

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: Nitrogen Management and Control – Update on California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Task Force and State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Expert Panel, and discussion of factors to be considered in fertilizer application

BOARD ACTION: *Information Item Only.*

BACKGROUND: CDFA, in coordination with the Water Boards convened a Task Force to identify intended outcomes and expected benefits of a nitrogen mass balance tracking system in nitrate high-risk areas. The CDFA Task Force came to "...general agreement on several components of an effective nitrogen tracking and reporting system"¹. The Final Report states "The recommended system addresses eight key topics including: (1) System Structure; (2) Data Elements; (3) Roles, Responsibilities and Data Accessibility; (4) Benefits of Participation; (5) Verifiability; (6) Societal Benefits of the Recommended System; (7) Limitations and (8) System Phase-in." A representative from CDFA will present the Task Force's recommendations including intended outcome and anticipated benefits of such a tracking and reporting system for nitrogen use.

In the Report to the Legislature², the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) committed to convene a panel of experts from a broad spectrum of relevant disciplines (Expert Panel) to assess existing agricultural nitrate control programs and develop recommendations, as needed, to ensure that ongoing efforts are protective of groundwater quality. The Expert Panel will evaluate ongoing agricultural control measures that address nitrate in groundwater, and will propose new measures, if necessary. In its assessment of existing agricultural nitrate control programs and development of recommendations for possible improvements in the regulatory approaches being used, the Expert Panel will consider groundwater monitoring, mandatory adoption of best management practices, tracking and reporting of nitrogen fertilizer application, estimates of nitrogen use efficiency or a similar metric, and farm-specific nutrient management plans as source control measures and regulatory tools. The Expert Panel will consider the recommendations of the CDFA Task Force in its discussions.

RECOMMENDATION This is an information item only.

Mgmt. Review ___JK___

Legal Review _____

12 March 2014

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Meeting

11020 Sun Center Drive, #200

Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

¹ California Department of Food and Agriculture, Nitrogen Tracking and Reporting Task Force, Final Report, December, 2013. <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/environmentalstewardship/PDFs/NTRSTFFinalReport122013.pdf>

² State Water Board Resources Control Board. 2013. Report to the Legislature, Recommendations Addressing Nitrate in Groundwater http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nitrate_project/docs/nitrate_rpt.pdf .