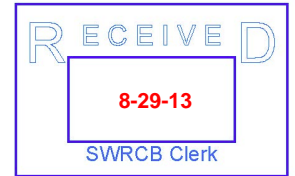


Felicia Marcus, Chair and Members
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100
c/o Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board



Dear State Water Board Members:

I strongly support the Board's work to develop an Agricultural Order that retains key provisions to protect public health and the environment along the Central Coast. Polluted runoff from agriculture and farming operations has contaminated too many Central Coast groundwater basins and waterways with nitrates, phosphates, and toxic pesticides. These pollutants are highly toxic, and endanger California's communities and watersheds.

The Order provides a solid foundation for moving forward. I urge the Board to retain key provisions within the Order to protect the public's interest and right to water quality data and clean water. Requiring rigorous monitoring and reporting of these pollutants is essential to evaluating our progress towards reducing pollutant loading in the immediate future. In particular, I urge the Board to retain the following key provisions to the Order:

- Individual monitoring and reporting at a scale that shows the efficacy of the Order for the biggest and highest risk farms;
- Individual and cooperative groundwater monitoring and reporting that includes testing of all wells that provide drinking water, dry and wet season testing, and annual testing of high risk farms;
- Aggressive actions to reduce the nitrogen fertilizer loading that pollutes public water systems, costing urban rate payers millions of dollars to clean up, and endangers the health of thousands of rural families;
- Increased focus on toxicity and less focus on individual chemicals to avoid simply switching from one pesticide to another without solving the critical toxicity problem.

I urge the State Water Board to work with staff to retain these key provisions during the final decision-making process. Thank you for your work to ensure that California waters are safe for swimming, drinking, and fishing for everyone.

Sincerely,

Penelope Owens
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Santa Barbara, CA 93109