



California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Coast Region



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Governor

Si necesita ayuda en español llame al (805) 549-3881.

March 1, 2011

如果協助必要用中文，請叫 (805) 542-4648.

PUBLIC NOTICE

DRAFT ORDER, MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM, STAFF REPORT AND SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE REGULATION OF WASTE DISCHARGES FROM IRRIGATED LANDS

Date: March 17, 2011

Time: 8:15 AM

Address: 275 Main Street, 4th Floor, Watsonville, CA 95076. Individuals requiring special accommodations are requested to contact Cyndee Jones at (805) 549-3372 at least 5 working days prior to the meeting. TTY users may contact the California Relay Service at 1-800-735-2929 or voice line at 1-800-735-2922.

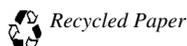
PURPOSE OF THE MEETING- DRAFT ORDER, MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM, CEQA

Central Coast Water Board (Water Board) will hold a public hearing to consider adoption of a revised conditional waiver of waste discharge requirements regulating discharges from irrigated lands (Draft Order) and a monitoring and reporting program (MRP) and certification of a subsequent environmental impact report (SEIR). Water Board staff has proposed to renew the current "Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Irrigated Lands" with revisions to control the discharges of wastes, including nitrate, pesticides, and sediment, to surface or ground water and protect beneficial uses of these waters.

The Draft Order and MRP requires owners and operators of irrigated agricultural lands and facilities to control the discharges of waste so they do not violate water quality standards by implementing management practices or operational changes, reporting on progress and effectiveness of practices or operational changes, and monitoring to verify compliance of individual operations with the terms of the Draft Order.

Water quality conditions in agricultural areas of the region are currently degraded or polluted by waste discharges from irrigated agricultural operations and activities that impact aquatic habitat on or near irrigated agricultural operations, including the use of fertilizers and pesticides that run off agricultural fields into surface waters from irrigation water or stormwater or leach into groundwater. Hundreds of drinking water wells serving thousands of people throughout the Central Coast Region have nitrate levels exceeding the drinking water standard. Many streams are listed as impaired in the Central Coast Region for nutrients and pesticides, toxicity (from pesticides), or sediment, on the Clean Water Act section 303(d) List of Impaired Waterbodies. In-stream aquatic habitat has been impaired by riparian vegetation removal that eliminates

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filtering of chemicals as they runoff from fields, and/or causes increases in temperatures to levels harmful for organisms and fish. The Final SEIR concludes that the environmental effects associated with the Draft Order may be significant with respect to biological resources due to reduced flows in some water bodies. However, given the uncertainty associated with evaluating the available information, it is possible that the effects may turn out to be less than significant. Therefore, the Central Coast Water Board finds it appropriate to make findings and a statement of overriding considerations with respect to biological resources.

Currently, irrigated agricultural dischargers (owners and operators) are required to enroll in an existing Order to control waste discharges. The Water Board is considering a revised order to better address the current degraded conditions.

Interested persons will have an opportunity to make oral comments at the hearing. Persons commenting are expected to summarize their written comments. In order to give everyone an opportunity to be heard, time limits on oral comments may be imposed. The Water Board Chair will allocate time to individual speakers according to the number of speakers present. For scheduling purposes, requests for extended speaking times should be submitted to staff as soon as possible after the agenda is mailed, but no later **March 9, 2011**. The Water Board Chair will decide whether to grant such requests, and staff will let the speakers know if the Water Board Chair granted the request. The Water Board Chair may change the order of the agenda items at any time.

The 2011 Draft Agricultural Order, MRP, Final SEIR, and staff report are posted at the website below. Documents are also available by request at the office of the Central Coast Water Board.

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/ag_waivers/ag_order.shtml

TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGRICULTURAL ORDER

To receive Agricultural Order Renewal information, please subscribe to the Agricultural Discharges electronic mailing list at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg3_subscribe.shtml

Interested persons may also request to have Agricultural Order information hardcopies via U. S. mail by contacting Barbara Brooks at bbrooks@waterboards.gov.ca. Persons who subscribe to the electronic mailing list or who request a hard copy of information will be included in the Interested Persons List and will receive future notices of Water Board activities; those that do not make such a request will not be included on the list.

Questions regarding the 2011 Draft Agricultural Order, MRP, SEIR, and staff report should be sent to agorder@waterboards.ca.gov or directed to Angela Schroeter, Agricultural Regulatory Program Manager, at (805) 542-4644 or Lisa McCann, Watershed Protection Section Manager, at (805) 549-3132.

cc: Enrolled Dischargers and Interested Parties List Agricultural Order
File: Agricultural Order

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