

January 10, 2014

**Notice of Consideration for Coverage Under Order No. R1-2009-0045,
General NPDES Permit No. CA0024902,
Waste Discharge Requirements for
Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters in the North Coast Region**

for the

**California Department of Transportation
Randolph Collier Road Side Rest Area
Siskiyou County
WDID No. 1A13153NSIS**

On November 27, 2013, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received a Notice of Intent (NOI) from Thomas Butler, Stantec Consulting Services, on behalf of the California Department of Transportation (Applicant), requesting enrollment under Order No. R1-2009-0045, General NPDES Permit No. CA0024902, Waste Discharge Requirements for Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters in the North Coast Region (hereinafter General Low Threat Permit) for the Randolph Collier Road Side Rest Area Well Installation, Development, and Testing Project (proposed project). Additional information to supplement the NOI was submitted to the Regional Water Board on January 2, 2014.

The proposed project will discharge groundwater to the Klamath River, a water of the United States (U.S.). The proposed project site is located in Hornbrook, Siskiyou County California at the intersection of Highway 15 and Highway 96 and is located within the Hornbrook Hydrologic Subarea of the Middle Klamath River Hydrologic Area.

The Applicant proposes to drill a new potable water well using the air rotary drilling method. Currently the rest area utilizes shallow horizontal collector wells, which are considered to be under the direct influence of surface water and must meet California Department of Public Health (CDPH) surface water treatment requirements. The project is intended to investigate whether a deeper groundwater source to supply potable water that is not directly influenced by surface water and which will not require further treatment, is feasible. Well development and pump test activities will result in the discharge of groundwater. The Applicant intends to complete construction and discharge activities between January and March 2014, weather permitting. If inclement weather delays the project, well drilling and discharge activities will be completed no later than June 2014.

The boring for the new well will be advanced through shallow alluvium and into bedrock. The test boring is proposed to be 500 feet deep, but may be shallower if the required water yields are encountered at a shallower depth. The shallow alluvium will be isolated from the boring through the installation and sealing of a conductor casing. The conductor casing will extend from the land surface and be keyed into bedrock. During drilling of the boring, water that is generated will be contained in portable tanks to allow settling of sediment, and the decant water will be land discharged to an on-site depressional area that is approximately 0.4 acres and 1 foot deep, where it will be contained and allowed to infiltrate into the soil. The Applicant estimates that well drilling and development activities will generate approximately 60,000 gallons of water. Once the well has been completed, capacity testing will be conducted in accordance with CDPH's standards for bedrock wells.

Accordingly, the capacity testing will consist of a step discharge test (approximately 8 hours), followed by a 72 hour constant discharge test. The Applicant anticipates capacity testing will generate approximately 480,000 gallons to be discharged to the Klamath River.

The Applicant evaluated alternatives to the proposed discharge to surface waters. The Applicant has demonstrated that there is insufficient land area to allow land discharge of the pumping test water. In addition, there is no sanitary sewer or permitted municipal storm drain systems in the area. Due to the limited land area available at the project site, water discharged from the step and constant discharge tests (well testing activities) is proposed to be discharged to the Klamath River. This water, which must be clear of sediment and chlorine-free, will be conveyed from the well via approximately 20 feet of temporary pipe to an adjacent riprap lined storm water conveyance that discharges to a grassy/vegetated area before entering the Klamath River.

The primary pollutant of concern from discharges related to the well installation and development at the project site is sediment. Several best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented in order to limit the potential for sediment generation. Water produced during drilling and development activities will be contained, settled, and discharged to land, as described above. Only clean water following development and during the capacity testing will be discharged to the Klamath River. Accordingly, the well discharge itself is not expected to directly contribute to sedimentation. Furthermore, in order to further prevent potential erosion and sediment generation, the discharge will be conveyed from the well to the riprap lined storm water conveyance using temporary piping. The grassy/vegetated area that exists along the river bank provides further erosion protection. Water will be visually clear prior to discharge. Expected discharge rate ranges from a low of 10 gallons per minute (gpm) to a maximum of 100 gpm. The Klamath River flow is expected to be around 1,000 cubic feet per second or more (450,000 gpm). As the discharge represents approximately 0.02 percent of the Klamath River flow, sediment generation through scour is expected to be minimal. The discharge to the river will be visually monitored for evidence of sediment or other pollutants that can be detected visually, and adjustments to BMPs will be made as necessary.

The NOI does not include characterization monitoring data for the proposed well water discharge or the Klamath River. The Applicant must collect monitoring data to characterize the Klamath River and the well water upon completion of well development activities and prior to discharge and submit this data to Regional Water Board staff to be reviewed for compliance with the General Low Threat Discharge Permit. Provided that the submitted analytical results, characterizing the discharge and the receiving water demonstrates compliance with applicable water quality objectives and other applicable state policies, the Applicant will be authorized to discharge to the Klamath River for the short period of time required to complete the required well testing activities. In addition, effluent discharge and receiving water upstream and downstream monitoring will be conducted while the discharge is occurring to ensure compliance with the General Low Threat Discharge Permit.

The General Low Threat Permit requires the Applicant to conduct well installation, development, and testing activities in a manner that will not adversely affect water quality. Only high quality water that meets all water quality objectives, including those for turbidity will be allowed to discharge for a limited period of time (up to a total discharge of 480,000 gallons over a period of 80 hours).

Regional Water Board staff is proposing to regulate this project under General Low Threat Permit and pursuant to section 402 of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), implementing regulations adopted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and chapter 5.5, division 7, of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (commencing with section 13370). Staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within a 30-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Cathleen Goodwin at (707) 576-2687 or cathleen.goodwin@waterboards.ca.gov within 30 days of the posting of this notice.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the Applicant's proposed activities. The NOI to enroll under the General Low Threat Discharge Permit is available on the Regional Water Board website and at the Regional Water Board office. The NOI contains additional details and maps about the proposed project. The related documents and comments received are on file and may be reviewed or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.