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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Regional Water Quality Control Board issuing fines to growers non-compliant with Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program requirements**

**BAKERSFIELD, CA:** Central Valley landowners in Merced, Madera, and Stanislaus counties are facing fines from the Central Valley Water Board (Regional Board) for failing to comply with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) requirements. Kern County growers could be subject to the same fines if they do not comply with the ILRP by the final sign-up deadline of Aug. 4, 2014.

“The Regional Water Quality Control Board is taking enforcement action against landowners who do not comply with the General Order requirements,” explained Nicole Bell, ILRP Manager for the Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority (KRWCA). “Growers and/or landowners who do not comply by the Aug. 4 deadline, will have to go through the Regional Board for approval to join the Coalition and will have to pay additional fees to the Regional Board and the Coalition. Growers who do nothing will be subject to fines imposed by the Regional Board.”

The ILRP is a recently adopted General Order that encompasses new waste discharge requirements to protect ground and surface water from irrigated agricultural discharges. Growers who irrigate agricultural lands for commercial purposes within the Kern River Watershed area are now required to either join the KRWCA or obtain individual coverage with the Regional Board. The new General Order rescinded the previous Conditional Waiver program that only applied to growers in the region that had potential for irrigation or storm water runoff into surface waters.

The KRWCA will facilitate regulatory compliance towards General Order requirements for coalition members as well as advocate for growers on water quality issues in various forums, and develop and implement economical and scientifically valid water quality monitoring programs for surface water and groundwater in the region. Growers who do not join the KRWCA will incur much higher costs associated with conducting their own individual monitoring and reporting to the Regional Board. Landowners who do not have the required permit by Aug. 4 are subject to fines and may lose their opportunity to be regulated under the coalition-based permit.

“Our Board provided growers with a very cost-effective option for getting the regulatory coverage required by law by joining the coalition,” said Andrew Altevogt, assistant executive officer of the Central Valley Water Board. “The vast majority of growers throughout the valley have complied by signing up to get the required regulatory coverage. For those who are trying to avoid these requirements, we have an aggressive program to identify their lands, and if necessary, issue fines to bring them into compliance.”

**[www.krwca.org](http://www.krwca.org)**



Membership forms and additional information on how to join the coalition, including Frequently Asked Questions and resources on Best Management Practices, are available at [www.krwca.org](http://www.krwca.org). Additional information about the proposed fines can be found at [www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water\\_issues/irrigated\\_lands/compliance\\_outreach\\_activities](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/irrigated_lands/compliance_outreach_activities). For specific questions or more information, growers can call (661) 616-6500 or email [admin@krwca.org](mailto:admin@krwca.org).

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