

CEQA SCOPING MEETING
 Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program
 Ag Order 4.0
 San Luis Obispo, March 29, 2018

	Possible Management Practices	Adverse Environmental Impacts associated with Management Practices?	Level of Impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Impacts? • Less than Significant? • Potentially Significant? 	Alternatives or mitigation?	Evidence? / Cost?
1	Denitrifying bioreactors	Taking Ag land out of production Hydrogen sulfide gas	Potentially significant		-Sometimes bioreactor may not work due to sediment buildup, so may only work in tile drain area. Then may have to redirect tile drain water to the bioreactor. -May not be practical for a large farm due to acreage needed
2	Planting cover crops	-Invasive weed species could be increased, which could also harbor invasive pests, which could harm brassica family -Could further increase use of pesticides, herbicides, could also impact cattle -Can make pest pressure continue through entire year	Potentially significant	-May not plant cover crops during drought years -Plant cover crop during fall, incorporate later to help with frost protection and avoid competition -Keep track of the high risk species	-Cover crops can be grown during winter if get adequate rainfall. If don't get adequate rainfall, cover crop may compete with your crop for the water

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3	Buffer strips/filter strips	-Weeds and pests – takes more management and the weeds/pests could move into your crop	Potentially significant		-Food safety issue related to the amount of vegetation allowed
4	Sedimentation basins	-If water flowing into them is high in nitrate or persistent pesticide residues, the nitrate/pesticides may percolate to groundwater -Cleaning them out can cause impacts -Could take ag land out of production; land could become fire danger, erosion danger, harbor for pests -Concept of rural blight if don't allow proper management of land	Potentially significant		-Sediment basins do play a positive role for recharge

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5	Avoid winter N applications	-If did avoid it, would cause grower to disk crop in due to low yield/quality -Then have to replant, which includes tractor work	Potentially significant		-This is impossible, especially around here -Many crops are grown year round, and can't leave crop without any N during winter
6	Reduce amount of fertilizer applied to match amount that is being removed		Potentially significant		-Impossible; need high quality crop in order to sell -Investment in crop requires that you protect it to provide more than sufficient fertility

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7	Using N in irrigation water to fertilize				<p>-Recent Tim Hartz article describes only using a certain amount of the irrigation water in your budget (Fertilizer value of N in irrigation water, CAPCA article)</p> <p>-During establishment phase, crop cannot take up N yet</p> <p>-Taking pounds of N applied through irrigation, plus fertilizer N, plus soil N present, is incorrect</p> <p>-The N applied to crop from the irrigation water was already, but was already present in the groundwater</p> <p>-During drought years, growers may apply 200% of ET, and saying that all of that N from irrigation water is going to crop is inaccurate (would need to account for this in calculation)</p>

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8	Improve irrigation efficiency				-DU in Santa Maria is 70% on strawberries -So would need to account for the DU in the formula for N from irrigation water
9	Converting to drip from overhead sprinkler (for irrigation efficiency)	-What do you do with drip tape at end of season? Trash problem.	Potentially significant	Permanent drip tape as an option	-Vegetable growers recently switching to thinner drip, which means it needs to be replaced more often -Cost of repairing is higher than installing new drip
10	Minimize bare dirt				-Could cause competition for water
11	Minimize tillage to protect soil structure				-Can be impossible to not till soil in vineyard/row crop situation due to pest pressures
12	Leave crop in ground until plant next one (especially for strawberries, but other crops too)				-Impossible because harbors pests prior to next crop -Not recommended by UC extension vegetable specialist
13	Maintain irrigation systems				-Probably 100% of growers are already doing this maintenance

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14					
15					
16					

Cumulative Impacts?

Alternatives to the Ag Order. How would these alternatives reduce impacts?

Other general comments?

- SGMA doesn't have to do CEQA
- Would like to see more coordination between RB and other agencies, e.g. GSAs
- Would like opportunity for feedback prior to final draft order being released
- Baseline should incorporate review of other programs, including voluntary programs; should go beyond Ag Order 1.0/2.0/3.0. Would like opportunity for public to review baseline conditions.
- Not all sedimentation is bad; excessive sedimentation is bad

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- Another main goal should be protecting agriculture as a resource; would like that added. Without agricultural stewardship of the land, entire ecosystem could crumble
- The degree of monitoring and reporting that might be required is a concern. Monitoring and reporting takes away from ability to do management practices. Less monitoring and reporting would give growers more time to implement management practices on the ground. With food safety requirements, SGMA requirements, etc. the requirements can become overwhelming and confusing. Difficult to keep track of reporting timelines.
- More outreach to growers is needed
- Is a WDR required to clean out sediment basin? If need WDR to clean out sediment basin, might do different sediment management practice, including potentially converting ag land.
- Will EIR provide recommendation saying which management practices are best based on site specific characteristics, e.g. soil type?
- How prescriptive will Ag Order be?
- Question of whether the requirements of the Ag Order would drive growers to sell their land, leading to land use conversion. More likely outcome would be that land would be taken out of production. Do need some level of agriculture to support the state
- What are some of the existing programs/grants that growers could apply for to mitigate for their cost. What is the water board going to do to mitigate the CEQA problems they have created with Ag Order 4.0? Options to reduce the cost of compliance. Would like more specific information on the cost of compliance. For example, when roll ESJ in, will need to hire somebody to do the monitoring, more extensive monitoring. May have to drill wells to show what's happening beneath farms. ESJ wants growers to be deputy sheriff and report neighbors who may not be complying.
- Prop 1 set aside significant money to allow the GSAs to come up with real plans. Matching local expenditure with state money so can set up data collection systems. R3 should be asking the governor for money for these groups so they can do what the order is asking them to do.

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-Incentives (for riparian areas, for more vegetation). Will there be incentives for growers to, for example, go into T1 if their water is not high in nitrate. Example: grower who had been on ground for only a few years, so the high nitrate groundwater wasn't from him. But he installed lysimeters to measure the concentration of what was actually moving through his soil. Turned out he was growing his crop at a nutrient deficiency. Could there be incentives for practices like this?

-Have growers going out of their way to reduce their nutrient applications. Is there an incentive?

-Incentives could be part of the mitigation of potential environmental impacts

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