



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR, REGION 9  
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Ser N40JRR.cs/0024  
October 24, 2011

Ms. Jeanine Townsend  
Clerk of the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)  
1001 I Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814



**Subject: COMMENT LETTER - DRAFT CALIFORNIA OCEAN PLAN AMENDMENT**

On behalf of Rear Admiral French, the Department of Defense (DOD) Regional Environmental Coordinator for EPA Region IX, and the Military Services in California, I respectfully submit these comments on the SWRCB's Draft California Ocean Plan Amendment dated August 2011.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the subject plan and look forward to working with the Board's staff to develop a plan that will be science-driven, protective, and reasonable approach to managing ocean water quality and near shore discharges. As currently drafted the proposed Ocean Plan Amendments will pose significant challenges for DoD installations and could result in more environmental cost than environmental benefit.

The proposed amendments are intended to provide a consistent framework for planning and scaling NPDES receiving water monitoring for ocean waters of California based upon the quantity and quality of effluent. As proposed the monitoring requirements do not adequately address the significant differences between larger and smaller (low threat) discharges by applying the same monitoring requirements to all discharges less than 10 million gallons per day (gpd). For smaller discharges, the monitoring cost could easily exceed current operating budgets and prevent potential system or BMP improvements that will have real water quality benefit. We suggest adding a true low threat category for discharges less than 100,000 gpd. These facilities should be excused from the plan's monitoring requirements unless the permit writer (Regional or State Board) determines that the discharge(s) could pose a significant threat to water quality. This will provide needed flexibility for the State and Regional Boards as well as dischargers to address environmental concerns in the most cost effective manner. The Board should also apply lower tier monitoring requirements for discharges between 100,000 gpd and 1 million gallons per day.

The cost estimates appear to be based only on analytical cost and grossly understate the cost of the proposed monitoring program. The full monitoring cost includes not just analytical costs; but also mobilization, transportation, sampling, work plan development, including worker health and safety plans, and reporting to name a few. As an example, for a facility located in San Diego, it

Diego, it cost the Navy \$5,493 for each sediment sample to meet current NPDES monitoring and reporting requirements. This compares to the \$560.00 estimated by the Board. Your cost estimates for sediment monitoring are nearly an order of magnitude lower than the actual costs. The economic cost estimates should be recalculated to reflect the true costs of all of the proposed monitoring requirements.

In addition, the applicability of the proposed amendments to control discharges from commercial vessels should be more clearly stated at the beginning of the proposed changes. As currently drafted the reviewer has to read through all of the proposed changes to understand the applicability of the requirements. Therefore, we request that "5. Commercial Vessels" be inserted at the beginning of the proposed changes. We would also recommend that under the definitions in Appendix 1 that "Commercial Vessels" be defined.

The DoD requests that you consider the comments in this letter in the upcoming revisions to the Ocean Plan. The points of contact for this letter are Mr. Christopher Haynes at [christopher.a.haynes@navy.mil](mailto:christopher.a.haynes@navy.mil) or (619) 532-1290 and Mr. Michael Huber at [michael.huber@navy.mil](mailto:michael.huber@navy.mil) or (619) 532-2303.

Sincerely,



C. L. STATHOS  
By direction