



North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Notice of Preparation and Notice of Scoping Meeting

TO: State Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 954812-3044

FROM LEAD AGENCY: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

SUBJECT: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed General Waste Discharge Requirements for Commercial Lily Bulb Operations in the Smith River Plain

PROJECT CONTACT: Brenna Sullivan, Engineering Geologist
(707) 576-2699
brenna.sullivan@waterboards.ca.gov
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Blvd, Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Notice Date: October 10, 2024

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

AND

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT SCOPING MEETING FOR

GENERAL WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL LILY BULB OPERATIONS IN THE SMITH RIVER PLAIN

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

That the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) as the Lead Agency, is planning to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant

GREGORY A. GIUSTI , CHAIR | MATTHIAS ST. JOHN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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to the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Div. 6, Chap. 3).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

Staff intend to recommend that the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) adopt General Waste Discharge Requirements (hereafter “General Order”) for Commercial Lily Bulb Operations located in the Smith River Plain Hydrologic Subarea and coastal terraces between Pyramid Point and the Oregon border. Commercial Lily Bulb Operations (fields used for cultivation are shown in the attached Figure) have the potential to discharge wastes (including excess sediment, nutrients, and pesticides) to surface waters and groundwater and to affect other related controllable water quality factors such as riparian shade. The term Commercial Lily Bulb Operations includes fields cultivated for lily bulbs or similar bulb crops anytime within a sequential five-year period, field roads, greenhouses, and pesticide mixing areas. The proposed General Order would establish a regulatory mechanism, in the form of General Waste Discharge Requirements with requirements, prohibitions, and provisions that would require: (1) enrollment and payment of fees; (2) implementation and adaptation of Management Practices; and (3) monitoring and reporting. As of the 2023-2024 growing season, approximately 1,000 acres of agricultural land is commercially farmed for easter lily bulbs in a 3–5-year seasonal rotation in the Smith River Plain Hydrologic Subarea and coastal terraces between Pyramid Point and the Oregon border. See Figure 1 for a map of the Project Area.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Regional Water Board has conducted an Initial Study for the Project, identifying potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project, and has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is necessary. In particular, the Initial Study identified potential significant impacts to Agriculture and Forestry Resources that would require preparation of an EIR. The Regional Water Board will be the lead agency for the Project and will prepare the EIR.

This Notice of Preparation serves to 1) solicit information on the scope of the environmental analysis for the Project and 2) notify the public and regulatory agencies that the Regional Water Board will prepare a draft EIR to assess potential adverse environmental impacts that may result from implementing the Project.

The Initial Study is available for review at the Regional Water Board office at the address listed above and on the Regional Water Board website at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/agricultural_lands/lily/

If you have trouble accessing the Initial Study, and electronic copy is available by contacting Brenna Sullivan at brenna.sullivan@waterboards.ca.gov.

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

The Regional Water Board is requesting comments from the public and public agencies on the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. For public agencies, the Regional Water Board is interested in your views as to the scope and content of the environmental information, which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities, if any, in connection with the Project. Public agency responses and comments, as well as general public comments, must be postmarked or sent electronically within the 45-day comment period listed in this notice. Please send your comments to the Regional Water Board, as directed below, along with the name of a contact person, if you are a public agency. In order to be fully considered, written comments focusing on the issues related to the environmental analysis for the Project must be received by **5:00 pm on Monday, November 25, 2024**.

Comments can be sent electronically to the following email address with the subject line: Attn: Lily Bulbs: NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov

Written comments should be sent to the address below:

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Attn: Lily Bulbs

SCOPING MEETING

In order for the public and regulatory agencies to have an opportunity to submit oral comments on the scope of the EIR, a scoping meeting will be held during the 45-day comment period. The purpose of a scoping meeting is to seek input from public agencies and members of the public on the range of project actions, alternatives, reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance, significant impacts to be analyzed, cumulative impacts if any, and mitigation measures that will reduce impacts to a less than significant level as part of the development of the Project; and to eliminate from detailed study issues found not to be important. Scoping may also assist in resolving concerns of affected federal, state, and local agencies, the proponent of the action, and other interested persons. A hybrid scoping meeting will be conducted with an option for attendance either in person or on Zoom. The meeting will include a presentation about the Project and potential adverse environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Project. Agencies and the public will have the opportunity to provide oral comments during the CEQA scoping meeting and/or by submitting written comments any time during the 45-day comment period.

MEETING INFORMATION

The scoping meeting with an in-person and virtual option will be conducted on:
Tuesday, October 22, 2024, 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

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The in-person meeting will be located at:

Crescent City United Methodist Church
664 H St, Crescent City, CA 95531

To participate virtually, click on the following link:

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://waterboards.zoom.us/j/95464614709>
Meeting ID: 954 6461 4709

A recorded video and audio broadcast of the scoping meeting will be available on the Regional Water Board Website ten business days after the scoping meeting at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/agricultural_lands/lily/

Following the meeting, staff will review written and oral comments in preparation of the draft EIR, which will be released for public review. All CEQA Scoping comments received will be included in the final administrative record for the Project.

ACCESSIBILITY

Anyone requiring special accommodations, including language interpretation services, are requested to call (916) 322-4265 by October 14, 2024. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf users may contact the California Relay Service at (800) 735-2929 or voice line at (800) 735-2922.

FUTURE NOTICES

Any change in the date or time of the scoping meeting will be publicly noticed on the Regional Water Board website and through the Project email list. Any persons desiring to receive future notice concerning the Project must sign up for the Project email list. Please note, the Regional Water Board will provide future notifications through the Project email list and website.

To sign up for the Project (Agricultural Lands Discharge Program) email list, access the Agricultural Lands Discharge Program Email List Subscription Page at the web address listed below, check the box for "Agricultural Lands Discharge Program"
(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg1_subscribe.html)

Submitted by:



Valerie Quinto
Executive Officer

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Figure 1: Map of Project Area which is the Smith River Plain Hydrologic Subarea and coastal terraces between Pyramid Point and the Oregon border.

