

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY
MARCH 15, 2011**

ITEM 7

SUBJECT

INFORMATIONAL ITEM: UPDATE ON IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM, INCLUDING GROWER PARTICIPATION AND THE GLENN/BUTTE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER PILOT PROGRAM

DISCUSSION

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and certain Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards) initiated the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) in 2003. Beginning January 1, 2000, Water Code Section 13269 required Regional Water Boards to either renew their existing waivers of waste discharge requirements or replace them with waste discharge requirements by 2003. Before 2003, most Regional Water Boards had issued waivers for discharges from irrigated agriculture although these waivers had few substantive conditions.

The Regional Water Boards with the most developed ILRPs are the Central Coast, Los Angeles, and Central Valley Water Boards. These Regional Water Boards require water quality monitoring of water bodies that receive agricultural drainage and this monitoring has found water quality impairments caused by agricultural discharges. To control water quality impairments, management plans are being developed and implemented. These management plans include the use of best management practices (BMP) and follow-up monitoring to determine BMP performance. Grower enrollment in the ILRP has been increasing. About eighty percent of the estimated irrigated acreage in the Central Coast, Central Valley, and Los Angeles Water Board regions is now enrolled in the ILRP.

Instead of a conditional waiver, the Colorado River Basin Water Board has adopted a conditional prohibition for growers in the Imperial Valley. This prohibition does not require enrollment or payment of fees to the State Water Board. The other Regional Water Boards do not yet have full-fledged programs. The [Staff Report](#) for this item provides a status report on grower participation in the ILRP.

In 2007, the State Water Board and Central Valley Water Board signed a memorandum of understanding with the Agricultural Commissioners in Glenn and Butte Counties. Under this MOU as a pilot program, the Agricultural Commissioners assist the Central Valley Water Board in implementing the ILRP. Through contracts, the state provides funds for this service. During this informational item, the Agricultural Commissioner from Butte County will provide a summary of the work performed by the Agricultural Commissioners.

POLICY ISSUE

N/A – Informational Item

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A – Informational Item

REGIONAL WATER BOARD IMPACT

N/A - Informational Item

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

N/A - Informational Item