



Jeffrey W. Cown, Director

EPD Director's Office
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive
Suite 1456, East Tower
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
404-656-4713

Mr. Eric Duff, State Environmental Administrator Jan 08, 2024
Georgia Department of Transportation
Office of Environmental Services
600 W. Peachtree Street, NW, 16th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
Attention: Michelle Baldwin

Re: Request for Variance under the Provisions of O.C.G.A. § 12-7-6(b)(15)
GDOT Project - PI # 522570
US 84 Connector from US 84 to SR 119
Liberty and Long Counties

Dear Mr. Duff:

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has reviewed your stream buffer variance application for the above-referenced project. The review was conducted to consider the potential impacts of the proposed project's encroachment on buffers to State waters within the context of Georgia's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permits for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities. This review, and the variance granted herein, is limited to only the request(s) in the application that you submitted for permission to conduct land-disturbing activities within 25-foot areas located immediately adjacent to the banks of State waters where vegetation has been wrested by normal stream flow or wave action. To the extent that your buffer variance application includes a request to conduct land-disturbing activities within 25-feet of State waters where there is no vegetation that has been wrested by normal stream flow or wave action, such request has not been considered by EPD, and the related activity is not addressed in the variance granted herein.

Pursuant to Ga. Comp. R. and Regs. 391-3-7-.05(2)(k)1. & (k)2. and subject to the conditions and contingencies described further below, authorization is hereby granted to encroach within the 25-foot buffer adjacent to State waters as delineated in your application, dated May 4, 2023. ***Buffer impacts authorized by this variance must be completed within five years of the date of this approval letter. If the approved buffer impacts cannot be completed prior to the expiration date, a time extension request must be submitted to EPD in writing at least 90 calendar days prior to the expiration date and must demonstrate justifiable cause for the extension.***

Authorization for the above-referenced project is subject to the following conditions and contingencies:

- 1) All graded slopes 3:1 or greater within the buffer encroachment areas must be hydroseeded and covered with Georgia DOT approved wood fiber matting or coconut fiber matting. If not hydroseeded, Georgia DOT approved matting that has been incorporated with seed and

fertilizer must be used. All slopes must be properly protected until a permanent vegetative stand is established;

- 2) The amount of land cleared during construction must be kept to a minimum;
- 3) All disturbed areas must be seeded, fertilized and mulched as soon as the final grade is achieved. Also, these disturbed areas must be protected until permanent vegetation is established;
- 4) Georgia DOT type "C" silt fence or an approved high performance silt fence must be installed on the site perimeter wherever the stormwater may be discharged, and a double row must be installed between the land disturbing activities and State waters where appropriate; and
- 5) The applicant must purchase 1,858 stream mitigation credits from within the Secondary Service Area (SSA) serving the same 8-digit HUC as the buffer impacts and the sales receipt verifying the credit purchase shall be forwarded to the EPD by return receipt certified mail (or similar service) or delivery receipt email by the applicant to document buffer mitigation compliance at least 14 days prior to any land disturbance on site. Proof of delivery and receipt is the applicant's responsibility.

The granting of this approval does not relieve you of any obligation or responsibility for complying with the provisions of any other law or regulations of any federal, local or additional State authority, nor does it obligate any of the aforementioned to permit this project if they do not concur with its concept of development/control. If you have questions concerning this letter, please contact Jacob Kelley, Erosion and Sedimentation Control Unit, Nonpoint Source Program, at (470) 531-2938.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey W. Cown
Director

JWC:jk

BV-089-23-01

cc: Cassius Edwards, GDOT Project Manager
Jerry Guo, GDOT Environmental Analyst
Daryl Williams, GDOT ECB
Lisa Westberry, GDOT Mitigation
Sunshine Beba, GDOT Environmental Program Manager

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Ben Bryant, Atlas Technical Consultants Ecologist
Beth Stevenson, Coastal District (Brunswick)
Robert Amos, GSWCC
Tim Barrett, Region 6 Fisheries
Donald Lovette, Liberty County Chairman
Robert Parker, Long County Chairman