



# Enforcement News

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board  
[www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/)

## **Central Valley Water Board Issues Pair of Penalties to Madera County Growers for failing to Acquire Water Quality Permits**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
May 12, 2015

**Contact: Brett Stevens**  
**Phone: (916) 464-4642**

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has approved a pair of penalties for two Madera County landowners for failing to get the required permits for discharging waste from their irrigated croplands.

The Central Valley Board approved fines for Heritage Ranch LLC and Sarbjit and Satwant Athwal in the amounts of \$51,480 and \$56,628 respectively for their properties in the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed.

State law requires water quality permits for commercial irrigated lands because pesticides and fertilizers used on cropland can run off into streams, or enter groundwater. These permits ensure waste discharges don't harm the Central Valley's rivers and groundwater aquifers.

In December 2012, the Central Valley Water Board issued waste discharge requirements that allowed farmers in the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed to join a coalition of growers called the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition. The coalition holds a water quality permit that covers all of its members, conducts monitoring and provides reports to the Central Valley Water Board on behalf of the growers. Growers who don't join the coalition incur much higher costs associated with conducting their own individual monitoring and reporting directly to the Central Valley Water Board. Landowners whose parcels do not have the required permit are subject to fines and may lose their opportunity to be regulated under the coalition-based permit.

"Owners of unpermitted irrigated lands are undermining the regulatory program and efforts to mitigate agricultural-related water quality problems. With these fines, the Board is sending a strong message that it's time for the remaining non-permitted growers to obtain all appropriate regulatory coverage," said Andrew Altevogt, Assistant Executive Officer for the Central Valley Water Board.



For more information, see the Heritage Ranch LLC and Athwal Administrative Civil Liability Orders [here](#) and [here](#).

Owners of irrigated cropland can find out how to join a coalition group and get the required regulatory coverage by going to the [Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Join a Coalition Group webpage](#), or by calling the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program at (916) 464-4611. More information about these fines can be found at the [Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Compliance and Outreach Activities webpage](#).

***The State Water Boards are now on Twitter! Follow us at:***  
<https://twitter.com/CaWaterBoards>

###