
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

May 7, 2013

Mr. Greg Dale
Coast Seafoods Company
25 Waterfront Drive
Eureka, CA 95403

Dear Mr. Dale:

Subject: Amendment to the Federal Clean Water Act, Section 401, Water Quality Certification for Coast Seafoods Company – Mariculture Activities

File: Coast Seafoods Company – Mariculture Activities
WDID No. 1B01140WNHU

On April 9, 2013, we received your letter regarding Coast Seafoods Company's (Coast) identification of the "basket-on-longline" shellfish culture method which is expected to reduce the environmental effects of shellfish culture in Humboldt Bay compared to the "rack-and-bag" method currently used by Coast. The primary purpose of your letter was to request the written approval of the Regional Water Board Executive Officer to allow Coast the option to use the "basket-on-longline" method within the approximately 11 acre area where the "rack-and-bag" culture method is currently used. Your letter includes suggested additions to the project description in the April 25, 2012 water quality certification (Certification) and a memorandum prepared by H.T. Harvey and Associates that describes the differences in environmental effects between the two culture methods.

Regional Water Board staff have reviewed the memorandum and the suggested revisions to the project description, and determined that the suggested revisions are appropriate. The project description in the Certification has been revised to include the following additional finding:

The basket-on-longline culture method grows oysters in baskets that hang off a monofilament line that is suspended off the bottom using 2-inch diameter schedule 80 PVC pipe that is placed every ten feet along the line. Galvanized fence posts are used as "anchors" at the end of each line. Lines are set in groups of three with a three foot

space between each line and a 20 foot space between each group of three lines. The monofilament line is 5-milimeter diameter and protected by a 3/8-inch diameter polyethylene sleeve that the monofilament is slid inside. The baskets are approximately 24-inches long by 10-inches wide by 6-inches tall and are held on the line with plastic clips. A float, which is approximately 2.5-inches diameter and 5.5-inches long, is often attached to the baskets so they float up during high tides. The line is positioned approximately 2.5 feet to 3.0 feet off the bottom so the baskets are roughly 1 foot above the bottom when hanging down during low tides. Coast estimates that 492 longlines, each 100 feet long, will be placed in the approximately 11 acre area (approximately 45 lines per acre). This would entail the use of approximately 5,410 2-inch diameter PVC posts (498 posts per acre) and 984 galvanized fence post stakes (91 posts per acre). The total area of the bay floor that would be covered by the ends of all the PVC pipes would be less than .003 acre and the total area covered by the ends of all the fence post stakes would be less than .0008 acre.

Condition No. 12 of the Certification Order states, "Prior to implementing any change to the project that may have a significant or material effect on the findings, conclusions, or conditions of this Order, the Applicant shall obtain the written approval of the Regional Water Board Executive Officer." I hereby issue an amendment to the project description of the Coast Seafood Company – Mariculture Activities Certification Order (WDID No. 1B01140WNHU) to include the above finding and authorizing Coast to utilize the basket-on-longline culture method within the approximately 11 acre area where the rack-and-bag method currently occurs. I certify that the remainder of the Water Quality Certification sections of the April 25, 2012 Certification Order are still valid.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Matthias St. John
Executive Officer

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Electronic

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