

May 31, 2012

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

California Department of Transportation
Highway 116 – Madrone Left Turn Lane Project
WDID No. 1B12061WNSO

Sonoma County

On April 25, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application 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 116 – Madrone Left Turn Lane Project (project). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with the Russian River Hydrologic Unit No.114.00 (Laguna de Santa Rosa Hydrologic Sub-Area 114.21).

The proposed project is located on Highway 116 from post mile (PM) 34.09 to 34.47, in Sonoma County. The purpose of the project is to reduce congestion and improve safety. The existing roadway will be widened from a maximum of 36 feet to a maximum of 46 feet in order to accommodate one left turn pocket in each direction at the intersection of Highway 116 and Madrone Avenue. The widened roadway will consist of one additional 12-foot lane, and a maximum of 5-foot additional shoulder. Each new turn pocket will be 350 feet long.

Caltrans has determined that the proposed project will result in 0.006 acres (250 feet²) of permanent impacts and 0.001 acres (40 feet²) to wetlands identified as waters of the U.S. and waters of the State. In addition, permanent impacts to unnamed tributaries (roadside ditches) to the Laguna de Santa Rosa identified as waters of the U.S. would total 0.019 acres (858 feet²). Temporary impacts to roadside ditches identified as waters of the U.S. associated with construction would total 0.001 acres (80 feet²). In addition, permanent impact to California Tiger Salamander (CTS) habitat will be 0.62 acres (27,007 feet²), with an additional 0.077 acres (3,354 feet²) of permanent impact.

Caltrans proposes to mitigate for direct impacts to waters of the State through on-site revegetation and the purchase of off-site wetland mitigation bank credits. The on-site mitigation includes the restoration/creation of roadside ditches within the project limits. The project would result in impacts to CTS habitat, which Caltrans will mitigate through the purchase of mitigation bank credits. The project will result in an increase of approximately 0.36 acres of impervious surface. Therefore, Caltrans will provide storm water treatment through on-site BMPs such as biofiltration and through off-site low impact development retrofit projects.

The proposed project will be conducted year round; however, work in surface waters will only be conducted in summer months during low flow conditions between May 15th and October 15th. The project will result in less than one acre disturbed soil area. Caltrans

will utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs) to provide erosion control and pollution prevention throughout the project area during construction. All graded areas within the project affected by the construction activities will be appropriately stabilized and/or replanted with appropriate native vegetation.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and will be required to obtain an individual Department of the Army permit pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. In addition, Caltrans is seeking an Incidental Take Permit from the California Department of Fish and Game for impacts to CTS habitat. On May 17, 2012, Caltrans, acting as lead agency, recirculated an Initial Study with a Proposed Negative Declaration for the proposed project in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (State Clearing House No. 2012042005). The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental documentation, including any proposed changes, and incorporates any avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures into the project as a condition of approval to avoid significant affects to the environment. A final CEQA document approved by the lead agency will be required prior to issuing a 401 Certification.

The Laguna de Santa Rosa, a major tributary of the Russian River, is listed on the Clean Water Act section 303(d) list as impaired mercury, indicator bacteria, dissolved oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment/siltation, and temperature. The Russian River watershed is listed on the Clean Water Act section 303(d) list as impaired for sediment and temperature. Roads are a significant source of sediment in the watershed (directly, from surface erosion, and, indirectly, by triggering landslides. In addition, activities that impact stream bed, banks, and floodplains and reduce riparian vegetation are identified as sources contributing to increased stream temperatures. Such projects may involve removal of vegetation and/or channel alteration, and also have potential to increase sediment loads. A focus on measures to reduce sediment discharges to surface waters from roads in the watershed, and measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on riparian zones is essential for achieving Basin Plan and CEQA compliance

To ensure compliance with Water Quality Objectives within the Basin Plan, adequate wetland and riparian protection and stringent requirements to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the sediment and temperature impacts associated with the proposed project will be incorporated as enforceable conditions in this Water Quality Certification. In addition, Caltrans will be required to conduct surface water monitoring, sampling, and analysis in accordance with the conditions of the Water Quality Certification. Additionally, storm water runoff monitoring, sampling, and analysis will be conducted as required by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for Storm Water Discharges from the State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Properties, Facilities and Activities Order No. 99 – 06 - DWQ. The surface water data collected will be utilized to assess the adequacy of BMPs during construction as well as site specific mitigation measures proposed to minimize impacts to the environment, including sediment and temperature impacts.

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.