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## North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

### **NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT DRAFT INITIAL STUDY AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND CWA SECTION 401 WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION FOR THE SMITH RIVER DAIRY WATER DIVERSION PROJECT**

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Water Board) staff will hold a 30-day public comment period from June 14 2024, through July 13, 2024, to seek input on the Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (Draft MND) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and an accompanying Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 Water Quality Certification for the Smith River Dairy Water Diversion Project. This Notice of Opportunity for Public Comment includes (1) a brief summary of the proposed project, (2) how to review and comment on the Draft MND, and (3) details regarding the accompanying Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification that is being considered for issuance for the project.

#### ***I. Quick information***

- You can review the Draft MND and CWA 401 Water Quality Certification on the North Coast Water Board's webpage here:
  - [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board\\_decisions/tentative\\_orders/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_decisions/tentative_orders/)
- Send written comments to Ryan Bey at [Ryan.Bey@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Ryan.Bey@waterboards.ca.gov) by 5:00 p.m. on July 13, 2024.

#### ***II. Background***

This Initial Study has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations 1500 et seq.). CEQA requires that all state and local government agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority before acting on those projects. The North Coast Water Board is the Lead Agency under CEQA.

The Alexandre Dairy is proposing the project to restore a riparian water right for APN 103-020-074 to irrigate approximately 355 acres of agricultural land which is grazed annually for organic milk production. The purpose of the project is maximize pasture irrigation during the late spring and summer during traditionally dry periods on the coast to allow the harvest of winter feeds (silage and grass hay) and grazing by: (1) replacing a functionally obsolete water diversion with a new structure that meets current NMFS standards and regulations and (2) conveying the water by means of a new underground

pipeline, minimizing evaporation and groundwater penetration which previously occurred through an open conveyance ditch. The 4,500-foot-long underground water supply will irrigate the Ranch's approximately 355 acres, which makes up APN 103-020-074 from May 1st through September 31st annually. Start dates may vary depending on the farm's annual precipitation, which dictates pump start and stop periods on an annual basis, as this region generally experiences 76 inches of annual rainfall.

### **III. Public Review and Comment Period**

**Notice Is Hereby Given** that the North Coast Water Board will receive public comment on the Draft MND and accompanying CWA Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification for a 30-day period from June 14, 2024 through July 13, 2024.

The public comment period will close at 5:00 p.m. on July 13, 2024.

Please send comments by selecting from the following methods:

1. **Email** up to 15 megabytes of information to [Ryan.Bey@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Ryan.Bey@waterboards.ca.gov) with the subject heading "Comments for Smith River Dairy Water Diversion Project".
  - a. Follow [electronic submittal guidelines](#) for comments greater than 15 megabytes.
2. **Fax** to 707-576-2069
3. **Mail or Hand Deliver** to:  
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Attention: Ryan Bey  
5550 Skyland Blvd., Suite A  
Santa Rosa, California 95403-1072

### **IV. Availability of Documents and Information**

The Draft MND may be reviewed at the North Coast Water Board office during normal business hours at the following<sup>1</sup> webpage:

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Tentative Orders:

[Tentative Orders | California Northcoast Regional Water Quality Control Board](#)

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<sup>1</sup> The Draft MND and CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification may be reviewed at the Santa Rosa office during normal business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holiday, and at the Eureka office by appointment only. Please contact [Ryan.Bey@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Ryan.Bey@waterboards.ca.gov) to schedule an appointment to view the documents at the Eureka office.