



Enforcement News

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

Landowners Face Fines for Failure to get Waste Discharge Permits

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Five Central Valley landowners face fines from the Central Valley Water Board for allegedly failing to get the required permits for the discharge of water from their irrigated cropland. The proposed fines range from \$2,240 to \$8,600 for the landowners who own cropland varying in size from 24 acres to 668 acres. The land in question is in the Eastern San Joaquin River watershed (Merced, Madera, and Stanislaus counties).

The State Water Code requires an owner or operator of a facility that discharges waste to land to get a water quality permit. Pesticides and fertilizers used on cropland can run off the land to streams or percolate into the groundwater. Waste Discharge Requirement permits (WDRS) issued by the Central Valley Water Board include specifications to ensure such waste discharges do not harm the beneficial uses of the Central Valley's important groundwater aquifers and rivers.

In December 2012, the Central Valley Water Board issued WDRs that allowed farmers in the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed to join a coalition of growers – the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition. The coalition conducts monitoring and provides reports to the Central Valley Water Board on behalf of the growers. Growers who do not join the coalition will incur the much higher costs associated with conducting their own individual monitoring and reporting to the Water Board. Landowners who do not have the required permit are subject to fines and may lose their opportunity to be regulated under the coalition-based permit.

“Our Board provided growers with a very cost-effective option for getting the regulatory coverage required by law by joining the coalition,” said Andrew Altevogt, assistant executive officer of the Central Valley Water Board. “The vast majority of growers have complied by signing up to get the required regulatory coverage. For those who are trying to avoid these requirements, we have an aggressive program to identify their lands and, if necessary, issue fines to bring them into compliance.”

Landowners of irrigated cropland can find out how to join a coalition and get the required regulatory coverage by going to:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/irrigated_lands/app_approval/index.shtml or contacting the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program phone line at (916) 464-4611.

More information about the proposed fines can be found at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/irrigated_lands/compliance_outreach_activities/index.shtml .