



Media Release

Public Comment Sought on Proposed Salt and Nitrate Control Program for Central Valley Surface and Groundwater Resources

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Contact: Pamela Creedon, Executive Officer
Phone: 916-464-4839

Sacramento – Staff of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has released a draft [Central Valley Salt and Nitrate Control Program](#) to solicit public comment before a planned adoption hearing set for early summer.

The program is designed to protect surface water and groundwater supplies in the Sacramento and San Joaquin River basins and the Tulare Lake basin from continued buildup of salts and nitrate. Ultimately, the program is aimed at restoring groundwater supplies with elevated nitrate concentrations and sustainably managing salt concentrations.

The buildup of salts and nitrate pose a threat to drinking water, agriculture and the environment. Levels have increased in the waters of the Central Valley due to the long-term effects of population growth, application of farm fertilizers and soil amendments, food processing and other industrial activities and municipal water use.

The draft control program, which is open for public comment until May 7, is the product of more than 10 years of collaboration by a coalition of agriculture, environmentalists, municipalities and private citizens. The Central Valley Water Board is tentatively set to consider the program for adoption at its May 31-June 1 meeting.

The draft program calls for amendments to the region's Water Quality Control Plans designed to address both the past accumulation of salt and nitrate in surface and groundwater, and the ongoing issue of nitrate and salt accumulation. The primary focus for the first ten years of the program is to reduce the level of nitrates impacting groundwater supplies used for drinking water and facilitate provision of safe drinking water for users currently impacted.

In a complementary effort, the Brown administration is proposing to establish a sustainable funding source, known as the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund, that local communities could use to help pay for the treatment of contaminated drinking water supplies. The funding source is part of the administration's 2018-19 budget proposal.

The goals of the salt and nitrate control program are to sustain the Valley's agricultural lifestyle; support regional economic growth; retain a world-class agricultural economy; maintain a reliable, high-quality water supply; and protect and enhance the environment. To support the





goals, the amendments also includes recommendations for new policies and regulatory strategies.

The foundation of the proposed program was developed through the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability ([CV-SALTS](#)) initiative that submitted a Salt and Nitrate Management Plan to the Central Valley Water Board in January 2017. The CV-SALTS is a Central Valley Water Board and stakeholder-driven initiative that has been working since 2006 to adopt long-term solutions for salt and nitrate concerns. To learn more, visit the regional board CV-Salts resource page found [here](#).

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