



# Enforcement News

*North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board*

## Caltrans to Pay \$475,182 Fine in Settlement of Water Pollution Violations

**For Immediate Release  
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SANTA ROSA - The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board levied a \$475,182 fine against the California Department of Transportation Thursday (March 15), for water quality violations stemming from the Confusion Hill Bypass project along the South Fork of the Eel River, eight miles north of Leggett.

The project involved constructing two bridges, relocating the highway to circumvent chronic landslides and road closures. During construction, Caltrans and its contractor, MCM Construction, caused sediment, cement waste material, welding slag and trash to enter the Eel River in violation of Caltrans' storm water permit and water quality certification, posing a threat to endangered salmon and steelhead, and impacts to other aquatic species.

The initial 2009 complaint sought \$1.51 million penalties and costs. In a hearing last June the Regional Board considered a variety of factors, including the circumstances, the seriousness of the violation, the environmental effects and impacts of the discharge, as well as Caltrans' prior history of violations. The fine was ultimately reduced to \$475,182 for violations occurring between August 2006 and January 2007.

"This is a fair resolution for a situation in which a very beneficial public project caused environmental damage to an important waterway," said David Noren, Regional Board Chairman. "There were some mitigating circumstances, but the seriousness of the violations warranted a significant fine."

For more information on the issue, visit:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water\\_issues/hot\\_topics/confusion\\_hill/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/hot_topics/confusion_hill/)

The North Coast Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources, and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations. For more information, visit:

<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/>