
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

August 27, 2015

Via Electronic Mail Only

Mr. Parry Klassen
Executive Director
Central Coast Groundwater Coalition
P.O. Box 828
Salinas, CA 93902
pklassen@unwiredbb.com

Dear Mr. Klassen,

IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM – APPROVAL OF THE CENTRAL COAST GROUNDWATER COALITION’S SOUTHERN COUNTIES GROUNDWATER QUALITY CHARACTERIZATION REPORT

The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) received a report titled, *“Final Southern Counties Groundwater Quality Characterization Report”* (Final Southern Counties Characterization Report), dated July 30, 2015. The Final Southern Counties Characterization Report was prepared by Luhdorff & Scalmanini Consulting Engineers (LSCE) and submitted on behalf of the Central Coast Groundwater Coalition (CCGC). In accordance with the Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands (Order No. R3-2012-0011), the primary purpose of cooperative groundwater monitoring is to adequately characterize the groundwater aquifer(s) in the local area of the cooperative groundwater monitoring program, characterize the groundwater quality of the uppermost aquifer, and identify and evaluate groundwater used for domestic drinking water purposes. The Final Southern Counties Characterization Report provides a summary of the groundwater sampling results for all domestic well sampling conducted throughout the southern counties, an analysis of data gaps and limitations, and final conclusions. Specifically, the report summarizes the spatial distribution of nitrate concentrations in domestic supply wells and identifies regions for evaluation of agricultural land- and water-management practices to reduce discharges to groundwater.

The Final Southern Counties Characterization Report, including the associated nitrate concentration contour maps, represents CCGC’s interpretation of groundwater quality in agricultural areas of the Santa Maria River Valley, and San Antonio Creek Valley, and the Santa Ynez River Valley. In addition, the Final Southern Counties Characterization Report also includes data for the Central San Luis Obispo County Groundwater Basins: Los Osos Valley, Morro Valley, Chorro Valley, and San Luis Obispo Valley. Groundwater monitoring data reported to the Central Coast Water Board in compliance with the Agricultural Order may be interpreted in different ways depending upon the underlying geologic assumptions and the hydrogeologic conceptual model used. Notwithstanding, Central Coast Water Board staff finds that CCGC’s Final Southern Counties Characterization Report includes the required information and adequately addresses the comments described in our April 22, 2015 letter.

DR. JEAN-PIERRE WOLFF, CHAIR | KENNETH A. HARRIS JR., EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The requirement to monitor all domestic drinking water wells is a significant priority in both the Central Coast Water Board Order No. R3-2012-0011 and State Board Order No. WQ-2012-0101 due to the compelling concerns regarding unsafe drinking water due to excessive nitrate in groundwater. As described in our June 25, 2015 letter, Central Coast Water Board records indicate that CCGC did not sample all domestic drinking water wells for CCGC member properties enrolled in the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. In CCGC's response letter dated July 27, 2015, CCGC confirmed that CCGC conducted an evaluation of the completeness of sampling of groundwater wells (including domestic drinking water wells). CCGC did identify some CCGC member ranches where domestic wells were not sampled, including at least four domestic wells in the southern counties area. CCGC provided a schedule to sample these wells within 90 days. In addition, CCGC agreed to submit an addendum to the Final Southern Counties Characterization Report by December 16, 2015. The addendum will describe the extent to which the inclusion of data from these additional domestic drinking water wells results in a different interpretation than that described in the Final Southern Counties Characterization Report and associated contour maps.

Therefore, I hereby accept the Final Southern Counties Characterization Report as conditionally complete and final, pending the submittal of the additional domestic drinking water well data and the associated addendum report described above. We appreciate CCGC's efforts to continue to work cooperatively with the Central Coast Water Board. If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact Hector Hernandez at (805) 542-4641 or via e-mail at hhernandez@waterboards.ca.gov, or Angela Schroeter at (805) 542-4644 or via e-mail at aschroeter@waterboards.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Harris Jr.
Executive Officer

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