

## RECOMMENDED STEPS FOR ESTABLISHING A COOPERATIVE MONITORING PROGRAM

The following is intended to provide further information and guidance for establishing a cooperative monitoring program in the Central Coast Region.

1. Establish an Agricultural Monitoring Committee

The committee will oversee the funding and implementation of the cooperative program as required by the Waiver Order and Monitoring and Reporting Program, including establishing a cost allocation formula and collecting dues. The committee can seek funding to support the monitoring program, through sources like the SWRCB Agricultural Water Quality Grants Program, and should identify an existing non-profit entity or establish a new one to aid in obtaining these funds. The committee should include a broad representation of the agricultural industry in the Central Coast Region.

2. Apply for Agricultural Water Quality Grants

The grant application deadline will be October or November 2004. Funds are available for both baseline monitoring and implementation with a monitoring component. Baseline monitoring grants are available for a maximum amount of \$500,000, require a 50% match and must result in development of a plan of implementation. Implementation grants can be for amounts up to \$1,000,000 and only require a 20% match. Since many growers in the Central Coast already have or are developing farm water quality plans, it will likely be more advantageous to apply for implementation grants, identifying management practice implementation as the implementation component and utilizing grant funds for monitoring. Staff has had discussions with the SWRCB Agricultural Water Quality Workgroup and has been told that such projects would be eligible for funding. Staff recommends applying for two implementation grants, a northern and a southern grant, corresponding to the areas covered by the two agricultural coalitions. Grant applicants must be non-profits, local public agencies (such as RCDs) or educational institutions. Recipients may hire other organizations and entities to perform work such as sampling and data management. The purpose of the grants should be to establish a long-term, self-supporting monitoring program in conjunction with on-going management practice implementation throughout the region. We recommend that the two coalitions collaborate to establish one coordinated monitoring effort operated by a single entity; this will reduce overall effort and program costs by consolidating certain program management activities and overhead costs. Two grants would allow the Cooperative Monitoring Program to collect at least two full years of data prior to having to be fully self-supporting. In addition, two years of data will allow for evaluation of the program.

3. Establish a Cost Allocation Committee

A subcommittee of the Agricultural Monitoring Committee should be designated to develop a cost allocation structure for the cooperative monitoring program.

4. Develop Cost Allocation Formula

The cost allocation formula used to assess dues for the cooperative monitoring program should be based on threat to water quality, using criteria similar to what is described in Attachment 3. The Committee may modify the criteria or develop additional criteria to better distribute costs.

5. Initial monitoring (Year 1 – 2005)

a. Designate an organization to hold funds for the Cooperative Monitoring Program

b. Apply for settlement funds (PG&E and Guadalupe) to initiate monitoring in the lower Salinas and Santa Maria watersheds and identify an entity to conduct monitoring

c. Develop a Regional Board-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan and Sampling Plan and initiate monitoring in the lower Salinas and Santa Maria watersheds

6. Regionwide monitoring (Year 2 – 2006)

a. Issue notices of dues

b. Collect dues

c. Notify Regional Board of final list of participants

d. Begin regionwide monitoring