



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 2017 - 2018, staff will continue to address issues brought up during the petition as we provide more details regarding the robustness of the current ILRP groundwater protection strategy. A revised proposed order is anticipated during the Fall of 2017.

The ILRP consists of 0.7 PY¹ (Redding), 6.8 PY (Fresno) and 11.2 PY (Sacramento) for a total of 18.7 PYs for the region. Program implementation activities are shown in the charts below.

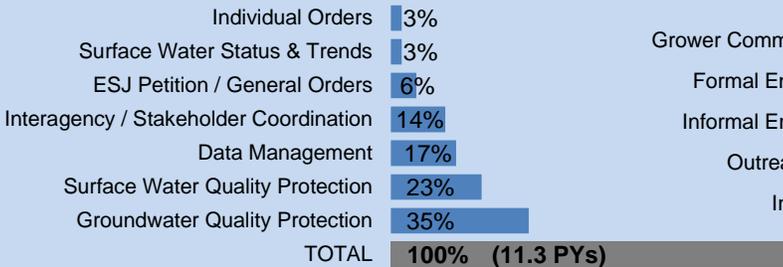
¹PY=person year or resources to fund one Central Valley Water Board staff

Goals

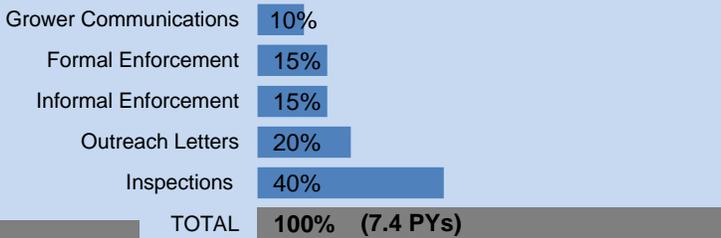
The goal of the ILRP is to prevent discharges from irrigated lands from causing or contributing to exceedances of water quality objectives through order implementation, appropriate compliance and enforcement, and coordination with all interested parties. This includes preserving both the human right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



Accomplishments for FY 2016-2017

Groundwater

- *Management Practice Evaluation Program (MPEP) – Conditional approval of Southern San Joaquin Coalitions' MPEP; June information item to obtain Board direction and stakeholder input*
- *Regional Groundwater Trend Monitoring Program – Revised MRP Orders to allow coalitions to coordinate with other programs (dairies, CVSALTS, etc.) on a regional trend monitoring program*
- *Groundwater Quality Management Plans (GQMP) – Approval of Western San Joaquin Coalition's GQMP which provides performance goals of coalition outreach and grower implementation of practices protective of groundwater quality. Working on approval of other coalitions' GQMPs.*

Surface Water

- *Management Plan Completions – ILRP requires growers to implement improved practices to address identified water quality problems caused by agricultural pollutants. In FY16/17, 24 management plans were completed; most for eliminating pesticides and toxicity problems.*
- *Delisting of CWA Section 303(d) impaired waters – In FY 16/17, our Board supported the delisting of 64 waterbody/pollutants based on completion of ILRP management plans, both because of improved water quality and from recognition of the management plan process as an effective regulatory tool for addressing water quality problems.*

Compliance and Enforcement

- *Increasing enrollment acreage – During FY16/17, Board staff continued compliance and enforcement efforts to address non-filers which included employing new, plain-English documents to increase enrollment in the program. It resulted in the addition of approximately 36,000 acres and 800 operations to the program.*
- *Enforcing Order requirements – Assessed significant monetary penalties against growers who failed to comply with ILRP Order requirements*
- *Enforcement coordination with coalitions – ILRP staff continue to use “last chance” phone calls and coordination with coalitions to bring growers into compliance (with both enrollment and reporting requirements) before initiation of formal enforcement.*

Performance Targets

	16/17 <u>Targets</u>	16/17 <u>Products</u>	17/18 <u>Targets</u>
Groundwater Quality Management Plan Reviews	14	14	
Annual Report Reviews	13	12	14
Management Practice Evaluation Plan Reviews	2	2	
Regional Groundwater Trend Monitoring Plan Review			1
Issue Pesticide Evaluation Protocol	1	1	
Non-enrollment Inspections	2000	2900	1250
On-farm (Order compliance) Inspections	115	114	95
Reminder letters with trifolds			2500
Stakeholder Meetings	4	4	4
Draft surface water quality status and trend report	1	0	1
Actively participate in State Water Board Petition Process	1	1	1

Ongoing Issues

- *More focused outreach to small farm operations, especially those with non-English speaking operators, is needed for comprehensive implementation of the program.*
- *Provide transparency and flexibility to evolve with best available science to protect water quality.*