

# EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD

January 2026

**EMPLOYEE:** Cruz Romero  
**UNIT:** Groundwater Quality Protection Permitting Unit  
**TITLE:** Water Resource Control Engineer  
**SUPERVISOR/TITLE:** Bryan Rock, Senior Engineering Geologist

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Cruz Romero is being recognized for his significant contributions during the month of January 2026. Since Cruz came on to the Central Valley Water Board in February 2022 his hard work, attention to detail, and professionalism have been instrumental in advancing the goals and objectives of the Groundwater Quality Protection Program.

In the past month, Cruz has completed several significant program tasks. He drafted two Notices of Applicability and associated MRPs for small domestic wastewater treatment systems. One of these facilities, the Sonora Estates Manufactured Housing Development, has outdated WDRs and was also issued a CDO in the early 2000s. On top of the NOA for Sonora Estates, Cruz also reviewed the compliance history for the site and drafted a rescission order for the CDO, as well as a rescission Order for the WDRs, both of which are scheduled to be considered for adoption at the April Board Meeting.

In January, Cruz also conducted a pre-requirement inspection and prepared tentative revised WDRs and an MRP for the Firebaugh WWTF that are also scheduled to be considered for adoption in April. The Firebaugh WWTF is a complex site that is home to not only a POTW, but also a tomato processing wastewater operation, and both operations utilize the same reclamation area. The Firebaugh WWTF has also encountered many funding hurdles over the past year, resulting in changes in the scope of work to upgrade the facility. Originally, this project was assigned to another staff member, but due to the need to shift staff resources to another priority project, Cruz willingly stepped into the project and had to come up to speed quickly to meet Work Plan goals. Notably, Cruz prepared and presented a Pre-Issue Paper for the site to EMG during a scheduled meeting. However, other presentations during the same meeting time ran long and gave Cruz little time to present his prepared presentation. Even given the condensed time to present, Cruz was able to make on the fly adjustments to give a thorough summary of the complex site history, financial hurdles, proposed upgrades, and issues at the WWTF, and present proposed resolutions. Due to Cruz's efforts, the draft TWDRs and TMRP are expected to be released for public comment in the next few days.

In addition to the accomplishments noted above, Cruz provides timely responses to dischargers, other public agency representatives, and coworkers, and is always courteous, professional, and positive. He goes beyond the technical

reports, often researching the dischargers and operators and associated local current events to further gain insights into projects he works on. It's been a pleasure working with Cruz, and I strongly believe that he is deserving of the Employee Recognition Award for the way in which he completes project tasks, and the way in which he represents the Central Valley Water Board.