



**Matthew Rodriguez**  
Secretary for  
Environmental Protection

# California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Coast Region

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**Edmund G. Brown Jr.**  
Governor

Si necesita ayuda en español llame al (805) 549-3881.

如果協助必要用中文, 請叫 (805) 542-4648.

February 23, 2012

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

### **OF HEARING TO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF DRAFT AGRICULTURAL ORDER, MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM, AND SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE REGULATION OF WASTE DISCHARGES FROM IRRIGATED LANDS (Draft Agricultural Order No. R3-2012-0011)**

**Date:** March 14, 2012

**Time:** 9:30 AM

**Address:** Embassy Suites Hotel  
333 Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Individuals requiring special accommodations should contact Cyndee Jones at (805) 549-3372 at least five working days prior to the meeting. TTY users may contact the California Relay Service at 1-800-735-2929 or voice line at 1-800-735-2922.

**More Info:**

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board\\_info/agendas/2012/march/agenda.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_info/agendas/2012/march/agenda.shtml)

### **Purpose of the Hearing:**

The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) will hold a public hearing on March 14, 2012 to consider adoption of a revised conditional waiver of waste discharge requirements regulating discharges from irrigated lands (2012 Draft Agricultural Order) and a monitoring and reporting program (MRP) and certification of a subsequent environmental impact report (SEIR). The Water Board rescheduled this item from September 1, 2011, which was postponed because there was not a quorum of Board Members who could vote on the item.

As indicated on the public notice postponing the September 1, 2011 item, the written public comment period is complete. The Water Board will not accept any additional written comments on the Draft Order and associated documents. The Water Board will provide an opportunity for oral comments at the March 14, 2012 hearing. Instructions for providing oral comment at the hearing are further described below.

***California Environmental Protection Agency***

### **Background:**

Water Board staff has proposed to renew the current “Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Irrigated Lands” with revisions to control the discharges of wastes, including nitrate, pesticides, and sediment, to surface or ground water and protect beneficial uses of these waters. The 2012 Draft Agricultural Order and MRP requires owners and operators of irrigated agricultural lands and facilities to control the discharges of waste so they do not violate water quality standards by implementing management practices, reporting on progress and effectiveness of management practices, and monitoring to verify compliance of individual operations with the terms of the 2012 Draft Agricultural Order.

Water quality conditions in agricultural areas of the region are currently degraded or polluted by waste discharges from irrigated agricultural operations and activities that impact aquatic habitat on or near irrigated agricultural operations, including the use of fertilizers and pesticides that run off agricultural fields into surface waters from irrigation water or stormwater or leaches into groundwater. Hundreds of drinking water wells serving thousands of people throughout the Central Coast Region have nitrate levels exceeding the drinking water standard, and must be treated as required by the California Department of Public Health. Many streams are listed as impaired in the Central Coast Region for nutrients and pesticides, toxicity (from pesticides), or sediment, on the Clean Water Act section 303(d) List of Impaired Waterbodies. In-stream aquatic habitat has been impaired by riparian vegetation removal that eliminates filtering of chemicals as they runoff from fields, and/or causes increases in temperatures that are harmful for organisms and fish. The SEIR concludes that the environmental effects associated with the Draft Order may be significant with respect to biological resources due to reduced flows in some water bodies. However, given the uncertainty associated with evaluating the available information, it is possible that the effects may be less than significant. Therefore, the Central Coast Water Board finds it appropriate to make a statement of overriding considerations with respect to biological resources.

Currently, irrigated agricultural dischargers (owners and operators) are required to enroll in the current order to control waste discharges. The Water Board is considering a revised order to more effectively address the current degraded conditions.

### **Providing Oral Comments at the Hearing:**

The Water Board and staff welcome oral comments on the item before the Water Board. The Water Board Chair will allocate time to individual speakers according to the number of speakers present. Speakers should summarize their written comments. In order to give everyone an opportunity to be heard, oral comments are limited to **two minutes**. The Water Board Chair may adjust the time allocated to individual speakers for the orderly conduct of the hearing. Requests for extended speaking times along with brief justification, must be submitted to the Executive Officer ([rbriggs@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:rbriggs@waterboards.ca.gov)) as soon as possible, but no later than **March 5, 2012 at 5:00 PM**. The Water Board Chair will decide whether to grant such requests, and staff will let the speakers know if the Water Board Chair granted the request. The Water Board Chair may change the order of the agenda items at any time.

**FOR STATUS AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE 2012 AGRICULTURAL ORDER**

The 2012 Draft Agricultural Order, MRP, Final SEIR, and staff report for the March 14, 2012 hearing, are posted at the website below. Hardcopy documents are also available by request at the office of the Central Coast Water Board.

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board\\_info/agendas/2012/march/agenda.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_info/agendas/2012/march/agenda.shtml)

More information and background on the Agricultural Order Renewal is also available at the Water Board's website below:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water\\_issues/programs/ag\\_waivers/ag\\_order.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/ag_waivers/ag_order.shtml)

To receive Agricultural Order Renewal information, please subscribe to the Agricultural Discharges electronic mailing list at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/reg3\\_subscribe.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg3_subscribe.shtml)

Interested persons may also request to have Agricultural Order information hardcopies via U. S. mail by contacting Barbara Brooks at [bbrooks@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:bbrooks@waterboards.ca.gov) or at 805-542-4789. Persons who subscribe to the electronic mailing list or who request a hard copy of information will be included in the Interested Persons List and will receive future notices of Water Board activities; those that do not make such a request will not be included on the list.

Questions regarding the 2012 Draft Agricultural Order, MRP, SEIR, and Staff Report should be sent to [agorder@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:agorder@waterboards.ca.gov) or directed to Angela Schroeter, Agricultural Regulatory Program Manager, at (805) 542-4644 or Lisa McCann, Watershed Protection Section Manager, at (805) 549-3132.

cc: Enrolled Dischargers and Interested Parties List Agricultural Order  
File: Agricultural Order