



# Media Release

## *News Release*

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Central Coast Region  
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101  
San Luis Obispo, California 93401-7906  
Phone (805) 549-3147 FAX (805) 543-0397  
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast>

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CONTACT: Ken Harris  
Phone: (805) 549-3140

### **CENTRAL COAST WATER BOARD SETTLES ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS: FARMING OPERATIONS WILL PAY FINES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE IRRIGATED LANDS AGRICULTURAL ORDER**

SAN LUIS OBISPO – The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) and six farming operations have resolved violations of the Irrigated Lands Agricultural Order.

In July 2012, the Regional Water Board's Assistant Executive Officer issued administrative civil liability complaints for failure to submit either cooperative monitoring fees or individual monitoring reports in violation of the irrigated lands agricultural order.

Prior to a hearing before the Regional Water Board scheduled for October 12, 2012, all of the farming operations resolved their violations by paying past-due cooperative monitoring fees to Central Coast Water Quality Preservation, Inc., the third-party organization that implements a cooperative monitoring program. This program is intended to lower the individual farming operations' costs of monitoring and reporting by sharing costs with a large number of other farms. Alternatively, each farming operation has the option of electing to conduct its own monitoring and reporting.

The farming operations involved continued operations without paying their share of cooperative monitoring fees, thus leaving the support of the monitoring program to the farms that are complying with the Agricultural Order.

The operations also paid penalties to the Regional Water Board to help cover investigation and enforcement costs.

"Most Central Coast farmers are conscientious land stewards," said Ken Harris, the Central Coast Water Board's Interim Executive Officer. "It's not fair to the vast majority who work hard





to stay in compliance when others don't. We are trying to make sure all farmers are doing their part to support the monitoring programs and protect water quality.”

The farming operations and the amounts they paid are:

Ralph Garcia, Salinas: \$10,379.

Gabriel Garcia, Salinas: \$8,322.

B&E Vineyard, Paso Robles: \$2,175.50.

Alvaro Rincon, Watsonville: \$2,109. (Not associated with Rincon Farms, Inc. of Gonzalez)

Vidal Medina, Watsonville: \$296.

Gomes Orchards, Hollister: \$1,000.

The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board is a California state agency tasked with preservation and enhancement of water quality.

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State Water Resources Control Board  
Office of Public Affairs  
Phone: 916.341.5254  
Fax: 916.341.5252  
Email: [info@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:info@waterboards.ca.gov)