

July 8, 2009

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

California Department of Transportation
Highway 96 – Storm Damage (Five Locations) Project
WDID No. 1B09002WNHU

Humboldt County

On January 2, 2009 the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application and \$3,043 fee from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requesting Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed Highway 96 Storm Damage (Five Locations) project (project). Additional project information was received on April 2, and May 4, 2009. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with drainages within the Klamath River Hydrologic Unit No.105.00, Orleans Hydrologic Sub-Area No. 105.12.

The proposed project includes five locations along Highway 96 at post mile (PM) 27.02, PM 27.20, PM 35.34, PM 36.05 and PM 41.04 in Humboldt County. The purposes and objectives of the project are to repair and upgrade the culverts, downdrains, drainage ditches, subgrade and asphalt to protect the roadway from erosion-related structural failures. The proposed construction activities will consist of: installing new corrugated metal pipes and plastic pipes; installing drain inlets and downdrains; installing rock slope protection; and conducting slope revegetation and erosion control. In addition, the project will include the installation of a traction sand trap at PM 41.04 to reduce the amount of sediment discharges to the Klamath River associated with winter maintenance activities. The proposed project may result in soil disturbances up to approximately 1.23-acres, including 3,518 ft² (1,709 linear feet) of temporary impacts to the jurisdictional drainages. All areas with disturbed soil will be stabilized with appropriate erosion control and subsequent to the completion of the project the disturbed soil areas will be revegetated.

The proposed project will result in approximately 2,476 ft (1,238 linear feet) of new permanent impacts to waters of the U.S and waters of the State. However, the permanent impacts are associated with the installation of drainage ditch underdrains, which are primarily designed to prevent ground water from infiltrating road base and destabilizing the highway. In addition, the underdrains will likely promote a limited amount of infiltration of surface waters within the drainage ditches. The proposed project will likely require a water diversion to conduct the proposed construction activities. Caltrans will utilize BMPs for all activities including work windows for stream work, and proper erosion control, sediment control and pollution prevention during construction.

Caltrans has applied for authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to perform the project under their Nationwide Permits No. 33 (Temporary Construction, Access and Dewatering) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. In addition, Caltrans has applied to the California Department of Fish and Game for a 1602 Lake

and Streambed Alteration Agreement. Caltrans has determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (Class 1 Categorical Exemption). Additionally, Regional Water Board staff also determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 1 Categorical Exemption) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption. The proposed project is scheduled to be conducted during the summer of 2009 or 2010. Project activities will be conducted year round; however, work in the jurisdictional drainages will only be performed between May 15 and October 15.

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 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.