



August 4, 2017

The legislature is still on Summer Recess, and will reconvene on August 21st. In the meantime, more regulatory efforts that affect agriculture have pressed forward.

The State Water Resources Control Board held a Water Quality Fees Stakeholder Meeting this week to give fee payers an overview of budget cost drivers for the 2017-18 Waste Discharge Permit Fund (WDPF). The WDPF houses funds for eight programs which include the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System, Storm Water, Waste Discharge Requirements (or General Orders), Land Disposal, 401 Certification, Confined Animal Facilities (CAF), the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) and now Cannabis. Cannabis will be kept structurally separate in the WDPF.

The state budget provided State Water Resources Control Board \$1 million from the Waste Discharge Permit Fund for 5 new positions in the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program to address contamination of groundwater basins from agricultural practices. With the addition of the 5 new positions and other costs the ILRP is looking at a 22.3 % increase. Staff offered three approaches to address the increase:

1. 16 cent per acre fee increase to fully cover the 22.3 % increase
2. 12 cent per acre fee increase to cover the 5 new positions only, or
3. 5 cent per acre fee increase this year with a phased increase in coming years.

The CAF program is looking at a 9.8 % increase. The program saw a 33% increase in the 2014-15 budget and no increases the past two years.

The Water Board is expected to adopt the 2016-17 fee schedule in September.