

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - THE RESOURCES AGENCY

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCESSAN JOAQUIN DISTRICT
3374 EAST SHIELDS AVENUE
FRESNO, CA 93726-6913

January 20, 2006

Salinity-1/31/06
WorkshopMs. Selica Potter
Acting Clerk
State Water Board
Post Office Box 100
Sacramento, California 95812-0100

Subject: Comment Letter January 31, 2006, Board Workshop on Salinity

Dear Ms. Potter,

The question being asked at this workshop is whether there is a need for further action by the Regional Water Quality Control Board or the State Water Resources Control Board on the issue of salinity impairment of surface and groundwater in the Central Valley.

There is a long list of actions being taken by individual entities as well as groups to resolve salinity issues in the Central Valley. The most recent of these efforts was the formation of the San Joaquin Water Quality Management Group. This group evaluated problems with existing and imported salts. The group arrived at a set of recommendations that if collectively implemented will improve water quality on the lower San Joaquin River (SJR). These actions have a broad base of support and the Department of Water Resources has agreed to take the process to the next level by organizing agencies with specific responsibilities to implement these actions. The focus is on actions that were agreed upon by the group and that can be implemented.

We share the Board's goal of improving water quality. We believe that a collaborative approach is most likely to succeed in reaching that goal. The measure of our success and yours will be how much surface and groundwater quality is improved rather than how many enforcement actions have been taken. The Board can help guide this process and foster collaboration that will lead to significant progress.

The Department has an ongoing Agricultural Drainage Management Program that has implemented on the ground actions for a number of years with a high degree of success. These actions include on-farm drainage management, real-time water quality management and improvements to wetlands discharges. We have provided \$70 million in grants with the result that in the last ten years salt loads in the lower SJR have been reduced by nearly 50%, from 210,000 tons to 117,000 tons.



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The Department's goals identified in the California Water Plan are to improve water use efficiency, protect water quality and support environmental stewardship. In addition, the Department is promoting Integrated Regional Water Management to inspire local collaboration as well as broad planning. The Governor's budget includes funds that will make progress in these areas successful.

We look forward to continuing our successful collaboration with others to voluntarily achieve our mutual goals of improved water quality in the Central Valley. I will be making a statement to this affect at the January 31, 2006, Board Workshop on Salinity.

Sincerely,



Paula J. Landis, Chief
San Joaquin District

