

February 25, 2008

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

California Department of Transportation  
Highway 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)  
Lane Widening and Improvements Project:  
Steele Lane to Windsor River Road  
WDID No. 1B07177WNSO

Sonoma County

On December 4, 2007, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Highway 101 Widening Project from Windsor to Steele Lane in Sonoma County (Project). The Project will impact waters of the State associated with Paulin Creek, Piner Creek, Mark West Creek, Pruitt Creek, Poole Creek, and Windsor Creek all in the Middle Russian River Hydrologic Area No.114.20.

The Project is located along Highway 101 in Sonoma County, from Steele Lane in Santa Rosa to Windsor River Road in Windsor, between post mile (PM) 21.7 and PM 29.3. The purposes of the Project are to complete one of the remaining portions of the planned continuous Highway 101 HOV system, to reduce traffic congestion, and to address existing roadway and operational deficiencies.

The proposed actions for the Project will consist of: widening Highway 101 from four lanes to six lanes; widening the shoulders of Highway 101; modifying and adding new drainage structures; widening, extending, and adding auxiliary lanes; modifying interchanges; modifying bridges at Mark West Creek, Poole Creek, and Pruitt Creek; realigning and reconstructing ramps; installing ramp metering, closed circuit cameras, changeable message signs, overhead signs, new traffic signals, traffic monitoring stations, and a highway advisory radio system; and constructing retaining walls and sound walls. A second phase of the project will consist of making improvements to the Airport/Fulton interchange. That phase of the project will be permitted through a separate application.

The total Project area is approximately 253 acres, including all staging areas. All of the land to be converted to transportation structure is existing State-owned right of way.

The Project will result in permanent impacts to 0.47 acres of waters of the United States, 0.392 acres of which are wetland features and 0.078 acres of which are linear features. Temporary impacts will also occur due to the Project; 0.188 acres of waters of the United States, and 1.965 acres of waters of the State. Total permanent impacts are 2.152 acres.

The Project will result in an increase of 39.28 acres of impervious area. Caltrans will mitigate for increased storm water and hydro-modification of the area through various

means, primarily through the use of bio-strips that rely on retention and dispersion. The area of hydro-modification mitigation and storm water treatment is 56.5 acres. For soils that do not lend themselves to these measures, Caltrans will amend the soil so that it is more suitable.

Compensatory mitigation for loss of riparian vegetation will be obtained through revegetation proposed at Pruitt Creek. Above the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) willows will be planted between the drip line of the bridge and the line of State-owned right of way. Himalayan blackberry and other invasive species will be removed. Appropriate native tree species will be planted at higher elevations along the bank to provide shading and diversity. Riparian impacts are estimated to be 0.08 acres. The total area of proposed revegetation is 0.113 acres. Compensatory mitigation requirements for loss of waters of the State and waters of the United States associated with the completion of the Project will be fulfilled through the purchase of off-site mitigation credits, and through on-site mitigation work.

Off-site credits: 3.14 acres of California Tiger Salamander (CTS) dispersal habitat, 10.83 acres of special-status species habitat, 0.47 acres of Waters of the U.S.

On-site: 0.19 acres of waters of the United States restoration, 1.97 acres of restoration for waters of the State (ditch relocation). Mitigation credits will be purchased no later than June 2008. Caltrans is pursuing the purchase of mitigation credits from a variety of mitigation banks in the project area.

On October 24, 2007, Caltrans certified an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (SCH No.2003062101) for the Project in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document.

The Project is scheduled to begin in summer 2008 and end in 2011. Staff is 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 notice. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Mona Dougherty at (707) 570-3761 or at [mdougherty@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:mdougherty@waterboards.ca.gov) within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The related documents and comments received are on file and may be inspected or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.