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Agency Secretary

State Water Resources Control Board

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Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

NOTICE OF PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND PUBLIC HEARING (pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21092)

EXCEPTION TO THE CALIFORNIA OCEAN PLAN WRIGLEY MARINE SCIENCE CENTER

February 1, 2006, 10 a.m.
Coastal Hearing Room – Second Floor
Joe Serna, Jr. Cal/EPA Headquarters Building
1001 “I” Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the staff of the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration setting forth the findings that the following proposed action will have a less-than-significant effect on the environment.

Project Title: Exception to the California Ocean Plan for the University of Southern California Wrigley Marine Science Center Discharge into the Northwest Santa Catalina Island Area of Special Biological Significance (No. 25)

Applicant: University of Southern California
Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies
AHF 232
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0371

Project Description: University of Southern California (USC) Wrigley Marine Science Center (WMSC) seeks an exception from the California Ocean Plan’s (Ocean Plan) prohibition on discharges into Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS).

Proposed Terms and Conditions: Measures have been incorporated into the project to avoid potential significant environmental impacts. The exception includes mitigating conditions, which provide special protections to the ASBS. The exception, if approved, would allow continued waste seawater and storm water discharges, controlled and monitored according to these special protections, into the Northwest Santa Catalina Island ASBS.

BACKGROUND

On March 21, 1974, the State Water Board, in Resolution No. 74-28, designated 31 ASBS (subsequently, three additional ASBS were designated, for a total of 34). Among those ASBS

California Environmental Protection Agency

designated include the Santa Catalina Island Subarea One, Isthmus Cove to Catalina Head ASBS. The name of this ASBS was changed by the State Water Board in April 2005 to the Northwest Santa Catalina Island ASBS (Resolution 2005-0035). Since 1983, the Ocean Plan has prohibited waste discharges to ASBS. WMSC discharges waste seawater and storm water into the ASBS. The Ocean Plan states that “The State Board may, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, subsequent to a public hearing, and with the concurrence of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, grant exceptions where the Board determines: a) the exception will not compromise protection of ocean waters for beneficial uses, and b) the public interest will be served.”

USC/WMSC is a facility for marine scientific education, providing programs and facilities including terrestrial and environmental science education to USC and non-USC scientists, students and other education and outreach visitors from many other institutions. Much of the research and education performed at WMSC utilizes and is dependent on the flow-through seawater system. While the WMSC sea water system and storm water system discharge into the ASBS, the quality of that discharge may be controlled through the application of specific controls and management practices. It is in the public interest with regard to marine environmental education and conservation, to allow USC/WMSC to continue to discharge within the confines of specific mitigating conditions.

State Water Board staff believes that if the mitigating conditions (special protections) are approved the exception will not compromise protection of ocean waters for beneficial uses, and the public interest will be served. Staff recommends approval of the conditional exception.

AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

The proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and supporting Initial Study may be obtained via the Internet on the State Water Board web site at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/plnspols/oplans/asbs.html>. You may also receive a copy by writing or calling: Constance S. Anderson, Division of Water Quality, State Water Resources Control Board, 1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 341-5280, FAX: (916) 341-5584, email: csanderson@waterboards.ca.gov.

SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS

The State Water Board will accept both written and oral comments on the proposed exception. Persons who wish to comment are invited to furnish written comments to:

Selica Potter, Acting Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Email: commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov
Fax: (916) 341-5620

The deadline for submitting written comments is January 13, 2006, by 5 p.m. Interested persons may also provide oral comments regarding the exception and special protections for the ASBS at the February 1, 2006 public hearing. Persons who have submitted written comments are requested to briefly summarize their written comments when they appear before the State Water Board. The State Water Board will not take action on the exception request at the hearing. The State Water Board will take final action at a publicly-noticed board meeting at a later date. All interested persons will receive notice of the board meeting.

PARKING AND ACCESSIBILITY

There is a parking garage across from the Joe Serna, Jr. Cal/EPA Building with entrances on 10th and 11th Streets between "I" and "J" Streets, and metered parking spaces are in the vicinity of the building. For a map, see our Web site at <http://www.calepa.ca.gov/EPABldg/location.htm>. The facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. Individuals who require special accommodations are requested to contact Adrian Perez at (916) 341-5880 at least five working days prior to the public hearing date. Persons with hearing or speech impairments can contact us by using the California Relay Service Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD). TDD is reachable only from phones equipped with a TDD Device. HEARING IMPAIRED RELAY SERVICE: TDD to voice 1-800-735-2929, Voice to TDD 1-800-735-2922.

All visitors are required to sign in and receive a badge prior to attending any meeting in the CAL/EPA building. The Visitor and Environmental Services Center is located just inside and to the left of the Cal/EPA building's public entrance. Valid picture identification may be required due to the security level. Please allow up to 15 minutes for receiving clearance before proceeding to the Coastal Hearing Room.



Selica Potter
Acting Clerk to the Board

December 6, 2005
Date