

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

In the Matter of Request for Review  
of Waste Discharge Requirements for  
Northern California Aggregates, Inc.,  
Prescribed by California Regional  
Water Resources Control Board, North  
Coast Region.

Order No. 70-9

The Jenner Coastline Conservation Coalition, by letter dated June 19, 1970, requested the State Water Resources Control Board to review and revise the waste discharge requirements for Northern California Aggregates, Inc. which, after public hearing, were prescribed by the California Regional Water Resources Control Board, North Coast Region, and that the State Board specify the Russian River from its mouth to a point at least three miles upstream as an area where no wastes may be discharged. The request was based on the following statements:

1. The operation may result in saltwater intrusion into wells in the area.
2. The operation will result in "aesthetic debasement of the area" which violates state standards.
3. Any additional silt discharge to the area would be detrimental.
4. Even proper monitoring may not protect the ocean from irreparable damage.
5. The dredging operation will result in a deep hole where a shallow channel now exists causing a "sulfurous basin".

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The record of the regional board indicates as follows:

1. The Russian River enters the ocean at a point about 60 miles north of San Francisco, halfway between Bodega Bay and Fort Bragg. The estuary formed at the mouth of the river alternates from freshwater to saltwater depending on river flow and tide. The river meanders through vast deposits of gravels prior to entering the ocean.

2. The Northern California Aggregates, Inc. has obtained the State Lands Commission lease previously held by the Utah Construction Company. They propose to mine sand and gravel by use of a suction dredge and stockpile the dredged material behind diked areas. The river mouth would be kept open by a permanently installed dragline so that the gravel can be transported by barge to the Bay area. No washing or sorting operations are proposed at the mining site. The aggregate company may remove sand and gravel from the river mouth to a point about five miles upstream within the existing river channel. Maximum depth of dredging could be as deep as 90 feet at the river mouth. The dredging operation will completely modify the geography and aquatic environment of the estuary.

3. The existing waste discharge requirements will not assure protection of the aquatic environment.

4. Environmental studies are being planned and conducted to define existing natural conditions and predict the effect of the project on the aquatic environment.

5. The physical features in the estuary will be significantly altered.

6. The short-term impact on the aquatic environment is not known.

7. The long-range effects of the project on water quality and on the aquatic environment are not known.

8. The effect of the dredging operation on wildlife in the area is not fully understood.

9. The influence of the sands and gravels carried by the Russian River on the beaches along the adjacent ocean is not known.

10. No master plan for ultimate use of the estuary has been developed.

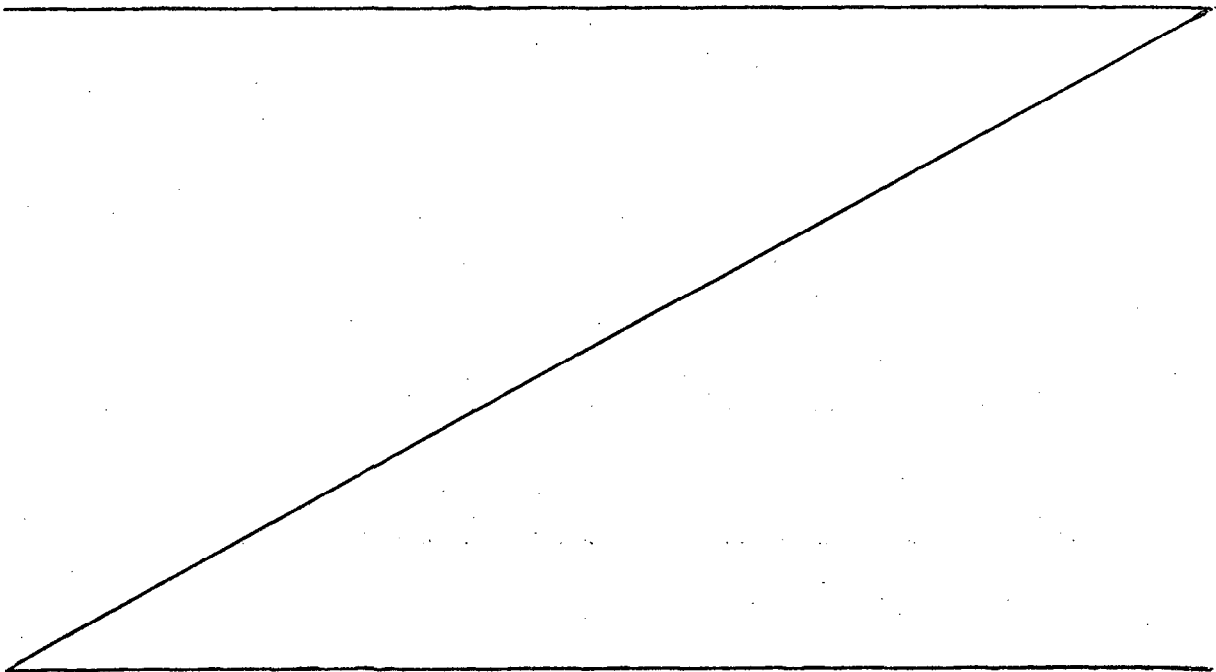
11. The Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife, in July 1970, re-evaluated its position. It now requests the Corps of Engineers' permit be denied because of damage to wildlife and natural aesthetics of the area, lack of background data for the estuary, possible beach erosion problems and the possibility of the stockpile area being a public beach.

12. Information presently available is not adequate to assure that the project will conform to the State's water quality control policy for the area in question. Such information is necessary before the project can be certified for a Corps of Engineers' permit under Section 21(b) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

1. The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region, at the earliest possible date undertake appropriate proceedings to modify the waste discharge requirements to prohibit all waste discharges from the proposed operation until completion of such studies as the regional board deems appropriate which demonstrate under what conditions the discharge can be made without adversely affecting the aquatic environment.

2. After completion of the above studies and prior to submitting recommendations to the State Board for certification of the project in accordance with Section 21(b) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, the regional board conduct a public hearing to review research findings and re-evaluate the effects of the project on the overall aquatic environment.



Adopted as the order of the State Water Resources  
Control Board at a meeting duly called and held at Sacramento,  
California.

Dated: September 3, 1970

KERRY W. MULLIGAN  
Kerry W. Mulligan, Chairman

ABSENT  
E. F. Dibble, Vice Chairman

NORMAN B. HUME  
Norman B. Hume, Member

RONALD B. ROBIE  
Ronald B. Robie, Member

W. W. ADAMS  
W. W. Adams, Member