



STATE MINING AND GEOLOGY BOARD

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

For Meeting Date: September 13, 2012

Agenda Item No. 9A: Office of Mine Reclamation, Lead Agency Review Team (LART) Reports for the County of Madera.

INTRODUCTION: Under the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA), lead agencies are required to fulfill certain responsibilities including conduct of site inspections, annual review and adjustment of financial assurances, review and approve new and amended reclamation plans, and take enforcement actions as appropriate, among other obligations. In 2007, the Department of Conservation, Office of Mine Reclamation (OMR) established the Lead Agency Review Team (LART). LART has completed its review of the County of Madera's (County) SMARA program dated May 29, 2012.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 2774.4(a) and (b) provide criteria to the SMGB when considering assumption, or restoration, of certain SMARA powers of a lead agency. Specifically, PRC Section 2774.4(a) states that if certain deficiencies exist, the SMGB can assume certain SMARA lead agency responsibilities as follows:

“If the board finds that a lead agency either has (1) approved reclamation plans or financial assurances which are not consistent with this chapter, (2) failed to inspect or cause the inspection of surface mining operations as required by this chapter, (3) failed to seek forfeiture of financial assurances and to carry out reclamation of surface mining operations as required by this chapter, (4) failed to take appropriate enforcement actions as required by this chapter, (5) intentionally misrepresented the results of inspections required under this chapter, or (6) failed to submit information to the department as required by this chapter, the board shall exercise any of the powers of that lead agency under this chapter, except for permitting authority.”

Public Resources Code Sections 2774.4(c) provides criteria the SMGB considers should it determine to issue a 45-Day Notice to Correct Deficiencies, and states:

“(c) Before taking any action pursuant to subdivision (a), the board shall first notify the lead agency of the identified deficiencies, and allow the lead agency 45 days to correct the deficiencies to the satisfaction of the board. If the lead agency has not corrected the deficiencies to the satisfaction of the board within the 45-day period, the board shall hold a public hearing within the lead agency's area of jurisdiction, upon a 45-



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day written notice given to the public in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the city or county, and directly mailed to the lead agency and to all surface mining operators within the lead agency's jurisdiction who have submitted reports as required by Section 2207.”

BACKGROUND: California is the only state in the conterminous United States where surface mine reclamation is not regulated at the state level. Most states also maintain permitting authority when it comes to mining regulation; whereas, in California permitting authority is decided at the local level. SMARA pursuant to PRC Section 2728 defines a lead agency as a city, county, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), or the SMGB which has the principal responsibility for approving a surface mining operation or reclamation plan. Under SMARA, there are currently 113 lead agencies: 52 counties, 50 cities, and the SMGB.

In 2007, the SMGB published Information Report IR 2006-07 titled “*Report on SMARA Lead Agency Performance Regarding Mine Reclamation.*” This evaluation assessed the lead agency’s performance of periodic mine inspections, adjustment of annual financial assurances and enforcement of the preparation of Interim Management Plans should a surface mine site be characterized as idle for a period exceeding one year. Based on this review, the overall performance of SMARA lead agencies was found to significantly vary throughout the state. For the most part, overall performance was found to be poor, reflecting a number of factors including primarily financial constraints, limited or lack of internal technical expertise, and overall low priority. As of March 2011, LART has commenced review of 18 SMARA lead agencies.

COUNTY OF MADERA SMARA PROGRAM: Six surface mining operations are reported to exist within the jurisdiction of the County (Table 1). Three are characterized as active, two idle, and one newly permitted. Commodities produced include fill dirt, decomposed granite, dimension stone and pumice.

In review of the LART report for the County of Madera, Several deficiencies are reported. Notably, deficiencies noted by LART reported, albeit, not limited, included out-of-date financial assurances cost estimates, out-of-date financial assurance mechanisms, lack of adequate documentation demonstrating approval of reclamation plans, absence of Interim Management Plans (IMPs), no demonstration of issuance of a Conditional Use Permit, inconsistencies in providing inspection reports, inadequate inspection reports, and failure to enforce SMARA (Table 1).



Table 1
Summary of Surface Mining Operations situated in the County of Madera

Surface Mine Name	Mine Identification Number	Operator	Surface Mine Status	Last Inspection Report on File (year)	Approved Acreage	Disturbed Acreage	Produced Product	Deficiencies Noted
Sierra White Quarry	CA Mine ID#91-20-0001	Cold Spring Granite Company	Active	2011	50.80	49.86	Dimension stone	2,4,6
Taylor's Pit	CA Mine ID#91-20-0007	Outback, Inc.	Active	2008	4	30	Pumice	1,2,4,6
Madera Quarry	CA Mine ID#91-20-0010	Madera Quarry, Inc.	Idle	2011	40	9.5	Stone	1,2,4,6
Weldon Pit	CA Mine ID#91-20-0012	Shirley & Richard Weldon	Active	No report noted	40	10	Fill dirt	1,2,4,6
Bruce Person	CA Mine ID#91-20-0013	Bruce Person	Idle	No report noted	Not noted	Not noted	Decomposed granite	1,4,2,6
Madera Quarry	CA Mine ID#91-20-0014	Madera Quarry, Inc.	Newly permitted	No report noted	125	0	Aggregate	1,2,6

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION: The information being provided by OMR is for the SMGB's information. However, based on the current status of the County's SMARA program, the Executive Officer recommends that a 45-Day Notice to Correct Deficiencies (Notice) be issued to the County of Madera. Should the County not correct the deficiencies to the satisfaction of the SMGB within the 45-day period, a public hearing be scheduled at such time pursuant to PRC Section 2774.4(c).

SUGGESTED MOTION LANGUAGE: The SMGB may consider the following motion language:

First Consideration – County of Madera

[Should the SMGB determine that the County is fulfilling its responsibilities and obligations as a lead agency pursuant to SMARA, and that no deficiencies and violations exist, the following motion may be considered.]

Mr. Chairman, I move that the SMGB, in light of the evidence presented before the Board today and contained in the Executive Officer's Report, find that the County of Madera is making a good faith effort in fulfilling its responsibilities and obligations as a lead agency under SMARA, and that the Board not consider issuance of a 45-Day Notice of Deficiencies.

[or]

[Should the SMGB determine that the County is making significant progress, but certain deficiencies and violations remain uncorrected, the following motion may be considered.]

Mr. Chairman, I move that the SMGB, in light of the evidence presented before the Board today and contained in the Executive Officer's Report, find that the County of Madera is making a good faith effort in fulfilling its responsibilities and obligations as a lead agency under SMARA, but note that significant deficiencies persist, and direct the Executive Officer to conduct a thorough review of current mine inspection reports for all surface mine sites within the jurisdiction of the County, and conduct on-site visits, as appropriate and deemed necessary. Upon completion, the Executive Officer will report back to the SMGB, and the SMGB can consider issuance of a 45-Day Notice of Deficiencies, if deemed necessary.

[Should the SMGB determine that deficiencies and violations remain uncorrected and the County is failing to make progress, the following motion may be considered.]

Mr. Chairman, I move that the SMGB, in light of the evidence presented before the Board today and contained in the Executive Officer's Report, direct the Executive Officer to issue a 45-Day Notice to Correct Deficiencies to County of Madera pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 2774.4(a) and (c).

Second Consideration - County of Mariposa

[Should the SMGB determine that the County is fulfilling its responsibilities and obligations as a lead agency pursuant to SMARA, and that no deficiencies and violations exist, the following motion may be considered.]

Mr. Chairman, I move that the SMGB, in light of the evidence presented before the Board today and contained in the Executive Officer's Report, find that the County of Madera is making a good faith effort in fulfilling its responsibilities and obligations as a lead agency under SMARA, and that the Board not consider issuance of a 45-Day Notice of Deficiencies.

[or]

[Should the SMGB determine that the County is making significant progress, but certain deficiencies and violations remain uncorrected, the following motion may be considered.]

Mr. Chairman, I move that the SMGB, in light of the evidence presented before the Board today and contained in the Executive Officer's Report, find that the County of Madera is making a good faith effort in fulfilling its responsibilities and obligations as a lead agency under SMARA, but note that significant deficiencies persist, and direct the Executive Officer to conduct a thorough review of current mine inspection reports for all surface mine sites within the jurisdiction of the County, and conduct on-site visits, as appropriate and deemed necessary. Upon completion, the Executive Officer will report back to the SMGB, and the SMGB can consider issuance of a 45-Day Notice of Deficiencies, if deemed necessary.

[or]

[Should the SMGB determine that deficiencies and violations remain uncorrected and the County is failing to make progress, the following motion may be considered.]

Mr. Chairman, I move that the SMGB, in light of the evidence presented before the Board today and contained in the Executive Officer's Report, direct the Executive Officer to issue a 45-Day Notice to Correct Deficiencies to County of Madera pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 2774.4(a) and (c).

Respectfully submitted:



Stephen M. Testa
Executive Officer