

27 August 2025

WGR Southwest, Inc.
11780 N. Hwy. 99
Lodi, CA 95240
Attention: John Teravskis

Subject: **WGR AUGUST ARTICLE**

Mr. Teravskis

Your recent article on EnviroCert International, Inc. (ECI) was shared with us by several professionals and the tone and tenure of your malicious comments. Because I believe in direct communication, ECI has prepared this letter to address your news-letter email blast and the associated points, directly, openly, and personally.

For more than forty-five (45) years, ECI has advanced professional standards in erosion and sediment control, stormwater, and water quality. Healthy debate is welcome, but disagreement should be grounded in facts and expressed with civility. Unfortunately, your recent August 2025 article contained inaccuracies, misrepresentations, and, in some instances, defamatory statements.

Key Concerns

1. Misrepresentation of ECI's Position

ECI has never opposed "alternate" training pathways. Our concern arose only when meaningful experience requirements were eliminated. To suggest otherwise is false.

2. Erosion of Professional Standards

Credentials such as PE, RG, CPESC, and CESSWI are earned only after years of formal education, rigorous training, and verified professional experience. These credentials represent nationally and internationally recognized benchmarks of competency. By contrast, replacing this foundation with a 16-hour class, offered without examination, accreditation, or independent oversight, and thereby creates a false equivalency that misleads both regulators and the public.

This issue is not about restricting opportunity or creating exclusivity. It is about ensuring that individuals entrusted with protecting water quality and environmental resources possess the competence, judgment, and experience necessary to meet statutory and regulatory obligations. The Clean Water Act requires that permits include enforceable conditions protective of water quality¹, and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act requires the

¹ 33 U.S.C. § 1342

State Water Board to issue waste discharge requirements sufficient to protect beneficial uses². Diluting professional standards in this way undermines the legal framework, weakens public confidence, and erodes the integrity of California's stormwater program.

3. Mischaracterization of "Alternate" Classes

Your article implied ECI opposed alternate classes. In fact, our objection focused solely on the elimination of experience requirements. Presenting otherwise is deceptive.

4. Standards of Equivalency

"Alternate" reasonably implies equivalency in rigor. Redefining it to mean no experience or reduced standards creates an underground regulation, as the current interpretation to reduce standards could not be deducted by a reasonable person, therefore it is neither clear, necessary, nor legally valid under the permit. Credentials such as PE, RG, CPESC, CPSWQ, and CESSWI are the product of extensive education and practice based on established standards as an underlying prerequisite.

5. Role of Certification vs. Education

ECI is a professional certification body — not a training provider. That distinction was ignored in your article, leaving readers with a misleading impression. While we agree that education is absolutely essential, certification is not synonymous with training. What educational value is there when the presenter is simply reading slides to a group who has no accountability to the content?

6. Qualifications of Trainers

Who established the standards for these educators? By what authority? In most states, instructors at this level who are required to present "education" content are required to have certain education and credentials, which may include advanced degrees. It remains unclear whether any comparable standards apply here.

7. Lack of Transparency & Oversight

Your article devoted space to one (1) certification program while omitting ECI's voice, much of it paraphrased from our prior communications. At the same time, you failed to disclose conflicts of interest and financial ties to the training program, an omission that undermines credibility and suggests intent. You did reach out to ECI by email; however, you omitted this fact from your article. When I responded, you claimed there must have been a mistake, and then disregarded any follow-up. This selective presentation of facts left your readers with a distorted view of the record. ECI can provide supporting correspondence if there is any doubt.

² Cal. Water Code § 13263

8. Conflicts of Interest & Legal Exposure

Your financial interest in the program was not disclosed, creating a direct conflict of interest and undermining the credibility of your position. Further, several of your statements were knowingly false and made with malice, and we believe it meets the legal standard for defamation. ECI is evaluating various options at this time. However, any further propagation of misleading information, particularly when financially motivated, will be met with aggressive defense to protect the integrity of the profession and the public interest.

9. Cost Misrepresentation

Claims that certification is “cost prohibitive” are inaccurate. Our annual renewal fees are at a median price point in the U.S. for professional credentials. For perspective, the fees impact an individual at around 0.002% of the median CPESC/CPSWQ//CESSWI salary.

More than ninety 990)%percent of ECI’s budget is reinvested directly into technical development, standards, and program integrity. If ECI’s intent were financial gain, we could have created a “CPESC-light” program with lower standards and higher margins. Instead, we have chosen to uphold our principles and preserve the integrity of certification, even at greater cost to ourselves.

10. Integrity of Standards

The claim of a “workforce shortage” is unsupported by valid, independent study. In reality, special interests seek:

- Cheaper labor,
- Lower consulting fees, and
- Reduced implementation standards.

11. Consequences for California

Lowering standards will:

- Depress wages and consulting fees,
- Flood the market with underqualified practitioners, and
- Erode environmental protections and reduce water quality.

12. California’s Reversal in Leadership

California once set the national standard for water quality permitting. That leadership is now being eroded by the unnecessary dilution of professional practice. By lowering credential and experience requirements, California not only diminishes its reputation as a regulatory leader but also undermines the enforceability of its own program.

The Clean Water Act requires states to adopt and maintain programs protective of water quality standards³, and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act obligates the State to issue permits with conditions sufficient to protect beneficial uses⁴. Diluting qualifications for QSPs and QSDs is inconsistent with these statutory mandates, creates a risk of noncompliance, and exposes both the Water Board and the regulated community to increased liability.

Conclusion

ECI recognizes that the Water Board is acting in good faith in its administration of the QSP/QSD program. However, it is equally clear that the Board has been given improper, biased, and self-serving advice from individuals with vested financial interests. This advice has not only distorted the intent of the Construction General Permit but has effectively created an underground regulation⁵, a standard that is neither clear, necessary, nor legally valid under controlling law.⁶

This debate is not about money for ECI, despite the false narrative propagated by “certain members” of the CGPTT. We applaud the Water Board for removing the CGPTT from certain decision making and approval processes due to direct and flagrant conflicts of interest.

This debate is about maintaining the integrity of professional practice and protecting the environment. If the Water Board wishes to provide “alternative classes,” ECI does not object, provided the classes are developed and administered as equivalent programs with demonstrable rigor and accountability. Instead, what has been advanced is a redistribution of public responsibility into private hands, enriching a small circle of insiders while exposing California to environmental degradation, reduced professional competence, and significant legal liability.

ECI has acted in good faith at every step — submitting multiple letters, offering direct dialogue, and meeting with the Water Board. Disagreement does not require disparagement. Yet your August article was misleading, uncivil, and dismissive of the professional standards that underpin stormwater management.

ECI will not compromise on the principles that safeguard public health, environmental quality, and the integrity of the profession. We will continue to pursue transparency, accountability, and

³ 33 U.S.C. §§ 1313, 1342

⁴ Cal. Water Code §§ 13000, 13263

⁵ Cal. Gov’t Code § 11340.5(a): “No state agency shall issue, utilize, enforce, or attempt to enforce any guideline, criterion, bulletin, manual, instruction, order, standard of general application, or other rule, which is a regulation as defined in Section 11342.600, unless the guideline, criterion, bulletin, manual, instruction, order, standard of general application, or other rule has been adopted as a regulation and filed with the Secretary of State pursuant to this chapter.”

⁶ Clean Water Act §§ 303, 402, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1313, 1342 (establishing water quality standards and NPDES permitting requirements); Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, Cal. Water Code §§ 13000, 13263 (requiring permits to include enforceable conditions protective of water quality); Cal. Gov’t Code § 11340.5 (prohibiting state agencies from enforcing “underground regulations” not adopted pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act).

adherence to law. Lowering standards does not serve industry, the environment, or the public — and will not withstand scrutiny under California’s statutory and regulatory framework.⁷

While we respect your right to publish opinions, and acknowledge that open public debate has merit, civility and diplomacy must remain essential elements of our profession. Defamatory and misleading statements, however, have no place in these discussions.

Pursuant to California Civil Code § 48a, which provides for the correction of libelous publications, we hereby demand that you publish a correction and clarification to your August article. Failure to issue such a correction will not only perpetuate misinformation but also escalate the matter into potential legal exposure.

This is not a request made lightly. It is made to preserve the integrity of professional discourse, protect the public’s trust, and prevent further harm to both the stormwater profession and the environment we are all entrusted to safeguard.

I can be reached at robert.anderson@envirocert.org or 805.766.3950 to discuss this matter or if I can assist provide readily implemented solutions.

Sincerely,

ENVIROCERT INTERNATIONAL, INC.



Robert W. Anderson, *Professional Civil Engineer (15 States), Juris Doctorate, CPESC, CPSWQ, CPMSM, CPISM, CPSWQ, QSM, QSP/QSD & ToR (California CASQA), QISP/Compliance Group Leader & ToR (California CASQA)*
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North Carolina PE 43503
Delaware PE 22422

South Dakota PE11546
North Dakota PE 8252
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California RC E58383

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New York PE 92272
Georgia RCE 043088

Certified CPESC #6840 & Instructor
California Certified QSP/QSD #21902 &
Trainer of Record (ToR) – Construction
California Certified /QISP #004 & Trainer
of Record (ToR) – Industrial

Certified Stormwater Manager (APWA)
Certified CESSWI #3270 & Trainer
Certified CPSWQ #0920 & Trainer
Certified CPMSM #0223 & Trainer
Certified CPISM #001 & Trainer

Qualified Stormwater Manager #001
National Green Infrastructure (NGICP)
#1365

Distribution:

ECI Certified Professionals
ECI Retention Records

⁷ See Cal. Code Regs. tit. 23, § 3860 (requiring clarity, necessity, and consistency in regulatory standards); Clean Water Act § 101, 33 U.S.C. § 1251 (declaring objective to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters)