

# Thirsty for Justice...

## The Central Coast Ag Order



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# About the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW)

- Statewide coalition of more than eighty community-based and non-profit organizations and Native American tribes
- Working for water justice all across California
- Safe drinking water, waterways that support subsistence fishing, tribal cultural uses, recreational access



# Irrigated Agriculture is the Single Largest Water User and a Significant GHG Polluter



80% of California's Developed Water

The Global Water / Food / Climate Crisis Demands a Shift towards Sustainable Agriculture, including on the Central Coast

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy



# Health Impacts of Nitrates in Drinking Water



- In babies nitrates can cause blue baby syndrome which can lead to death.
- In adults chronic nitrate exposure can cause Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, other cancers, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.
- Disproportionate burden on babies, infants and the elderly.



# Thousands of Small Water Systems

The Central Coast has thousands of small systems without the economy of scale to pay the cost of treatment.



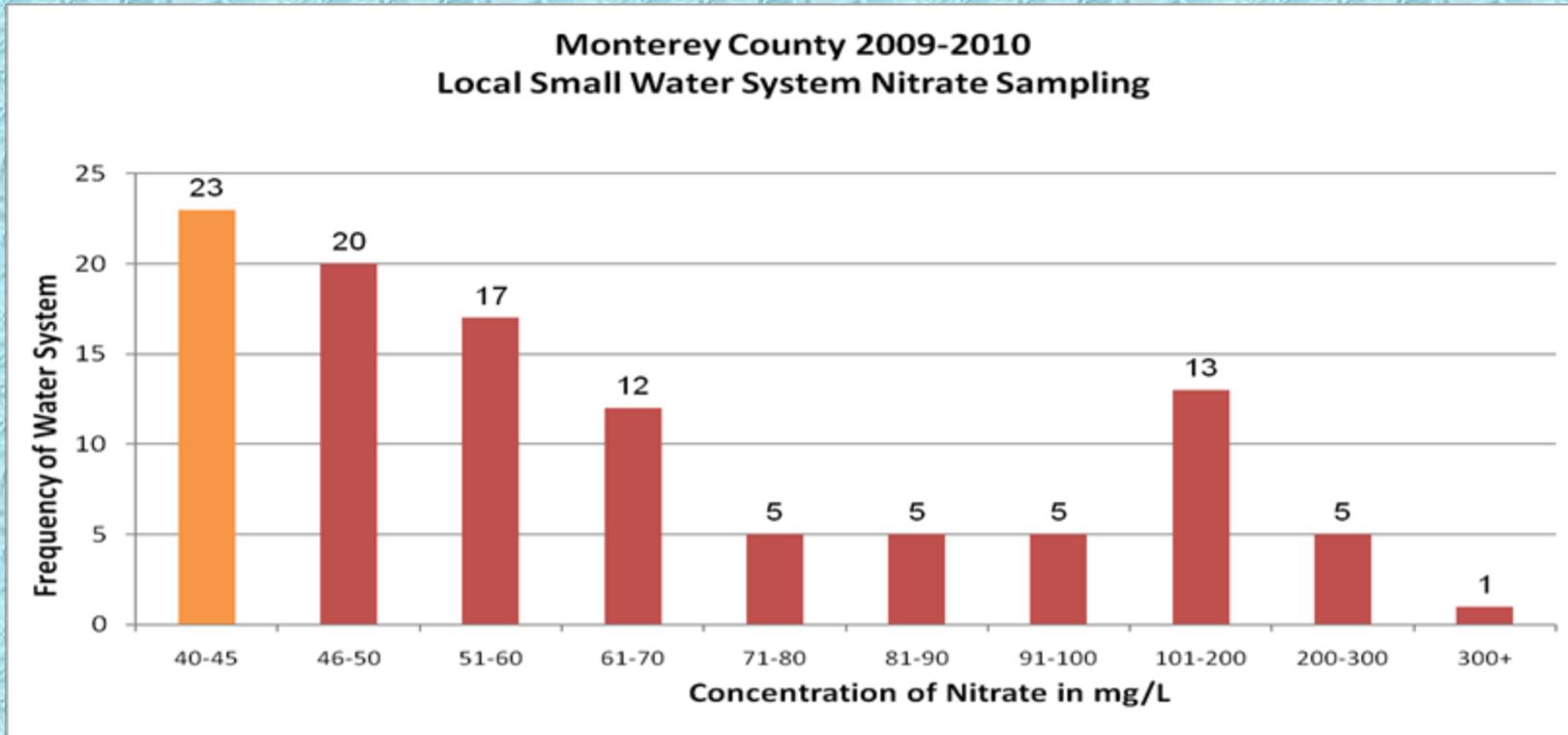
# Data from Monterey County Environmental Health

- We made a Public records request
- 2009-10 sampling data for nitrate contamination
- Information is also available at:  
[http://www.mtyhd.org/images/stories/FY\\_2009-10\\_LSWS\\_Sampling\\_02-14-11.pdf](http://www.mtyhd.org/images/stories/FY_2009-10_LSWS_Sampling_02-14-11.pdf)

MCEH found 83 water systems with nitrates over 45mg/L legal limit (16% of wells sampled in this time period)



# Data from Monterey County Environmental Health

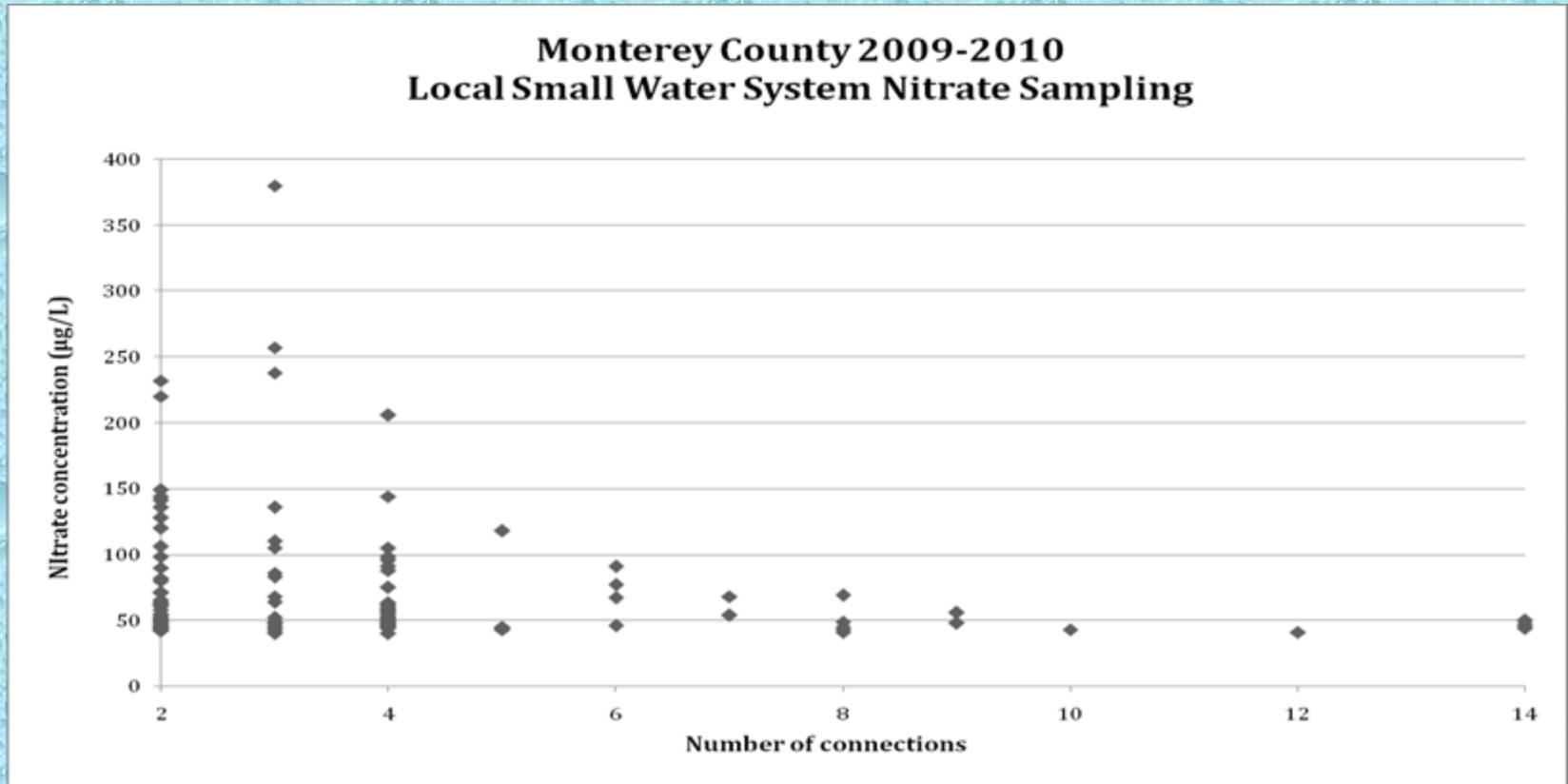


- Over 20 water systems with nitrates over 100mg/L !  
(the legal limit is 45 mg/L)

[Graphs courtesy of EJCW intern, Raymundus Butarbutar, UC Berkeley]



# Data from Monterey County Environmental Health



- Most of the egregious nitrate violations are in the smaller systems – these systems are much more vulnerable



# How will small communities get clean water?

No lifeline water rate in CA – so many community members pay high water bills OR they expose their families to poisonous water OR buy expensive bottled water.



# Which Draft Will Provide Environmental Justice?

## Justice?



- We truly support the Feb 2010 draft as fully protective of groundwater and surface water quality
- There have been many rollbacks since then, the March 2011 draft is acceptable with Required Revisions
- Ag alternative:  
No water quality standards, no individual monitoring = no accountability of polluters = not interested



# This is the face of water policy in California today

**Human Right to Water (AB 685) filed in the Legislature – package of bills sponsored by Assembly members Eng, Fong, Perea, Alejo, Perez & Wolk**



# Regional Board's efforts are in line with with statewide efforts



Your task is difficult, politically charged, but it is to be applauded. You must continue to prioritize safe, clean and affordable drinking water, and human health. You are a regulatory agency – so regulate ag.





[www.ejcw.org](http://www.ejcw.org)

