
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

April 7, 2017

Via Electronic Mail

Mr. Parry Klassen
Central Coast Groundwater Coalition
P.O. Box 828
Salinas, California 93902
klassenparry@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Klassen:

IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM: APPROVAL OF CENTRAL COAST GROUNDWATER COALITION COOPERATIVE GROUNDWATER MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

The Central Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) approved Agricultural Order R3-2017-0002 and associated Monitoring and Reporting Programs (MRPs) on March 8, 2017. The new Agricultural Order is the third Agricultural Order adopted in the central coast region, so is referred to as Ag Order 3.0. Ag Order 3.0 has a term of three years and must be replaced by March 7, 2020. Ag Order 3.0 and the associated MRPs require groundwater monitoring and reporting. Growers may choose to comply with groundwater monitoring and reporting individually, or through a cooperative monitoring and reporting program that is approved by the Executive Officer. A copy of Ag Order 3.0 and associated MRPs, including groundwater monitoring and reporting requirements are available at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/ag_waivers/index.shtml

The Central Coast Groundwater Coalition (CCGC) submitted *CCGC Work Plan – Ag Order 3.0*, dated April 3, 2017 (Work Plan) on behalf of CCGC members in the Central Coast Region to comply with groundwater monitoring and reporting using a cooperative monitoring and reporting program. Staff has reviewed the Work Plan per the recently adopted Ag Order 3.0 and associated MRPs, and I am hereby approving the Work Plan as submitted and outlined below.

CCGC Cooperative Groundwater Monitoring and Reporting Program

CCGC includes approximately 550 members with 206,000 acres enrolled in Ag Order 3.0. The Work Plan proposes to implement a region-wide cooperative groundwater monitoring plan to monitor nitrate concentration in groundwater, properly notify drinking water well users of nitrate exceedances of the safe drinking water standard, and assist CCGC members to comply with Ag Order 3.0.

Per the Work Plan, CCGC will monitor all domestic wells and primary irrigation wells twice during Ag Order 3.0. Sampling will occur once during the spring and once during the fall, and the first sample must be collected in 2017. All samples will be analyzed for nitrate; samples will also be analyzed for general minerals (if well was not analyzed for general minerals previously

DR. JEAN-PIERRE WOLFF, CHAIR | JOHN M. ROBERTSON, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

to comply with Ag Order 2.0). Laboratory analyses must be conducted by a State-certified laboratory according to U.S. EPA-approved methods and analytical results must be submitted within 60 days of sample collection using the Water Board's GeoTracker electronic deliverable format (EDF). Pursuant to Part 2B of the MRP, analytical results must be uploaded to the individual ranch GeoTracker Global ID (AGL#) where the groundwater well is located.

Drinking Water Notification Requirements

Ag Order 3.0 and the associated MRPs prioritize safe drinking water and the protection of public health, and require drinking water notification in the case of a drinking water exceedance. Part 2(6) of the MRP states that if a Discharger or third party conducting cooperative groundwater monitoring determines that water in any well that is used or may be used for drinking water exceeds the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL, 10 mg/L of nitrate as Nitrogen), the Discharger or third party must provide notice to the Central Coast Water Board within 24 hours of learning of the exceedance. For domestic wells on a Discharger's farm /ranch that exceed the MCL, the Discharger or third party must provide written notification to the users within 10 days of learning of the exceedance and provide confirmation of the notification to the Central Coast Water Board.

The drinking water notification must include the statement that the water poses a human health risk due to elevated nitrate concentration, and include a warning against the use of the water for drinking or cooking. In addition, Dischargers must also provide prompt written notification to any new well users (e.g. tenants and employees with access to the affected well), whenever there is a change in occupancy. In addition, all records required by Ag Order 3.0 and the associated MRPs are available to the public, including but not limited to groundwater data and any drinking water notification and confirmation letters.

Per the Work Plan, CCGC will review all monitoring results and inform CCGC members of any exceedances of the nitrate MCL within 2 business days. CCGC will notify members of the exceedances and of their responsibilities that result from the elevated concentration of nitrate in their domestic supply wells. CCGC members must provide written notification to the users within 10 days of learning of the exceedance and provide written confirmation of the notification to the CCGC. CCGC will provide a quarterly exceedance report associated with copies of member notifications and follow up information regarding user notification and replacement water actions.

Implementation begins upon approval of the Work Plan and groundwater monitoring and reporting activities must be completed by December 31, 2019 and CCGC must complete submittal of all deliverables by January 15, 2020. If CCGC fails to implement any part of the Work Plan as approved, growers become individually responsible for implementing the MRP and may be subject to enforcement.

Legal Requirements

These groundwater monitoring reports are required pursuant to California Water Code Section 13267, which allows the Central Coast Water Board to require submission of technical reports from persons whose activities may have an impact on water quality, and to determine compliance with Agricultural Order R3-2017-0002. Failure to submit the requested reports indicated above may result in the Central Coast Water Board imposing an administrative civil liability in the amount up to \$1,000 for each day of the violation pursuant to California Water

Code Section 13268(b)(1) if responsible parties fail to respond, respond late, or submit an inadequate response.

The Central Coast Water Board recognizes that cooperative third-party approaches may provide a number of short and long-term benefits that can bring participants together to maximize local efforts toward understanding and improving water quality. We appreciate your efforts to work together to develop an effective cooperative monitoring program and look forward to working with you in implementing this Work Plan.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact **Corey Walsh (805) 542-4781** or at **corey.walsh@waterboards.ca.gov** or Angela Schroeter at (805) 542-4644 or at **angela.schroeter@waterboards.ca.gov**.

Sincerely,

John M. Robertson

Digitally signed by John M.

Robertson

Date: 2017.04.07 18:10:10 -07'00'

John M. Robertson
Executive Officer

cc:

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