



Media Release

California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region

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Central Valley Water Board to Consider Costs of Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) is developing new requirements to protect ground and surface water from irrigated agricultural discharges. Since an important goal of the Central Valley Water Board's irrigated lands regulatory program is to sustain the economic viability of agriculture, the Central Valley Water Board is considering the potential costs of the new effort at its October 13 meeting.

The anticipated regulations will require growers, who have not already implemented practices that protect water quality, to improve their practices. In addition to the costs of implementing new practices, other costs will be incurred to monitor water quality and report on activities to the Central Valley Water Board. The Central Valley Water Board will give growers an opportunity to meet these requirements in a cost-effective way by working as part of agricultural coalitions.

Direct regulation of individual farmers, which is more costly, will occur in those cases in which coalition efforts fail. The Central Valley Water Board will be hearing from staff on the potential range of costs associated with these different regulatory approaches.

The Central Valley Water Board has actively assisted growers and their coalitions in offsetting costs and in finding ways to reduce the regulatory burden. The Central Valley Water Board has dispersed \$8 million in Proposition 84 monies, through grants, to support implementation of farm management practices. The Central Valley Water Board has also partnered with academia and industry to pursue grant funding from the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

"We recognize that irrigated agriculture is faced with recent State fee increases, and it is important for the Central Valley Water Board to have a cost-effective regulatory program. Protecting water quality and sustaining our agricultural economy are compatible goals," said Pamela Creedon, Executive Officer of the Central Valley Water Board. "We need clean water to drink, for our industries, for our fisheries, and for agriculture. And we certainly need a vibrant agricultural sector to help feed the citizens of our State, country, and the world."

Information on the upcoming meeting can be found at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/tentative_orders/1110/index.shtml (Agenda item 17).