



Enforcement News

San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
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San Diego Water Board Issues Penalty Against SANDAG For Sediment Pollution From Construction Activities

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SAN DIEGO – The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Diego Water Board) has issued a \$50,000 penalty complaint against San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) for water quality violations from construction activities in Rose Canyon. The complaint alleges SANDAG failed to implement routine management practices, thereby allowing sediment to run off from the construction site to Rose Creek and then Mission Bay in September 2015.

Sediment from construction activities poses a large threat to local waters because exposed dirt can wash off during a storm. That excess sediment can alter or obstruct flows, resulting in flooding, and it can damage local ecosystems. Abnormally high levels of sediment in the water can smother aquatic animals and habitats, and it can reduce the clarity of water, which harms the ability of organisms to breath, find food and refuge, and reproduce. Sediment can also act as a binder, carrying toxic constituents such as metals, pesticides and other synthetic organic chemicals into our rivers, bays and ocean.

The site was brought to the San Diego Water Board's attention from a citizen complaint. After the San Diego Water Board inspection, SANDAG was quick to implement the necessary management practices.

"It's surprising that an organization with so much experience in linear construction projects would let this happen," said Chiara Clemente, San Diego Water Board enforcement coordinator. "The proposed penalty would have been much greater, had they not been responsive in implementing the necessary management measures."

With the anticipated El Niño just around the corner, the San Diego Water Board has been urging construction site operators and others to take necessary precautions.

"We often hear about how exceptional a particular rain event was," said Clemente, in reference to some prior enforcement cases. "Between El Niño and climate change, extreme storms are the new norm. People need to adapt accordingly."



A copy of the San Diego Water Board's complaint is available for review on its [website](#). The San Diego Water Board has scheduled a hearing to consider this complaint on Feb. 10, 2016. SANDAG can pay the penalty, propose a settlement or supplemental environmental project, or contest the penalty before the San Diego Water Board.

The San Diego Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore California's water resources and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations. For more information on the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, construction storm water requirements, and information about drought resources, visit their [website](#).

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