



# Media Release

## State Water Board Approves Storm Water Order for Selected Coastline Areas

*Special monitoring conditions will help improve water quality*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Sacramento** – On March 20, the State Water Resources Control Board approved a resolution requiring monitoring and testing of marine aquatic life and water quality in several Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) to protect California’s coastline during storms when rain water overflows into coastal waters. Stringent terms, prohibitions, and special conditions were adopted to provide special protections for marine aquatic life and natural water quality in ASBS.

This resolution provides general exceptions to an existing California Ocean Plan prohibition that applies to 27 individual entities including Caltrans, State Parks, municipal governments, private companies and the federal government. These entities requested this waiver from the California Ocean Plan. The exception allows storm water to enter biologically sensitive areas of the California coastline in circumstances where intermittent heavy rains offer few options to avoid possible water quality degradation. Under the resolution, these 27 entities with stewardship and oversight of beach lands and coastal properties may continue to discharge storm water but have to comply with a number of conditions intended to protect marine life, and have two and a half years to develop plans to ensure capture of pollutants transported by storm water before it enters the ocean within an ASBS. Final Compliance with the installation of controls, and maintenance of natural water quality, is required in six years.

During that time the entities will be required to take samples of ocean water before and during rains – the first time the State Water Board has mandated such testing to ensure that potential water degradation is accurately captured and can be quickly addressed by the local authorities.

ASBS constitute 1/3 of the state’s coastline from Oregon to Mexico, including the offshore islands. This resolution is the first step to address the ongoing problem of storm water overflows polluting our waterways.

The California Ocean Plan allows the State Water Board to grant exceptions to its provisions as long as the public interest will be served and beneficial uses are protected.

For more information on the resolution adopted by the board, please visit:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board\\_info/agendas/2012/mar/032012\\_4.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_info/agendas/2012/mar/032012_4.pdf)

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY



STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

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For information on the California Ocean Plan and ASBS, please visit:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/ocean/asbs.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ocean/asbs.shtml)

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