

June 6, 2011

Public Notice for Coverage Under General Order No. R1-2009-0045, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit and Waste Discharge Requirements for Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters

California Department of Transportation – District 4
Highway 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)
Wilfred Avenue Interchange Project:
WDID No. 1B08072WNSO

Sonoma County

On May 11, 2011, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received a Notice of Intent from Ghilotti Bros. Contractors on the behalf of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requesting enrollment under Order No. R1-2009-0045, General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. CA0024902, Waste Discharge Requirements for Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters in the North Coast Region (hereinafter Low Threat Discharge Permit) for the Highway 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Wilfred Avenue Interchange Project (project). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State, wetlands and drainage ditches within the Russian River Hydrologic Unit No.114.00, Laguna Hydrologic Sub-Area No. 114.21.

The project is located along Highway 101 in Sonoma County, from the Santa Rosa Avenue overcrossing to the Rohnert Park Expressway overcrossing, which extends from post mile (PM) 13.9 to PM 15.5. The purposes of the project are to complete one of the remaining portions of the planned continuous Highway 101 HOV system, to reduce traffic congestion, and to address existing roadway and operational deficiencies. The total project area is approximately 26.43 acres, including all staging areas. The majority of the land to be converted to transportation structure is existing State-owned right-of-way.

The proposed actions for the project will consist of: widening Highway 101 from four lanes to six lanes; constructing a two lane collector distributor road between Wilfred Avenue and Santa Rosa Avenue; modifying and adding new drainage structures; modifying the Wilfred Avenue overhead bridge connecting Wilfred Avenue and Golf Course Drive; realigning and reconstructing ramps; installing ramp metering, and modifying the park and ride at Roberts Lake Road.

Caltrans is seeking coverage under the Low Threat Discharge Permit to dispose of excess groundwater encountered in pile drilling and excavation activities for overhead signs, under-crossing, and over-crossing abutments. Dewatering operations will consist of mobilizing appropriately sized holding tanks and pumps. Excess groundwater will be collected and stored on site for sampling and analysis. Once analytical results characterizing the discharge are submitted the Regional Water Board that demonstrates compliance with applicable Water Quality Objectives and other applicable State policies, Caltrans will be authorized to discharge to Hinenbaugh Creek and the Five Creeks Flood Control Channel. In addition, effluent discharge and receiving water upstream

and downstream sampling and monitoring will be conducted to ensure compliance with Basin Plan and applicable water quality objectives.

Caltrans has researched alternatives to discharging to surface waters and will discharge a limited volume of water on site for dust control. Caltrans has demonstrated that they have pursued other alternatives of discharge (POTW and land application) and is seeking permit coverage as a disposal alternative should they exceed capacity for on-site disposal. Caltrans proposes the use of settling tanks and filters to remove sediment from the proposed discharge. This treatment system has demonstrated reliability for removing sediment and will also be used to control the flow of discharge into the creeks. In addition, Caltrans will implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as engineered vegetated biostrips and bioswales along with other temporary erosion and sediment control measures to protect receiving waters.

Regional Water Board staff is proposing to regulate this project pursuant to section 402 of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), implementing regulations adopted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), 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 Jeremiah Puget at (707) 576-2835 or JPuget@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 application for the Low Threat Discharge Permit in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps and design drawings. 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.