



NEW SALT CONTROL PROGRAM

FOR THE CENTRAL VALLEY



Coming Together to Resolve the Central Valley's Salinity Problems

To address increasing levels of salt in the Central Valley, a new Salt Control Program is underway for all regulated dischargers of salinity to surface waters or groundwaters throughout the region.

The phased program requires permitted dischargers to choose one of two permitting options:

OPTION 1

Proceed under traditional, more stringent, salinity control requirements

OR

OPTION 2

Join in a Valley-wide salt planning study that will lead to a long-term roadmap for addressing salt build up in the Central Valley.

In January, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) will mail Notices to Comply to all permitted dischargers subject to the new Salt Control Program, which was recently added to the Central Valley's Basin Plans.¹ This notice will trigger the need for permittees to make key decisions **within six months**, which will affect costs and responsibilities over the coming years.

¹ The new Salt Control Program is contained within Basin Plan Amendments for the Sacramento River, San Joaquin River, and Tulare Lake Basins, as approved by the Central Valley Water Board in 2018 and State Water Resources Control Board in 2019.

Challenges and Goals

High levels of salt exist in waters throughout the Central Valley, reducing crop production, impairing water use, and limiting agricultural and municipal uses. The reasons are complex and longstanding.

- Salt concentrations are naturally high, due to the native geology and arid climate.
- Salt levels are exacerbated by imported water supplies, as well as human activities that concentrate salts such as irrigation, food processing, municipal water use, and wastewater treatment.

To address these concerns, the new Salt Control Program is being administered by the Central Valley Water Board through its authorities to protect surface water and groundwater quality throughout the whole of the Central Valley. The goal is to protect and preserve multiple beneficial uses of water for people, the environment, and the economy.

The Choice Ahead: Two Permitting Options

Due to the long-term nature of salinity management, the new Salt Control Program will be phased in over time. Permitted dischargers must make an important choice: Whether to proceed under a traditional permit and be subject to conservative salinity limits or join in a regional Salt Prioritization and Optimization Study (**P&O Study**) to define long-term management actions.

The P&O Study. Phase 1 will run 10 to 15 years. During this time, the P&O Study will define long-term salt management actions, including strategies and projects for reducing and removing salts. It will cost \$10 million to \$15 million and will be administered by the Central Valley Salinity Coalition with oversight from the Central Valley Water Board and CV-SALTS stakeholders.

Permitting Options. While the P&O Study proceeds, permittees will have two options for salt compliance. Under both options, existing salt management and monitoring requirements will continue.

OPTION 1

CONSERVATIVE INDIVIDUAL OPTION

Individual permittee is responsible for reducing salt accumulation.

Stringent numeric water quality permit limits apply based on protecting the agricultural and/or municipal beneficial uses.

P&O Study participation is optional.

OPTION 2

ALTERNATIVE COOPERATIVE OPTION

Discharger elects to join region-wide P&O Study with fellow permittees.

Payment of an annual fee to support P&O Study is required.

Current permit performance levels must be maintained, while more stringent requirements are deferred during Phase I.

The P&O Study will help to determine the next permitting options for Phase II.

Benefits of the Alternative Option:

- Opportunity to participate and inform P&O Study process and analysis, including development of Phase II.
- Avoid more stringent and costly permitting requirements tied to the conservative option during Phase I.
- Likely less costly than Conservative permitting option demonstrations.
- Cooperative approach can aid achievement of long-term regional salinity goals.

Understanding the Phased Salt Control Program

PHASE 1

10-15 years with interim permitting approach

P&O Study Development

Salt Permitting Options:

Conservative
Individual approach

Alternative
Join P&O Study

PHASE 2

Following Phase 1

Design and permitting of preferred salt management projects identified in Phase 1.

Salt Permitting Options:

Options will be developed in conjunction with P&O Study completion and development of Phase II.

PHASE 3

Following Phase 2

Construction of salt management projects identified in Phase 1.

Salt Permitting Options:

Unknown at this time.

Next Steps: Processes, Fees and Timelines

The Central Valley Water Board will issue a Notice to Comply to permittees in January. Existing permittees must inform the Central Valley Water Board of their permitting choice **by July 15, 2021**. Fees to participate in the P&O Study are set by the Central Valley Salinity Coalition, which includes representatives of industry, agriculture, and community permittees. The fees vary by permit type and industry category.

Online Fee Payment Process

For permitted dischargers electing to join the P&O study, compliance steps and fee payments for participation can be completed online. The Notices to Comply will include a CV-SALTS ID number. By entering the CV-SALTS ID, permittees will be linked to their permit program, which will include cost information. They will be asked to provide standard information and answer several questions and will be directed to further online resources. The website process will walk permittees through review and approval of the P&O Study Participation Agreement and payment processes by credit card or invoice to submit a check. Initiate the process here: www.cvsalinity.org/po-fee.

Salt Control Program Fees by Permit Type or Industry Category

Permittee Type	Action Required / Annual Fee
Farmers in Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Coalitions	Most coalitions are collecting and paying the fees on your behalf. If you are in the Tule Basin Water Quality Coalition or Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition, contact your coalition lead.
Dairies and Bovine Operations	The Central Valley Dairy Representative Monitoring Program (www.cvdrrmp.org) is collecting and paying fees for all CVDRMP member dairies and bovine operations. Nonmembers may need to pay fees directly through the CV-SALTS online payment process; however, dairies and bovine operations should first contact CVDRMP at 916-594-9450 or CVDRMP@gmail.com for further information.
Poultry Facilities	The California Poultry Federation and Pacific Egg and Poultry Association collects and pays the fees for their members. Non-member poultry permittees who received a notice to comply are assessed a \$250 fee to be paid online.
Food Processors	\$700 per permit
Wineries	Fee based on production levels: Small producers regulated under a Central Valley Water Board waiver \$ 250 Fewer than 50,000 cases \$ 750 50,000 to 200,000 cases \$ 1,500 More than 200,000 cases \$ 3,000
Oil and Gas Producers	Price per permitted facility (ponds): \$160 each.
Wastewater/Water Treatment and Other Community Facilities	Permits for these facilities and related community permits are assigned as a community. Fees vary and are shown in the online payment portal.
All Others	Initial year fee based on presumed size and other factors (assigned in database and revised in future years). Others: \$250 minimum or a percentage of Water Board Permit Fee (rates set each year based on program need). Other industries are working to collect and pay P&O Study fees and will reach out to their members.



Photo courtesy of California Department Water Resources



For More Information

CV-SALTS is working to ensure safe, reliable water supplies for everyone in the Central Valley. You are encouraged to participate and get involved now. To learn more, visit www.cvsalts.info/salt-control-program.