

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

**STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 5 – 6, 2013**

Prepared on November 5, 2013

**ITEM NUMBER: 18**

**SUBJECT: Status Update - Central Coast Groundwater Coalition**

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**KEY INFORMATION:**

Location:                      Regionwide  
Type of Discharge:        Irrigated Lands runoff and leaching to groundwater  
Existing Orders:            Order No. RB3-2012-0011 and WQ 2013-0101

**THIS ACTION:            Informational**

**SUMMARY**

Agricultural Order R3-2012-0011 and the associated Monitoring and Reporting Program provide landowners and operators the option to comply with groundwater monitoring requirements by either sampling groundwater wells individually on their agricultural operations, or by joining a groundwater cooperative monitoring program approved by the Executive Officer.

In July 2013, the Executive Officer approved the following cooperative groundwater monitoring programs:

- Central Coast Cooperative Groundwater Program (Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito Counties)<sup>1</sup>;
- Santa Rosa Creek Valley Cooperative Groundwater Monitoring Program (San Luis Obispo County);

On September 24, 2013, after the Executive Officer approved these cooperative groundwater monitoring programs, the State Water Resources Control Board issued Water Quality Order 2013-0101 (State Order) for the Central Coast region, which included modifications to the groundwater monitoring and reporting requirements for cooperative groundwater monitoring programs. The staff report for Item 17 discusses the State Order in more detail.

The State Order added new language to the Agricultural Order to clarify specific cooperative groundwater monitoring program requirements, including well selection, repeat sampling, timing of sampling, prioritization of drinking water evaluation, drinking water notifications and reporting. In addition, the State Order added new language to state that cooperative groundwater

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<sup>1</sup> The Central Coast Cooperative Groundwater Program changed their name to the Central Coast Groundwater Coalition shortly after program approval.

monitoring proposals may be submitted between September 24, 2013, and November 1, 2013. This enables growers who have not joined a cooperative groundwater monitoring group prior to September 24, 2013 to join an approved cooperative groundwater monitoring program, provided they have completed two rounds of monitoring as required under individual groundwater monitoring requirements. The State Order also added new language to require that cooperative groundwater monitoring program sampling must be completed by December 1, 2014.

Regarding drinking water notifications, the State Order added new language to require that, if a discharger conducting individual groundwater monitoring or a third party conducting cooperative groundwater monitoring determines that water in any well that is used or may be used for drinking water exceeds or is projected to exceed 45 mg/L of nitrate as NO<sub>3</sub> (or 10mg/L of nitrate + nitrite as N), then the discharger or third party must provide notice to the Central Coast Water Board within 24 hours of learning of the exceedance or projected exceedance. The State Order indicates that for wells on a Discharger's farm/ranch, the Central Coast Water Board will require that the Discharger notify the users within 10 days. For all other wells, the Central Coast Water Board will notify the users promptly. The State Order also added new language to the Agricultural Order to clarify that an interested person may seek discretionary review by the Regional Board of the Executive Officer's approval or denial of a cooperative groundwater monitoring program.

The Central Coast Groundwater Coalition (CCGC) is the largest cooperative groundwater monitoring program in the Central Coast region. The CCGC operates as a non-profit 501(c)5 mutual benefit organization whose primary function is to fulfill groundwater monitoring requirements in the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program of the Central Coast Water Board. On November 1, 2013, the CCGC submitted a revised workplan to the Central Coast Water Board to address the new requirements in the State Order. In addition, the CCGC also submitted a new workplan to add members and groundwater monitoring in the southern counties (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties). Central Coast Water Board staff is currently reviewing these workplans. In addition, the CCGC has stated they will submit their final membership list by November 15, 2013. Once the final membership list is received, staff will evaluate individual grower compliance with groundwater monitoring and reporting requirements.

Parry Klassen, Executive Director of the CCGC will update the Board on the status of implementation of the cooperative groundwater monitoring program. The CCGC will provide a copy of their presentation in advance of the Board Meeting and staff will distribute it in a Supplemental Sheet to the Board.