

Construction Industry Coalition on Water Quality

CICWQ Background

CICWQ was created in 2001 to protect the construction industry from the potentially devastating impact of lost revenues and reduced wages that may be caused by the rapidly evolving set of water quality regulations. (www.cicwq.com)

The rights of property owners, builders, developers and contractors have been threatened by non-scientific based water quality regulations which are being proposed and implemented at an alarming rate. These regulations, if left unchecked, will potentially cost the industry tens of millions of dollars each year.

With major funding from the Construction Industry Advancement Fund and the Fund for Construction Industry Advancement, CICWQ has successfully placed the construction and building industries in a position to help influence the development of plans and regulations that balance the goals of clean water with the need for a healthy economy. CICWQ has positioned itself to take a proactive and pivotal role in the policy making activities of the Regional Water Quality Control Boards, State Water



Resources Control Board, cities and special districts, local water agencies, Army Corps of Engineers, US EPA, and California Coastal Commission.

CICWQ's General membership includes:

- The Associated General Contractors of California (AGC)
- Building Industry Association of Southern California (BIA/SC)
- Engineering Contractors Association (ECA)
- The Southern California Contractors Association (SCCA)
- The California Industrial and Construction Material Association serves as an Associate member.

Current Advocacy Efforts and Accomplishments

CICWQ Water Quality Policy Directives in Little Hoover Commission Report

CICWQ played a major role in 2008 in advocating for improved performance of state and regional water quality control boards. In January 2009, The Little Hoover Commission released

its long-awaited report entitled “Clearer Structure, Cleaner Water: Improving the performance and outcomes at the State Water Boards.” The report describes multiple directives and includes several recommendations for improving the structure and function of the Water Boards and validates many of the criticisms made by CICWQ. Notable are the report’s recommendations concerning the need for consistent policy implementation among Regional Boards in areas such as low impact development, stream channel degradation control, and the use of numeric performance measurements in stormwater permit enforcement. CICWQ prepared testimony for the Commission, and CICWQ participated in multiple stakeholder meetings organized by the Commission where issues were discussed and debated.

6-month Grading Ban in Ventura County Stopped

After heavy pressure from CICWQ, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board dropped a proposal to ban soil grading in Ventura for half the year. CICWQ used state-of-the-art graphical information system (GIS) analysis and mapping to show that more than 50% of potentially developable properties in Ventura County would be affected by the proposed ban. The Regional Board had maintained that the ban would only affect 8% of developable land.

Inclusion of Flexible MS4 Permit Provisions for Low Impact Development

A new generation of municipal separate storm sewer permits (known as MS4 permits) is under revision in California and CICWQ has led the industry and municipal permittees in advocating for flexible engineering design standards to implement new storm water control strategies called Low Impact Development site design. CICWQ has pushed hard for the full use of LID compliance measures and gained good success in getting these measures adopted in permits.

State Water Board General Construction Permit Mandate to Use Advanced Sediment Treatment Removed

Again, after heavy pressure from CICWQ, the State Water Resources Control Board removed a mandate to use expensive and often unnecessary use of advanced sediment treatment systems for handling construction site stormwater. The current Draft Construction Permit treats ATS as another tool in the contractor compliance toolbox.

Los Angeles Regional Board Triennial Review Litigation Successful

CICWQ, working with BILD (Building Industry Legal Defense Foundation) and the Coalition for Practical Regulation (CPR) successfully challenged the adequacy of the Los Angeles Regional Board’s Basin Plan. The Plan was never properly updated after 1987 when the Clean Water Act was amended to include storm water control. An administrative record review performed by CICWQ clearly showed the Regional Board never considered the dynamic nature of stormwater in setting Basin Plan water quality standards and the regulations based on these standards.