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NEWS RELEASE

California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region

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MADERA COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT FACES HALF MILLION DOLLARS IN PENALTIES FOR WATER QUALITY VIOLATIONS

FRESNO – The Madera County Road Department faces \$510,600 in Administrative Civil Liability (ACL) penalties for discharging dredge or fill material to waters of the U.S. without obtaining a federal Clean Water Act Water Quality Certification, and for failure to comply with the Construction Storm Water General Permit under the *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)*.

The County constructed the first phase of the Road 200 widening project from Spring Valley School to Leprechaun Lane during the summer and fall of 2008. The site is in the Sierra foothills approximately 30 miles from the City of Madera, and 2 miles northeast of the intersection of State Highway 41 and Road 200, along a 3.4 mile long section of Road 200. Surface waters that run through the project site are tributaries to Willow Creek and Finegold Creek.

During inspections of the site, Central Valley Water Board staff observed sediment-laden water discharging off site, uncontrolled erosion and sedimentation, and a lack of required mechanisms to control sediment discharges. Board staff measured as much as six inches of sediment accumulated on the bed of tributary drainages, and measured erosion gullies that exceeded two feet in depth and width. The Central Valley Water Board pursued numerous enforcement actions to compel the County to comply with the federal Clean Water Act and the Construction General Permit. The County failed to respond appropriately and effectively to the Board's actions.

Consequently, the Executive Officer of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board issued an ACL Complaint to the County. In addition, the Executive Officer has issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order which requires the County to immediately stabilize all disturbed areas and remove discharged sediment from surface waters.

The matter is set for a hearing at the Central Valley Water Board's December meeting which convenes starting on December 9th. The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board is a California state agency tasked with preservation and enhancement of quality in water resources.