

## **IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE**

### **March 2019**

This month's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) update provides a summary of significant activities of State Water Board from February 15, 2019 to March 15, 2019 and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board from January 15, 2019 to March 15, 2019. Next month's report will present activities of the North Coast, San Francisco Bay, Central Coast, Los Angeles, Colorado River Basin, Santa Ana, and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board's Programs and cover the period between from February 15, 2019 to April 15, 2019.

### **STATE WATER BOARD**

State Water Board staff met with Certified Crop Advisors (CCA) Board of Directors on February 19, 2019 to discuss the UC-Davis Grower Survey on the ILRP impact to growers in the Central Valley. The Board discussed Board member nomination & election. The Board heard update reports on Irrigated Nitrogen Management Plan Certification Insurance issues, results of the last CCA exam, and discussed the various committee reports.

On February 20, 2019, staff attended the California Bioresources Alliance (CBA) Planning Committee Meeting. Topics focused on new technologies, current legislation that focus on composting and digestion, and the lack of support to develop other technologies (such as pyrolysis, gasification, development of fuels). Reconsideration of conversion technologies, databases, symbiosis materials management, and the ongoing concern with contaminants were also discussed.

Additionally, on February 20, 2019, staff participated in the Salt River Watershed National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) sampling planning. It was agreed that NWQI sampling will occur this summer in order to document long-term trends and have enough data to consider various water years. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will work with North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board to transmit the existing data. The EPA's lab in the San Diego Region will work on Benthic Macroinvertebrate data analysis. EPA will be responsible for identifying possible sampling dates in June to August of 2019, which is the index period for bug collection, and data will be shared with the group. The Resource Conservation District offered to facilitate landowner access during summer sampling and the Natural Resources Conservation Service offered to assist with field work.

Staff presented potential fee structures at the ILRP Fees public stakeholder meeting on February 25, 2019. Concerns with alternatives were discussed; stakeholders will be submitting formal comments to staff by March 29, 2019.

On March 1, 2019, staff participated in a Healthy Soils Program meeting where

the Demonstration Projects Review was discussed. Project applications were due on March 8, 2019; awards will be announced May-June of 2019.

Staff met with the University of California's Agriculture and Natural Resources' (UC ANR) Water Program Team in Davis on March 5, 2019. The Water Program Team is a group of scientists that conduct applied and basic research on water and is comprised of scientists working on a multitude of studies including managed aquifer recharge projects in agricultural fields, plant physiology, and estimating crop evapotranspiration and yields.

On March 6, 2019, staff attended the California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment (CRAE). Discussion focused on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and the new in-stream flow requirements.

Staff presented at the March 7, 2019 Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board meeting to discuss the history of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program and the precedential orders as described in the Eastern San Joaquin General Order, Order WQ 2018-0002. The Board workshop focused on the draft General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dischargers of Waste from Irrigated Agricultural Lands and Drain Operations and Maintenance Activities Originating within the proposed Palo Verde Valley and Palo Verde Mesa Order.

On March 13, 2019, staff participated in the Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS) monthly conference call to discuss the precedential requirements of the Eastern San Joaquin Order and implementation strategy.

## **CENTRAL VALLEY REGION**

Central Valley Water Board staff will hold a quarterly stakeholder meeting on April 10, 2019, to provide an open forum for communication between staff, agricultural coalitions, environmental justice groups, and other interested parties in the Central Valley Region. The April meeting will be held at the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, with a focused discussion on the use of the Soil & Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) model by the Southern San Joaquin Management Practices Evaluation Program Group.

On February 7, 2019, the Central Valley Water Board approved revisions to seven General Orders for Growers within the Central Valley that are Members of a Third-Party Group, primarily to address elements of the Eastern San Joaquin Petition Order. General Orders were revised for the following areas and commodity: Sacramento River Watershed, Sacramento Valley Rice Growers, San Joaquin County and Delta, Western San Joaquin River Watershed, Grasslands Drainage Area, Western Tulare Lake Basin, and Tulare Lake Basin. In addition to stakeholders and interested parties, State Water Board staff and State Water Board Member Tam Doduc were present.

Central Valley Water Board staff continues to concentrate on compliance, outreach, and enforcement efforts in agricultural parcel inspections, Water Code section 13260 Directives, Notices of Violation for failure to respond to a Water Code section 13260 Directive and failure to comply with Orders, and Administrative Civil Liability Complaints. From January to February 2019, Central Valley Water Board staff conducted 658 parcel inspections to assess the need for ILRP enrollment and one on-farm inspection to evaluate General Order compliance; and issued 31 directives and 77 Notices of Violation. During those two months, 27 additional growers enrolled in the program, increasing the enrolled acreage by approximately 1,300 acres.

Additional information can be found on the [Regional Board website](#).