



Matthew Rodriquez
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Valley Region
Katherine Hart, Chair

11020 Sun Center Drive, #200, Rancho Cordova, California 95670-6114
(916) 464-3291 • FAX (916) 464-4645
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley>



Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM
General WDR Order Requirements Meeting
EAST SAN JOAQUIN WATER QUALITY COALITION

Meeting Notes

Thursday August 25, 2011, 9:30-11:30 PM

Purpose: To discuss naming conventions, proposed Tier 3 groundwater regions, designation of Tier 1 and Tier 2 groundwater regions, Coalition boundary issues, and time schedules.

Participants: Alan Cregan, Clay Rodgers, Joe Karkoski, Parry Klassen, Melissa Turner, Michael Johnson, Susan Fregien

1. **Proposed Naming Convention Change**

Purpose: Discuss the Coalition's proposal to change the designation of groundwater tiers 1, 2, or 3 to two categories named High Vulnerability areas and Low Vulnerability areas. Determine if this alternative will meet program requirements.

Outcome: The Coalition would like to use the terms "high vulnerability" and "low vulnerability" instead of Tiers 1, 2, and 3. The Coalition believes that their whole area is vulnerable to groundwater contamination and doesn't want to give growers the impression that they don't have to implement any preventative practices at all by using Tier 1 designation of low threat. They will be adding about a half million acres of agricultural lands to the program for the groundwater part of the new program. These new 'dischargers' generally don't have any familiarity with our program. The Coalition would assign either high or low vulnerability, with the associated practices and requirements being more intense for high vulnerability areas. Lower vulnerability areas would still have some basic requirements (e.g., protection of well heads).

One of the most important items that the Coalition will need to address in developing their groundwater management plan is how to prioritize and schedule what to work on first. The areas identified as highly vulnerable will need to have nutrient management plans in place.

The Coalition will also need to identify areas where additional information needs to be obtained before the vulnerability (or tier) level can be assigned. Therefore, at least internally, the concept of designating three different tier levels is necessary (i.e., Tier 2 or unknown "vulnerability" category for areas where more information is needed).

ACTION ITEM: RB Program Managers need to discuss use of terminology with Executive Management. We need to consider having consistency among the various Coalition Orders.

2. **Proposed Tier 3 Groundwater Regions**

Purpose: RB Staff and Coalition agreement on where the “Tier 3 (high threat)” groundwater regions are located, as well as their specific perimeters. Tools needed for this discussion include the RB’s map of proposed Tier 3 groundwater regions and the Coalition’s maps of groundwater information.

Outcome: Coalition asked why RB staff didn’t propose designated Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels. Staff explained that with the tools available they were able to designate Tier 3. (Note that Dairy Data from the Fresno office was used for Madera County, but not the rest of the Coalition area.) Staff did not designate Tier 1 areas because there are no known Tier 1 areas based on the data used to develop the map. Therefore, all other areas are by default Tier 2 until the Coalition determines otherwise. Where data are readily accessible the Coalition can present the information to justify areas to be moved into Tier 1.

The group discussed ideas about how to go about prioritizing efforts to address groundwater issues. If the Coalition labels an area high vulnerability, but doesn’t yet have data to confirm this, can they assign it a lower priority in terms of required efforts? Yes, this can be a criteria used in prioritization efforts. RB staff expressed that it would be desirable to assign a high priority to those areas where we know there are municipalities and/or a lot of people depending on ground water for drinking water/domestic purposes. The Coalition may be able to obtain information from Counties about community water systems.

Would % dairies be a useful criterion for prioritization? This is probably not as important as knowing what the actual use of the groundwater is in a given area. It was noted that dairies will be required to comply with ILRP, either through their Dairy permit or by joining a Coalition. Another criterion to use in prioritization is what crops are being grown in a given area.

A map of the proposed designations should be prepared and included in the Order, as part of the groundwater MRP. The Coalition is planning to assign the small ‘gaps’ that occur within the current map of Tier 3 areas as high vulnerability areas. Because these small sections are completely surrounded by Tier 3, it is most likely they have the same characteristics.

3. **Criteria/Process for Designation of “Tier 1 & Tier 2” Groundwater Regions**

Purpose: Identify the criteria for designating Tier 1 versus Tier 2 groundwater regions, decide who will make the initial assessment, and identify a deadline for preparing and submitting the initial map.

Outcome: See discussion under Items 1 and 2.

4. **Coalition Boundaries**

Purpose: Review the RB map showing both the current ESJ Coalition boundaries and the proposed ESJ Coalition boundaries; identify acceptable boundary changes; identify known issues with potential boundary changes; and identify decision factors and who is responsible for follow-up. Tools needed for this discussion include a map of current and proposed boundaries.

Outcome: The Coalition is fine with the proposed change on the northern boundary with the Delta Coalition. The Coalition will also be fine with the outcome of boundary discussions with the SSJ Coalition and the Westside Coalition.

5. Time Schedule to Begin Groundwater Requirements

Purpose: Discuss issues and concerns related to the time schedule for groundwater requirements and identify alternative scheduling approaches for the WDR Order.

Outcome: The Coalition is concerned about differences in the timing of when groundwater requirements must start for their members compared to members in other Coalitions. The RB does not anticipate a large gap between the Coalitions, maybe 6 months to a year. The RB will not delay the Order requirements to wait until other Orders are completed.

6. Components & Schedule for the ESJWQC WDR Order

Purpose: Share overall process and schedule with Coalition.

7. Action Items/Next Steps

Outcome:

- Revise the groundwater map, fill in the smaller sections as “high vulnerability” or Tier 3 areas. **We need to identify who makes the revisions**
- Parry will confirm with the ESJ Board that revising the gw map as discussed is acceptable.
- Joe and Clay to discuss terminology with Executive Management.
- During the next meeting the Coalition should let us know if they have specific comments related to documents that were reviewed and discussed at the first Stakeholder Work Group meeting.

8. Next Meeting