Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

17 December 2025

Carlos Gonzalez
Tulare County Resource Management Agency
5961 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93277

NOTICE OF APPLICABILITY; GENERAL SECTION 401 WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION ORDER REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TULARE COUNTY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY, M112 BRIDGE GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION PROJECT, (WDID# 5C54CR00165), TULARE COUNTY

On 16 October 2025, Tulare County Resource Management Agency (Permittee or County of Tulare) filed a notification requesting coverage under the 12 October 2021 State Water Resources Control Board Clean Water Act Section 401 General Water Quality Certification of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Nationwide Permits (Order No. WQ 2021-0048-DWQ) for the M112 Bridge Geotechnical Investigation (Project). After review of the notification and the supplemental material submitted by the Permittee, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) has determined that the Project qualifies for enrollment under this General Certification Order. The proposed activity will take place within less than 0.01 acres of waters of the United States.

The Central Valley Water Board is certifying this Project under United States Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit 6, Survey Activities, subject to the conditions and the notification requirements described in the Nationwide Permit ("Special Conditions"). This Notice of Applicability is being issued under the General Certification Order pursuant to Section 3838 of the California Code of Regulations.

A copy of the General Certification Order (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/docs/2021/certification-denial-corps-nationwide-permit-project-general-order-10122021.pdf) can be found on the State Water Resources Control Board's General Orders webpage.

The Project must proceed in accordance with the requirements contained in this Notice of Applicability and General Certification Order. The Project is described in the notification form requesting coverage under the General Certification Order, dated 16 October 2025, and supplementary information (Application Package). Coverage under the General Certification Order is no longer valid if the Project (as described) is modified.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
The <0.01-acre Project involves geotechnical investigation to support the design of a bridge to replace the existing temporary emergency bridge structure put in place in 2023 after the original bridge was washed out by above average stream flows.

Up to eight (8) borings are planned:

- One boring at/near each planned bridge support (up to six locations) to a depth of 40 feet or at least 10 feet into the competent rock, whichever occurs first.
- Two bores within roadway bridge approach areas (one on each side of the bridge) to five (5) feet deep.

Specific locations of borings may be field adjusted to stay out of water.

Boring Process:

- Drill borings using a track or truck-mounted CME55 drill rig (or equivalent). Each drill rig is approximately 8 feet wide and 20-25 feet long.
- Auger drill (4-inch diameter) through the alluvium, then switch to diamond-bit coring (PQ 3-1/4-inch core diameter, 5-inch outside diameter) when hard rock or a boulder is encountered.
- Rock coring:
    - Drive an approximately 6-inch diameter steel casing to an approximate depth of 10 feet with an automatic safety hammer to prepare for rock coring. The casing will create a seal to prevent drill fluid from entering the waterway.
    - Mix potable water with Cetco Variflo QD additive (quick dispersing and biodegradable) to create a drilling fluid. A non-toxic, water-soluble fluorescent dye will be added to help visually observe potential frac-out during rock core drilling. See below for more information about frac-out response.
    - Drill fluids will be re-circulated through the casing and contained in a tub during drilling.
    - Cover the work area (approximately 30 x 30 feet) with plastic sheeting and place straw wattles around the perimeter. A spill kit will be present on the drill rig.
- Obtain soil samples using Standard Penetration Test (SPT) or California Modified samplers at approximately 5-foot intervals within soil or decomposed rock.
- Obtain rock cores up to 10 feet into competent rock.
- Obtain bulk soil samples from the upper 5 feet of the approach area borings and selected bridge support borings.
- Backfill boring (deeper than 5 feet) with grout following Tulare County's boring permit requirements to approximately five (5) feet below the existing ground surface. The upper 5 feet will be backfilled with native soil cuttings. Approximately 36 gallons of grout will be needed to backfill each borehole (up to 40 feet deep).

- Drum excess soil cuttings and drill fluid and remove from the site.

Frac-Out Contingency Plan:

Any potential frac-out release volumes will likely be less than 20 gallons.

Plan to detect, respond to, and minimize impacts from a drill fluid release:

- Perform an on-site briefing with the drilling crew to discuss the geotechnical drilling plan and their responsibility to report any frac-out.
- Add non-toxic, water-soluble fluorescent dye (Bright Dyes Yellow Green, see attached product information) to the drilling fluid at a concentration sufficient for visual monitoring of the creek banks and waterway for signs of dye that would indicate frac-out conditions.
- Monitor drill fluid circulation (circulation loss could indicate possible frac-out).
- Monitor pump pressure (sudden pressure loss could indicate potential frac-out).
- Monitor the volumes of drill fluid in the mud tank (a sudden, significant loss of fluid volume in the mud tank suggests a possible frac-out).
- Maintain necessary frac-out response equipment on-site:
    - Absorbent wattles.
    - Shovels and rakes.
    - Buckets/drums.
    - Miscellaneous Hand Tools.
- If a frac-out is observed:
    - Direct the drill crew to stop all work. Document the frac out with photos and notes.
    - For terrestrial frac-out, the area will be immediately isolated with absorbent wattles to contain the release. The drilling fluid and impacted soil will be cleaned up with hand tools.

The Project will temporarily impact <0.01 acres and <0.01 linear feet of stream channel aquatic resource type. Temporarily impacted areas will be restored to pre-Project condition.

PROJECT LOCATION:
The Project is located near the intersection of Mountain Road 112 and Deer Creek Drive which is approximately 8.8 miles northeast of Terra Bella, California. The approximate center of the Project area is located at latitude 35.977243 degrees and longitude -118.880410 degrees MDB&M.

PROJECT SCHEDULE:
Project commencement of November 2025 to Project completion of March 2026.

APPLICATION FEE RECEIVED:
An application fee of $2,985.00 was received on 21 November 2025. The remaining balance of $1,227.00 was paid on 16 December 2025. The fee amount was determined

as required by California Code of Regulations, title 23, sections 3833(b)(3) and 2200(a)(3) and was calculated as Category E - Low Impact Discharges (fee code 87) with the dredge and fill fee calculator.

If you have any questions regarding this Notice of Applicability, please contact Ernesto P. Garcia at (559) 445-6126 or at Ernesto.Garcia@waterboards.ca.gov.

Original Signed by Alex S. Mushegan
for Patrick Pulupa
Executive Officer

cc: Via email only:

United States Army Corps of Engineers
Sacramento District Headquarters
SPKRegulatoryMailbox@usace.army.mil

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 9
R9cwa401@epa.gov

Justin Sloan
United States Fish & Wildlife Service
Justin_Sloan@fws.gov

Department of Fish and Wildlife
Region 4
R4LSA@wildlife.ca.gov

CWA Section 401 WQC Program
Division of Water Quality
State Water Resources Control Board
Stateboard401@waterboards.ca.gov

Carlos Gonzalez
Tulare County Resource Management Agency

Carie Wingert
Associate Senior Biologist