

4-22-16

Ms. Jeanine Townsend
Clerk of the Board
State Water Quality Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812



Email: commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov subject line: "Comments to A-2239(a)-(c)"

Re: Opposition to proposed Order for E. San Joaquin and all other water quality coalitions in CA

The El Dorado County Agricultural Water Quality Management Corporation (EDCAWQMC) subwatershed group has been in existence since 2003 after removal of the exemption for irrigated agriculture. EDCAWQMC. It is a subwatershed part of the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition. Our watershed area consists of 1.1 million acres in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Approximately 3000 acres are irrigated by 330 members with many farms of less than 5 acres.

In our area farming is of low intensity, cover crops are maintained on slopes year round, minimal to no pesticide are used, and at least two management practices are implemented by each grower. For 12 years we have had excellent water quality results. Irrigation practices employ drip or micro-jet irrigation resulting in no run-off reaching significant watercourses.

No important benefit to the environment is to be gained by further certification of plans, increase monitoring sites, further tests of private wells, and other requirements that do not apply to foothills farming. Recently, the Central Valley waterboard approved El Dorado for a Reduced Monitoring/ Management Practices Verification Plan based on our history and supporting scientific data. Proposed tests of sediment for substances not applied in the foothills are an example of regulations based on assumptions rather than data provided regulators for over 12 years. Apparent in A-2239 is a disregard for differences from valley agriculture in foothills farming practices, the types of crops, low intensity farming, minimal to no pesticide use, soil types, fractured rock permeability groundwater regimes, small scale attention to efficient irrigation and investments in eco-friendly practices currently implemented in EDCAWQMC.

A-2239 lacks provisions for small acreage foothill farming. The Economic Analysis Report by both the State Water Board and the Central Valley Regional water board does not recognize the costs already paid by farmers, let alone increased costs proposed in this new Waste Discharge Order. The costs of certifying plans, reporting, testing private wells, paying for additional surface water monitoring sites and analyses and reporting increase the minimum cost to EACH small grower of \$4,000-5,000/ yr for small acreage. The State Water Board's Fact Sheet says, **"We find that the additional costs and burden associated with these revisions are not substantial"**. The waterboards have have not recognized the real costs to family foothills growers.

There are many sections of the CA Water Code which concern and protect the economic impact to a person/ entity. For instance, CA Water Code section 13267 states that “[t]he burden, including costs, of [monitoring and reporting] shall bear **a reasonable relationship to the need** for the report and the benefits to be obtained from the reports.” This has not been addressed appropriately for small foothill growers or livestock producers.

The character of foothills small family farming is very different from valley farming by large corporations. The “one size fits all” regulations fail to account for the unique character of our farming community. The proposed A-2239 regulations put in danger the character of EDCAWQMC from open space and agricultural landscapes to housing tracts because small family farms are generally a labor of love rather than a profitable economic enterprise. This environment is worth protecting if only because the runoff and air quality from dense residential and industrial areas certainly exceeds the undesirables from the current foothills small farming community. This is antithetic to the purposes of A-1239

Sincerely,

Roland von Huene PhD
Emeritus, UC Davis
Emeritus, US Geological Survey