



CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

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May 21, 2014



Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

RE: Comment Letter – Santa Maria Toxicity and Pesticide TMDL

Dear Ms. Townsend:

On behalf of our 78,000 farm families and individual members the California Farm Bureau Federation appreciates the opportunity to provide the following comments on the proposed approval of an amendment to the water quality control plan for the Central Coastal Basin to establish a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for toxicity and pesticides in the Santa Maria River Watershed.

Comments were submitted to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Board) by Mr. Richard E. Adam, a long time Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau member and thus commenting before the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) is proper.

Mr. Adam stated, “As I read these proposals I am struck with the many inconsistencies and what I think are basically flawed studies which lead to flawed conclusions. I deem the C. Camp study that leads to the conclusion that many (if not all) of the manmade drainways in Santa Maria are impaired waterways a flawed study. It is flawed in the basic elements as they are interpreted in the Santa Maria drainage area.” The response to comments by the Central Coast Board was dismissive and inadequate.

Farm Bureau concurs with the points raised in the comment letter submitted by the Pyrethroid Working Group (see letter submitted by Theresa Dunham, Somach, Simmons and Dunn on May 21, 2014.) Specific points of concurrence in summary form include, but are not limited to, the following:

“(1) the Central Coast Water Board failed to comply with State Board’s *Water Quality Control Policy for Developing California’s Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List* (State’s Listing Policy) in making determinations of impairment for pyrethroid pesticides simultaneously while developing the TMDL; (2) the Central Coast Water Board used data that lacks scientific rigor and transparency to make determinations of impairment; (3) the Central Coast Water Board used water quality criteria developed by the University of California, Davis (UCD) as numeric water

quality targets that have not been subject to rigorous public review or comment; (4) the Central Coast Water Board improperly compared total water samples to dissolved criteria;” (5) the Central Coast Water Board inadequately responded to public comment letters; and (6) the TMDL is internally inconsistent. All of these issues raise important policy and technical issues of first impression that should be considered by the State Water Resources Control Board in its review of the Santa Maria Pesticide TMDL.

Additionally, to interpret the narrative water quality objectives, the TMDL’s Technical Project Report refers to the Central Valley Regional Board’s UCD criteria which has not been adopted by the Central Valley Regional Board, nor has it been fully vetted by the public or Board members.

Farm Bureau respectfully requests that the State Board, pursuant to its authority under Water Code section 13245, remand the Santa Maria Pesticide TMDL to the Central Coast Water Board for further consideration, and include specific direction to ensure that such further consideration complies with state law and policy.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Danny Merkley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Danny Merkley
Director of Water Resources