



---

## State Water Resources Control Board

### Division of Drinking Water

August 15, 2025

System No. CA5410024

Diego Paniagua, General Manager  
Richgrove Community Services District  
P.O. BOX 86  
Richgrove, CA 93261

**RE: NOTICE – 1<sup>st</sup> STEP OF ADMINISTRATOR PROCESS  
RICHGROVE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT (CA5410024)**

Dear Diego Paniagua,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is taking the first step to designate Richgrove Community Services District ("Richgrove CSD") as a public water system in need of an Administrator because it has not consistently provided an adequate supply of affordable, safe drinking water to its customers. The State Water Board is taking this step now for two reasons: 1) a State funded administrator will be able to take on many of the tasks that will be required to assist the water system into coming into compliance with applicable drinking water laws and regulations sustainably into the future, and 2) it may take some time to go through the required steps to appoint an administrator. A summary of the designation process, responsibilities of a full-scope administrator, applicable regulatory sections, and policies are provided as attachments.

The legally required formal first step in this process is for the State Water Board to give Richgrove CSD notice of its intended action and provide the water system an opportunity to show either of the following:

- a. It has not consistently failed to provide an adequate supply of affordable, safe drinking water, or
- b. It has taken steps to timely address its failure to provide an adequate supply of affordable, safe drinking water.

---

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | ERIC OPPENHEIMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

If Richgrove CSD has evidence and wishes to show that the violations listed on the following page have been resolved, please provide that information by **September 15, 2025**, via email to [elvira.reyes@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:elvira.reyes@waterboards.ca.gov).

### **List of Violations**

Richgrove CSD has failed to:

- Comply with California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Sections 64432, 64442, 64445.1 and 644449. Citation and Compliance Order No. 04\_12\_25J\_021 was issued to Richgrove CSD on June 23, 2025, for failure to monitor for Title 22 Chemical Water Quality for Calendar Years 2022 through 2024 for Well 04, 05, and 06.
- Comply with California Code of Regulations Title 22 Section 64449. Compliance Order No. 04\_12\_25J\_022 was issued to Richgrove CSD on March 4, 2025, for Well 04 manganese secondary maximum contaminant level violation.
- Comply with California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Sections 64431 and 64432. Compliance Order No. 03\_12\_23R\_003 was issued to Richgrove CSD on September 28, 2023 for Well 04 arsenic maximum contaminant level violation.
- Comply with Code of Regulations, Title 22, Section 64431. Compliance Order No. 03\_12\_20R\_001 was issued to Richgrove CSD on January 6, 2020 for Well 05 nitrate maximum contaminant level violation.
- Comply with California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Section 64444. Compliance Order No. 03\_12\_18R\_046 was issued to Richgrove CSD on December 18, 2018 for Well 05 for 1,2,3-Trichloropropane (1,2,3-TCP) maximum contaminant level violation.
- Demonstrate adequate technical, managerial, and financial capacity to maintain and operate the water system in accordance with the California Safe Drinking Water Act.

California Health and Safety Code Section 116530 authorizes the State Water Board to request financial capacity information. To help facilitate the State Water Board to more quickly respond to any impending need to support Richgrove CSD's customers, please provide three (3) years of financial statements, preferably audited financial statements if available, any accounting and financial policies, rate structures, and current capital improvement plan. The financial statements should include the current year (if available) and the two previous years, or three previous years if the current year has not yet been completed. Additionally, identification of any restricted funds and the reason for the restrictions could better facilitate assistance from the State Water Board. The State Water Board is requesting this information be submitted by **September 15, 2025**.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Elvira Reyes at [elvira.reyes@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:elvira.reyes@waterboards.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

(Original document signed by Bryan Potter)

Bryan Potter, P.E.  
Senior Water Resource Control Engineer, Southern Engagement Unit  
State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water

Attachment 1. Administrator Process Summary  
Attachment 2. Responsibilities of a Full-Scope Administrator  
Attachment 3. Section 116686 of the California Health and Safety Code  
Attachment 4. Administrator Policy Handbook

cc: Carbon Copy

Andrew Altevogt, Assistant Deputy Director  
Division of Drinking Water  
[Andrew.Altevogt@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Andrew.Altevogt@waterboards.ca.gov)

Chad Fischer, Supervising Water Resource Control Engineer  
Division of Drinking Water  
[Chad.Fischer@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Chad.Fischer@waterboards.ca.gov)

Michelle Frederick, Assistant Deputy Director  
Division of Drinking Water  
[Michelle.Frederick@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Michelle.Frederick@waterboards.ca.gov)

Jeff Densmore, South Central Section Chief  
Division of Drinking Water  
[Jeff.Densmore@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Jeff.Densmore@waterboards.ca.gov)

Adam Forbes, Visalia District Engineer  
Division of Drinking Water  
[Adam.Forbes@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Adam.Forbes@waterboards.ca.gov)

Vanessa Andrade, Water Resource Control Engineer  
Division of Drinking Water  
[Vanessa.Andrade@Waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Vanessa.Andrade@Waterboards.ca.gov)

Krystin Abhold, Assistant Deputy Director  
Division of Financial Assistance  
[Kristyn.Abhold@Waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Kristyn.Abhold@Waterboards.ca.gov)

Dat Tran, Supervising Sanitary Engineer  
Division of Financial Assistance  
[Dat.Tran@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Dat.Tran@waterboards.ca.gov)

James Garrett, Senior Water Resource Control Engineer  
Division of Financial Assistance  
[James.Garrett@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:James.Garrett@waterboards.ca.gov)

David Rice, Staff Counsel  
Office of Chief Counsel  
[David.Rice@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:David.Rice@waterboards.ca.gov)

Candace Cotton, Director of Legislative Affairs  
Office of Legislative Affairs  
[Candace.Cotton@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Candace.Cotton@waterboards.ca.gov)

Rachel Wittenberg, Staff Service Manager I  
Office of Public Engagement, Equity and Tribal Affairs  
[Rachel.Wittenberg@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Rachel.Wittenberg@waterboards.ca.gov)

Ben Giuliani, Executive Officer  
Tulare Local Agency Formation Commission  
[bgiuliani@tularecounty.ca.gov](mailto:bgiuliani@tularecounty.ca.gov)

Supervisor Dennis Townsend, District 5  
[dtownsend@tularecounty.ca.gov](mailto:dtownsend@tularecounty.ca.gov)

## **Attachment 1**

### **Administrator Process**

Section 116686 of the California Health and Safety Code and the Administrator Policy Handbook, adopted by the State Board in January 2025, requires that the State Board must find that the System's public water system is a "designated water system" and take other specific actions before it can issue an order to the System to accept a full-scope administrator. A "designated water system" is defined in section 116686(r)(2) as a public water system that serves a disadvantaged community, and that the State Water Board finds consistently fails to provide an adequate supply of affordable, safe drinking water. A copy of section 116686 and the Administrator Policy Handbook are provided in subsequent attachments. The actions required of the State Water Board are summarized below.

1. The State Board must give the water system notice of its actions and provide it with an opportunity to show either of the following:
  - a. It has not consistently failed to provide an adequate supply of affordable, safe drinking water, or
  - b. It has taken steps to timely address its failure to provide an adequate supply of affordable, safe drinking water.
2. Conduct a public meeting in a location as close as feasible to the affected community.
  - a. Provide 30-day notice of the public meeting to affected ratepayers, renters, and property owners.
  - b. Provide an opportunity for representatives of the System, affected ratepayers, renters, property owners, and the public to present oral and written comments at the meeting.
  - c. Provide an opportunity to submit comments by mail or electronically during the 30-day notice period and for at least one week after the public meeting
3. Make a reasonable effort to provide notice to all ratepayers, renters, and property owners who receive water service from the designated water system of the following:
  - a. The name and qualifications of the administrator being considered by the State Board
  - b. The scope of the appointment and the particular services to be provided by the administrator being considered by the State Board, and
  - c. Any conflict of interest
4. Issue an order to the System requiring it to accept a full-scope administrator to take complete management control of its public water system.

## Attachment 2

### Responsibilities of a Full-Scope Administrator

All actions taken by an administrator are required to be in the best interest of the community served by the water system and must be intended to develop the water system's capability to sustainably deliver an adequate supply of affordable, safe drinking water so that the services of the administrator are no longer necessary. Section 116686 and the Administrator Policy Handbook requires the State Water Board to enter into a contract or grant agreement with an appointed administrator and fund the cost of the administrator to provide the agreed upon service to the System.

The Administrator is required to provide reports in order to keep the governing board or owner of the water system and the customers served informed about actions taken and status of the system. In addition, the Administrator Policy Handbook includes a process that allows any ratepayer, renter, or property owner who receives water from a designated water system to submit a petition to the State Water Board for the reversal or modification of an administrator decision or replacement of an administrator. A complete description of an administrator's obligations is contained in section 116686 of the Health and Safety Code and in the Administrator Policy Handbook.

The authority and scope of work of an administrator is established on a case by case basis in the contract/grant agreement executed between the State Water Board and the administrator and in the order issued to the public water system to accept the services of the administrator. **In the case of Richgrove Community Services District, the full-scope administrator appointed to it will have authority to exercise complete managerial control over its public water system, including but not limited, to financial reviews, responding and representing Richgrove Community Services District to regulatory agencies, entering into contracts, establishing operational budgets and rates, acceptance of water rate payments to pay water system expenses, system operation, and keeping customers informed of the status of the water system.**

### **Attachment 3**

CA Health and Safety Code Section 116686:

[http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&sectionNum=116686](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&sectionNum=116686).

The State Water Board has not provided a paper copy of this section in the interest of decreasing environmental impacts. However, should you be unable to access this website for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact our office for a paper copy.

## **Attachment 4**

Administrator Policy Handbook:

[https://bit.ly/Admin\\_Policy\\_Handbook\\_2025](https://bit.ly/Admin_Policy_Handbook_2025)

The State Water Board has not provided a paper copy of this section in the interest of decreasing environmental impacts. However, should you be unable to access this website for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact our office for a paper copy.