



**California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Central Valley Region**

**Katherine Hart, Chair**



Linda S. Adams  
Acting Secretary for  
Environmental Protection

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Edmund G. Brown Jr.  
Governor

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To: San Joaquin County & Delta Water Quality Coalition Members

Re: Erosion & Sediment Controls for Agricultural Fields

The Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (Central Valley Water Board or Board) has recently responded to several complaints relating to sediment discharges from irrigated lands in the Discovery Bay area. These complaint investigations have typically resulted in findings by Board staff of excessive sediment discharges in violation of the Coalition Conditional Waiver<sup>1</sup>, the numeric Water Quality Objective for turbidity, and the narrative objective for nuisance conditions.

Staff has been directed by the Central Valley Water Board Executive Officer to pursue formal enforcement that includes considering an Administrative Civil Liability (i.e., monetary fines) when poor erosion and sediment control practices lead to excessive sediment discharges from irrigated lands. A recent case of such conditions resulted in the Central Valley Water Board issuing Administrative Civil Liability in the amount of \$300,000 to the owner of an almond orchard in the foothills of Stanislaus County. While this is an extreme case, growers in the Discovery Bay watershed can expect formal enforcement by our Board, including the possibility of fines for significant discharges of sediment-laden wastewater from their fields.

If your irrigated fields discharge irrigation return flows or storm water, the Central Valley Water Board urges you to implement effective erosion and sediment control practices, and to regularly inspect wastewater discharges to avoid conditions of excessive sediment.

Growers can seek guidance regarding effective erosion and sediment controls from your Coalition representatives, from your local Resource Conservation District, and from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Services.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (916) 464-4642, or via e-mail at [bstevens@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:bstevens@waterboards.ca.gov).

Brett Stevens, Chief  
Compliance & Outreach Unit  
Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program

<sup>1</sup> Short-Term Renewal of the Coalition Group Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands, Order No. R5-2011-0032