

State Water Resources Control Board

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STATE WATER BOARD RESPONDS TO PALCO'S STATEMENTS ON ITS MILL CLOSURE

SACRAMENTO - Decisions made by the California Water Boards protect the quality of water resources on the North Coast and throughout the State.

The June 2005 decision by the State Board is consistent with the *Porter Cologne Water Quality Control Act* and with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

In effect, the State Board's order requires the Pacific Lumber Company (PALCO) to apply for new permits and undergo environmental review before harvesting timber on a sensitive watershed in the North Coast.

"It is our job to protect water quality. It is unfortunate that PALCO is characterizing this responsibility as the cause of closure of the Fortuna lumber mill. Our decision affected only a small part of PALCO's operations and is appropriate for protection of water quality," said State Water Board Chair Arthur G. Baggett, Jr.

In a June 16 hearing, the State Water Board found that the North Coast Regional Board acted improperly in approving eight Timber Harvest Plans submitted by Pacific Lumber in the Freshwater Creek and Elk River in November 2004 and March 2005. The State Board's decision said that a few specific timber harvest plans were not consistent with the North Coast Water Board's general requirements that regulate the effects of timber operations on water quality.

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