

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Project Title: Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for Agricultural Discharges Originating within the Palo Verde Valley and the Palo Verde Mesa, Riverside and Imperial Counties, California

State Clearinghouse Number:

Lead Agency Name and Address: California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region, 73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100, Palm Desert, CA 92260

Contact Person and Phone Number: Jose Angel, Assistant Executive Officer, Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board, (760) 776-8932

Project Location: Colorado River Basin Region (southeastern California), Riverside and Imperial Counties

Project Description: The proposed project is a Conditional Waiver of WDRs for agricultural wastewater discharges originating within the Palo Verde Valley and Palo Verde Mesa. This Conditional Waiver applies to agricultural wastewater discharges from irrigated lands, specifically: 1) storm water runoff from irrigated lands, and 2) irrigation return water, which includes surface discharges (also known as "tailwater"), and subsurface discharges (known as "tilewater" in tilled areas, or "seepage" in areas not tilled). It also applies to discharges of wastes from drain operation and maintenance (O&M) activities in the area. Most agricultural wastewater discharges in the Palo Verde Valley and Palo Verde Mesa are collected into open drains, tributary to the Palo Verde Outfall Drain, which discharges into an old channel of the Colorado River before joining the active channel upstream of the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge. The purpose of the Conditional Waiver is to protect the beneficial uses of water in Palo Verde Valley Drains, and the Palo Verde Valley Lagoon and Outfall Drain by ensuring that farmers and drainage maintenance entities implement management practices (MPs) to reduce pollutant concentrations in agricultural wastewater and in discharges from drain O&M activities.

Finding: The Regional Water Board has prepared an Initial Study of the project described above and has determined that the proposed issuance of the Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements will not have a significant effect on the environment. A copy of the Initial Study that supports this finding is attached.

Mitigation Measures: Based on the conclusions provided in the attached Initial Study, the project will not have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required

Signature

Date