders for confined animal facilities.

NORTH COAST REGION

North Coast Regional Water Board staff are developing a permit to address discharges of waste from vineyards in the North Coast Region. The vineyard permit/waiver development process will include substantial outreach to stakeholders and consultation with local Tribal interests. The December 2019 North Coast Board meeting included an informational item that outlined the direction and potential content of the permit, as well as the development schedule. Staff are working closely with stakeholders to gather feedback and address concerns during the development process. Staff plan on hosting public workshops in 2020 and during the public review period which is anticipated to occur in the fall/winter of 2021.

Staff are also nearing completion of the administrative draft of the Smith River Plain Water Quality Management Plan (SRPWQMP), which addresses the water quality impacts associated with lily bulb cultivation. Once the draft is complete, it will undergo review by the agency and tribal development team and the lily bulb growers. After further revisions, the plan will be released publicly to solicit further input before being considered for approval by Regional Board's Executive Officer. Staff presented an overview of the SRPWQMP and development process at the December 2019 Regional

Water Board meeting and the stakeholders present were supportive of the approach and implementation program. In January, staff sampled the tributaries of the Smith River Plain. The samples will be analyzed for pesticides and the parameters necessary to run the Biotic Ligand Model, which is being used to develop site-specific adaptive management thresholds for dissolved copper in the water column. Two more winter season sampling events are scheduled for this year. Sample results will be presented in a report and used to adaptively manage the SRPWQMP and focus implementation.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board staff held public outreach meetings in the second half of December to explain the deadlines that are coming up in 2020 for the Vineyard Permit. In particular, the first round of Enrollment Fee Invoicing, the Farm Plan Verification Deadline, and certain Monitoring Requirements.

Throughout January and February, staff worked closely with the Napa and Sonoma Farm Bureaus to establish a group that will cover the fee collection and monitoring group options.

Approximately 40% of enrollees and 40% of the enrolled acreage joined a Fee Collection Group. These estimates are subject to some error because staff are still working to identify and eliminate duplicate enrollments. Because of slower than expected sign-ups for Group Fee participation, staff requested and were granted additional time from the State Board Fee Unit. Those who have not joined and paid to participate in the Farm Bureau fee collection and monitoring group will be referred to the State Board for individual invoices by March 20, 2020. Staff plan to send additional outreach to landowners who own properties that have not paid the Farm Bureau group to inform them of the benefits of participating in the Group for Fee Collection sometime prior to the individual fee dispersal.

The first Farm Plan Verification deadline and a Monitoring and Reporting Plan submittal deadline are due in July.

CENTRAL COAST REGION

Central Coast Regional Water Board staff plan to release the Ag Order 4.0 draft for public comment soon.

LOS ANGELES REGION

Los Angeles Regional Water Board staff reviewed and approved one education credit request in January offered by the Nursery Growers Association-Los Angeles County Irrigated Lands Group (NGA-LAILG).

On January 30, 2020, the Los Angeles Water Board staff participated in the NGA-LAILG Water Waiver Year 4 Seminar. About 50 grower-members of the NGA-LAILG participated in this workshop. On February 11, 2020, the Los Angeles Water Board staff met with NGA-LAILG representatives to discuss the workshop and additional topics to be presented to growers at future workshops, especially concerning water quality monitoring results, management practices implementation to address the exceedances of water quality benchmarks, grower survey completion, and enrollment increase.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION

Colorado River Basin Regional Water Board staff are developing a General Order of Waste Discharge Requirements to replace the Conditional Waiver for Agricultural Dischargers in the Coachella Valley, which will expire on June 26, 2020. Staff plan to hold a public workshop in Palm Desert, CA on April 9, 2020, and take the order to the Regional Water Board for action on May 14, 2020.

There are no significant program updates in the **Lahontan, Santa Ana, and San Diego Regions** from December 15, 2019 to February 15, 2020.