

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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*Serious drought.
Help save water!*

July 14, 2014

Dear Industry Partners:

The intent of this letter is to inform the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the Local Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) in California of recently adopted business practices at the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) that address exploratory borings in the development of transportation infrastructure on the State Highway System.

Caltrans is committed to protecting groundwater resources and recognizes that LEAs have regulatory authority with regard to groundwater. It is Caltrans' intention to cultivate healthy partnerships with LEAs in order to capture local concerns related with drilling operations. Caltrans understands that any time exploratory borings intersect groundwater the activity is subject to the Water Code. Caltrans also recognizes that there may be a zone (capillary fringe) higher than the measured groundwater surface that a LEA subjects to the Water Code. Policies have been established regarding practices in these circumstances.

Water Code work must be performed by an individual or a company that possesses a C-57 Water Well Drilling Contractor's license. Another key modification to Caltrans' practices is the incorporation of a C-57 licensed individual to oversee all drilling operations when performing Water Code work, to coordinate with LEAs, and to file Well Completion Reports when appropriate. Caltrans currently uses architectural and engineering (A&E) consultants to provide this service and is evaluating the potential to utilize in-house staff to serve this purpose in the future.

Caltrans will be reaching out to LEAs for projects moving forward. In fact, Caltrans met with the Water Well Technical Advisory Committee (WWTAC) on June 18, 2014, to discuss new Caltrans practices related to exploratory borings and monitoring wells. We have multiple projects throughout California at different stages of construction and are committed to working with each jurisdiction to ensure that bore holes and monitoring wells are appropriately mitigated. Caltrans will convey the scope of the work for individual projects to LEAs as it relates to subsurface investigations.

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Caltrans appreciates the role of the LEAs related to the protection of California's groundwater resources. We see ourselves as partners, committed to clear, effective communication in order to meet our goal of protecting California's resources and hope to nurture healthy relationships. Caltrans seeks continuous improvement and would like to receive feedback from DWR and the LEAs related to our subsurface activities. For questions and comments, please contact Tim Greutert at (916) 949-4939 or Timothy.Greutert@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



MALCOLM DOUGHERTY
Director

Attachment