
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

December 18, 2013

Parry Klassen
Executive Director
Central Coast Groundwater Coalition
512 Pajaro St.
Salinas, CA 93901
pklassen@unwiredbb.com

Dear Mr. Klassen:

IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM – APPROVAL OF CENTRAL COAST COALITION WORK PLAN FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO, SANTA BARBARA, AND VENTURA COUNTIES

On November 1, 2013, the Central Coast Groundwater Coalition (Coalition) submitted a work plan titled “*Central Coast Coalition Work Plan for San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties*” (workplan) to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board). The purpose of the workplan is to set forth the cooperative groundwater monitoring activities and schedule for the southern region of the Coalition that satisfies the requirements in Agricultural Order No. R3-2012-0011, Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands and the associated Monitoring and Reporting Program Orders (MRPs), for participating landowners and growers in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties. The workplan was submitted in accordance with Order WQ 2013-0101, adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) on September 24, 2013, which allowed growers and landowners to propose new or expand existing cooperative groundwater monitoring programs by November 1, 2013.

This letter is to approve the workplan for the San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties with the specific conditions described below. Please note that the conditions identified in the Central Coast Water Board’s approval letter dated July 11, 2013 for the Coalition’s “Northern Central Coast Cooperative Groundwater Program” also apply to the relevant sections of this workplan. In addition, this letter also includes specific requirements related to drinking water notifications that are included as a condition of our approval of the workplan. These conditions are important and required to clarify and confirm our expectations about how you will comply with the Order No. R3-2012-0011 and associated MRPs on behalf of individual landowners and growers who participate in your cooperative program.

BACKGROUND

The Central Coast Water Board adopted the Agricultural Order and associated MRPs on March 15, 2012. The Order and the MRPs specify that enrolled landowners and growers have the option to comply with groundwater monitoring requirements by either monitoring groundwater

individually on their agricultural operations, or by joining a groundwater cooperative monitoring program. In July 2013, the Central Coast Water Board did not approve a cooperative groundwater monitoring program for growers and landowners in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties. Thus, growers and landowners in these counties are required to comply with individual groundwater monitoring requirements specified in the Order and MRPs.

After a review of the Order and MRPs, the State Board issued Order WQ 2013-0101 allowing growers and landowners to propose new or expand existing cooperative groundwater monitoring programs by November 1, 2013. The State Board Order WQ 2013-0101 also specified that growers and landowners who had not joined a cooperative groundwater monitoring group prior to September 24, 2013, may participate in an approved cooperative groundwater monitoring program, provided they have completed two rounds of monitoring as required under individual groundwater monitoring requirements.

On November 1, 2013, the Coalition submitted a work plan titled "*Central Coast Coalition Work Plan for San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties*" (workplan) to the Central Coast Water Board. Similar to the Coalition's workplan for the Monterey, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties, the subject workplan states that the southern cooperative program will implement two important technical tasks: locating and sampling domestic supply wells on participant owned/leased/operated land, and characterizing groundwater aquifers in the cooperative program area with a focus on the quality of shallow groundwater. Additionally, the workplan also includes activities related to drinking water notifications for situations where results for domestic drinking water wells indicate an exceedance for the drinking water standard for nitrate as NO₃ or nitrate+nitrite as nitrogen, per State Board Order WQ-2013-0101.

This letter is to approve the workplan with the following specific conditions.

CONDITIONS

1. Implementation begins upon approval of the workplan. You must implement the workplan according to the schedule described in Tables 1, 3, 4 and 5. As described in Table 3, by December 1, 2014, you must complete all sampling activities and all phases of the workplan must be completed by June 30, 2015, including submittal of all deliverables to the Central Coast Water Board.
2. The Coalition's workplan for the northern counties includes a final report on the concentration of nitrate in domestic supply wells. This information is not explicitly identified in this workplan and must be included in the draft final report for the San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties submitted to the Central Coast Water Board by April 15, 2015.
3. Data collected as part of this workplan must be included in contour maps developed by the Coalition. Contour maps must be provided as a geographic information systems (GIS) shapefile with the associated technical information with the draft final report by April 15, 2015 according to the conditions specified in the Central Coast Water Board's approval letter dated July 11, 2013 for the Coalition's "Northern Central Coast Cooperative Groundwater Program".

4. The State Board Order WQ 2013-0101 requires that growers and landowners who had not joined a cooperative groundwater monitoring group prior to September 24, 2013, may participate in an approved cooperative groundwater monitoring program, provided they have completed two rounds of monitoring as required under individual groundwater monitoring requirements. If the Coalition chooses to conduct individual groundwater monitoring and reporting on behalf of such growers, data must be uploaded to GeoTracker as individual farm data in compliance with individual groundwater monitoring and reporting requirements.

Drinking Water Notification

5. The workplan indicates that the Coalition has developed a notification system to identify wells that have a concentration of nitrate above the MCL and make sure that users of the water are notified and will comply with the notification requirements specified by State Board Order WQ 2013-0101. If the Coalition determines that water in any well that is used or may be used for drinking water exceeds or is projected to exceed the drinking water standard, the Coalition must do the following:
 - a) Within 24 hours of learning of the exceedance or projected exceedance of the drinking water standard, provide notice to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board);
 - b) Within 48 hours of learning of the exceedance or projected exceedance of the drinking water standard, notify Coalition members that they are required by the Central Coast Water Board to notify the landowner and well users of the exceedance within 10 days. The content of the notifications must be consistent with that described in State Board Order WQ-2013-0101.
 - c) Within 10 days of learning of the exceedance or projected exceedance of the drinking water standard, provide a copy of the template notification letter, list of members notified, and the date the member was notified to the Central Coast Water Board. Additionally, at that time, the Coalition must also provide the Central Coast Water Board with the names and contact information for any member not successfully notified by the Coalition. The Coalition must also provide copies of the individual notification letters sent to Coalition members informing them of the exceedance of the drinking water standards, upon request of the Central Coast Water Board.
 - d) Within 30 days of completing notifications for San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, the Coalition must provide to the Central Coast Water Board a summary of any follow-up actions taken by Coalition members to provide treatment or alternative drinking water supplies for well users affected by drinking water exceedances. In addition, upon request by the Central Coast Water Board, the Coalition must provide a list of Coalition members who have not provided information about follow-up actions or who have not taken actions to provide treatment or alternative drinking water supplies for well users affected by drinking water exceedances. The Central Coast Water Board will contact these members directly.

I appreciate the Coalition's efforts and progress made thus far to comply with the cooperative groundwater monitoring requirements. The above conditions are important and required to clarify and confirm our expectations related to how the Coalition will comply with the cooperative groundwater monitoring requirements on behalf of their members, and especially to ensure that

well users are notified in the case of drinking water exceedances, as required by State Board Order WQ-2013-0101. Additionally, implementation of these notification requirements will ensure that the Coalition's drinking water notification process is consistent with the notification process that is presently followed by the Central Coast Water Board for dischargers who comply with individual groundwater monitoring requirements.

If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact Hector Hernandez of my staff at (805) 542-4641 or via e-mail at Hhernandez@waterboards.ca.gov, or Angela Schroeter at (805) 542-4644 or via e-mail at: Aschroeter@waterboards.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by Kenneth A Harris Jr.
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Coast Regional Water Quality Control
Board, ou=Executive Officer,
email=Ken.Harris@waterboards.ca.gov
, c=US
Date: 2013.12.18 09:36:44 -08'00'

Kenneth A. Harris Jr.
Executive Officer

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