



Legislation Text

File #: 10-0997, **Version:** 2

Supervisor Sweeney recommending the Board authorize the Chair to sign a letter to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board commenting on the monitoring of ground water in the proposed Long Term Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program; and authorize the Environmental Management Department to work with the El Dorado County Agricultural Water Quality Management Corporation and the El Dorado County Water Agency in the development of a compliance work plan.

Background:

The Central Valley Water Board's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) was initiated in 2003 with the adoption of the Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge requirements for discharges from irrigated lands within the Central Valley Region (Conditional Waiver). In 2006, the Conditional Waiver was extended to June 2011, while a Program Environmental Impact Report was developed and an environmental analysis completed for the alternatives to the ILRP.

In 2009, a Coalition Specific Order allowed coalitions within the Sacramento Valley watersheds to submit proposals to develop a management practices -based Pilot Program that would eliminate surface water monitoring for two years. The agricultural producers in the County of El Dorado have created a coalition known as the El Dorado County Agricultural Water Quality Management Corporation (AWQMC) to comply with the current Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR's). The El Dorado County AWQMC has coordinated a management practices plan to protect State waters.

On July 28, 2010, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQB) released a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for a waste discharge regulatory program relating to irrigated lands within the Central Valley Region. The program regulates discharges of waste to ground and surface waters of the State from irrigated agricultural operations, managed wetlands, and nursery operations. The program will impact the Central Valley Water Region, which extends from the Oregon border south to the northernmost tip of Los Angeles County (Region 5). The Draft PEIR analyzes a full range of suggested alternatives to determine the potential environmental impacts of each.

The ILRP could have significant financial impacts to the agricultural producers in the County of El Dorado based on new ground water monitoring requirements. At the request of the Farm Bureau, Supervisor Sweeney recently met with staff from the Environmental Management Department, the El Dorado County AWQMC and the Water Agency to discuss the ILRP and burden of the new ground water monitoring requirement which may not be pertinent to the County of El Dorado since the County's ground water is secured through rock fractures. It is inappropriate to assume that any particular rock fracture is influenced by a particular area of land above or adjacent to the rock fracture.

The El Dorado County AWQMC has requested that the Environmental Management Department and

the Water Agency assist with the immediate need to develop comments on the ILRP Draft Program EIR and assist with the development of a compliance management practices work plan for ground water assessment consistent with the approved surface water monitoring program.

On September 8, 2010, the El Dorado County Water Agency voted unanimously to assist the County with the development of comments on the ILRP Draft Program EIR and authorized preparation of a letter to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The County of El Dorado has been and will continue to be committed to the protection of ground and surface waters of the State.

Recommendation:

Supervisor Sweeney recommending the Board authorize the Chair to sign a letter to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board commenting on the monitoring of ground water in the proposed Long Term Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program and authorize the Environmental Management Department to work with the El Dorado County Agricultural Water Quality Management Corporation and the El Dorado County Water Agency in the development of a compliance work plan.