

December 9, 2008

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

California Department of Transportation – District 4  
Highway 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)  
Central Project: North of Pepper Road in Petaluma to  
Rohnert Park Expressway in Rohnert Park  
WDID No. 1B08018WNSO

Sonoma County

On May 06, 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in conjunction with the Sonoma County Transit Authority (SCTA), requesting Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed Highway 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Central Project: North of Pepper Road in Petaluma to the Rohnert Park Expressway in Rohnert Park (project). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State, wetlands, drainage ditches, the Laguna de Santa Rosa and Copeland Creek. The project is within the Russian River Hydrologic Unit No.114.00, Laguna Hydrologic Sub-Area No. 114.21.

The project is located along Highway 101 in Sonoma County, from the Rohnert Park Expressway overcrossing to North of Pepper Road in Petaluma, which extends from post mile (PM) 14.4 to PM 22.4. 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 total project area is approximately 83 acres, including all staging areas.

The proposed actions for the project will consist of: widening Highway 101 from four lanes to six lanes; creating standard 10 foot outside and inside shoulders; construction of auxiliary lanes between the Highway 116 and Rohnert Park Expressway interchanges; widening bridges at the Laguna de Santa Rosa and Copeland Creek; installation of closed circuit traffic cameras, changeable message signs, and traffic monitoring stations; and on- and off-ramp improvements for the Highway 116 interchange. The proposed project is anticipated to begin in April 2009 and end in December 2011, and will take approximately 240 working days per year.

The project will result in permanent impacts to 0.2685 acres of waters of the U.S. and waters of the State which includes seasonal wetlands, Copeland Creek and the Laguna de Santa Rosa. In addition, 0.03 acres of water of the U.S. will be temporarily impacted as well as 0.28 acres of waters of the State, for a total of 0.31 acres of temporary impacts. All graded areas within the project affected by the construction activities will be appropriately stabilized. In addition, construction and post construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented to ensure erosion is minimized and controlled.

Compensatory mitigation requirements for loss of waters of the State and waters of the U.S. associated with project has been negotiated with State and Federal agencies and will be fulfilled through the purchase of off-site mitigation credits, and through on-site mitigation work. As negotiated with approving agencies, mitigation for permanent project impacts will require the purchase of mitigation bank credits from an approved mitigation

bank at a 1:1 ratio. In accordance with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) revised Biological Opinion, dated April 15, 2008 the required acreage of off-site of California Tiger Salamander (CTS) dispersal habitat credits to be purchased is 26.63 acres. Caltrans has purchased mitigation credits from multiple agency-approved mitigation banks within the region. Temporary impacts to jurisdictional waters will not exceed one year of impact and will be mitigated on-site by replanting and revegetation activities.

The project will result in an increase of 27 acres of impervious area. On-site storm water and hydro-modification treatment controls will primarily include the use of biostrips and/or bioswales. However, due to sensitive CTS habitat constraints within the right-of-way, Caltrans/SCTA will only be able to provide treatment of storm water runoff and hydro-modification treatment for approximately 12 acres. Therefore, Caltrans/SCTA will seek contractual agreements with the City of Santa Rosa, the Santa Rosa Fairgrounds and Sonoma County to treat storm water runoff and hydro-modification impacts at three off-site locations within the middle Russian River Hydrologic Area 114.20 to off-set the project deficiencies (approximately 15 acres). The Regional Water Board has concurred with the project proposal which includes retrofits to the Santa Rosa Fairgrounds North parking lot, Talbot Drive & Montgomery Drive bulbouts (City of Santa Rosa), and the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department parking lot.

Caltrans and the SCTA have applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404, and have sought a Biological Opinion from the USFWS. Caltrans and the SCTA have also applied for a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game and a Letter of Concurrence from the National Marine Fisheries Service. On August 20, 2007, Caltrans certified an Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impacts Report (State Clearing House No.2003062100) for the project in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act. The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Jeremiah Puget at (707) 576-2835 or [jpuget@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:jpuget@waterboards.ca.gov) within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed road construction activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps and design drawings. The related documents and comments received are on file and may be reviewed 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.