



## **Make your voice heard!**

### **Join us on May 12<sup>th</sup> to demand drinking water protection!**

The Central Coast Regional Water Board will be discussing new regulations that impact the Central Coast's drinking water sources! Water running off from agricultural fields can lead to dangerous contaminants like nitrates entering the water sources and causing serious health problems.

**The Water Board is trying to regulate these discharges, and needs to hear from people like you that our public health and drinking water must be protected!**

**What:** A public meeting of Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's proposed regulations for agricultural discharges.

**When:** Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 10:30am – 5:30pm.

**Where:** Elks Lodge, 222 Elks Lane, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.

*Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW) can help provide transportation and lunch. The Water Board will provide Spanish translation at the event. There will also be staff available to answer questions in Chinese.*

**Questions?** Contact Dipti Bhatnagar at EJCW, at (510) 286-8400 or (510) 504-2876 (cell); [dipti@ejcw.org](mailto:dipti@ejcw.org).

For more information on the regulations, visit:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water\\_issues/programs/ag\\_waivers/ag\\_order.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/ag_waivers/ag_order.shtml)

### **Background information on the proposed regulations**

#### **What is the issue?**

Groundwater provides the vast majority of drinking water in the Central Coast, but virtually all the groundwater in the Central Coast is contaminated. One of the largest

sources of contamination is from agricultural run-off, which contains high rates of fertilizers. These fertilizers then leach into the ground and contaminate aquifers with nitrates. Nitrates can cause severe health impacts, including "blue baby syndrome."

In portions of the Salinas Valley, about 50% of surveyed wells had nitrate concentrations above the drinking water standard; with average concentrations nearly double the standard.

This contamination has many consequences. Small communities who cannot pay for the expensive costs of treatment are left drinking toxic water, and larger cities face constant problems with well contamination and rising treatment costs. Small, low-income communities like San Jerardo, just outside Salinas, consumed highly contaminated water for years, suffering many health impacts. Now, in order to cover the costs of treatment, residents are facing water bills of \$113.

EJCW and allies will be attending the important public workshop on May 12th in San Luis Obispo. We must be present at this workshop in full force and speak to the Board members in support of these recommendations and, in fact, to press for more stringent recommendations to protect our communities and water.

### **What will happen at the May 12 meeting?**

The meeting on May 12 in San Luis Obispo starts at 10.30am sharp. **Please plan to BE THERE BY 10AM!** Many big farmers and companies are planning to come out to oppose the regulations, so we must be on time to speak in favor of clean water.

At the meeting, first the staff will present their recommendations to regulate agricultural discharges, and then the public will make comments about the recommendations.

If you would like a time-slot of 10 or 15 minutes to present your comments, you can ask for time beforehand by emailing Angela Schroeter at [aschroeter@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:aschroeter@waterboards.ca.gov).

Or, if you would like to present your view in brief, **please fill in a comment card** with your name and mention that you want to speak on behalf of the Staff Recommendations. You will be given about 2 minutes to speak.

### **Please speak up in support of regulating agricultural discharges and clean water.**

You may also contact the Central Coast Regional Water Board:

English questions: Angela Schroeter, (805) 542-4644, [aschroeter@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:aschroeter@waterboards.ca.gov)

Spanish questions: Monica Barricarte, (805) 549-3881, [mbarricarte@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:mbarricarte@waterboards.ca.gov)

See you in San Luis Obispo on May 12!