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NEWS RELEASE

California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region



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STATE WATER BOARD APPROVES FUNDING TO HELP CENTRAL VALLEY FARMERS PROTECT WATER QUALITY

SACRAMENTO - More than \$8 million in state bond money is being directed to agricultural water quality improvement for the Central Valley, which is home to more than 75% of California's irrigated agriculture. The State Water Board approved nearly \$14 million of Proposition 84 bond funds for agricultural projects around the state at its June 17 board meeting. The \$8 million will go to fund cost-sharing projects with Central Valley farmers who implement improved management practices to reduce runoff of pesticides and fertilizers, and sediment that affect surface waters.

The funding will be directed to areas where water quality problems have been identified through the Central Valley Water Board's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. The ILRP requires farmers to reduce pollutants in runoff from their fields to protect rivers and streams. Agricultural water quality coalitions, formed by growers or agricultural entities such as irrigation districts, are working with the Central Valley Water Board to develop management plans that address problems identified in coalition water monitoring. Irrigated crop lands under the existing Milk Cow Dairy Order are also obligated to ensure runoff does not impact streams.

"We greatly appreciate the State Water Board recognizing the resource needs in the Central Valley and making this funding available," said Pamela Creedon, Executive Officer of the Central Valley Water Board. "We are thrilled with the opportunity to work with farmers to make on-the-ground improvements that result in better water quality for all Central Valley residents."

Parry Klassen, Executive Director of the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition said, "This funding will help support efforts by farmers to make the needed changes in their operations. There is technology on the shelf that can be used to make real improvements in water quality. We've identified problems through monitoring; now it's time to direct funding where we can make a difference. We want to demonstrate that agriculture is ready to be part of the solution to water quality problems."

The Central Valley Water Board now begins a competitive process for identifying grant spending. The Water Board anticipates selecting one or two primary grant recipients who will work with the Coalitions to provide the cost-sharing funds to growers willing to implement on-farm management practices.