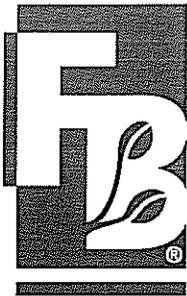


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Kings County Farm Bureau

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May 10, 2012

Adam Laputz
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, #200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6114

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Officers

Michael Miya
President

Dino Giacomazzi
Vice President

Joshua Bettencourt
Secretary/Treasurer

**RE: WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS GENERAL ORDER FOR GROWERS
WITHIN THE EASTERN SAN JOAQUIN RIVER WATERSHED THAT ARE MEMBERS
OF THE THIRD-PARTY GROUP**

The Kings County Farm Bureau appreciates the opportunity to comment on the EASTERN SAN JOAQUIN RIVER WATERSHED draft general order.

Board of Directors

Joseph Alcalá

Stan Azevedo

Tyler Bennett

Aubrey Bettencourt

Jim Crisp

Theo de Haan

Ryan Dooley

Chuck Draxler

John Ellis

Pete Hanse

Gary Lindley

Michael Maciel

Bryan Mello

Brian Rodrigues

Steve Walker

Bob Wilson

Frank Zonneveld

On behalf of our membership, our Board of Directors has expressed extreme concern over the far reaching regulatory oversight that this general order may have. It is our understanding that as proposed this Eastern San Joaquin River watershed General Order will require every commercial farm, regardless of size, to register with a third party, submitted farm surveys, erosion control plans, and nutrient management plans and be subject to all requirements of the general order. In our view, the reach and scope of the general Order is unprecedented. Our opinion is that the Board may not fully appreciate the burden that this requirement would have on small producers, many of whom will be faced additional costs that reach the "tipping point" in farm profitability, thereby driving small producers out of business, with the resultant loss of economic activity and jobs. In addition, the administrative burden from including the multitudes of small producers will result in added cost burden to third party groups as a whole. There appears to be no relief for small operators, since the penalty for not being a member of a third party group is an individual WDR, a cost burden that small operators, let alone any operator, should not have to bear.

Farmers have proven to be excellent stewards of their land. To that end, the agricultural industry's previous experience with a related agency, the local San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District (SJVUAPCD), resulted in a cooperative regulatory program, the development of Conservation Management Plans. In development of that regulatory program, the SJVUAPCD determined that reviewing CMP Plans for all farms in the San Joaquin Valley and providing assistance to hundreds or thousands of growers in the first year of program operation was not feasible. The air district's analysis concluded that if farms under 100 acres are exempted, 28% of the farms would be required to participate in the program, but 91% of the land area would be covered. If the exemption level were set at 50 instead of 100 acres, the administrative burden would increase by 46% to gain only 4% more acres covered.

The position of the Kings County Farm Bureau is that small operators, under 100 acres, should be exempted by the program, or at a minimum, a less burdensome reporting and monitoring requirement established for smaller operations under 100 acres.

Sincerely,

Michael Miya
President