



# Enforcement News

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board  
[www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/)

## **Eastern San Joaquin Watershed Landowners Face Proposed Fines for Discharging Irrigated Land Waste Without a Permit**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's assistant executive officer has proposed fines for a pair of landowners in Madera and Merced counties for allegedly failing to get the required permits for discharging waste from their irrigated croplands.

David Allan Ross and Renae Elaine Braaksma-Ross of Madera County and Elena Andrade of Merced County are facing fines of \$32,532 and \$23,595 respectively for their properties located in the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed.

State law requires water quality permits for facilities that discharge waste because pesticides and fertilizers used on cropland can run off into streams, or seep into groundwater sources. These permits ensure waste discharges don't harm the Central Valley's rivers and groundwater aquifers.

In December 2012, the Central Valley Water Board issued waste discharge requirements that allowed farmers in the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed to join a coalition of growers called the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition. The Coalition holds a water quality permit that covers all of its members, conducts monitoring and provides reports to the Central Valley Water Board on behalf of the growers. Growers who don't join the coalition incur much higher costs associated with conducting their own individual monitoring and reporting directly to the Central Valley Water Board. Landowners whose parcels do not have the required permit 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 for the Central Valley Water Board. "The vast majority of growers have complied. 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. Through these fines, the Board is clearly signaling that there is a steep price to pay for ignoring these basic regulatory requirements, and there is no economic advantage to delaying compliance."

Braaksma-Ross and Andrade will have the opportunity to address the Central Valley Water Board at its June 4-5 meeting to discuss the complaints and penalty amounts.

For more information, see the proposed Braaksma-Ross Administrative Civil Liability Order here: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board\\_decisions/tentative\\_orders/#ross](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/tentative_orders/#ross); and see the proposed Andrade Administrative Civil Liability Order here: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board\\_decisions/tentative\\_orders/#andrade](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/tentative_orders/#andrade).

Owners of irrigated cropland can find out how to join a coalition group and get the required regulatory coverage by going to the [Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Join a Coalition Group webpage](#), or by calling the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program at (916) 464-4611. More information about these fines can be found at the [Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Compliance and Outreach Activities webpage](#).

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