

Published: Tuesday, July 9, 2002

## **Termino Drain Project Delayed**

By Paul Young  
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LONG BEACH - A controversial storm drain project in the Colorado Lagoon will be delayed indefinitely after a judge ordered the county to take another look at the system's potential effects, an official said Monday.

The \$14 million Termino Avenue Drain Project, designed to alleviate flooding in a 596-acre watershed, was supposed to break ground in spring 2003. But project manager James Yang said he's now unsure when the project will begin because of Wednesday's ruling that the county's initial environmental impact study was inadequate and needed to be re-examined.

"To me, it's really a shame that the project will be delayed," Yang said. "We still believe our project will enhance water quality,....,and provide additional flood protection for the neighborhoods (north of) and surrounding the lagoon."

However, not everybody agrees.

The California Department of Fish and Game and the National Marine Fisheries Service wrote to the county saying that the lagoon, near Park Avenue and Colorado Street, is sensitive and that fish and plants living in the water could be harmed by the drain project.

In addition, Friends of the Colorado Lagoon, a group protesting the project, filed a lawsuit in July that challenges the county's determination that all environmental impacts on the water body would be mitigated by the way the drain was designed.

Members worry that the drain system anchored at Redondo Avenue and Pacific Coast Highway will cause an influx of fresh water that will dramatically change salt levels in the lagoon. They also say it would erode the lagoon floor and flood the surrounding area.

County officials, meanwhile, dispute these claims, saying their latest studies indicate the system will alleviate flooding.

Both sides are trying to come to an agreement as to how the county will re-examine the project's potential effects, said Bruce Bartram, an attorney for Friends of the Colorado Lagoon.

If they can't reach an agreement by July 24, Bartram will ask the judge to order the county to look more closely at how fish, birds and plants would be affected by the proposed drain.

The county would then have until July 29 to object. After each side then submits procedure proposals, the judge would make a decision.