

San Diego Water Board Adopts General Waste Discharge Requirements for Commercial Agricultural Operations within the San Diego Region

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DATE

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San Diego --- An early November action by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Diego Water Board) requires commercial agricultural operations to implement effective management practices to protect water quality.

The San Diego Water Board's November 9 adoption of waste discharge requirement orders are intended to protect groundwater and surface water from agricultural operation discharges. The production of crops requires disturbance to the soil and the use of various agricultural chemicals which can generate discharges of waste such as nutrients, pesticides, herbicides, fumigants, pathogens, and sediment that can cause pollution and nuisance conditions in surface water and groundwater. An estimated 6,000 agricultural operations on some 70,000 acres in San Diego Region will be required to comply with these requirements.

The orders are:

- [Order No. R9-2016-0004, General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Commercial Agricultural Operations for Dischargers that are Members of a Third-Party Group in the San Diego Region](#) (Third-Party General Order)
- [Order No. R9-2016-0005, General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Commercial Agricultural Operations for Dischargers Not Participating in a Third-Party Group in the San Diego Region](#) (Individual General Order)

The orders, the first of their kind in the San Diego Region, require commercial agricultural operations to implement effective management practices to protect water quality. Growers who have not already implemented practices that protect water quality will be required to improve their practices. Commercial agricultural operations within the San Diego Region are required to enroll under either the Third-Party General Order or the Individual General Order by August 7, 2017.

"The adoption of the agricultural orders is an important step in addressing impairment of our waters and to engage local growers," said David Gibson, Executive Officer of the San Diego Water Board. "In this effort, the agricultural community, the San Diego Water Board, and their partners have brought forward an effort to protect water quality and ensure local production of food and products that are a model for the state."

The Third Party General Order requirements apply to growers who join an approved Third-Party Group. Third-Party Groups will prepare technical reports, conduct required studies and monitoring, and submit reports to the San Diego Water Board on behalf of

the growers. Growers who do not join a Third-Party Group will be directly regulated by the San Diego Water Board under the Individual General Order and will be potentially subject to higher compliance costs.

The orders follow nearly four years of focused cooperation with interested members of the agricultural community and other governmental agencies involved in the effort to minimize the impacts of farming activities on water quality. As a result of this collaborative effort, only minor changes were requested by the agricultural community during the adoption hearing. The outreach effort will now focus on enrolling thousands of local growers in the orders and to ensure everyone is doing their part.

Additional information on the San Diego Water Board's Commercial Agriculture Regulatory Program can be found at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water_issues/programs/irrigated_lands/irrigated_ag.shtml.

The San Diego Water Board is a California State Agency responsible for preserving, enhancing and restoring the water resources of the San Diego Region for the benefit of present and future generations.

For more information about the San Diego Water Board visit: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/>

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