

February 28, 2008

Region 9 Regional Water Quality Control Board
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400
Oakland, CA

Re: Administrative Draft, Regional Municipal Permit

I live on Codornices Creek in Berkeley, and watch all kinds of stuff wash by from the spring rains, from foam caused by car-washing and perhaps laundry over-flow to plastic bags and balls. The creek rises high on my neighbor's lawn, stripping the soil since he has gardeners cut the weeds down to bare soil. I think of people whose houses sit above culverted creeks, old culverts that weren't designed to take the high flow produced by the storm drains from paved streets. I imagine all the pollution from cars washing into the Bay, all the garden fertilizer.

It is imperative that you require local governments to take serious, measurable steps toward reducing both rapid and destructive storm runoff in developed cities and the trash and pollutants that runoff carries. Besides the obvious damage to home-owners in the flats, whose property should not be imperiled to allow more development in the hills or to protect the mansions in the hills, the Bay Area itself is becoming polluted, with degradation of our Bay and the ocean into which it empties a true ecological emergency. This impacts the local wild-fowl population as well as the fish population with resultant effect on the fishing and tourist industry. Things are bad enough with accidental toxic spills, let alone the chronic pollution from runoff.

When you pass a measure addressing this issue, please include a monitoring plan to measure whether or not there are real improvements. Please do not let any board formed to monitor this become as much of a quagmire as the Bay has become. Save the fragile ecosystem of the Bay Area. Please don't let the bay itself become MORE of a toxic stew.

Sincerely,
Rachel C. Callaghan MD
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Berkeley, CA