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NEWS RELEASE

California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region



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FULL COMPLIANCE FROM AGRICULTURAL COALITIONS ON CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENT

After years of litigation about getting the names of growers in the agricultural coalitions, the Central valley Regional Water Board has received all seven groups' participant listings.

When the board renewed the Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver in June 2006, it added a requirement that coalition groups in the program must submit electronic updated participant lists.

The data in the lists are being evaluated for totals of participating parcels, acres and growers. Early analysis shows that there are more than 28,000 growers and 70,000 parcels totaling more than 5 million acres enrolled in coalition groups. This represents more than a 30 percent increase in participation from September 2006.

The Irrigated Lands Program protects water quality and helps agriculture meet water quality standards. Growers may join coalitions as an alternative to individual permits for waste discharges from their operations.

The Irrigated Lands Program requires coalitions to monitor, to identify water quality problems and to work with growers to address those problems. Growers are required to manage their operations and to carry out best management practices to prevent water quality problems and address existing problems.

As non-participating parcels are identified, the Executive Officer will issue warning letters under California Water Code section 13267 to get more information about operations on those lands, and then determine if regulatory coverage is required because of waste discharges from those operations.

Since March 2005, more than 1,400 warning letters have been issued, and more than 400 Notices of Violation were sent to land owners for failing to respond to the orders. More follow up to those who have not responded are being prepared. The California Water Code authorizes the Water Board to issue administrative civil liability of up to \$1,000 daily for failing to respond to a warning letter, or a 13267 Order.