



October 13, 2015



The Honorable Felicia Marcus, Chair  
and Members of the State Water Resources Control Board  
c/o Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 24th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Comment Letter:** Storm Water Resource Plan and Proposition 1 Funding Guidelines

Dear Chair Marcus and Members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this item. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) requests the inclusion of on-farm recharge as a potential project type in the Proposition 1 Storm Water Resource Funding Guidelines.

During dormant periods, agricultural lands have the potential to serve as percolation basins for groundwater recharge. Scientists at University of California Cooperative Extension have identified 3.6 million acres of farmland suitable for groundwater recharge.<sup>1</sup> During winter and spring storm events, excess river water could be distributed onto dormant agricultural fields, where the surplus would percolate and recharge groundwater aquifers. This practice not only benefits downstream communities by reducing flood risk, but also increases regional water self-reliance.

Many of California's aquifers are in chronic overdraft; more water is being pumped from the ground than is being replenished. On-farm recharge can play a critical role in moving our groundwater basins into balance. Additionally, there is the potential for on-farm recharge to improve groundwater quality and increase habitat for wildlife.

On-farm flood flow capture and recharge is already being practiced in some areas of the state<sup>2</sup>. However, more research and state investment is needed to expand adoption. In addition to full-scale projects, it is possible that pilot or demonstration projects may be needed to gather data for board scale adoption. Please also provide more definition regarding ability to fund such projects.

CDFA believes that on-farm recharge is an ideal multi-benefit storm water management project type that could be included in Proposition 1 Storm Water Grant Program Funding.

Yours truly,

Karen Ross  
Secretary

cc: Thomas Howard, Executive Director  
Jonathan Bishop, Chief Deputy Director  
Joe Karkoski, Bond Section Manager

<sup>1</sup> <http://californiaagriculture.ucanr.edu/landingpage.cfm?article=ca.v069n02p75&fulltext=yes>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.aginnovations.org/afa\\_uploads/Kings\\_Basin\\_Report.pdf](http://www.aginnovations.org/afa_uploads/Kings_Basin_Report.pdf)

