

State Water Resources Control Board

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REGIONAL WATER BOARD ADOPTS RUNOFF WAIVER

SACRAMENTO—The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board today adopted a conditional waiver from specific regulation for agricultural drainage after two days of testimony. The board adopted a revised waiver that takes into account many of the recommendations from agriculture and environmental groups. The Regional Water Board adopted the revised program for a six-month trial basis.

The waiver incorporates the concept of watershed coalitions, where groups of growers ban together to monitor and report on discharges that reach Central Valley waterways. The order requires identification and location of individual growers.

The Regional Water Board plans to revisit this issue in January 2004. At that time, with additional input from its staff, the board will either adjust or terminate the waiver plan. “This a huge undertaking that affects millions of Californians,” said Robert Schneider, chairman of the Regional Water Board. “We are breaking new ground in the area of watershed management, and we hope that Regional Water Board staff and stakeholders can continue to move forward to improve our water quality.”

Board members expressed concern with program funding. Fees for program implementation were waived for the present but charging a fee to cover the costs incurred will be discussed next January.

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board is committed to preserving and enhancing the quality of valley and Delta Waters.

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The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our Web-site at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov>