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Assembly California Legislature



JERRY HILL
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, NINETEENTH DISTRICT

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RENEWABLE ENERGY

April 2, 2009

John Muller, Chair
Bruce Wolfe, Executive Officer
San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400
Oakland, California 94612

RE: Draft Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit

Dear Chairman Muller and Executive Officer Wolfe:

I am writing regarding the draft municipal regional stormwater permit. Providing safe, clean drinking water to local residents is a priority of mine. Additionally, reducing pollution from stormwater runoff and eliminating trash from our coastline and bay-front is of utmost importance.

The City / County Association of Governments of San Mateo County has been implementing beneficial programs at the local level. The San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program (Countywide Program) created a "Sustainable Green Streets and Parking Lots Program" using funding from vehicle license fees. This program funded six demonstration projects that will utilize landscape-based stormwater management measures to treat parking lot and street runoff and developed a Design Guidebook that has received national interest. The Countywide Program has also taken steps to address trash and litter impairment in waterways, specifically working on a pilot assessment project with the City of San Mateo to both quantify trash accumulation in San Mateo Creek and identify land-based sources of trash generation in order to evaluate effective management measures.

I have recently become aware of the draft municipal regional stormwater permit requirements and its possible fiscal impact on local governments. I support strong water quality protection as part of the permit requirements but I also request that you consider the economic hardships faced by many local governments as part of the national recession. During times like these it may be appropriate to consider both phasing and flexibility as you prepare for the next five years of requirements. This will allow local governments to focus their limited resources on priority water quality and stormwater management efforts. I suggest you direct your staff to work with municipal stormwater programs to develop a road map for stormwater permitting requirements in future permit terms that ensures strong water quality regulation and at the same time recognizes the significant resource limitations facing these programs.

I would also request that the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board assist local governments in obtaining federal and state grants and forgivable loans that may be used to help local public agencies with their efforts to improve stormwater quality and to tie the most fiscally demanding new permit requirements to the receipt of such funds.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and for your further efforts in crafting a municipal regional permit that is appropriate for these challenging and unusually difficult times.

Sincerely,

JERRY HILL
Assemblymember, 19th District