



Enforcement News

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
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Central Valley Water Board Settles With East San Joaquin Valley Grower Over Failure to Acquire Water Quality Permit

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 29, 2016

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The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has approved a settlement agreement with a Madera County landowner for failure to obtain the required permits for discharging waste from their irrigated croplands.

The Central Valley Water Board approved a settlement agreement for Gurcharan and Balwinder Rakkar in the amount of \$63,700 for their properties in the East San Joaquin Valley. Of the full settlement amount, \$29,619 will be provided to [Self-Help Enterprises](#) to conduct an environmental project called “Disadvantaged Community Engagement in Regional Water Planning for the Madera County area of the San Joaquin Basin Region.” This project is one of many that have been funded as a result of the Central Valley Water Board’s partnership with the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment that began in 2014.

“Owners of unpermitted irrigated lands undermine the regulatory program and ongoing efforts to mitigate agricultural-related water quality problems,” said Andrew Altevogt, assistant executive officer for the Central Valley Water Board. “With this and other similar fines, the board is sending a strong message that a lack of appropriate permit coverage is unacceptable.”

State law requires water quality permits for commercially-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 2012, the Central Valley Water Board issued waste discharge requirements that allowed farmers in the East San Joaquin River Watershed to join the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition. The coalition holds water quality permits that cover their members and conducts monitoring and provides reports to the Central Valley Water Board on behalf of the growers.

Growers who don’t join a 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.

For more information, see the Rakkar settlement [agreement](#).

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 Outreach and Enforcement webpage](#).

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