



Media Release

100,000 Central Valley residents impacted by contaminated drinking water will soon see interim solutions

Short-term and permanent fixes for drinking water contaminated with nitrates

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SACRAMENTO – An estimated 100,000 Central Valley residents impacted by nitrate groundwater contamination will soon be supplied with safe drinking water on a temporary basis while more permanent solutions are developed.

These solutions in the form of bottled water deliveries or bottle-filling kiosks are outlined in [Early Action Plans](#) submitted to the Central Valley Regional Water Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) for six geographic zones deemed to have the most serious groundwater contamination issues.

The plans are part of the board's strategy for addressing [nitrate pollution](#) in numerous communities that rely on groundwater as their primary source of drinking water. Water discharge permit holders that chose to join one of the designated Management Zones were required to produce plans as part of the board's Nitrate Control Program, which was developed in 2018 in response to widespread increases of nitrates in groundwater.

"In these plans, many permittees in the valley have committed to both fixing their nitrate problems and to providing clean drinking water to affected communities while their efforts are underway," said Patrick Pulupa, executive officer of the Central Valley Water Board. "These plans represent a significant milestone toward ensuring that residents of the valley have access to safe, clean and affordable drinking water."

Nitrate in drinking water can lead to serious health outcomes, especially for infants and pregnant women. It is considered a risk to human health when it is above 10 parts per million (ppm) of nitrate nitrogen, which is the primary maximum contaminant level (MCL), also known as the nitrate drinking water standard.

The Central Valley Water Board identified areas where nitrates in groundwater are most prevalent and places them in two categories – Priority 1 and Priority 2 groundwater basins. The six early action plans submitted Monday are for the Priority 1 subbasins: Kaweah, Turlock, Chowchilla, Tule, Modesto and Kings. The two largest zones –



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Turlock and Kings – comprise about 85,000 impacted residents of the 103,077 total for all six basins.

These plans describe how each Management Zone will provide affected residents interim drinking water solutions, such as providing regular deliveries of bottled water or access to water filling stations or kiosks. The next step is for the Central Valley Water Board to accept public comments and address any input prior to moving forward.

Public comment can be submitted in writing to cvsalts@waterboards.ca.gov or mailed to 11020 Sun Center Drive #200, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. The deadline for public comments on the Early Action Plans is April 14. Further public engagement will be required as long-term solutions are sought and as permittees have their permits updated to include new nitrate reduction targets.

The Central Valley Water Board is a state agency responsible for protecting water quality and ensuring beneficial uses such as aquatic habitat and human health for 11,350 miles of streams, 579,110 acres of lakes, and the largest contiguous groundwater basin in California. It is the largest of nine regional boards, encompassing 60,000 square miles, or about 40 percent of the state. Thirty-eight of 58 counties are either completely or partially within the regional board's boundaries, formed by the crests of the Sierra Nevada on the east, the Coast Ranges and Klamath Mountains on the west, the Oregon border on the north, and the Tehachapi Mountains on the south.

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