

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 20-21, 2018
Prepared on August 23, 2018

ITEM NUMBER: 6

SUBJECT: Agricultural Order 4.0 Stakeholder Panel Discussions

STAFF

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ACTION: Informational

BACKGROUND

The current agricultural order, known as Ag Order 3.0, was adopted on March 8, 2017. It has a three-year term, meaning it must be replaced with a new order by March 7, 2020. The replacement order, known as Ag Order 4.0, is currently under development and is the subject of this agenda item and workshop.

Addition of a Workshop: Following the June board meeting, the Executive Officer, in consultation with the Central Coast Water Board Chair, and individual board members, determined that a workshop forum providing various stakeholder groups, including agriculture, environmental, and environmental justice groups an opportunity to speak to the board was appropriate, prior to issuance and discussion of preliminary Ag Order 4.0 options. This board item represents that workshop forum.

Scoping the Workshop's Content: The water quality conditions items from the March (surface water) and May (groundwater) 2018 board meetings highlighted several large-scale environmental and water quality issues associated with discharges from agricultural operations. As Central Coast Water Board staff develop Ag Order 4.0, we will be addressing these challenges. We also want to engage stakeholders from all perspectives on these priority water quality issues. To help in this, staff framed six primary questions, based on these issues, for both ourselves and stakeholders to answer. In preparation for this item, staff requested that each panel devote half or more of their time to one or more of the following questions:

1. What can growers and the regional board do to demonstrate quantifiable progress to minimize nitrate discharge to groundwater to achieve water quality objectives?
2. What can growers and the regional board do to demonstrate quantifiable progress to minimize nutrient discharge to surface waters to achieve water quality objectives?
3. What can growers and the regional board do to demonstrate quantifiable progress to minimize toxicity in surface waters from pesticide discharges to achieve water quality objectives?
4. What can growers and the regional board do to ensure that riparian and wetland habitat is protected due to agricultural activities and discharges?
5. What can growers and the regional board do to demonstrate quantifiable progress to minimize sediment discharge to achieve water quality objectives?

6. How can the regional board use discharge permit requirements to ensure current and future affordable, safe, and clean water for drinking and environmental uses?

We acknowledge that there are other useful questions to ask that will help elicit meaningful comment, guidance, suggestions, and examples, with respect to developing and implementing an order that improves water quality conditions, and we will be asking many of these questions as we proceed through this order's development.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Presentations and board discussion with panelists are scheduled on both Thursday and Friday, September 20th and 21st respectively. Thursday's panelists represent numerous grower's interest and Friday's panelists represent primarily environmental and environmental justice interests. Opportunity for public comment is provided on both Thursday afternoon and Friday afternoon and will commence after all panelists have finished with the presentations and responded board member's questions and comments.

Thursday:

The following discussions are scheduled for Thursday, September 20th in the order as follows:

Panel: Agricultural Panel

Topic: Farm Management Considerations
<i>Discussion: Food Safety</i>
Panelists: Scott Horsfall (Leafy Green Handlers Marketing Agreement); Joe Pezzini (Ocean Mist Farms); Dan Sutton (Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange)
<i>Discussion: General Farm Management</i>
Panelist: Joe Pezzini (Ocean Mist Farms)
Topic: Nutrient, Irrigation and Pesticide Management
<i>Discussions: Irrigation Management</i> <i>Discussion: Nutrient Management</i> <i>Discussion: Pesticide Management</i>
Panelists: David Costa (Costa Family Farms); Jim Stolberg (Maverick Farming); Steve McIntyre (McIntyre Vineyards); Jocelyn Bridson (Rio Farms); Jackie Vasquez (Sundance Berry Farms); Mark Mason (Huntington Farms); Tim Borel (Blanco Farms); Joel Wiley (Wilbur Ellis); A.J. Cisney (Rancho Guadalupe)
Topic: Generating Meaningful Data & Balancing Level of Detail with Reporting Burden
<i>Discussion: Agricultural Associations</i>

<p>Panelists: Claire Wineman (Grower-Shipper Assoc. S. Barbara & San Luis Obispo Counties); Abby Taylor Silva (Grower-Shipper Assoc. of Central California); Parry Klassen (Central Coast Groundwater Coalition); George Adam (Grower, Innovative Produce) Grower to be introduced</p>
Topic: Looking Forward/Summations
<p><i>Presentation: Summary and Looking Forward</i></p> <p>Panelists: Kirk Schmidt (Sustainable Agricultural Water Corporation); Abby Taylor Silva (Grower-Shipper Assoc. of Central California); Parry Klassen (Central Coast Groundwater Coalition); Jason Sharrett (CA Strawberry Commission) Norm Groot (Monterey County Farm Bureau) Grower to be introduced</p>

Individual public comments will follow the discussions outlined above on Thursday.

Friday:

The following discussions are scheduled for Friday, September 21st in the order as follows:

Panel: Environmental Advocate Panel

Topic: Water Quality Protection and How to Achieve It
<p><i>Discussion by Panelists</i></p> <p>Panelists: Steve Shimek (Executive Director, The Otter Project and Monterey Coastkeeper) Sean Bothwell (Acting Executive Director, California Coastkeeper Alliance); Ben Pitterle (Watershed and Marine Program Director, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper);</p>

Panel: Creeklands Conservation for People, Ag and Wildlife

Topic: Habitat Enhancement in Agricultural Land Use Areas
<p><i>Discussion by Panelists</i></p> <p>Panelist: Stephnie Wald (Watershed Projects Manager, Central Coast Salmon Enhancement)</p>

Panel: Environmental Justice Advocate Panel

Topic: Environmental Justice Implications and Recommendations for Ag Order 4.0
<p><i>Discussion by Panelists</i></p> <p>Panelists: Horacio Amezcua (San Jerardo Cooperative); Marisol Aguilar (California Rural Legal Assistance); Deborah Ores (Community Water Center); Nathaniel Kane (Environmental Law Foundation); Helen Kang (Golden Gate University School of Law Environmental Law and Justice Clinic); May Nguyen (The Environmental Justice Coalition for Water)</p>

Panel: Agricultural/Environmental Partnerships for Improving Water Quality

Topic: Partnerships to Achieve Goals
<i>Discussion by Panelists</i>
Panelists: Abigail Hart (The Nature Conservancy)

Individual public comments will follow the discussions outlined above on Friday.

Some panelists provided materials for their individual items prior to our publication deadline and this material is included as Day One Ag Panels (Attachment 1) and Day Two Environmental and Environmental Justice Panels (Attachment 2).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Day One Agricultural Panels

Attachment 2: Day Two Environmental Panel