



California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Coast Region



Linda S. Adams
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Protection

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Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

February 23, 2007

Kate McKenna, Executive Officer
LAFCO
P.O. Box 1369
Salinas, CA 93902

Ms. McKenna:

RE: City of Salinas Future Growth Area and Low Impact Development Requirements, Monterey County

The Central Coast Water Board issued an updated Phase I Storm Water Permit¹ (Permit) for the City of Salinas (City) in February 2005. The Central Coast Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) approved the original Permit in 1999 and required substantial revisions in the 2005 Permit as a result of numerous EPA directives and court decisions on storm water issues across the State of California. One of the revisions included requiring the City to utilize Low Impact Development techniques in new and re-development projects. Low Impact Development techniques minimize or eliminate many of the flooding, erosion, and urban pollutant problems typically associated with urbanization.

Pertinent Background

The City's Permit requires, and the Water Board has identified, Low Impact Development (LID) planning and building methods as a key component in protecting streams, lakes and other receiving waters from urban stormwater impacts. LID principles aim to protect natural stream patterns and riparian corridors, and preserve the predevelopment hydraulic "sponge" (stormwater infiltration and runoff rates and volumes) after build-out. LID methods are most effective when initiated in the development planning stage (including development layout). The City's Permit requires the City to review their storm water and development Ordinances, and Construction / Post-Construction Design Standards, and update these documents to incorporate Low

¹ Order No. R3-2004-0135, Waste Discharge Requirements for City of Salinas Municipal Storm Water Discharges.

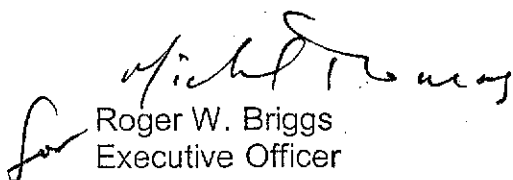
Impact Development techniques. The City's Permit required the City to revise their Development Design Standards and pertinent Ordinances by February 2006, however the City did not meet this timeline. The Central Coast Water Board hired an outside consultant to assist the City with this aspect of their Permit. The City agreed to work cooperatively with the consultant to review and revise the City's Storm Water Master Plan, Storm Water Ordinance, Grading Ordinance, and Development Design Standards to bring these documents in line with LID principles. LID-compatible Development Design Standards are still in draft form; we expect the standards to be released for public consideration by March 2007.

Water Board Concerns

The City and LAFCO are currently reviewing major development plans for the City's Future Growth area. The City's Permit required LID-based development standards to be finalized one year ago, however the City has missed this deadline. As a result, it appears possible that the City might approve the Future Growth area development prior to adopting publicly reviewed and Water Board approved Low Impact Development standards. If the Future Growth area developments proceed without incorporating LID design layout and stormwater management techniques, the water quality impacts, including erosion, flooding, and urban pollutant loading, will be enormous. The Water Board members and staff have publicly expressed these concerns to the City. We would also like to bring this issue to LAFCO's attention, and request this issue be formally addressed in the LAFCO review process.

Thank you in advance for considering this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Donette Dunaway, ddunaway@waterboards.ca.gov, (805) 549-3698.

Sincerely,


Roger W. Briggs
Executive Officer

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CC:

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