

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

Mr. Robert Freeman 548253
Los Angeles World Airports 548252
7301 World Way West, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90045

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED
No. 7012 3460 0001 6366 0489

TECHNICALLY CONDITIONED WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION FOR PROPOSED LAX RUNWAY 6L-24R & 6R-24L IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, (Corps' Project No. 2014-00485-SLP), ARGO DITCH-TRIBUTARY TO PACIFIC OCEAN, CITY OF LOS ANGELES, LOS ANGELES COUNTY (File No. 14-089)


Dear Mr. Freeman:

Board staff has reviewed your request on behalf of Los Angeles World Airports (Applicant) for a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification for the above-referenced project. Your application was deemed complete on August 12, 2014.

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.

Please read this entire document carefully. 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 Valerie Carrillo Zara, P.G., Lead, Section 401 Program, at (213) 576-6759.



Samuel Unger, P.E.
Executive Officer

Sept. 24, 2014
Date

DISTRIBUTION LIST

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State Water Resources Control Board
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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Daniel P. Swenson (via electronic copy)
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Paul Amato
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San Francisco, CA 94105

ATTACHMENT A

Project Information

File No. 14-089

1. Applicant: Los Angeles World Airports
7301 World Way West, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Phone: (424) 646-6474
2. Project Name: Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Runway 6L-24R & 6R-24L Improvements
3. Project Location: Los Angeles (LAX), Los Angeles County

| <u>Latitude</u> | <u>Longitude</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 33.952905 | 118.402800 |
| 33.952984 | 118.402810 |
| 33.952985 | 118.400761 |
| 33.953023 | 118.400674 |
| 33.953026 | 118.400593 |
| 33.952985 | 118.400671 |
| 33.952985 | 118.400459 |
| 33.952905 | 118.400457 |

4. Type of Project: Runway safety improvements
5. Project Purpose: The proposed project will improve the existing northern runway safety area, in order to comply with federal laws. Project related improvements proposed at the east end of Runway 6L-24R require converting up to 720 linear feet of a currently open flood control channel, the Argo Ditch, to a concrete box culvert capable of, in an emergency situation, supporting the weight of aircraft that utilize Runway 6L-24R.
6. Project Description: The runway safety area (RSA) of Runway 6L-24R does not meet current FAA standards. As required by Congressional mandate, Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) is required to improve the Runway 6L-24R RSA to meet FAA design standards. A small portion of the Argo Ditch within the runway safety area will be placed in a box culvert and covered to conform to FAA design standards. The runway safety area is required to be flat and level within a 250-foot buffer adjacent to the actual runway, in the event of an emergency landing or other situation outside of the runway.

ATTACHMENT A

Project Information

File No. 14-089

As part of the improvements, the existing airfield service road north of Runway 6L-24R will be relocated farther north, extending over a portion of the current Argo Ditch. This portion of the ditch will be covered to accommodate the road relocation. A concrete box channel will be installed in the ditch. In order to install a concrete box channel system, the ditch will be prepared with heavy machinery (maintenance vehicles, pickup trucks, crane, lowboy tractor trailer, backhoe, scrapers, grader, front-end loader, dump truck, roller, and water truck) and activities such as excavation and compaction. In-stream activities will be required to install the concrete box channel.

In addition to the impact to 0.09 acres of wetlands, and 0.22 acres of vegetated streambed, a 0.27 acre area adjacent to the vegetated streambed will be permanently impacted.

The overall project construction is scheduled to occur from May 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015, for 175 days. Work to take place in the Argo Ditch is anticipated to occur outside of the rainy season.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 7. Federal Agency/Permit: | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers NWP No. 39 (No. 2014-00485-SLP) |
| 8. Other Required Regulatory Approvals: | California Department of Fish and Wildlife Streambed Alteration Agreement |
| 9. California Environmental Quality Act Compliance: | The Los Angeles World Airports Board of Airport Commissioners approved the project's Final Environmental Impact Report on July 21, 2014. |
| 10. Receiving Water: | Tributary to the Pacific Ocean (Hydrologic Unit Code: 180701010202) |
| 11. Designated Beneficial Uses: | MUN*, IND, PROC, AGR, GWR, FRSH, NAV, POW, REC-1, REC-2, COMM, AQUA, WARM, COLD, SAL, EST, MAR, WILD, BIOL, RARE, MIGR, SPWN, SHELL, WET |

*Conditional beneficial use

ATTACHMENT A

Project Information

File No. 14-089

12. Impacted Waters of the United States:
- Federal jurisdictional wetlands: 0.01 permanent acres (200 linear feet)
- Non-wetland waters (streambed): 0.30 permanent acres (520 linear feet)
13. Dredge Volume: None
14. Related Projects Implemented/to be Implemented by the Applicant:
- The Applicant has not identified any related projects carried out in the last 5 years or planned for implementation in the next 5 years.
15. Avoidance/Minimization Activities:
- The Applicant has proposed to implement several Best Management Practices, including, but not limited to, the following:
- Although not anticipated to impact sensitive fish, wildlife, or plant resources, construction efforts will follow mitigation measures and guidelines established in the Hydrology Report and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).
 - Erosion and sediment control best management practices, water diversion plan, scheduling, wind erosion control, water conservation, solid waste management, sanitary waste management, liquid waste management, straw mulch, geotextiles and mats, silt fence or other highly visible material along boundary / areas of disturbance, and fiber rolls around stockpiles will be employed.
 - Work within the channel will generally be confined to the dry, summer months to avoid rain events. Excess soils will be removed from site and disposed of in an appropriate manner
 - Existing vegetation will be preserved where required and when feasible.
 - The area of soil disturbing operations shall be controlled such that the Contractor is able to implement erosion control BMPs quickly and effectively.
 - Non-active areas will be stabilized as soon as feasible after construction is complete and no later than 14 days after

ATTACHMENT A

Project Information File No. 14-089

construction in that portion of the site that has temporarily or permanently or ceased.

- Erosion will be controlled in concentrated flow paths by applying erosion control blankets, check dams, erosion control seeding or alternate methods.
- Prior to the completion of construction, permanent erosion control will be applied to remaining disturbed soil areas.

16. Proposed Compensatory Mitigation:

One (1) acre of emergent wetlands in the Argo Ditch was previously mitigated for impacts associated with channel maintenance dredging (i.e., ongoing periodic removal of vegetation within Argo Ditch to remove wildlife attractants for safety reasons and was deemed successful by the USACOE on December 9, 2004 (Permit No. 980015100-JLB).

The Applicant has proposed to mitigate the project impacts at a ratio of 3:1. For the 0.01 acre of impacts within the cattail marsh, 0.03 acres of wetland creation will occur off-site. In addition, the 0.30 acres of Brome Grassland impact area will be mitigated at a ratio of 3:1 (totaling 0.90 acres), with native habitat restoration in the vicinity of the off-site wetland mitigation area and removing paving along the asphalt drainage area on the north airfield at LAX, which drains into the Argo Ditch.

17. Required Compensatory Mitigation:

The Regional Board will require the Applicant to provide compensatory mitigation as proposed above at a 3:1 ratio for project impacts. A total of 0.93 acres of compensatory mitigation will be required.

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. 14-089

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 Wildlife's (CDFW) 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 CDFW'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. 15, are incorporated as additional conditions herein.
5. The Applicant and all contractors employed by the Applicant shall have copies of this Certification, and all other regulatory approvals for this project on site at all times and shall be familiar with all conditions set forth.

ATTACHMENT B

Conditions of Certification File No. 14-089

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 or 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.
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.
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

ATTACHMENT B

Conditions of Certification

File No. 14-089

by the Regional Board. Pesticide utilization shall be in accordance with State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order Nos. 2011-0002-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. 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.
17. 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.
18. 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 (ROWD)** to this Regional Board and obtain any necessary NPDES permits/Waste Discharge Requirements prior to discharging waste.
19. All project/maintenance activities not included in this Certification, and which may require a permit, must be reported to the Regional Board for appropriate permitting. Bank stabilization and grading, as well as any other ground disturbances, are subject to restoration and revegetation requirements, and may require additional Certification action.
20. 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.

ATTACHMENT B

Conditions of Certification

File No. 14-089

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.

21. The Applicant shall restore **all areas** of TEMPORARY IMPACTS to waters of the United States and all other areas of temporary disturbance which could result in a discharge or a threatened discharge to waters of the State. Restoration shall include grading of disturbed areas to pre-project contours and revegetation with native species. Restored areas shall be monitored and maintained with native species as necessary for five years.
22. The Applicant shall provide COMPENSATORY MITIGATION to offset the proposed permanent loss of **0.30** acres waters of the United States by creating or restoring riparian habitat at a minimum **3:1** area replacement ratio (**0.90 acres**). The Applicant shall also provide compensatory mitigation for the proposed permanent impacts to **0.01 acres** of wetlands by creating or restoring riparian habitat at a minimum **3:1** area replacement ratio (**0.03 acres**). The total compensatory mitigation shall be **0.93 acres**. The Applicant shall submit a **Proposed Mitigation Report** which shall include:
 - (a) 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.
 - (b) The type(s) of mitigation shall be described (e.g., removal of exotics and/or replanting with native species, etc.)
 - (c) Success criteria shall be established.

ATTACHMENT B

Conditions of Certification

File No. 14-089

This information shall be submitted to this Regional Board for approval prior to any project activities which take place 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.

23. If the Applicant proposes funding to a third-party organization for the creation or restoration within waters of the United States/Federal jurisdictional wetlands, then funding shall apply to mitigation acreage only, exclusive of administrative costs. The mitigation site shall be located within the (Name of) 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. The Applicant shall submit to this Regional Board **Annual Mitigation Monitoring Reports** (Annual Reports) by **January 1st** of each year for a minimum period of **five (5) years** following this issuance of 401 Certification or until mitigation/(project) success/(completion) 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:
- (a) Color photo documentation of the pre- and post-project and mitigation site conditions;
 - (b) Geographical Positioning System (GPS) coordinates in decimal-degrees format outlining the boundary of the project and mitigation areas;
 - (c) The overall status of project including whether or not work has begun on the Project and a detailed schedule;

ATTACHMENT B

**Conditions of Certification
File No. 14-089**

- (d) Copies of all permits revised as required in Additional Condition 1;
 - (e) Water quality monitoring results for each reach (as required) compiled in an easy to interpret format;
 - (f) A certified Statement of "no net loss" of wetlands associated with this project;
 - (g) Discussion of any monitoring activities and exotic plant control efforts; and
 - (h) A certified Statement from the permittee or his/her representative that all conditions of this Certification have been met.
25. 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.
26. 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.

Executed on the _____ day of _____ at _____.

(Signature)
(Title)"

ATTACHMENT B

Conditions of Certification File No. 14-089

27. All communications regarding this project and submitted to this Regional Board shall identify the Project **File Number 14-089**. Submittals shall be sent to the attention of the 401 Certification Unit.
28. 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.
29. The project shall comply with the local regulations associated with the Regional Board's **Municipal Stormwater Permit** issued to Los Angeles County and co-permittees under NPDES No. CAS004001 and Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R4-2012-0175. The project shall also comply with all requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) **General Permit** for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity, Order No. 2012-0011-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.
30. 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.
31. 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.
32. *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.

ATTACHMENT B

Conditions of Certification

File No. 14-089

- (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.
33. This Certification shall expire **five (5) years** from date of this Certification. The Applicant shall submit a complete application at least 90 days prior to termination of this Certification if renewal is requested.