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Filed 11/16/2005

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Case 5:05-cv-030Z3-PVT

United States et al. v. County of Santa Clara, et al., No. CV

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Consent Decree

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This Consent Decree ("Decree") is made and entered into by and among the United States of America ("the United States"), on behalf of itself and the Department of the Interior ("DOI"), and the State of California ("State"), by and through the California Department of Fish and Game ("CDFG") and the California State Lands Commission ("SLC"), as trustees for State Natural Resources (collectively, the "Plaintiffs"), and defendant Newson, Inc ("Newson"). I. INTRODUCTION

- The United States, on behalf of DOI in its capacity as natural resource trustee, and A. the CDFG and SLC in their capacities as natural resource trustees for Natural Resources of the State of California (collectively, the "Trustees"), concurrently with the filing of this Consent Decree, have filed Complaints ("Complaints") in this action under Section 107 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended ("CERCLA"), 42 U.S.C. § 9607, and various State laws, seeking, inter alia, recovery of damages, including damage assessment costs, for injury to, destruction of, and loss of natural resources resulting from releases into the environment of inorganic and organic mercury and hazardous substances contained in mining waste (hereafter, collectively, "Hazardous Substances").
- B. The Complaints allege that the Defendants (i) are or were owners or operators of facilities in the Guadalupe River Watershed, as defined herein, or (ii) are or were persons who arranged for the disposal of Hazardous Substances at or from facilities in the Guadalupe River Watershed, or (iii) are persons who are successors to or otherwise legally responsible for the acts and omissions of persons who were owners or operators of facilities in the Guadalupe River Watershed or who arranged for disposal of Hazardous Substances at facilities in the Guadalupe River Watershed, from which Plaintiffs allege there have been releases of Hazardous Substances into the environment.

C. In February 2000, DOI issued a Preassessment Screen Determination ("PSD") regarding injuries to natural resources arising from historical and continuing releases of mercury, and of other metals resulting from or associated with historic mining within the Guadalupe River Watershed. In that PSD, DOI determined that sufficient information existed for it to pursue a claim for Natural Resource Damages for such releases, including damages for injury to soil, United States and State of California v. Consent Decree

surface water, and sediment in the Guadalupe River Watershed, as well as for injuries to biological resources using those resources, including vegetation, invertebrates, amphibians, fish species, and piscivorous birds. DOI alleges that it took these actions pursuant to CERCLA, DOI's Natural Resource Damages regulations, 43 C.F.R. Part 11 (1998), and Executive Order 12580, as amended by Executive Order 13016.

- D. The Trustees and certain defendants in this action have previously entered into a Consent Decree ("Work CD") pursuant to which those defendants will variously perform or contribute to projects to address all known significant mining waste deposits remaining within and about the Almaden Quicksilver County Park and to restore or rehabilitate the injured resources that are the subject of the Complaints. Additional projects to be undertaken pursuant to the Work CD constitute the replacement or acquisition of equivalent resources providing the same or substantially equivalent services as those that had been provided by the injured natural resources (consistent with 43 C.F.R. § 11.82).
- E. CERCLA and its implementing regulations require that the Trustees seek input from the public before implementing a restoration plan to address injured natural resources. Consequently, the Parties acknowledge that entry of the Work CD after lodging will be deferred to allow the time necessary for the Trustees to obtain public comment on the Work CD and on a draft restoration plan that proposes the projects described in Section VI of the Work CD and is attached thereto as Exhibit B.
- F. The Trustees have undertaken a restoration planning process to determine the restoration projects that will most effectively restore or compensate for the lost use of the injured resources. The details for specific projects are contained in the draft restoration plan at Sections 4.3.1.1 through 4.3.2.3 and are summarized in Section VI of the Work CD. A final restoration plan will be adopted by the Trustees after final approval of the Work CD by the Court, after provision of notice, opportunity for public input, and consideration of public comments on the Work CD and attached draft restoration plan.
- G. Newson shall contribute, pursuant to this Consent Decree, towards damage assessment and oversight costs incurred and to be incurred by the Trustees in assessing the nature United States and State of California v.

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and extent of natural resource injuries and in overseeing the projects to be performed pursuant to the Work CD.

H. This settlement is made in good faith after arm's-length negotiations. The Parties agree, and the Court by entering this Consent Decree finds, that this Consent Decree has been negotiated by the Parties in good faith, that settlement of this matter and entry of this Decree will avoid complicated and potentially costly litigation between the Parties, is the most appropriate means to resolve the matters covered herein, and is fair, reasonable, consistent with the purposes of CERCLA, and in the public interest.

NOW, THEREFORE, with the consent of the Parties to this Decree, it is hereby ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED:

#### II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. The Plaintiffs have alleged that this Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1345, and 1367; Sections 107 and 113(b) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 9607, 9613(b); California Fish and Game Code sections 2104, 5650, and 5650.1; and the common law of nuisance; that the Court has personal jurisdiction over Newson; and that venue lies in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), (c) and 1395(a) and Section 113(b) of CERCLA. For purposes of this Consent Decree, only, Newson waives all objections and defenses that it may have to jurisdiction of the Court or to venue in this District.

### III. APPLICABILITY OF DECREE

The obligations of this Consent Decree apply to and are binding upon the Plaintiffs
and their departments, agencies and instrumentalities, and upon Newson and its respective
successors and assigns.

#### IV. DEFINITIONS

- 3. This Decree incorporates the definitions set forth in Section 101 of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601, and in Section 11.14 of the Natural Resource Damages ("NRD") regulations, 43 CFR § 11.14. In addition, whenever the following terms are used in this Decree, they shall have the following meanings:
- A. "Damage Assessment Costs" shall mean all costs associated with the planning,
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  County of Santa Clara, et al., No. CV

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design, implementation, and oversight of the Trustees' damage assessment process, which addresses the extent and quantification of the injury to, destruction of, or loss of Natural Resources and the services provided by these resources resulting from the alleged releases of Hazardous Substances, and with the planning of restoration or replacement of such Natural Resources and the services provided by those resources, or the planning of the acquisition of equivalent resources or services, and any other costs necessary to carry out the Trustees' responsibilities with respect to those Natural Resources injuries resulting directly or indirectly from the alleged releases of Hazardous Substances, including all related enforcement costs.

- · B. "Date of Entry of this Decree" shall mean the date on which the District Court has approved and entered this Decree as a judgment.
- C. "Date of Final Approval of this Decree" shall mean (1) the Date of Entry of this Decree, or (2) if an appeal is taken after entry, the date on which the District Court's judgment is affirmed and there is no further right to appellate review.
- D. "Date of Lodging of this Decree" shall mean the date that this Decree is lodged with the Court, subject to the public comment period referred to in Section XV of this Decree.
- E. "Guadalupe River Watershed" for purposes of this Decree shall mean (i) the Guadalupe River and all its tributary streams, including without limitation Alamitos Creek. Guadalupe Creek, and Arroyo Calero, and the associated tributaries, reservoirs, impoundments, banks and sediments of each of the foregoing; (ii) all areas that drain water or sediment into the waters described in (i); and (iii) that area of San Francisco Bay south of the Dumbarton Bridge.
- F. "Interest" shall mean interest at the rate specified for interest on investments of the EPA Hazardous Substance Superfund established by 26 U.S.C. § 9507, compounded annually on October 1 of each year, in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 9607(a). The applicable rate of interest shall be the rate in effect at the time the interest accrues. The rate of interest is subject to change on October 1 of each year.
- G. "Natural Resource Damages" shall mean all damages, including loss of use, restoration costs, resource replacement costs, or equivalent resource values, Damage Assessment Costs, and any other costs or losses that have been incurred in the past or will be incurred in the United States and State of California v.

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future by the United States, the State of California, or any other person pursuant to Trustee approval, authorization, or direction, with respect to injury to, destruction of, or loss of any and all natural resources resulting either directly or indirectly from the releases of Hazardous Substances in the Guadalupe River Watershed, including any continuing releases.

- H. "Natural Resources" shall have that meaning set forth in Section 101(16) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(16).
  - I. "Paragraph" shall mean a portion of this Decree identified by an arabic numeral.
- J. "Parties" shall mean the United States; the State of California, by and through the CDFG and SLC; and Newson.
- K. "Plaintiffs" shall mean the United States, on behalf of DOI, and the State of California, on behalf of the CDFG and SLC.
  - L. "Section" shall mean a portion of this Decree identified by a roman numeral.
  - M. "State of California" shall mean the CDFG and SLC.
- N. "United States" shall mean the United States of America, including its departments, agencies, and instrumentalities.

#### V. PAYMENTS

- 4. Newson shall pay a total of \$475,000 pursuant to the terms specified in this Section.
- 5. Newson shall pay, within ten (10) business days of the Date of Entry of this Consent Decree, the amount of \$100,000 to DOI by electronic fund transfer ("EFT") in accordance with instructions to be provided by DOI to Newson following lodging of the Decree. Such funds are to be utilized jointly by DOI and DFG for the restoration, rehabilitation, replacement, or acquisition of the equivalent of the injured natural resources, in particular for their costs of restoration planning and oversight of the implementation of those projects to be performed pursuant to the Work CD. At the time of payment, Newson shall send written notice of payment and a copy of any transmittal documentation (which should reference DOJ case number 90-11-2-07048) to the Plaintiffs in accordance with Section XVI of this Decree and to:

Charles McKinley, Esq.

Office of the Solicitor
U.S. Department of the Interior
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 735
Oakland, California 94607

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Bruce Nesslage DOI Restoration Fund Manager 1849 "C" Street, N.W. Mail Stop 4449 Washington, D.C. 20240

6. Within ten (10) business days of the Date of Entry of this Consent Decree, Newson shall make a further payment of \$310,600 to DOI by electronic fund transfer ("EFT") to the U.S. Department of Justice in accordance with instructions to be provided to Newson following lodging of the Decree by the Financial Litigation Unit of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California. At the time of payment, Newson shall send written notice of payment and a copy of any transmittal documentation in accordance with the preceding Paragraph.

and

- 7. The EFTs and transmittal letters required by the preceding Paragraphs shall reflect that the payment is being made to the "Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration Fund, Account No. 14X5198." DOI will assign those funds a special project number to allow the funds to be maintained as a segregated account (the "Guadalupe River Watershed NRD Account") within the DOI Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Fund.
- 8. Within ten (10) business days of the Date of Entry of this Consent Decree, Newson shall make a further payment of \$64,400 to CDFG by certified or cashier's check payable to the Department of Fish and Game and delivered to

John A. Holland Office of Spill Prevention and Response Department of Fish and Game P.O. Box 160362 Sacramento, California 95816-0362

Or, if by courier or overnight mail, to

John A. Holland Office of Spill Prevention and Response Department of Fish and Game

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### 1700 K Street, Suite 250 Sacramento, California, 95814

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# VI. COVENANT NOT TO SUE BY PLAINTIFFS

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9. Except as specifically provided in Paragraph 12 of this Decree, the United States and the State of California, by and through the CDFG and SLC as trustees for the State of California's Natural Resources, covenant not to sue or to take administrative action against Defendant Newson, as well as the following entities: E.A. Viner International, Inc., n/k/a E.A. Viner Holdings Co.; W.H. Newbold's Son & Co., Hopper Soliday, Inc., Fahnestock & Co., Inc., n/k/a Oppenheimer & Co., Inc.; Viner Finance, Inc.; and Fahnestock Viner Holdings, Inc., n/k/a Oppenheimer Holdings, Inc. (collectively, for purposes of Sections VI, VII, VIII, IX, and IX of this Decree, the "Settling Parties"), for costs incurred or to be incurred by the Trustees in assessing natural resource damages in the Guadalupe River Watershed or in overseeing the projects to be performed under the Work CD, under CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act ("Clean Water Act"), 33 U.S.C. § 1321(f), or other federal, State or common law. These covenants take effect upon payment of the amount required in Section V.

- 10. The United States covenants not to sue or to take administrative action against CDFG, SLC, or the California Department of Transportation ("CalTrans") for costs incurred or to be incurred by the Trustees in assessing natural resource damages in the Guadalupe River Watershed or in overseeing the projects to be performed under the Work CD, under CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607, the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1321(f), or other federal law. These covenants take effect upon the Entry of this Decree.
- 11. The State of California, by and through the CDFG and SLC as trustees for the State of California's Natural Resources, and CalTrans covenant not to sue or to take administrative action against the United States for costs incurred or to be incurred by the Trustees in assessing natural resource damages in the Guadalupe River Watershed or in overseeing the projects to be performed under the Work CD, under CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607, the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1321(f), or other federal, State or common law. These covenants take effect upon the Entry of this Decree.

### VII. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS FOR NATURAL RESOURCE DAMAGES

- of California reserve the right to institute proceedings against the Settling Parties in this action or in a new action seeking recovery of Natural Resource Damages (1) based on injury to, destruction of, or loss of Natural Resources resulting from conditions that were unknown to the Trustees as of the Date of Lodging of this Decree ("Unknown Conditions"), or (2) based on information received by the Trustees after the Date of Lodging of this Decree that indicates that there is injury to, destruction of, or loss of Natural Resources of a type unknown to the Trustees as of the Date of Lodging of this Decree ("New Information").
- 13. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Decree, the covenants not to sue in Paragraph 9 shall apply only to matters addressed in that Paragraph and specifically shall not apply to the following claims:
  - a. claims based on a failure by Newson to satisfy any requirement imposed upon it by this Decree;
    - b. claims for criminal liability; and
  - c. claims arising from the past, present or future disposal, release, or threat of release of hazardous substances not addressed in this Decree.
- 14. For purposes of Paragraph 12, "Unknown Conditions" or "New Information" shall not include or pertain to (i) a change only in Plaintiffs' quantification of Natural Resource Damages arising out of the past and/or continuing releases of Hazardous Substances alleged by Plaintiffs in this action; and/or (ii) damages based on releases of hazardous substances other than Hazardous Substances as defined herein, unless Plaintiffs can demonstrate that such releases resulted in an injury different in type than those alleged in this action.
- 15. No information shall be deemed "new," and no condition shall be deemed "unknown," if the information or condition is contained or identified in, or could be reasonably determined from, documents and data in the possession of CDFG, DTSC, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board for the San Francisco Bay Region, DOI, or Region IX of the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency, on or before the Date of Entry of this Decree.

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### VIII. COVENANTS BY SETTLING PARTIES

- 16. Subject to Paragraph 17, the Settling Parties hereby covenant not to sue or to assert any administrative claims or causes of action against the United States or against the State of California with respect to the payments required by this Decree, including, but not limited to:
- a. any direct or indirect Settling Defendant Claim for reimbursement from the Hazardous Substance Superfund (established pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C. § 9507) through CERCLA Sections 106(b)(2), 107, 111, 112, 113 or any other provision of law;
- any claims against the United States or the State of California, including any department, agency or instrumentality of the United States or the State of California, under CERCLA Sections 107 or 113;
  - Ç. any claims against the Guadalupe River Watershed NRD Account; or
- d. any claims under the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, the Tucker Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1491, the Equal Access to Justice Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2412, as amended, or at common law.
- The Settling Parties reserve their right to contest any claims alleged to be reserved 17. by Section VII of this Decree, and the Settling Parties do not by consenting to this Decree waive any defenses to such claims, except that the Settling Parties covenant not to assert, and may not maintain, any defense based upon principles of waiver, res judicata, collateral estoppel, issue preclusion, claim-splitting, or other defense based upon the contention that the claims that are allowed by Section VII of this Decree were or should have been brought in the instant case. In the event that either the United States or the State of California brings any claim not settled by this Decree, or pursuant to Section VII of this Decree, the Settling Parties reserve the right to assert all potential counterclaims, cross-claims, or third-party claims against the United States or the State of California arising from such claim. Nothing in this Decree shall be deemed to constitute preauthorization of a claim within the meaning of Section 111 of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9611.

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### IX. EFFECT OF SETTLEMENT/CONTRIBUTION PROTECTION

- 18. The Settling Parties do not admit any of Plaintiffs' allegations or claims set forth herein and deny any liability for Plaintiffs' claims against Newson set forth in the Complaints.
- 19. Nothing in this Consent Decree shall be construed to create any rights in, or grant any cause of action to, any person not a signatory to this Consent Decree. The preceding sentence shall not be construed to waive or nullify any rights that any person not a signatory to this Decree may have under applicable law. Each of the Parties, including the Settling Parties, expressly reserves any and all rights (including, but not limited to, any right to contribution), defenses, claims, demands, and causes of action that it may have against any person not a signatory hereto.
- 20. The Parties agree, and the Court hereby finds, adjudges and decrees, that (1) the Parties have fully negotiated the terms of this Consent Decree at arm's length with the assistance and advice of competent, independent counsel; (2) the consideration exchanged and commitments made herein are reasonable in the context of the rights and responsibilities of the Parties and their potential liabilities; (3) public notice (including a properly noticed public comment period) of the opportunity for submitting comments on the terms and conditions of this settlement has been provided; and (4) the settlement reflected herein is made in good faith and is neither fraudulent nor collusive, nor affected by any fraud or collusion. Accordingly, the Parties agree, and the Court hereby finds, orders, adjudges, and decrees, that this Consent Decree represents a fair, adequate, reasonable, equitable, and good-faith settlement, and that therefore the Settling Parties are entitled to contribution protection provided by CERCLA Section 113(f)(2), 42 U.S.C. § 9613(f)(2), or otherwise provided by State or common law, for matters addressed by this Consent Decree. "Matters addressed" in this Consent Decree include only costs incurred or to be incurred by the Trustees in assessing natural resource damages in the Guadalupe River Watershed or in overseeing the projects to be performed under the Work CD, under CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act ("Clean Water Act"), 33 U.S.C. § 1321(f), or other federal, State or common law, but do not include the projects to be performed under the Work CD. The "Matters Addressed" in this Consent Decree do not include those claims as to which any signatory has reserved its rights under this Consent Decree (except for claims for failure to

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comply with this Decree), in the event that any signatory asserts rights against another coming within the scope of such reservations.

- 21. The Settling Parties agree that, with respect to any suit or claim for contribution brought by them for matters related to this Consent Decree, they will notify the United States and the State of California in writing no later than sixty (60) days prior to the initiation of such suit or claim, unless the giving of such advance notice would subject such suit or claim to a defense that it is barred by the statute of limitations or other time-related defense.
- 22. The Settling Parties also agree that, with respect to any suit or claim for contribution brought against them for matters related to this Consent Decree, they will notify in writing the United States and the State of California within ten (10) days of service of the complaint on them. In addition, Settling Parties shall notify the United States and the State of California within ten (10) days of service or receipt of any Motion for Summary Judgment with respect to such a claim, and within ten (10) days of receipt of any order from a court setting such a case for trial.

### X. PENALTIES FOR LATE PAYMENTS

23. If any payment required by Section V is not made by the date specified in that Section, Newson shall be liable for the following amounts for each day such payment is late:

Days Late	Penalty
1-14	\$ 2000/day
15-60	\$ 3000/day
Beyond 60 Days	\$ 4000/day

24. Payments due under the preceding Paragraph shall be disbursed to the Plaintiff to which late payment is owing. Stipulated penalties are due within thirty (30) days following receipt by Newson of a written demand by Plaintiffs for payment of such stipulated penalties. Stipulated penalties owing to the United States shall, as directed by the United States, be paid by certified or cashier's check in the amount due payable to the "U.S. Department of Justice,"

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referencing DOJ No. 90-11-2-07048, and shall be delivered to the Office of the United States Attorney, Northern District of California, Financial Litigation Unit, 450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36055, San Francisco, California 94102. Notice of such payment shall be sent to the Plaintiffs as provided in Section XVI of this Decree.

25. Stipulated penalties owing to the State of California shall be payable to the Department of Fish and Game and delivered to

> John A. Holland Office of Spill Prevention and Response Department of Fish and Game P.O. Box 160362 Sacramento, California 95816-0362

Or, if by courier or overnight mail, to

John A. Holland Office of Spill Prevention and Response Department of Fish and Game 1700 K Street, Suite 250 Sacramento, California 95814

- 26. In addition to the stipulated penalties provided in this Section, if any payment required by Section V of this Decree is not made by the date specified in that Section, Newson shall be liable for Interest on the amount due.
- 27. In addition to stipulated penalties and Interest as provided in this Section, if the payment required by Section V of this Decree or the stipulated penalties provided for by this Section are not made, Newson shall be liable for any costs and attorneys fees incurred by Plaintiffs in collecting any amounts owing.
- 28. Payments due under this Section shall be in addition to any other remedies or sanctions that may be available to the Plaintiffs on account of Newson's failure to comply with the terms of this Decree.

#### XI. CERTIFICATION CONCERNING RECORDS

29. Newson hereby certifies that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, after thorough inquiry, Newson has not altered, mutilated, discarded, destroyed, or otherwise disposed of any records, documents, or other information (other than identical copies) relating to Newson's potential liability regarding Natural Resource Damages with respect to the Guadalupe River United States and State of California v.

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Watershed since notification of potential liability by the Plaintiffs and that Newson has fully complied with any and all of Plaintiffs' prior requests for information with respect to this site, pursuant to Section 104(e) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9604(e), or other applicable federal or state laws or regulations.

#### XII. SIGNATURE

- 30. The undersigned representative of the Settling Parties certifies that he or she is fully authorized to enter into the terms and conditions of this Decree, to legally execute this Decree, and to bind the parties he or she represents to this Decree.
- 31. This Consent Decree may be signed in counterparts, and such counterpart signature pages shall be given full force and effect.

### XIII. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

32. This Consent Decree constitutes the final, complete, and exclusive agreement and understanding between the Trustees and Newson with respect to the settlement embodied in the Decree and supersedes all prior agreements and understandings, whether oral or written. No other document, nor any representation, inducement, agreement, understanding, or promise, constitutes any part of this Decree or the settlement it represents, nor shall it be used in construing the terms of this Decree.

#### XIV. TERMINATION

33. This Consent Decree shall terminate as to Newson upon payment of the amount required by Section V of this Decree, together with any outstanding stipulated penalties under Section X of this Decree, except that the provisions and effect of Sections VI through IX of this Consent Decree shall survive termination of the Decree.

### XV. PUBLIC COMMENT

John A. Holland

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**Executive Officer** 

State Lands Commission

## Case 5:05-cv-0307 Document 31 Filed 11/1 FOR THE CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS COMMISSION WE HEREBY CONSENT to the entry of the Consent Decree in United States, et al. v. County of Santa Clara, et al., subject to the public notice and comment requirements of Section XIX of this Consent Decree: BILL LOCKYER, Attorney General of the State of California GAVIN G. McCABE, Deputy Attorney General

United States and State of California v. County of Santa Clara, et al., No. CV

Attorneys for Plaintiff California State Lands Commission

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### FOR THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

WE HEREBY CONSENT to the entry of the Consent Decree in <u>United States</u>, et al. v. <u>County of Santa Clara</u>, subject to the public notice and comment requirements of Section XIX of this Consent Decree:

Dated:

2005 LAV NORVELL

Chief

Division of Environmental Analysis

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