



Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program

Overview

There are an estimated 35,000 irrigated agricultural operations within the Central Valley Water Board’s jurisdiction, on approximately 7 million acres of land. Common to these operations is the use of water to sustain crops. Depending on the irrigation method, geography, geology, climate, and constituents (e.g., nutrients, pesticides) present or used at a site, water discharged from the site may carry these constituents as waste into groundwater or surface waters.

The Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) regulates waste discharges from irrigated lands using seven [geographic](#) and one [commodity-specific](#) general orders for growers that are part of a third-party group (coalitions). There are [14 coalitions](#) helping growers comply with the general orders. There is also a general order for growers who choose to be regulated [individually](#).

The ILRP general orders were adopted from December 2012 to July 2015; coalitions are working with growers at slightly different stages of implementation. The first general order, adopted for the [Eastern San Joaquin Watershed](#), was petitioned by environmental/environmental justice groups and agricultural representatives. A number of issues have been raised by the petitioners, including the adequacy of the ILRP’s current groundwater protection strategy. In February 2016, the State Water Board issued a [proposed order](#) in response to the [petition](#). During FY 2015 -2016, staff started addressing the proposed order, by briefing State Water Board members, participating in State Water Board Workshops and providing formal written comments.

ILRP staffing in FY 15/16 - 0.7 PY¹ (Redding), 6.2 PY (Fresno) and 11.8 PY (Sacramento) for a total of 18.7 PYs for the region. Program implementation activities are shown in the charts below.

¹PY=person year or resources to fund one Central Valley Water Board staff

Goals

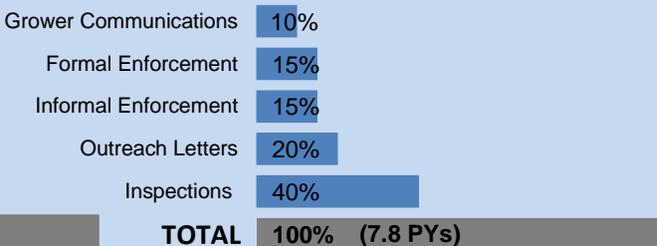
The goal of the ILRP is to prevent discharges from irrigated lands from causing or contributing to exceedances of water quality objectives through order implementation, appropriate compliance and enforcement, and coordination with all interested parties. This includes preserving both the human right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water, and a healthy and sustainable irrigated agriculture.

Order implementation includes oversight of coalition and grower activities and management of water quality data. Compliance and enforcement activities include maximizing grower enrollment and order compliance. Coordination is facilitated through regular stakeholder meetings and other venues.

Coalition Oversight



Compliance/Enforcement



Major Accomplishments (since beginning of program)

Adoption of all ILRP General Orders

The ILRP was initiated in 2003 with adoption of a conditional waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for discharges from irrigated lands to surface waters. The recent adoption of general order WDRs includes regulation of waste discharges to groundwater. This involved significant stakeholder participation and development of a programmatic environmental impact report. The program continues to maintain a very high level of stakeholder input.

Surface Water Successes

- *Management Plan Completions* – ILRP requires growers to implement improved practices to eliminate identified water quality problems caused by agricultural pollutants. This has resulted in successful completion of ~140 management plans for pesticides, aquatic toxicity, sediment toxicity, trace metals, legacy pesticides, and other parameters.
- *Delisting of CWA Section 303(d) impaired waters* – ILRP management plan completions contributed significantly to de-listings of diazinon in reaches of the San Joaquin, Feather and Sacramento Rivers. Additional delistings of diazinon, chlorpyrifos, and diuron will be pursued based predominantly on ILRP management plan efforts.

Compliance and Enforcement Successes

- *Increased enrollment acreage* – With currently 5.6 million acres enrolled in the ILRP, enrollment of irrigated lands has increased about a million acres since the adoption of the new General Orders. ILRP staff and coalition efforts to enroll the remaining irrigated acreage (estimated at about 1.4 million acres) are ongoing.

FY2015-2016

Approved Nitrogen Management Plan Summary Report and Sediment and Erosion Control Plan templates. Approved process for coalitions to calculate nitrogen removed from grower reported crop information. Updated ILRP to appropriately protect water quality; removed certain requirements for wetlands/pastures. Focused compliance/enforcement efforts in foothill areas with significant pasture to orchard conversions based on concerns raised by concerned citizens; no further concerns expressed after enforcement effort. Promoted ILRP transparency by posting and providing public comment period for all groundwater reports.

Performance targets for FY 2015-2016

	<u>Target</u>	<u>Completed</u>
Adoption of Grassland Bypass Project WDRs	1	1
Adoption of Grassland Drainage Area WDRs	1	1
Coalition participation in Delta RMP	5	4
Review and conditional approval of SDEARs	13	13
Review and conditional approval of GARs	11	10
Non-enrollment inspections	2000	3589
On-farm (Order compliance) inspections	45	36
Stakeholder meetings	1	4
Draft surface water quality status and trend report	1	0
Issue Pesticide Evaluation Protocol	1	0
Update ILRP Website	1	1

Ongoing Issues

- Resources were diverted from scheduled tasks to address State Board petition response.
- More focused outreach to small grower operations, especially those with non-English speaking operators, is needed for comprehensive implementation of the program.
- Program must provide transparency and flexibility to evolve with best available science in protecting water quality.