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January 11, 2012

Mr. Gary Strawn
Vice Chairman
California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego
9174 Sky Park Court, Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92123-4340

**Re: Comment—Tentative Order No. R9-2013-001, Regional MS4 Permit, Place ID:
786088Wchiu**

Dear Vice Chair Strawn:

I am writing on behalf of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce in response to the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board's Tentative Order R9-2012-0011 ("Permit") dated October 31, 2012. After reviewing the Permit, the Chamber and its members are concerned that it will impose expensive and untested regulations on local governments and businesses.

Clean, safe water is vital to the region's economy. The tourism industry is one of San Diego's largest. Maintaining its economic health requires clean water in our beaches and streams. It is important, however, that we use our limited resources wisely, and ensure that our efforts produce the desired outcome of improving water quality.

We applaud the Board's inclusion of Water Quality Improvement Plans (WQIP) as a first step in developing a cost-effective approach to improving our water. Analysis remains a critical component of a successful strategy, and we are glad to see that the Board is committed to finding the best possible solution to water quality improvement.

We are concerned, however, that the costs associated with enforcing and implementing the permit will have a negative impact on San Diego's economy. Our three primary areas of concern include: 1) the strict liability for exceeding water quality objectives; 2) the preemption of WQIPs by new and changing regulatory requirements prior to allowing the WQIPs to be developed and implemented; and 3) the lack of reliable funding sources to implement these regulatory changes.

It is necessary to hold individuals, businesses, and governments accountable, but it is critical that accountability measures are practical and have a demonstrable, positive benefit to the region's water. Because of these concerns, we respectfully request that the Permit focus on the timely development of effective and enforceable WQIPs, and that each of the WQIPs be developed through a process that ensures public participation. We ask also that the designation of appropriate Best Management Practices in each watershed be determined through the WQIP

process rather than the one size fits all strategy currently being proposed in the Permit. We ask further that until the Board adopts a WQIP for a watershed that the provisions of the existing Permit remain in place for that watershed. Finally, in order to avoid unnecessary litigation, we request that the Board adopt the WQIPs as Orders implementing the proposed Permit.

We urge you to adopt final permit language that is evidence-based and both environmentally and economically sustainable. Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Leah Hemze at lhemze@sdchamber.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Leslie".

Mark Leslie
Interim President & CEO

CC: Mr. Wayne Chiu, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego