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## North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

July 15, 2014

California Department of Transportation  
Attn: Mr. Kevin Church  
P.O. Box 3700  
Eureka, CA 95501-3700  
[Kevin.Church@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Kevin.Church@dot.ca.gov)

Dear Mr. Church:

**Subject:** Notice of Applicability for Coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board 401 Water Quality Certification of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2012 Nationwide Permits

**Files:** Del Norte 101 Dr. Fine Bridge Geotechnical Drilling Phase 2(Caltrans EA No. 01-43640), CIWQS PIN CW-724700, WDID No. 1A08120WNDN

On June 23, 2014, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) staff received the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) notice of intent to comply with the terms of the general water quality certification of 2012 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permits (State Water Resources Control Board Order Number SB12002GN, hereinafter "General Order") for the Del Norte State Route 101 Dr. Fine Bridge Geotechnical Drilling Phase 2 Project (Project). Caltrans has filed for a non-reporting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit number 6, *Survey Activities*. Project implementation would cause disturbances to the Smith River Plain hydrologic subarea (hydrologic subarea no. 103.11). We find that this Project, only as described below and in the June 23, 2014, notification package may proceed under the terms and conditions of the General Order.

Caltrans is proposing a geotechnical investigative drilling operation in and adjacent the Smith River channel at State Route 101 in order to obtain subsurface information that would inform design for replacement of the Smith River Dr. Fine Bridge. Drilling would be conducted at nine locations in the vicinity of the future bridge abutments and one location within the active channel boundary, accessed through and within the inside of an existing bridge pier. The proposed soil borings would be approximately 4.5-inches in diameter, and would be drilled to a depth of approximately 150 feet. A 5.5-inch diameter steel casing may

be used at the top of the boring hole to secure drilling fluid circulation. The drilling fluids shall be contained and recirculated through a closed system—drilling fluids and products shall be fully recovered in a mud tank before being transferred to 55-gallon steel drums for disposal. The boreholes would be backfilled with cement slurry or a mixture of cement and bentonite slurry.

Plastic sheeting with a perimeter containment berm shall be used around drilling equipment, mud tubs, and borehole locations. In the event of a fluid spill, drilling will cease immediately to allow for containment and clean-up.

No wetland, tree, or shrub vegetation shall be removed to accommodate drilling activities.

Caltrans, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, determined that the Project was categorically exempt from CEQA on March 20, 2014, pursuant to CEQA guidelines (section 15306, *Information Collection*). The State Water Resources Control Board has determined that projects with Nationwide Permit no. 6 and General Order coverage are exempt from CEQA, pursuant to CEQA guidelines (section 15304, *Minor Alterations to Land*).

Receiving Water: River channel  
Smith River Plain, Hydrologic Sub-Area No. 103.11

Excavated Area: Permanent Area Impacted: None  
Temporary Area Impacted: 16 square inches

Latitude/Longitude: Latitude 41°52'47.76"N / 124°8'13.29"W

Regional Water Board staff has determined that the proposed activities may proceed under the General 401 Order.

If you have any questions, please contact Brendan Thompson of my staff, at [Brendan.Thompson@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Brendan.Thompson@waterboards.ca.gov) or (707) 576-2699.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by Fred Blatt for*

Matthias St. John  
Executive Officer

140715\_DN101\_DrFineBridgeGeotechDrilling\_CertifiedNWP\_NOA

cc: Laurie Monarres, US Army Corps of Engineers,  
[Laurie.A.Monarres@usace.army.mil](mailto:Laurie.A.Monarres@usace.army.mil)

Bill Orme, State Water Resources Control Board  
[Bill.Orme@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Bill.Orme@waterboards.ca.gov)