Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

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STATE WATER BOARD FUNDING TO HELP CENTRAL VALLEY FARMERS PROTECT WATER QUALITY

SACRAMENTO - More than $8 million in state bond money is now available to Central Valley farmers for agricultural water quality improvement projects. The money will be distributed in the form of grants under an agreement between the State Water Board and the Coalition for Urban Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES), using Proposition 84 bond money. The $8 million will fund cost-sharing projects with Central Valley farmers who use improved management practices to reduce runoff of pesticides, fertilizers and sediment into surface waters in the region.

The funding will go to areas where water quality problems have been identified through the Central Valley Water Board's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP). The ILRP requires farmers to reduce pollutants in field runoff to protect rivers and streams. Agricultural water quality coalitions, formed by growers or agricultural entities such as irrigation districts, are working with the Central Valley Water Board to develop management plans that address problems identified in coalition water monitoring.

"Unlike other pollutant sources, grant funding to assist farmers in addressing water quality problems has been limited," said Ken Landau, Assistant Executive Officer of the Central Valley Water Board. "We are pleased with this opportunity and expect to see on-the-ground improvements that result in better water quality for all Central Valley residents."

Parry Klassen, Executive Director of CURES said, "This grant is a good investment of state funds into agriculture because it will help growers of lower valued crops make improvements they might otherwise not be able to afford." Field and row crops are considered lower valued crops.

CURES will contact watershed coalition groups and other agricultural entities about grant funding availability and application requirements. Where the grant funding is allocated will be determined through a competitive process that is expected to start in early March. Detailed information on submitting applications is available at www.curesworks.org.

The mission of Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board is to preserve and enhance the quality of California's water resources for the benefit of present and future generations. The primary duty of the Regional Board is to protect the quality of the waters within the Region for all beneficial uses. This duty is implemented by formulating and adopting water quality plans for specific ground or surface water basins and by prescribing and enforcing requirements on all agricultural, domestic and industrial waste discharges. More information is available at www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley.

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