



California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Los Angeles Region



Linda S. Adams  
Acting Secretary for  
Environmental Protection

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Edmund G. Brown Jr.  
Governor

Eduardo Aguilar  
CALTRANS District 7  
100 S. Main Street, MS16A  
Los Angeles, CA 91002

**WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION FOR PROPOSED STATE ROUTE 126, HOPPER CREEK BRIDGE LONG-TERM SEDIMENT REMOVAL MAINTENANCE PROJECT (Corps' Project No. 2006-01420-VEN), HOPPER CREEK, PIRU, VENTURA COUNTY (File No. 10-054)**


Dear Mr. Aguilar:

Board staff has reviewed your request on behalf of Caltrans District 7 (Applicant) for a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification (CWA 401) for the above-referenced project. Your application was deemed complete on April 13, 2011.

I hereby issue an order certifying that any discharge from the referenced project will comply with the applicable provisions of sections 301 (Effluent Limitations), 302 (Water Quality Related Effluent Limitations), 303 (Water Quality Standards and Implementation Plans), 306 (National Standards of Performance), and 307 (Toxic and Pretreatment Effluent Standards) of the Clean Water Act, and with other applicable requirements of State law. This discharge is also regulated under State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2003 - 0017 - DWQ, "General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dredge and Fill Discharges that have received State Water Quality Certification" which requires compliance with all conditions of this Water Quality Certification.

The Applicant shall be liable civilly for any violations of this Certification in accordance with the California Water Code. This Certification does not eliminate the Applicant's responsibility to comply with any other applicable laws, requirements and/or permits.

Should you have questions concerning this Certification action, please contact Dana Cole, Section 401 Program, at (213) 576-5733.

  
Samuel Unger, P.E.  
Executive Officer

July 20, 2011  
Date

## DISTRIBUTION LIST

Newton Wong  
CALTRANS District 7  
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Los Angeles, CA 91002

Peter Brand  
Coastal Conservancy  
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Bill Orme (via electronic copy)  
State Water Resources Control Board  
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Jeff Humble (via electronic copy)  
California Department of Fish and Game  
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Staff Attorney  
Environmental Defense Center  
906 Garden Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Jessie Altstatt  
Santa Barbara Channel Keeper  
714 Bond Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93103

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Project Information  
File No. 10-054**

1. Applicant: Eduardo Aguilar  
CALTRANS District 7  
100 S. Main Street, MS16A  
Los Angeles, CA 91002  
  
Phone: (213) 897-8492 Fax: (213) 897-0685
2. Applicant's Agent: Newton Wong  
CALTRANS District 7  
100 S. Main Street, MS16A  
Los Angeles, CA 91002  
  
Phone: (213) 897-2432 Fax: (213) 897-0685
3. Project Name: State Route 126, Hopper Creek Bridge Long Term Sediment  
Removal Maintenance
4. Project Location: Piru, Ventura County
- | <u>Latitude</u><br>(decimal degrees) | <u>Longitude</u><br>(decimal degrees) |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 34.4012                              | 118.8268                              |
| 34.4009                              | 118.8268                              |
| 34.4004                              | 118.8267                              |
| 34.4006                              | 118.8265                              |
| 34.4012                              | 118.8264                              |
| 34.4009                              | 118.8264                              |
| 34.4004                              | 118.8269                              |
| 34.4006                              | 118.8268                              |
5. Type of Project: Channel sediment removal
6. Project Purpose: The State Route 126 bridge over Hopper Creek is filled with sediment to 50% of capacity. Sediment and debris will be removed from within the stream channel in order to restore capacity.

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#### 7. Project Description:

Alluvial material is constantly deposited in the drainage along Hopper Canyon Creek. The proposed project (Project) will remove accumulated sediment located at the State Route 126 Hopper Creek Bridge (Bridge) to increase capacity. The work will be done in the summer or early fall before the wet season begins and after the bird nesting season ends, and while the water level is typically at its lowest levels for the year. Construction related impacts will include noise and dust that might temporarily impact wildlife.

Hopper Creek is approximately 60 to 120 feet wide at this point, and sediment will be removed to about a depth of 10 feet. Existing access points adjacent to the bridge will be used as access to the channel.

Heavy equipment; excavators, bulldozers, loaders, and dump trucks will be used to remove dead vegetation, sediment and debris from the streambed. Sediment excavation will occur 100 feet up and downstream from the bridge.

A deeper, low flow channel will be created within the work area in Hopper Creek to allow Steelhead passage through Hopper Creek under Route 126. The low flow channel will incorporate the natural grade as much as possible, within the right of way constraints, to prevent any steep sections and provide a smooth flow channel.

Subsequent excavations will take place, if required. Each individual excavation will be limited to a 30 day duration during non winter/rainy months. If a significant rainfall occurs, such that the capacity needs to be immediately restored to prevent flooding, then work will be conducted during winter months.

The excavated material (accumulated alluvial sediment deposits, gravel, rocks and silt, from the creek bed and vegetation) will be stored offsite at legal point of disposal and will be used later for other projects. If water is present, water diversion will be performed. No work will be done in flowing water.

#### 8. Federal Agency/Permit:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
NWP Nos. 3 & 33 (Permit No. 2006-01420-VEN)

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9. Other Required Regulatory Approvals: California Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Agreement
10. California Environmental Quality Act Compliance: Caltrans determined through a NEPA/CEQA document that the proposed project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA on June 13, 2006 pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301, Existing Facilities.  
  
On April 11, 2011 "Low Impact Developments" (best management practices) were added as conditions to the Document above.
11. Receiving Water: Hopper Canyon Creek (Hydrologic Unit No. 403.41)
12. Designated Beneficial Uses: MUN\*, IND, AGR, GWR, FRSH, REC-1, REC-2, WARM, COLD, WILD, RARE, WET  
  
\*Conditional beneficial use
13. Impacted Waters of the United States: Non-wetland waters (vegetated streambed): 0.79 temporary acres
14. Dredge Volume: None
15. Related Projects Implemented/to be Implemented by the Applicant: The Applicant has not identified any related projects carried out in the last 5 years.
16. Avoidance/Minimization Activities: The Applicant has proposed to implement several Best Management Practices, including, but not limited to, the following:
- Work shall occur during the low flow season, and while rain is not forecasted for a 72 hour period.
  - Caltrans anticipates attempted nesting by migratory and non-game birds from February 15 to September 1. If the project activities are conducted during the bird nesting season, then a

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bird nesting survey will be performed prior to any further work.

- If the survey finds any bird species of concern, all work will stop within a 150-foot radius of the discovery of any migratory and non-game bird nests or a 500 feet radius for any raptor nests.
- All work shall cease if any listed species is spotted during work activities, and coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game will commence immediately.
- A low flow channel at Hopper Creek will be graded into the streambed to allow for Steelhead passage.
- Water will be diverted within the channel by the creation of a Sandbag Barrier.
- If turbidity is present, a straw bale barrier will be used at the downstream end of the project area to allow sediment to settle before the water leaves the construction site.
- All sediment removed shall be disposed off site to a legal point of disposal.
- Heavy equipment shall access the work areas using existing established routes only.
- All refueling activity will occur off site.
- Equipment storage areas shall be place outside of jurisdictional areas.
- Stationary equipment such as motors and pumps, located within or adjacent to a water body, shall be positioned over drip pans.
- Vehicles and equipment within the project will be maintained and free of any exterior grease, oil, fuel and petroleum residues.
- Diversion structures shall be adequately designed to accommodate fluctuations in water depth or flow volume due to tides, etc.

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### Project Information

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- Non-active equipment will not be placed within jurisdictional areas unless allowed by state and federal regulation.
- A biologist may be present during construction to monitor construction activities. All work shall cease if a listed species is spotted during work activities.
- The Applicant will ensure that work is monitored to ensure compliance with all avoidance and minimization measures above.

17. Proposed  
Compensatory  
Mitigation:

The Applicant has proposed no onsite compensatory mitigation for temporary impacts. However, the Applicant does propose in-lieu fees for the creation or restoration of wetland habitat for 0.39 acres (1:2 ratio) within the Santa Clara River Watershed by providing funds to a third party organization.

18. Required  
Compensatory  
Mitigation:

The Applicant shall provide compensatory mitigation to offset the proposed temporary loss of **0.79** acres (1:1 ratio) waters of the United States by creating or restoring riparian habitat for **0.79 acres**. See *Attachment B, Conditions of Certifications, Additional Conditions* for modifications and additions to the above proposed compensatory mitigation.

## ATTACHMENT B

### Conditions of Certification File No. 10-054

#### STANDARD CONDITIONS

Pursuant to §3860 of Title 23 of the California Code of Regulations (23 CCR), the following three standard conditions shall apply to this project:

1. This Certification action is subject to modification or revocation upon administrative or judicial review, including review and amendment pursuant to §13330 of the California Water Code and Article 6 (commencing with 23 CCR §3867).
2. This Certification action is not intended and shall not be construed to apply to any activity involving a hydroelectric facility and requiring a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license or an amendment to a FERC license unless the pertinent Certification application was filed pursuant to 23 CCR Subsection 3855(b) and the application specifically identified that a FERC license or amendment to a FERC license for a hydroelectric facility was being sought.
3. Certification is conditioned upon total payment of any fee required pursuant to 23 CCR Chapter 28 and owed by the Applicant.

#### ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS

Pursuant to 23 CCR §3859(a), the Applicant shall comply with the following additional conditions:

1. The Applicant shall submit to this Regional Board copies of any other final permits and agreements required for this project, including, but not limited to, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (ACOE) Section 404 Permit and the California Department of Fish and Game's (CDFG) Streambed Alteration Agreement. These documents shall be submitted prior to any discharge to waters of the State.
2. The Applicant shall adhere to the most stringent conditions indicated with either this Certification, the CDFG's Streambed Alteration Agreement, or the ACOE Section 404 Permit.
3. The Applicant shall comply with all water quality objectives, prohibitions, and policies set forth in the *Water Quality Control Plan, Los Angeles Region (1994)*, as amended.
4. The Avoidance/Minimization activities proposed by the Applicant as described in Attachment A, No. 16, are incorporated as additional conditions herein.
5. The Applicant and all contractors employed by the Applicant shall have copies of this Certification, the approved maintenance as described herein (and in the *Natural Environmental Study* for Hopper Creek Bridge, the ACOE *Section 404 Permit*, and the



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CDFG *Streambed Alteration Agreement*) and all other regulatory approvals for this project on site at all times and shall be familiar with all conditions set forth.

6. Fueling, lubrication, maintenance, operation, and storage of vehicles and equipment shall not result in a discharge or a threatened discharge to waters of the State. At no time shall the Applicant use any vehicle or equipment which leaks any substance that may impact water quality. Staging and storage areas for vehicles and equipment shall be located outside of waters of the State.
7. All excavation, construction, or maintenance activities shall follow best management practices to minimize impacts to water quality and beneficial uses. Dust control activities shall be conducted in such a manner that will not produce downstream runoff.
8. No construction material, spoils, debris, or any other substances associated with this project that may adversely impact water quality standards, shall be located in a manner which may result in a discharge or a threatened discharge to waters of the State. Designated spoil and waste areas shall be visually marked prior to any excavation and/or construction activity, and storage of the materials shall be confined to these areas.
9. All waste and dredged material removed shall be relocated to a legal point of disposal if applicable. A legal point of disposal is defined as one for which Waste Discharge Requirements have been established by a California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and is in full compliance therewith. Please contact Wen Yang, Land Disposal Unit, at (213) 620-2253 for further information.
10. The Applicant shall implement all necessary control measures to prevent the degradation of water quality from the proposed project in order to maintain compliance with the Basin Plan. The discharge shall meet all effluent limitations and toxic and effluent standards established to comply with the applicable water quality standards and other appropriate requirements, including the provisions of Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Clean Water Act. This Certification does not authorize the discharge by the applicant for any other activity than specifically described in the 404 Permit.
11. The discharge shall not: a) degrade surface water communities and populations including vertebrate, invertebrate, and plant species; b) promote the breeding of mosquitoes, gnats, black flies, midges, or other pests; c) alter the color, create visual contrast with the natural appearance, nor cause aesthetically undesirable discoloration of the receiving waters; d) cause formation of sludge deposits; or e) adversely affect any designated beneficial uses.
12. The Applicant shall allow the Regional Board and its authorized representative entry to the premises, including all mitigation sites, to inspect and undertake any activity to determine compliance with this Certification, or as otherwise authorized by the California Water Code.

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13. Application of pesticides must be supervised by a certified applicator and be in conformance with manufacturer's specifications for use. Compounds used must be appropriate to the target species and habitat. All pesticides directed toward aquatic species must be approved by the Regional Board. Pesticide utilization shall be in accordance with State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order Nos. 2004-0008-DWQ and 2004-0009-DWQ.
14. The Applicant shall not conduct any construction activities within waters of the State during a rainfall event. The Applicant shall maintain a **five-day (5-day) clear weather forecast** before conducting any operations within waters of the State.
15. If rain is predicted after operations have begun, grading activities must cease immediately and the site must be stabilized to prevent impacts to water quality, and minimize erosion and runoff from the site.
16. Sediment removal at each phase shall not go beyond the extent as defined in the application packet.
17. The grading, stabilization and re-vegetation will be phased to limit the exposed or working face such that the graded area can be stabilized within 24 hours after the first prediction of rain during the 5-day forecast or within 24 hours after final grading of the phased area.
18. The Applicant shall utilize the services of a qualified biologist with expertise in riparian assessments during any vegetation clearing activities. The biologist shall be available on site during construction activities to ensure that all protected areas are marked properly and ensure that no vegetation outside the specified areas is removed. The biologist shall have the authority to stop the work, as necessary, if instructions are not followed. The biologist shall be available upon request from this Regional Board for consultation within 24 hours of request of consultation.
19. No activities shall involve wet excavations (i.e., no excavations shall occur below the seasonal high water table). A minimum **5-foot** buffer zone shall be maintained above the existing groundwater level. If construction or groundwater dewatering is proposed or anticipated, the Applicant shall file a **Report of Waste Discharge** to this Regional Board and obtain any necessary NPDES permits/Waste Discharge Requirements prior to discharging waste. Sufficient time should be allowed to obtain any such permits (generally 180 days). If groundwater is encountered without the benefit of appropriate permits, the Applicant shall cease all activities in the areas where groundwater is present, file a Report of Waste Discharge to this Regional Board, and obtain any necessary permits prior to discharging waste.
20. All project and maintenance activities not included in this Certification, and which may require a permit, must be reported to the Regional Board for appropriate permitting. Bank

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stabilization and grading, as well as any other ground disturbances, are subject to restoration and revegetation requirements, and may require additional Certification action.

21. All surface waters, including ponded waters, shall be diverted away from areas undergoing grading, construction, excavation, vegetation removal, and/or any other activity which may result in a discharge to the receiving water. If surface water diversions are anticipated, the Applicant shall develop and submit a **Surface Water Diversion Plan** (plan) to this Regional Board. The plan shall include the proposed method and duration of diversion activities, structure configuration, construction materials, equipment, erosion and sediment controls, and a map or drawing indicating the locations of diversion and discharge points. Contingency measures shall be a part of this plan to address various flow discharge rates. The plan shall be submitted prior to any surface water diversions. If surface flows are present, then upstream and downstream monitoring for the following shall be implemented:
  - pH
  - temperature
  - dissolved oxygen
  - turbidity
  - total suspended solids(TSS)

Analyses must be performed using approved US Environmental Protection Agency methods, where applicable. These constituents shall be measured at least once prior to diversion and then monitored for on a daily basis during the first week of diversion and/or dewatering activities, and then on a weekly basis, thereafter, until the in-stream work is complete.

Results of the analyses shall be submitted to this Regional Board by the 15th day of each subsequent sampling month. A map or drawing indicating the locations of sampling points shall be included with each submittal. Diversion activities shall not result in the degradation of beneficial uses or exceedance of water quality objectives of the receiving waters. Downstream TSS shall be maintained at ambient levels. Where natural turbidity is between 0 and 50 Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTU), increases shall not exceed 20%. Where natural turbidity is greater than 50 NTU, increases shall not exceed 10%. Any such violations may result in corrective and/or enforcement actions, including increased monitoring and sample collection.

22. The Applicant shall restore all areas of temporary disturbance which could result in a discharge or a threatened discharge to waters of the State. The Applicant shall implement all necessary Best Management Practices to control erosion and runoff from areas associated with this project.
23. The Applicant shall provide COMPENSATORY MITIGATION to offset the proposed temporary loss of **0.79** acres waters of the United States by creating or restoring riparian habitat (vegetated streambed) at a minimum **1:1** area replacement ratio (**0.79 acres**). The Applicant shall provide funding to a third-party organization for the creation or restoration

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### Conditions of Certification File No. 10-054

of vegetated streambed riparian habitat within waters of the United States/Federal jurisdictional wetlands, and funding shall apply to mitigation acreage only exclusive of administrative costs. The mitigation site shall be located within the Santa Clara Watershed unless otherwise approved by this Regional Board. The Applicant shall submit a **Proposed Mitigation Report** which shall include:

- (a) Documentation from the third party indicating that funds have been used for mitigation acreage only, which do not include administrative costs.
- (b) The boundary of the mitigation site shall be clearly identified on a map of suitable resolution and quality and shall also be defined by latitude and longitude.
- (c) The type(s) of mitigation shall be described (e.g., removal of exotics and/or replanting with native species, etc.)
- (d) Success criteria shall be established.

**This information shall be submitted to this Regional Board for approval prior to any disturbance within waters of the United States** and shall include copies of all agreements made between the Applicant and a third party organization regarding compensatory mitigation efforts.

24. All open space and mitigation areas shall be placed within a conservation easement to ensure preservation in perpetuity. Documentation of proper easement placement shall be submitted to the Regional Board within one year.
25. The Applicant shall submit to this Regional Board **Annual Mitigation Monitoring Reports** (Annual Reports) by **January 1<sup>st</sup>** of each year for a minimum period of **five (5) years** following this issuance of 401 Certification or until mitigation success has been achieved and documented. The Annual Reports shall describe in detail all of the project/construction activities performed during the previous year and all restoration and mitigation efforts; including percent survival by plant species and percent cover. The Annual Reports shall describe the status of other agreements (e.g., mitigation banking) or any delays in the mitigation process. At a minimum the Annual Reports shall include the following documentation and answered appropriately whether or not mitigation has been performed:
  - (e) Color photo documentation of the pre- and post-project and mitigation site conditions;
  - (f) Geographical Positioning System (GPS) coordinates in decimal-degrees format outlining the boundary of the project and mitigation areas;
  - (g) The overall status of project including a detailed schedule of work;
  - (h) Copies of all permits revised as required in Additional Condition 1;

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- (i) Water quality monitoring results for each reach (as required) compiled in an easy to interpret format;
  - (j) A certified Statement of "no net loss" of wetlands associated with this project;
  - (k) Discussion of any monitoring activities and exotic plant control efforts; and
  - (l) A certified Statement from the permittee or his/her representative that all conditions of this Certification have been met.
26. Prior to any subsequent maintenance activities within the subject drainages/basin, including clearing, maintenance by-hand, and/or the application of pesticides, the Applicant shall submit to this Regional Board a NOTIFICATION of any such activity. Notification shall include: (a) the proposed schedule; (b) a description of the drainage's/basin's existing condition/capacity; (c) the area of proposed temporary impact within waters of the State; (c) a description of any existing aquatic resources (e.g., wetland/riparian vegetation); and (d) any proposed compensatory mitigation. Notifications must be submitted a minimum of **three (3) weeks** prior to commencing work activities.
27. All applications, reports, or information submitted to the Regional Board shall be signed:
- (a) For corporations, by a principal executive officer at least of the level of vice president or his duly authorized representative, if such representative is responsible for the overall operation of the facility from which discharge originates.
  - (b) For a partnership, by a general partner.
  - (c) For a sole proprietorship, by the proprietor.
  - (d) For a municipal, State, or other public facility, by either a principal executive officer, ranking elected official, or other duly authorized employee.
28. Each and any report submitted in accordance with this Certification shall contain the following completed declaration:
- "I declare under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under my direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on my inquiry of the person or persons who managed the system or those directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, accurate and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations.

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Conditions of Certification  
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Executed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)  
(Title)

29. All communications regarding this project and submitted to this Regional Board shall identify the Project File Number **10-054**. Submittals shall be sent to the attention of the 401 Certification Unit.
30. Any modifications of the proposed project may require submittal of a new Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification application and appropriate filing fee.
31. The project shall comply with the local regulations associated with the Regional Board's **Municipal Stormwater Permit** issued to the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) under NPDES No. CAS000003 and Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 99 - 06 - DWQ. This includes the Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) and all related implementing local ordinances and regulations for the control of stormwater pollution from new development and redevelopment.
32. The project shall comply with all requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) **General Permit** for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity, Order No. 2009-009-DWQ. All stormwater treatment systems shall be located outside of any water of the State and shall not be used as a wetland or riparian mitigation credit.
33. Coverage under this Certification may be transferred to the extent the underlying federal permit may legally be transferred and further provided that the Applicant notifies the Executive Officer at least 30 days before the proposed transfer date, and the notice includes a written agreement between the existing and new Applicants containing a specific date of coverage, responsibility for compliance with this Certification, and liability between them.
34. The Applicant or their agents shall report any noncompliance. Any such information shall be provided verbally to the Executive Officer within 24 hours from the time the Applicant becomes aware of the circumstances. A written submission shall also be provided within five days of the time the Applicant becomes aware of the circumstances. The written submission shall contain a description of the noncompliance and its cause; the period of noncompliance, including exact dates and times, and if the noncompliance has not been corrected; the anticipated time it is expected to continue and steps taken or planned to reduce, eliminate and prevent recurrence of the noncompliance. The Executive Officer, or an authorized representative, may waive the written report on a case-by-case basis if the oral report has been received within 24 hours.

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35. *Enforcement:*

- (a) In the event of any violation or threatened violation of the conditions of this Certification, the violation or threatened violation shall be subject to any remedies, penalties, process or sanctions as provided for under State law. For purposes of section 401(d) of the Clean Water Act, the applicability of any State law authorizing remedies, penalties, process or sanctions for the violation or threatened violation constitutes a limitation necessary to assure compliance with the water quality standards and other pertinent requirements incorporated into this Certification.
- (b) In response to a suspected violation of any condition of this Certification, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) or Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) may require the holder of any permit or license subject to this Certification to furnish, under penalty of perjury, any technical or monitoring reports the SWRCB deems appropriate, provided that the burden, including costs, of the reports shall be a reasonable relationship to the need for the reports and the benefits to be obtained from the reports.
- (c) In response to any violation of the conditions of this Certification, the SWRCB or RWQCB may add to or modify the conditions of this Certification as appropriate to ensure compliance.

36. This Certification shall expire **five (5) years** from date of this Certification. The Applicant shall submit a complete application prior to termination of this Certification if renewal is requested.