

commentletters - Caltrans storm water management plan

From: "Emilie Kashtan" <ekashtan@surewest.net>
To: "Robert Erilich" <rerlich@waterboards.ca.gov>, "Harold Singer" <hsinger@waterboards.ca.gov>, "Jeanine Townsend" <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Thursday, September 27, 2007 4:33:31 PM
Subject: Caltrans storm water management plan

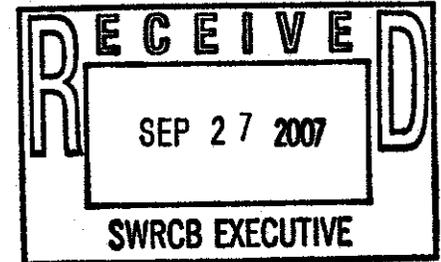
I am resending this as it was sent back to me as undeliverable. I think I left out the "s" in waterboards. Emilie Kashtan

----- Original Message -----

From: Emilie Kashtan
To: Robert Erilich ; Harold Singer ; Jeanine Townsend
Cc: Mark Brown ; Barbara Green ; Richard Anderson ; Josh Susman ; Tony Lashbrook ; Dan Wilkins ; John Eaton ; Barbara Boxer ; Diane Feinstein ; Arnold Schwarzenegger ; Chris Bowman ; David Kean ; Rick Keene ; Karen Sloan ; Jamie Bate ; editor@moonshineink ; Perry Norris
Sent: Thursday, September 27, 2007 4:11 PM
Subject: Caltrans storm water management plan

September 27, 2007

To: State Water Resources Control Board
Robert Erilich rerlich@waterboard.ca.gov
Harold Singer Hsinger@waterboard.ca.gov
Jeanine Townsend commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov



Attn: State Water Resources Control Board, Div. of Water Quality

We understand that the permit for the California Department of Transportation's Storm Water Management Plan is now under review, and you are receiving Public Comment until noon on November 30, 2007.

We would like to comment on that Plan and clarify by example, a project that is now under construction between Castle Peak exit to mid-town Truckee, in which public comment has been ignored relative to a shortcoming of the Highway retrofit of the Truckee Watershed. We understand that Caltrans responded that due to "extraordinary reasons", they were not going to provide proper highway treatment to drainage problems downhill of I-80, which includes Donner Lake. There was promised maintenance that has not been done, but more profoundly, there is resulting massive hillside erosion caused by long time failure to properly engineer and install culverts for drainage, lack of adequate catch-basins, as well as failure to maintain those culverts that were installed.

We feel a condition of a new permit, is to ensure that current projects fall under any new permit as a condition of using public monies properly and effectively for today as well as for the future.

A case in point concerns Subdivisions publicly dedicated on the north side of Donner Lake, a few include Green Point Subdivision (June 26, 1924), Donner Heights Subdivision (September 26, 1960), Lakeview Subdivision Extension (July 14, 1922), and Lakeview Subdivision (August 4, 1919,) with included public drainage easements extending from the north of the

properties (below I-80) down to Lincoln Highway, known today as Donner Pass Road. Homes have been built since dedication, both prior and after the construction of I-80, but the public easements have continued to this day to be set aside for drainage. Despite this allocation, Caltrans did not engineer the drainage off I-80 into these drainage channels, and instead, reduced the number of culverts off I-80, in a cost cutting tactic, to every other historic natural drainage way, increasing the volume and velocity of the drainage coming off the hillside from I-80. These culverts have structurally failed as well as the ditches that were to convey them to the natural drainage channels resulting in a cumulative massive erosion.

Additionally, this has dumped unfiltered drainage, containing petroleum byproducts and other substances due to wreckage (a truck wreck dumped fertilizer on I-80 above Donner Lake which leached down to the lake, causing an Algae Bloom for years) from the roadways and debris from the hillside into downhill creeks, Donner Lake and the Truckee River. This problem has escalated within the last few years in damage to properties and the waterways. The damage began with Parker v. Caltrans in the early 1960's and continues today with Taylor v. Caltrans.

On July 13, 2000, Caltrans conducted an EIR for the I-80 construction project proposed between Castle Peak exit to midtown Truckee, where Citizens at Donner Lake, including Emilie Kashtan went on formal record complaining about problems caused by drainage occurring uphill from I-80, affecting properties, creeks and Donner Lake. Letters have been written, meetings have occurred with no productive response from Caltrans.

Today, the news has significantly worsened with years of unfiltered hillside drainage, sheeting downhill from I-80 resulting in pollution of the waterways and mounting hillside erosion and sloughing. This has resulted in partial or complete damage to water services, telephone poles, back and front yards, driveways, roads, properties and home structures. The problems continue to escalate, as Caltran's plans remain deficient in solving these problems, but in fact compounding the problems with added freeway lanes minus additional culverts or adequate catch-basins, or properly directing the drainage.

Of considerable concern is the lack of "rehabilitation" of the eroded and damaged hillside that is missing in the Caltrans plans for this project, thus perpetuating and encouraging more substantive and financial problems to the residents below I-80 and the Town of Truckee. The plans, quite simply, are not addressing the problem for today or into the future.

While Caltrans has expressed to Lahonton interest toward downhill water quality into Donner Lake and the Truckee River, their plans ignore the current condition that has been caused. If you look at CalTrans' project on the east side of Brockway Summit (Highway 267) many catch-basins have been added to collect and "treat" the waters off that highway to protect the Lake Tahoe Basin; yet there is NO SIMILAR protection for the west side which flows through Truckee and on to Reno. Absence is any visible evidence that Caltrans cares about their impact on the people of Donner

Lake or Truckee.

We encourage you to require Caltrans to address problems of downhill erosion caused by Caltrans, especially at Donner Lake, and to protect monies provided by the citizens of the State of California as well as to protect our valuable limited natural resources.

Respectfully submitted,

Donner Lake Community Association
Emilie Kashtan, Chairperson

CC: Town of Truckee Town Council
Tony Lashbrook, Truckee Town Manager tlashbrook@townoftruckee.com
John Eaton, Mountain Area Preservation jme@gbis.com
Sierra Club dividmkean@yahoo.com
Governor Schwarzenegger governor@governor.ca.gov
GOVERNOR Gibbons (Nevada)
Truckee Watershed Council
U.S. Congressman Doolittle doolittle.house.gov
U.S. Senator Feinstein
Barbara Boxer boxer.seanator.gov/contact/webform.cfm
State Assemblyman Keene assemblymember.keene@assembly.ca.gov
State Senator Cox
Sierra Sun editor@sierrasun.com
Moonshine Ink editors@moonshineink.com
Truckee Times feedback@truckeetimes.com
Sacramento Bee cbowman@sacbee.com