

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

20 July 2016

OPERATION OF SEEPAGE INTERCEPTOR LINE DRAINS TO MITIGATE INCREASED FLOWS RESULTING FROM THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT

To: Members of the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed and East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalitions

The Central Valley Water Board, Westside San Joaquin and East San Joaquin Coalitions, and US Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) have discussed the operation of proposed seepage mitigation projects to protect cropland from waterlogging or root zone salinity issues. Under the San Joaquin River Restoration Project, the Bureau will be releasing restoration flows in the river, causing groundwater levels to rise below adjacent cropland. The Bureau is required to implement a Seepage Management Plan to mitigate material adverse groundwater seepage impacts to agriculture that will include provisions for member growers covered under the Central Valley Water Board's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) or the Bureau to install and operate interceptor lines. These mitigation actions may result in the collection and release of return flows back to the San Joaquin River as a part of existing irrigated lands operations.

Member growers who own and operate interceptor lines will be covered under the ILRP for potential water quality effects. Such coverage will not necessitate any changes to the grower's current ILRP membership. Central Valley Water Board staff will work with the Coalitions and Bureau to identify an appropriate mechanism for reporting the installation and operation of interceptor lines on member parcels.

Member growers who have an agreement with the Bureau for the Bureau to own and operate interceptor lines on their property may also obtain regulatory coverage of the interceptor line activity under the ILRP. Notwithstanding Bureau ownership and operation of the interceptor lines, the member grower will bear ultimate regulatory responsibility for any resulting discharges under the applicable ILRP order.

Sincerely,



Pamela Credon
Executive Officer