

# Notice of Exemption

# Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research  
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk  
County of: Marin  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 234  
San Rafael, CA 94903

From: (Public Agency): Central Marin Sanitation Agency  
1301 Andersen Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94901

(Address)

Project Title: Marine Outfall Diffuser Cleaning Project

Project Applicant: Central Marin Sanitation Agency

Project Location - Specific:  
Along CMSA's Marine Outfall Diffuser section, beginning about 7,000 ft. offshore (37° 56.9' N , 122° 27. 7' W) and 8,050 ft. offshore (37° 56.887' N, 122° 27.482' W) of San Rafael in SF Bay.

Project Location - City: San Rafael Project Location - County: Marin

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:  
Periodic maintenance is required to remove accumulated solids from the interior of the outfall diffuser section, which obstruct the flow capacity of the outfall.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Central Marin Sanitation Agency

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Jason Dow, General Manager, CMSA

Exempt Status: (check one):


- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15301 (b)(d)
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons why project is exempt:  
Periodic maintenance is required, as stipulated in CMSA's NPDES permit, for the existing outfall to maintain its original design capacity. This maintenance ensures the proper conveyance and diffusion of fully treated effluent from CMSA's Treatment Plant.

Lead Agency  
Contact Person: Jason Dow, General Manager Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 415-459-1455 x 145

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?  Yes  No

Signature:  Date: 3/25/24 Title: General Manager

Signed by Lead Agency  Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.  
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_

**CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION DETERMINATION**  
**Central Marin Sanitation Agency**  
**Marine Outfall Diffuser Cleaning Project**

The project for the Central Marin Sanitation Agency (CMSA) is referred to as the Marine Outfall Diffuser Cleaning Project (Project) and will consist of removing an accumulation of approximately 600 cubic yards of sediments from the interior of the submerged 1,035 foot long diffuser section of the Agency's marine outfall.

**Need for Project:**

CMSA is a Joint Powers Agency which operates a regional wastewater treatment plant in San Rafael, Marin County, California. The treatment plant has a 30 million gallon per day (MGD) maximum secondary treatment capacity and a 125 MGD primary treatment and effluent disinfection/dechlorination capacity, which is discharged through an 11,000 foot long, 84 inch diameter marine outfall pipeline. Under the conditions of its NPDES permit issued by the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board (RWB), the Agency is required to inspect, maintain, and report on the condition of its outfall.

At dry weather flows, the flow velocities inside the outfall are extremely slow, and hydraulic studies indicate that only the first 30 diffusers, of 176, are working at these low flows. This allows particles in the wastewater effluent to settle out in the remaining 880 feet of pipeline, rather than being conveyed out the diffusers with the rest of the effluent. The result is that the Agency must periodically have the accumulated solids removed from the interior of the diffuser section when they reach levels that may impede the outfall's ability to convey the required and permitted treated wastewater flows. This interior solids removal has been performed on four previous occasions: in 1994 (about 1,000 yards), in 1997 (about 500 yards), in 2002 (about 500 yards), and again in 2009 (about 575 yards). For those events, the RWB authorized the Agency to side-cast the solids on the Bay floor adjacent to the diffuser section. For this Project, removal of the solids material is needed to preserve the hydraulic capacity of the outfall.

Authorization for the solids removal work comes from the RWB under authority of the Agency's NPDES permit, and will be covered by a 401 Water Quality Certification by the RWB, a regional permit issued by the Bay Conservation Development Commission, and coverage under the Army Corp of Engineers nationwide permits.

**Determination:**

In compliance with State Guidelines for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Agency has reviewed the Project and has determined it to be categorically exempt from CEQA under Class 1 exemption Section 15301 (b) (d). The Project is exempt because it involves maintenance of the existing marine outfall pipe which will not result in any increase in its dry weather flow treatment and conveyance capacity. The Project is intended only to help preserve the original design wet weather flow capacity.