

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION**

**TENTATIVE ORDER**

**SETTING ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY FOR:**

**Hammon Plating Corporation  
890 Commercial St.  
Palo Alto, Santa Clara County**

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region (hereinafter called the Water Board), finds with respect to Hammon Plating Corporation (hereinafter called the Discharger), that:

1. The Discharger operates the facility, which discharges storm water associated with industrial activity. In 1993, the Discharger submitted a Notice of Intent (NOI) to obtain coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's discharge permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Industrial Activities, Water Quality Order NO. 97-03-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000001 (General Permit). The Discharger's Waste Discharge ID No. is 243I010827.
2. The General Permit states, in part:

“Section B. Monitoring Program and Reporting Requirements

“14. All facility operators shall submit an Annual Report by July 1 of each year to the Executive Officer of the Regional Water Board responsible for the area in which the facility is located and to the local agency (if requested).”
3. The Discharger violated Section B of the General Permit by failing to submit its 2006/2007 annual report by July 1, 2007.
4. On August 6, 2007, the Executive Officer issued a Notice of Noncompliance (NNC) letter to the Discharger. The Discharger was notified of its obligation to submit an annual report and to comply with the General Permit. The Discharger was required to respond by September 8, 2007, but failed to do so.
5. By certified mail dated November 13, 2007, the Executive Officer issued a second NNC letter to the Discharger. This letter was to inform the Discharger that it was in violation of the General Permit and that the Executive Officer would recommend enforcement actions if an annual report was not submitted. No written or verbal response to the letter was provided by the Discharger.
6. Board staff discussed the matter with the Discharger's representative via telephone on January 29, 2008, and again on March 11, 2008. During the conversations, the Discharger's representative confirmed that the 2006/2007 annual report had not been submitted.

7. On March 17, 2008, the Discharger submitted to the Water Board's office the 2006-2007 annual report, 261 days past the July 1, 2007 deadline.
8. Water Code Section 13385 states, in part:
  - “(a) Any person who violates any of the following shall be liable civilly in accordance with this section:*
    - (2) Any waste discharge requirements or dredge and fill material permit.*
  - (c) Civil liability may be imposed administratively by the state board or a regional board pursuant to Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 13323) of Chapter 5 in an amount not to exceed the sum of both of the following:*
    - (1) Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for each day in which the violation occurs.”*
    - (2) [subsection 2 is not pertinent to this ACL]*
9. Water Code Section 13385 authorizes Administrative Civil Liability not exceeding \$10,000 for each day in which the violation occurs. The 2006/2007 annual report was submitted on March 17, 2008, 261 days past the July 1, 2007 deadline. In addition, the annual report was inadequate, as it did not document implementation of the SWPPP or compliance with monitoring requirements.
10. On June 20, 2008, the Assistant Executive Officer issued a Complaint (R2-2008-0035) to the Discharger proposing a \$10,025 Administrative Civil Liability for the violation of the General Permit, and California Water Code Section 13385. The Discharger has not contested the Complaint's allegations.
11. The Water Board, after hearing all testimony, determined the Discharger is subject to civil penalties. In determining the amount of civil liability the following factors have been taken into consideration:

*“...the nature, circumstance, extent, and gravity of the violation or violations, whether the discharge is susceptible to cleanup and abatement, the degree of toxicity of the discharge, and, with respect to the violator, the ability to pay, the effect on ability to continue in business, any voluntary cleanup efforts undertaken, any prior history of violations, the degree of culpability, economic savings, if any, resulting from the violation, and other matters of justice may require.”*
12. The Board determined, with respect to the factors in Finding No. 9, the following:
  - a. Nature, circumstances, extent, and gravity of the violation  
Late submittal of the annual report is a significant violation because the Water Board relies on the report to determine the Discharger's compliance with the General Permit.

- The Discharger was given a number of warnings, including two Notices of Noncompliance and two telephone conversations. These annual reports are a key means of determining the quality of stormwater runoff from the Discharger's site and ensuring the Discharger is implementing appropriate control measures at its site. In addition, the annual report eventually submitted past the deadline indicated that requirements of the General Permit, including implementation of the SWPPP and site monitoring, were not met.
- b. Susceptibility to cleanup, violator's voluntary cleanup efforts, and toxicity of the discharge  
Cleanup is not applicable to failure to submit the annual report. Toxicity of discharge cannot be addressed.
  - c. Prior history of violations  
The discharger has submitted its annual reports from previous years in a timely manner.
  - d. Degree of culpability  
The storm water regulations are applicable to all industrial sites on a nationwide basis. All dischargers are required to comply with the General Permit. The Discharger is fully culpable for violating the terms and conditions of the General Permit, which implements the Clean Water Act.
  - e. Savings resulting from the violation  
The Discharger has realized cost savings by: failure to perform required sampling and analyses, failure to prepare the annual report, and failure to implement and/or document its SWPPP. Assuming an average-sized site, the minimum economic savings for not submitting and annual report is approximately \$1000/year.
  - f. Discharger's ability to pay  
The Discharger has not demonstrated an inability to pay the proposed amount.
  - g. Other matters that justice may require  
Staff time to prepare a Complaint and supporting information is estimated to be 15 hours. Based on an average cost to the State of \$125 per hour, the total cost is \$2,500.
13. A \$10,025 Administrative Civil Liability is appropriate based on the determinations in Finding No. 10. This includes staff costs of \$2,500.
14. This action is an Order to enforce the laws and regulations administered by the Water Board. Issuance of this Order is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq.), in accordance with Section 15321(a)(2), Title 14, of the California Code of Regulations.

15. The Discharger may petition the State Board to review this action. The State Board must receive the petition within 30 days of the date this order was adopted by the Water Board. The petition will be limited to raising only the substantive issues or objections that were raised before the Water Board at the public hearing or in a timely submitted written correspondence delivered to the Water Board.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Hammond Plating is civilly liable for the violation of the General Permit cited in Complaint No. R2-2008-0035, and shall pay the administrative civil liability in the amount of \$10,025. The liability shall be paid to the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account within 30 days of the date of this Order.

I, Bruce H. Wolfe, Executive Officer, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, complete, and correct copy of an Order adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region, on August 13, 2008.

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Bruce H. Wolfe  
Executive Officer