

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Washington, D. C. 20426

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 2105-CA
Upper North Fork Feather River Project
Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Randal S. Livingston, Director
Power Generation
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
P. O. Box 770000
Mail Code: N11E
San Francisco, CA 94177

AUG 01 2003

Re: Results of P-2105 Environmental Inspection

Dear Mr. Livingston:

Thank you for the assistance of your staff during the environmental inspection conducted by Ms. Antonia Lattin from June 10 to June 13, 2003, of the Upper North Fork Feather River Project, FERC Project No. 2105. This letter presents our findings and needed actions to address several concerns. We group our comments by type of concerns below.

Private Development within the Project Boundary

We are concerned about the private housing development now under construction within the inundation zone of Lake Almanor reservoir (below the 4500-foot elevation, PG+E datum) at the proposed Vision Lake Homes subdivision in Chester, California. Residential development should not occupy project lands for several reasons. First, public access to project lands and waters should be maintained per Article 17 and the Commission's Regulations. Second, project operations, including the right to fill Lake Almanor reservoir to the spillway crest elevation, should not be constrained by such development. We understand that you have notified the developer and requested that work below the 4500-foot elevation cease immediately pending meetings to resolve the issue of occupation of project lands. Under License Article 42, Commission approval of the proposed use of project lands must be obtained prior to construction and must meet all the requirements of the license and the Commission's Regulations. Please submit a status report concerning your negotiations and your course of action regarding this matter.

Power Lines and Boat Launching/Boating Safety

We are concerned about transmission, distribution, and individual-residence service power lines that cross roads providing access to boat ramps at several private resorts at Lake Almanor reservoir. A partial list includes the Dorado Inn, Lassen View Resort, Lake Almanor Resort, and Miller's Resort. Please conduct a detailed survey of all boat launching ramps at Lake Almanor reservoir private resorts, lines and clearances over access roads and parking areas at the resorts, and a list of warning signs, guard cables, or other measures to prevent collision with or arcing to sailboat masts of trailered boats on the road or in rigging areas. Under 18CFR§12.43, all lines that do not meet the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) should either be raised (if constructed after March 1, 1981) or warning signs should be clearly posted informing boaters of the hazard and actual clearances (if the line was constructed before March 2, 1981). Please submit the results of your survey along with your plan to address public safety at all locations where clearances are less than those specified in the NESC.

The warning sign at the Alder Creek Boat Launch is placed in the parking lot at the top of the ramp. The sign prohibits boats with masts over 30 feet based on the power line crossings of Butt Valley Reservoir. Since the 21 kV line crosses the parking lot at Alder Creek, please relocate the warning sign to the entrance of the parking area (between the access road and the power line) and submit verification of its relocation. Placement of a guard cable upslope from the ramp would provide an added level of protection at this location.

The transmission line originating at the Hamilton Branch Powerhouse crosses the Hamilton Branch of Lake Almanor reservoir. Please arrange to measure and report the clearance of this line at maximum sag and at full reservoir pool per 18CFR§12.43.

We note that your staff installed a safety barrier below the cableway from Canyon Dam to the outlet tower. We appreciate your continuing proactive attention to assuring public safety.

Log Boom Visibility and Boating Safety

The log booms placed by private resorts as wind protection still exhibit poor visibility for boaters; many float low in the water. The dark color of the logs also makes it difficult to see these navigation hazards in low light conditions. The standards for Lake Almanor reservoir contained in your permit program require high-visibility markers every 50 feet and clearly marked basin entrances. There are many private marinas, however, where observations during the inspection revealed that the markers were missing and/or the entrances did not have buoys or other high-visibility designations. These include

Lake Cove Resort, Galena Pines, Lake Almanor Resort, Lakeshore Resort, Almanor Country Club Recreation Areas 1 and 2, Northshore Campground, and Plumas Pines Resort. We understand that you will be working with these private resorts to obtain compliance with the permit program requirements, including an inspection of all facilities by your land department staff, covering water and land marina facilities and private docks on project lands and waters. Please submit the results of your dock and permit inspection to this office as soon as they are available and confirm that additional markings have been placed on the log booms.

Congestion, Private Boat Docks/Mooring Buoys, and Recreation Planning

The proliferation of marina slips and private docks on Lake Almanor reservoir is causing congestion and making navigation more difficult, especially in intensely developed areas such as Big Cove. The current permit program for Lake Almanor Reservoir does not include criteria for assessing the appropriate level of development to avoid overcrowding and ensure adequate resource protection. Examples of planning and management criteria include Boats-At-One-Time (BAOT) capacity, physical constraints, environmental considerations, and public safety concerns. Please inform us as to how you intend to address this issue.

Debris Removal and Public Safety

Please arrange to have debris removed from project lands to reduce or eliminate public safety hazards. This should include the abandoned docks at the PSEA camp unless they are repaired, refloated, and the exposed styrofoam floatation of the dock has been sealed. This should also include the abandoned dock and the loose cables on the shoreline at Plumas Pines Resort. Please submit verification that these items have been accomplished.

Recreation and Public Safety

The abandoned hose bibs at the Canyon Dam picnic area should be removed and the well where the faucet discharged should be filled. Please submit verification once this has been accomplished.

Please work with the Forest Service to repair the courtesy dock at Canyon Dam Boat Ramp at the junction of the wood and concrete sections. We understand that at Canyon Dam Boat Ramp this season, the Forest Service will be extending the accessible pedestrian ramp below the viewing platform, removing the outdated vault toilets near the platform, and designating an accessible parking space at the beginning of the accessible

route to the platform. Please submit a status report of the progress in making these recreation, access, and public safety improvements.

Please work with the Forest Service to address the spalled concrete at the Almanor Campground Boat Ramp. A plan and schedule with Forest Service concurrence should be submitted for accomplishing this repair work.

The visibility of cable gates in recreation areas of the project should be increased. Please submit verification that high-visibility casing has been added to these facilities at the entrance to the Last Chance Campground group camping area, at the entrance to the walk-in sites at Cool Springs Campground, and at the service road to the restroom at Ponderosa Campground.

Sediment deposited on the Alder Creek Boat Launch at Butt Valley Reservoir results in difficult vehicle traction. Please remove the sand and gravel from the ramp and submit verification that it has been removed.

The metal anchors at the old concrete garbage can pads in Ponderosa Campground represent a tripping hazard and should be flattened or removed since the campground garbage containers were switched to dumpsters. Please submit verification once this has been accomplished.

Please replace the pedestrian bridge across the gully between the walk-in sites and the vault toilets at the Cool Springs Campground and submit verification once the new bridge is in place.

The sudden water fluctuation warning sign at the Howell-Bunger valve release at Butt Creek should be replaced with a larger sign that can be read from the parking area. Please submit verification once this is accomplished.

Berry bushes and other vegetation that partially obscures the sudden fluctuation warning signs along the North Fork Feather River below the Belden Forebay should be removed. Please submit verification once this has been accomplished.

We have confirmed that the Eby Stamp Mill at the Belden Rest Stop is within the project boundary. The stairs structure for public viewing of the Mill is in need of repair, including patching of the hole in the roof, replacement of the broken rafter, securing of loose railings at the lowest stairs and on the first landing, and repair or replacement of the bent and exposed wire grid below the railing at the top platform. Please submit verification once these repairs have been accomplished.

We understand that broken concrete campfire rings were to be replaced with metal enclosures and grasses and other vegetation at some campsite fire pits and grills in the Butt Valley Campgrounds were to be removed immediately after the inspection. We appreciate your prompt attention to public and fire safety.

Child Safety

As discussed during the inspection, the child play structure at the Northshore Campground needs to be repaired or replaced. All connections need tightening, all sharp items should be removed (including screws at the top of the slide, bolt ends above the railings, and deteriorated plastic shrink wrap on the swing chains), the strap swings should be replaced with bucket swings, and the supports should be reinforced to avoid movement of the structure while children are playing on it. Please submit verification once these improvements have been accomplished.

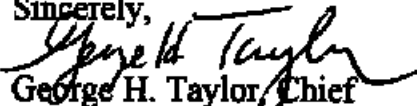
Pollution Control

We understand that as a temporary measure until a permanent fix can be designed and installed, you intend to fabricate a basket with replaceable sorbent-material filter to fit in the drain in the Butt Valley Powerhouse packing box near the turbine guide bearing. Please submit verification once this is in place. Also, please submit a progress report regarding a permanent pollution control measure at this location.

Submittals, Deadline, and Other Information

For all requested submittals, an original and seven copies should be filed with the Secretary, FERC, at 888 First St. N. E., Washington, D.C. 20426, with a copy to Ms. Lattin at the San Francisco Regional Office at 901 Market Street, Room 350, San Francisco, CA 94103-1778, no later than 60 days from the date of this letter.

The inspection report should be available on the Commission's FERRIS system web site at <http://ferris.ferc.gov> in approximately 90 days. Should you have questions or need additional information, please call Ms. Lattin at 415-369-3334 or e-mail her at antonia.lattin@ferc.gov.

Sincerely,

George H. Taylor, Chief
Biological Resources Branch
Division of Hydropower Administration
and Compliance

**cc: Ms. Kathy Turner, Lands and Recreation Officer
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