



December 9, 2010

Attn: Michelle Mata
San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
9174 Sky Park Court, Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92123

Via Electronic Mail
mmata@waterboards.ca.gov

RE: SUPPORT Tentative Order No. R9-2010-0124, NPDES Permit No. CAG999002 *General Waste Discharge Requirements For Discharges to Water Associated With Public Displays of Fireworks*

Dear Ms. Mata and Regional Board members:

Please accept these comments in strong support of the proposed water quality protections to be provided upon adoption of Tentative Order No. R9-2010-0124 by the Regional Board.

As Board staff is well aware, when fireworks explode over or adjacent to surface waters, chemicals contained in the fireworks are discharged directly into the water bodies themselves—not to mention can blow over the audience. The chemical-laden paper casings of spent fireworks, as well as unexploded “dud” fireworks also fall from the sky into the surface waters, and are often not recoverable. Both the federal and state Clean Water Acts require that permits be obtained before such discharges occur, and we appreciate the Board finally addressing this mandate.

Fireworks generally contain perchlorate salts, a luminum, magnesium, titanium, barium copper, chloride, and potassium nitrates. Other hazardous chemical compounds often associated with fireworks include, but are not limited to: arsenic salts, strontium salts, lithium salts, calcium salts, sodium, barium, cadmium, copper, aluminum, titanium, lead, mercury and magnesium. These chemicals are widely regulated by the Board, and no other circumstance exists where such intentional point source discharges are tolerated unpermitted. Failure to regulate these obvious discharges not only threatens water quality, it also calls into question the integrity of the Board’s entire permitting scheme.

Pollution is pollution. Toxic chemicals are toxic chemicals. Discharge of them, unpermitted, into our waterways is not appropriate. We are confident that in the greatness of our nation we are not so limited that we cannot learn to celebrate without polluting our precious waters. It is critical that the permitting, reporting, and monitoring provisions of the draft permit be maintained until the full impacts of these discharges are understood.

Sincerely,

Laura Hunter
Associate Director of Programs

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