

June 26, 2015

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

**California Department of Transportation
State Route 101 South Humboldt Storm Repair Project, Post-Miles 15.0 and 29.4
40.148, -123.8003; 40.283, -123.8876¹
WDID No. 1B15055WNHU, ECM PIN CW-815431
Caltrans EA No. 01-0B400**

Humboldt County

On May 18, 2015, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) for activities related to the proposed State Route 101 South Humboldt Storm Repair Project (Project).

On January 15, 2015, a portion of this Project (post-mile 15.0) was issued a Notice of Applicability for Coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dredge or Fill Discharges to Waters Deemed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to be Outside of Federal Jurisdiction (Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ). Caltrans subsequently determined the Project was subject to Corps jurisdiction and submitted the abovementioned certification application. Project activities are no longer covered under Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ.

The purpose of the Project is to restore the roadway prism that was damaged during storms in March 2011.

At post-mile 15, the proposed Project activities involve installation of 33 horizontal drains below the highway surface along the southbound State Route 101 embankment. A twelve-inch manifold pipe would be installed to convey the drainage to an existing grouted rock apron above the Eel River ordinary high water mark. Project construction would require a temporary access road between the river and the embankment.

At post-mile 29.4, the proposed Project activities include repair and replacement of 38 existing horizontal drains along the northbound shoulder. Approximately 450 linear feet of underdrain would be placed under the northbound shoulder. Collected water would be

¹ WGS84 datum

conveyed by a pipe for approximately 75 feet before discharging to a rock energy dissipater at the outlet. Work areas would be accessed from the highway.

Caltrans would monitor the drainage outfall locations annually for three to five consecutive years to ensure that introduced flows are not resulting in excessive erosion below the outlet.

The proposed Project would cause approximately 3 square feet (3 linear feet) of permanent impacts to a jurisdictional ephemeral tributary to the Eel River as a result of new headwall construction at post-mile 15. Compensatory mitigation has not been proposed.

The Project is expected to require 110 days of construction. The Project would begin September 2015, and be completed before October 15, 2016.

The Eel River is identified as impaired for sediment and temperature under Clean Water Act section 303(d). Erosion is identified as a source contributing to a source contributing to sediment impairment. Caltrans would utilize appropriate erosion control, sediment control, and site management Best Management Practices to control pollutants during construction and the drainage improvements would result in a net reduction in sediment contributions. Project implementation would not result in loss of effective shade along the Eel River. Accordingly, this certification would not certify any activities that would contribute to the Eel River sediment or temperature impairment.

Project implementation would not result in a net increase in impervious surface area and post-construction storm water treatment is not proposed.

Caltrans has applied for coverage under a non-reporting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit No. 3, *Maintenance*, pursuant to CWA, section 404. Caltrans has received a section 1603 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, dated January 15, 2015. Caltrans has also received a Letter of Concurrence from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for coverage under the October 2010 NMFS Programmatic Biological Assessment.

The Regional Water Board, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that the Project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption, (section 15301, *Existing Facilities*), and would file a Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse concurrent with issuance of the certification, pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this Project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this notice 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 Brendan Thompson at (707)

576-2699 or Brendan.Thompson@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of Caltrans's proposed activities. The Regional Water Board's Project file includes the application for certification and additional details of the proposed Project, including maps and design drawings. Project documents and any 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.

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