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Ms. Jeanine Townsend
Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
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Commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov



Re: Opposition to Proposed Draft Caltrans MS4 Permit

Dear State Water Resource Control Board Members and Staff:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), thank you for the opportunity to provide written comment on the State Water Resource Control Board's draft California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit. Unfortunately, I write today to express our opposition to the draft Caltrans MS4 Permit. This permit, as drafted, would impose extensive new regulations on all future Caltrans road construction projects that far surpass what the federal government requires from states under the federal Clean Water Act.

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If implemented, Caltrans estimates that the draft permit would drain an estimated \$600 million annually from state road construction projects each year. Such enormous costs would result in the elimination of thousands of jobs in the construction industry at a time when our economy can hardly afford further job losses. Additionally, local agencies are facing the same the same cost implications from the proposed Draft Phase II Small MS4 General Permit. The proposed changes to the Caltrans MS4 Permit would therefore also increase costs to counties for local projects in the Caltrans right-of-way.

We are concerned that the proposed permit would significantly shift Caltrans' focus from improving roadways to retrofitting existing infrastructure to meet the permit's requirements. This would worsen road conditions, create unsafe driving environments, and force California motorists to pay more for driving on under maintained roadways.

While we support efforts to improve water quality, there is no evidence that these proposed regulations would proportionally improve water quality to justify spending \$600 million taxpayer dollars each year.

For these reasons, CSAC opposes the proposed Draft Caltrans MS4 Permit and requests that the State Water Board work with Caltrans to come up with a more cost-effective permit that improves water quality without defunding our transportation system.

Sincerely,

DeAnn Baker
Senior Legislative Representative