

ITEM: 4

SUBJECT: Workshop on the Draft WDRs in the Western San Joaquin River Watershed

BOARD ACTION: *No board action. Workshop Item.*

BACKGROUND: On 14 June 2013, staff circulated draft waste discharge requirements for discharges from irrigated lands for growers that are members of a third-party group within the Western San Joaquin River Watershed (draft order). Interested person comments were due by 15 July 2013. Staff revisions to the draft order based on interested person comments are expected to begin in August of this year. A tentative general order is scheduled to be circulated for public comment in September/October 2013. At a January 2014 hearing in Los Banos, staff intends to propose board adoption of the tentative general order. The draft order and attachments are included in this agenda package.

In general, the draft order is similar to the board adopted Waste Discharge Requirements for Growers within the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed (Eastern San Joaquin Order). The draft order addresses discharges to both surface water and groundwater, requires regional surface water and trend groundwater monitoring, and evaluation of management practice effectiveness. The draft order maintains the use of third-party entities to represent growers, and requires farm evaluations by growers, nitrogen management and reporting by individual growers in high vulnerability groundwater areas, and sediment and erosion control plans where applicable. The draft order also provides more time for small farming operations to comply with certain requirements.

The primary differences between the draft order and the Eastern San Joaquin Order are in two areas. The draft order allows portions of the high vulnerability groundwater areas to temporarily operate under reduced monitoring requirements where, due to naturally occurring constituents, the underlying groundwater would likely qualify for de-designation under the Basin Plan. In such cases, the third-party has the option of pursuing a basin plan amendment to address the appropriateness of the beneficial use. The reduced monitoring and reporting requirements would be no less stringent than the requirements for low vulnerability areas.

The other difference is that the draft order synchronizes the timing of current coalition members to confirm their coverage under the Order with submittal of the initial farm evaluation for large farming operations. This change from the approach in the Eastern San Joaquin Order will allow the third-party to more effectively outreach to growers and should increase compliance with both the farm evaluation and notice of confirmation requirements.

RECOMMENDATION There is no staff recommendation for this workshop item. The board may provide direction to staff based on the staff presentation and comments received from the public.

Mgmt. Review \_\_\_\_\_  
Legal Review \_\_\_\_APM\_\_\_\_  
30 July 2013

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board workshop  
403 "F" Street, Los Banos Fairgrounds