

**Public Notice for Section 401 Water Quality Certification
and/or Waste Discharge Requirements**

CDOT – Highway 162 Underdrain Project, P.M. 20.65-21.67
WDID No. 1B05130WNME

Mendocino County

On September 26, 2005, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Gail Popham, representing the California Department of Transportation (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, Section 401, Water Quality Certification to install underdrains at four locations along Highway 162 between Post Mile 20.65 and 21.67 in Mendocino County. The application was deemed complete on December 8, 2005. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with unnamed drainages that are tributary to the Middle Fork Eel River in the Eden Valley Hydrologic Subarea No. 111.71.

The purpose of the proposed project is to alleviate the chronic roadway slumping problems caused by excessive subsurface water in the roadway prism. The roadway prism becomes saturated during the rainy season and the subsequent soil movement compromises the integrity of the roadway. The applicant is continually repaving the cracked roadway in this area. The applicant proposes placement of underdrains to intercept subsurface water and direct intercepted water into the inlets of existing culverts. These underdrains would be constructed in 11-15 foot deep trenches along the cut slope side of the roadway, using perforated pipe and permeable backfill material. The underdrains would outlet on the banks of existing culverted drainage channels. Where the underdrains connect to the existing drainage channels, there is likely to be some temporary disturbance below the ordinary high water mark. Approximately 3,140 cubic yards of material excavated from the underdrain trenches will be removed offsite for disposal at an approved location.

The project is proposed to occur between June 1 and October 15 in 2006 or 2007. All construction activities will be done when the drainage channels are dry. The project does not require removal of mature vegetation; however, some trenching near mature trees may be necessary and the applicant must be careful not to sever the trees' roots. The applicant proposes installation of temporary fencing where trenching will occur near any trees that are greater than 3-inches diameter at breast height in order to delineate tree root protection zones as environmentally sensitive areas. No special status plant or animal species are known to occur in the project area.

Approximately 0.001-acre of seasonal drainage channel will be permanently impacted by placing additional rock where the new underdrains will daylight and connect to existing drainages. Approximately 0.001-acre of seasonal drainage channel will be temporarily impacted for construction access. Compensatory mitigation is not required for this project. Noncompensatory mitigation for this project includes the use of Best Management Practices for heavy equipment use near waterways and for sediment and erosion control.

The applicant has applied to the United States Army Corps of Engineers for authorization to perform the project, pursuant to Clean Water Act, Section 404. The California Department of Transportation, as the lead agency for California Environmental Quality Act compliance, determined that this project will have no significant effect on the

environment and is categorically exempt from CEQA (Class1, Section 15301). The applicant indicates that this project will have negligible impact on the bed, bank, and channel of any watercourses and a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement will not be obtained.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801 within 21-days of the posting of this notice.