

**CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
DISCLOSURE FORM
EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING PENDING GENERAL ORDERS**

*Note: This form is intended to assist the public in providing the disclosure required by law. It is designed to document meetings and phone calls. Written communications may be disclosed by providing a complete copy of the written document, with attachments. Unless the board member(s) provide you with a different contact person, please your materials to: stacy.denney@waterboards.ca.gov
Use of this form is not mandatory.*

1. Pending General Order that the communication concerned: Ag Order 4.0
2. Name, title and contact information of person completing this form: Steve Shimek, exec@otterproject.org
3. Date of meeting, phone call or other communication: 8/28/20
Time: ~ 7pm
Location: email sent
4. Type of communication (written, oral or both): written
5. Names of all participants in the communication, including all board members who participated: Jane Grey, Monica Hunter, Jean-Pierre Wolff, Jeff Young, Michael Johnston
6. Name of person(s) who initiated the communication: Steve Shimek
7. Describe the communication and the content of the communication: Emailed an opinion article written by Art Seavey, owner, Monterey Abalone. A PDF of the article is attached.
8. Attach a copy of handouts, PowerPoint presentations and other materials any person used or distributed at the meeting. If you have electronic copies, please email them to facilitate web posting.

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voices

of monterey bay



Opinion

By Art Seavey

I am a partner in the Monterey Abalone Co., which for the past 30 years has raised delicious and sustainable abalone on the Monterey waterfront, primarily for Central Coast and Bay Area restaurants. Abalone are an iconic Central Coast seafood that represent one of the many gifts our region receives from a clean and healthy ocean.

In many ways, the ocean blesses our communities with jobs, quality of life and more. For many of us, a healthy and bountiful ocean is why we live here.

Abalone eat kelp — both of which depend on clean water to survive. We've seen this first-hand. In 2007, we lost more than 10,000 abalone to an outbreak of red tide. Recently, the frequency and intensity of toxic algae outbreaks seems to be increasing. So it's important to our business, and many others, that state agencies do everything they can to ensure the health of our ocean.

That's particularly important because scientific studies have found signs linking agricultural runoff to Monterey Bay water quality problems, including evidence that nutrients in runoff could prolong outbreaks of harmful algae blooms. This linkage can be seen clearly elsewhere, from the Gulf of Mexico and the Everglades to the Great Lakes, where excess nutrients are causing dead zones and deadly algae blooms.

Fortunately, California has strong water quality laws and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board is beginning to work on new requirements related to agricultural runoff. Here are some ways state regulators can tackle that job responsibly.

First, they should carefully review the scientific evidence linking agricultural runoff and water quality in Monterey Bay and along the coast.

Second, they should require more nature-based solutions like vegetated buffers and restored or protected creeks. These habitats

can absorb runoff, reduce erosion and improve water quality – all while providing a home for valuable wildlife. (Non-chemical based solutions like these work even for non-organic farmers.)

Third, limits set by state regulators on the application of chemicals like fertilizers and pesticides must be tailored to local conditions and crops. In a state that grows hundreds of crops in widely different climates and on different soils, one size definitely does not fit all.

Fourth, regulators and scientists should carefully monitor waterways to pinpoint runoff hotspots where farmers may need more help to reduce contamination. My company tests our product rigorously to ensure the highest quality product for the public. Agency monitoring should be designed to do the same for our public waterways.

Fifth, state agencies should partner with farmers to develop alternatives to the most toxic chemicals and the over-application of fertilizers. There are many examples around the state where innovative farmers have found how to apply less pesticide and fertilizer, use less-toxic chemicals, and employ more nature-based solutions. But farmers should not be on their own to discover and spread those new approaches. (After all, we can't rely on the chemical companies to reduce our reliance on chemicals.) The state must help.

Non-farmers should also help ensure clean coastal waters by conserving water, disposing of medications properly, composting

food waste and carefully selecting household detergents and cleaners.

One more thing. Around the world, particularly in Asia, tens of millions of tons of seaweed are cultivated annually. Seaweed can grow astonishingly rapidly. In Monterey Bay, giant kelp can grow up to two feet a day — turning clean water, sunlight and nutrients into something useful for both animals and humans. I believe that seaweed farming in places like Monterey Bay could help absorb excess nutrients and carbon dioxide while generating a useful product and jobs. If that works, I know some hungry abalone who would appreciate a snack.

My family is involved in traditional farming. So I'm sensitive to the need for state water quality protections to reflect the business needs of farmers. And after all, folks growing grapes, artichokes, seaweed and abalone are all farmers.

California agriculture is the most innovative on the planet — a good thing, given that we live in a rapidly changing world. All of us farmers need to continue to adapt to provide produce, seafood and more for the public, while caring for the public's rivers and oceans. And the state must do its job to protect precious natural treasures like the Central Coast.