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California Regional Water Quality Control Board Lahontan Region

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Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

January 11, 2012

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND AGENCIES:

TENTATIVE WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS AND DRAFT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The Lahontan Water Board anticipates considering waste discharge requirements and a monitoring and reporting program for the US Forest Service, LTBMU South Shore Fuel Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project at the April 11-12, 2012 Lahontan Water Board Meeting. The Water Board requests that you review the documents, which include the draft environmental documentation, and provide us with your written comments no later than **February 27, 2012**. Comments received after that date may not be given full consideration in preparation of the recommended Order to be presented to the Board for adoption.

The documents are available on the Water Board's Internet web page at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan>. Paper copies of these documents may be obtained by calling (530) 542-5400, or may be examined and photocopied on weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at the Lahontan Water Board's office, 2501 Lake Tahoe Boulevard, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.

For your information, I have enclosed a copy of the Water Board's Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for Issuance of Waste Discharge Requirements for the South Shore Fuel Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project.

You may contact me at (530) 542-5426 if you should have any questions or wish to discuss the tentative waste discharge requirements or the draft environmental documents.


for George Cella
Engineering Geologist

Enclosure

GEC/clhT: South Shore Project\WDRs\southshore_cmmnt.docx

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
LAHONTAN REGION

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

For

Issuance of Waste Discharge Requirements for the South Shore Fuel Reduction and
Healthy Forest Restoration Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The US Forest Service – Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) is proposing to reduce fuel hazards and restore ecosystem health through vegetation treatments on up to 10,670 acres of lands owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The primary Project objective is the reduction of hazard fuels within the South Shore of the Lake Tahoe Basin wildland/urban intermix (WUI) in order to change fire behavior resulting in lower fire severity and reduced rates of spread. Secondary objectives include providing healthy wildlife habitat, restoration of a forest structure with increased resistance to drought, disease, and insects, and restoration of aspen stands within the south shore Project area. The Project will involve the discharge of waste earthen materials to waters of the State in the Project area. Such discharges are subject to regulation pursuant to the California Water Code section 13263.

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) will regulate discharges from the Project by issuing Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs). Because it will issue WDRs for the Project, the Water Board is the Lead Agency under CEQA.

PROJECT LOCATION: The south shore region of Lake Tahoe in El Dorado County, California, generally from near the Heavenly Valley Ski Area south and west to near Cascade Lake.

INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION: The Project is subject to the requirements of both the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The LTBMU has developed a Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (FEIS/ROD) for the Project, pursuant to NEPA. Section 15221 of the CEQA Guidelines directs that when a project requires compliance with both NEPA and CEQA, state Lead Agencies should use the EIS rather than preparing a separate Environmental Impact Report or Initial Study, as long as the EIS complies with the requirements of CEQA. Water Board staff has reviewed the information contained in the FEIS/ROD for compliance with CEQA, and determined that additional mitigation measures and information are needed to comply with CEQA requirements.

Therefore, the Water Board is circulating tentative WDRs, and a draft CEQA checklist, along with the FEIS/ROD to support a Mitigated Negative Declaration in compliance with CEQA guidelines. The CEQA checklist was developed by Water Board staff to inform the public and interested agencies of the additional mitigation measures

identified as necessary by the Water Board, and included in its tentative WDRs. It also summarizes the mitigation measures contained in the FEIS/ROD. A discussion of growth inducing impacts and mandatory findings of significance, as required by CEQA, is also included in the CEQA checklist.

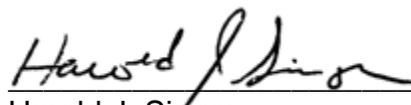
The CEQA checklist represents the Water Board's own review and analysis of the Project. The checklist supports the Water Board's independent judgment that impacts from the Project can be mitigated to levels of insignificance, based on implementation of the mitigation measures described in the tentative WDRs, FEIS/ROD, and summarized in the CEQA Checklist. The Water Board will consider certifying the Mitigated Negative Declaration, and adopting Waste Discharge Requirements for the Project during a public meeting held on:

- DATE:** April 11-12, 2012
- TIME:** During the Lahontan Water Board's regular meeting. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. on April 11, 2012.
- PLACE:** The location of the meeting has not been determined at this time. The location information will be available on the Lahontan Water Board's Internet web page at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan> no less than 10 days before the meeting.

The meeting room will be accessible to people with disabilities. If you have special accommodations or language needs, please contact Sue Genera at (530) 542-5414 by April 1, 2012. TTY/TDD/Speech-to-Speech users may dial 7-1-1 for the California Relay Service.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: The public review period for the tentative WDRs, CEQA Checklist/Mitigated Negative Declaration will extend from **January 11, 2012 to February 27, 2012**. Written comments or questions on these documents should be directed to the attention of George Cella at the address below or via email to gcella@waterboards.ca.gov.

The documents are available on the Lahontan Water Board's Internet web page at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan>. Paper copies of these documents may be obtained by calling (530) 542-5400, or may be examined and photocopied on weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at the Lahontan Water Board's office, 2501 Lake Tahoe Boulevard, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.



Harold J. Singer
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

January 11, 2012
Date