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## *Alameda County Mayors' Conference*

February 26, 2008

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER

FEB 28 2008

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Mr. Bruce Wolfe  
Executive Officer  
San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board  
1515 Clay Street, Ste. 1400  
Oakland, CA 94612

Subject: Tentative Order for the Municipal Regional Stormwater NPDES Permit  
Request for Six Month Extension of Public Comment Period and  
Deferral of March 11 Public Hearing

Dear Mr. Wolfe:

At the February 13 meeting of the Alameda County Mayors' Conference, the mayors present voted unanimously to authorize the sending of a letter to the Regional Board. The purpose of this letter is to request that the public comment period for the Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit, which is currently scheduled to end on February 29, 2008, be extended an additional six months, and that the initial public hearing on this item, currently scheduled for March 11, 2008, also be deferred six months.

The reason for this request is that the permit, as currently written, is in need of extensive rework due to its overly-prescriptive nature and the inclusion of tasks which provide nominal or questionable benefit to water quality. Furthermore, there is need for a value-engineering review of the permit to determine if there are opportunities to consolidate or modify tasks in a manner that meets water-quality goals at a lower cost to local government.

Cities throughout the region have sent letters to the Board expressing concern about the proposed permit language. Based on review of the Board's website, over 50 letters had been submitted to the Board by local government agencies on this matter; the concerns expressed in these letters generally follow the same themes of the permit being overly-prescriptive and not cost effective. It is the concurrence of the Mayors' Conference that these concerns remain unaddressed on a region-wide level.

Given the breadth and complexity of unresolved issues that will be presented to the Board at the public hearing, it does not seem likely that the public hearing will be productive and lead to the timely adoption of the permit. Instead, it will do nothing more than drive home the fact that, after a year and a half since the administrative draft for the permit was first issued, and in spite of extensive written comments and constructive alternate language proposals by local agencies, there has been little or no progress by Board staff in addressing local agencies' concerns.

The six-month deferral in taking action on the permit will provide the Regional Board with the opportunity to begin a good-faith dialogue with the local agencies subject to the permit, and allow development and consideration of alternate permit requirements that are effective and fundable at the local level and do not sacrifice real water-quality objectives. The end result will be a permit that is endorsed and supported at the local level, which should result in a smoother public hearing process and the ultimate adoption of the new permit.

The effort by Board staff in the development of the permit and its ongoing efforts in addressing water-quality issues is appreciated. The Alameda County Mayors' Conference continues to advocate and promote the proper care and stewardship of our environment. Our member cities are committed to a good-faith effort to do our share in maintaining water quality within the Bay Area. We look forward to working with the Board to develop a permit that accomplishes these goals.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. Please contact Mark Green, President of the Alameda County Mayors' Conference, at (510) 489-3883, if you have any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

  
Nancy Ortenblad  
Executive Director

cc: John Muller, Chair, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board  
William Peacock, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Shalom Eliahu, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Terry Young, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Jim McGrath, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Alameda County Mayors' Conference Members  
Kathy Cote, Manager of Environmental Services, City of Fremont