

**SUMMARY OF AG ORDER 4.0 PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS
AUGUST 2017**

Table 1: Public Scoping Meetings		
Meeting Date	Location	Attendees
August 3, 2017	Webcast	10 grower representatives and technical assistance providers
August 7, 2017	Salinas	40 interested parties
August 10, 2017	Santa Maria	30 interested parties
August 14, 2017	Webcast	7 environmental and environmental justice representatives
August 15, 2017	Watsonville	40 interested parties
August 16, 2017	San Luis Obispo Farm Bureau	12 growers and farm bureau

Below is a brief summary of comments made during the public scoping meetings.

A. Structure: enrollment, tiers, Annual Compliance Form (ACF)

- The enrollment and termination process could be improved, especially in situations where growers rotate ranches
- Inability to save partially completed eNOI and ACF can be problematic
- Clarity is needed regarding who enrolls the ranch and is responsible for any required reporting and liability (landowner, primary leaseholder, lessee, etc.)
- Using acreage as a criteria in assigning ranch tiers is flawed; a better methodology might look at practices implemented or the quality of the discharge
- Recommendation to move away from tiers altogether; use geography to prioritize
- The Order should incentivize and focus on practices, rather than focusing on monitoring and reporting
- Focus should be on water quality results, rather than individual practices
- Funding assistance for practice implementation would be helpful
- Section H of the ACF (practices implementation, assessment, and outcomes) should be revisited to add clarity and ensure that the options in the form are representative of real, on-the-ground practices;
- Additional quantitative information should be included in Section H of the ACF as a better metric of implementation and changes over time
- Third party programs may help with prioritizing areas in the region and with practice implementation
- Until the Water Board follows up with the growers who have the worst discharges, the requirements on all other growers will continue to increase
- Information on the best practices available to growers needs to be shared
- Information on the existing impairments and water quality monitoring results needs to be shared with growers
- More inter-agency coordination would be helpful to growers, including reducing the number of online portals where growers report different information to different agencies

B. Surface Receiving Water Monitoring and third party

- Flexibility in the quality assurance requirements would facilitate adding new sites

- When analyzing the data, must be aware of how flow/volume and concentration affect loading
- Water Board should host town hall meeting with real growers to spread information
- Cooperatives could help to disseminate results of monitoring
- Engage with the Spanish-speaking community
- CEDEN lag time is problematic
- There is confusion among growers regarding CMP and CCGC – which entity does what monitoring
- State Board fee structure for growers not in CMP feels punitive
- Pathway for certifying that a ranch has no runoff, and therefore falls into a different billing category, would help reduce burdens
- CMP has been able to identify trends in water quality with the monitoring data
- Can be difficult to correlate practices to changes in water quality
- Changes in practices have to be correlated with water quality trends at the watershed level

C. Groundwater Monitoring and third parties

- Difficulty with requiring growers to sample all domestic wells on an agricultural parcel when the well is outside the lease
- Sampling must be done often enough for results to be usable by growers; once every five years may not be helpful to growers when making application decisions
- Coordinate with other agencies doing groundwater trend monitoring, e.g. PVWMA
- To monitor the overall health of an aquifer, need to know what aquifer the monitoring results came from; current monitoring does not include depth or well construction
- Formation of cooperatives is daunting to growers
- More frequent sampling to identify trends and seasonal variability would be good
- Growers would appreciate flexibility in domestic well monitoring if replacement water is being provided
- It is important to know the quality of the water that is being treated, to ensure that the correct treatment method is being used
- It would help to include or make clear reference to groundwater sampling and quality assurance procedures
- Cooperatives can provide value to growers by performing the monitoring so individuals don't have to learn and follow complicated sampling and quality assurance procedures
- Recommendation to revisit the groundwater monitoring constituents (e.g. general minerals, boron)

D. Total Nitrogen Applied reporting

- Some growers may have a third party that applies the fertilizers using proprietary formulas – could make compliance with TNA reporting difficult
- It can take a significant amount of time for operators to comply with TNA reporting
- Irrigation water nitrogen applied during germination and pre-irrigation is not available to the crop (crop is not yet planted or roots are very small and N demand is low)
- Reporting could be simplified if reported nitrogen applied to entire ranch over year, rather than to specific crops
- There are concerns over the recent expansion of TNA to more ranches
- TNA reporting should apply to all growers, or at a minimum capture the vast majority of nitrogen applications
- Consideration should be given to fertilizer mineralization rates

- There is repetitiveness in strawberry TNA reporting
- Feedback to growers regarding the TNA reporting would be beneficial
- Reporting should capture the vast majority of nitrogen applications; there could be many crops that are high risk, but are not currently identified as high risk
- Growers have concerns regarding potentially reporting harvest or yield information
- Recommendation that TNA reporting takes the next step and includes a metric for nitrogen loading

E. Tier 3 requirements: individual discharge monitoring, irrigation and nutrient management plan (INMP) and effectiveness reporting, and water quality buffer plan (WQBP)

- It is challenging to find consultants to help with the INMP
- Current approach for individual discharge monitoring does not provide enough detail at the watershed level
- All growers should have some form of INMP
- An INMP should not be required of all growers
- Buffer plans are currently a patchwork, resulting in minimal to no water quality benefits – need to be more focused and objectives need to be clearer
- Water Board should consider concept of use obtainability for certain waterbodies
- More follow-up from Water Board on individual discharge monitoring results is needed
- Additional clarification regarding flow measurement requirements and interpretation of reported information in individual discharge monitoring reporting is needed

F. Missing water quality issues

- Some pesticide classes have been missed
- Focus should be on toxicity rather than individual pesticides or classes, and specifically on controlling off-site movement
- If Ag Order 4.0 will be very different from Ag Order 3.0, then a new economic analysis should be performed
- More emphasis needed on outreach and on sharing the information that is already being collected
- Erosion control progress is needed
- Winter sediment discharge requirements are needed
- Temperature is an issue that has been missed; critical to steelheads
- Incentives for collaborative projects are needed
- Educational component could be an added requirement
- Aggregated data and non-public data should not be incorporated; the public needs to know whether a requirement or the Order is ultimately working
- Milestones are needed
- Requirements need to be accountable to water quality
- Requirements to reduce loading and be protective of drinking water are needed
- In general, more communication regarding health impacts of nitrate in drinking water is needed
- Cannabis is another crop and should be regulated in the Central Coast's Ag Order
- Cannabis should be regulated separately, such as through the State Board Order
- Cannabis fees should pay into the Ag Order regional monitoring program