

State Water Resources Control Board

To: Interested Parties Mailing List

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO ACCEPT COMMENTS ON THE
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
UPPER NORTH FORK FEATHER RIVER HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 2105**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) will hold a meeting to solicit comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Upper North Fork Feather River Hydroelectric Project (UNFFR Project), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No 2105. Recipients of this notice are encouraged to inform others who are interested in the Project about this meeting.

MEETING

The purpose of this meeting is to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to submit oral comments concerning the Draft EIR, as well as the State Water Board staff recommendation. The time allotted for each individual or organization to comment orally may be limited if the number of people in attendance so requires. The State Water Board will not take any action during the meeting and no decisions will be made. Plumas County has provided the State Water Board with the venue for the meeting. The location and time of the meeting is as follows:

**Wednesday, February 11, 2015 – 6:00 p.m.
Veterans Memorial Hall
225 Gay Street
Chester, CA 96020**

BACKGROUND

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) owns and operates the UNFFR Project. PG&E requested a Clean Water Act section 401 water quality certification for the FERC relicensing of the UNFFR Project from the State Water Board. The State Water Board must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) when issuing a water quality certification.

The Draft EIR evaluates the Proposed UNFFR Project as well as two alternatives. For purposes of the CEQA analysis, the Proposed UNFFR Project consists of operation of the UNFFR Project under a new FERC license in accordance with PG&E's application to FERC, a partial settlement agreement between PG&E and numerous stakeholders, conditions proposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service pursuant to section 18 of the Federal Power Act, conditions proposed by the United States Forest Service pursuant to section 4(e) of the Federal

FELICIA MARCUS, CHAIR | THOMAS HOWARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 | Mailing Address: P.O. Box 100, Sacramento, Ca 95812-0100 | www.waterboards.ca.gov

Power Act, and FERC's Staff Alternative as outlined in Chapter 3 of the Draft EIR. Alternatives 1 and 2 are described in detail in Chapter 4 of the Draft EIR. Generally, both Alternatives 1 and 2 involve: 1) construction of thermal curtains at the Prattville and Caribou intakes; and 2) the activities outlined in the Proposed UNFFR Project with alternative minimum flow releases from Canyon Dam to the Seneca and Belden reaches of the North Fork Feather River. Alternative 1 also includes increased releases from the low level outlet at Canyon dam from June 15 to September 15.

The Draft EIR identifies significant impacts for the following resources:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Fisheries
- Geology, Geomorphology, and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Land Use and Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Vegetation, Wildlife, and Sensitive Biological Resources
- Water Quality

All potentially significant impacts can be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of mitigation measures, except for the Aesthetics resource area, which is identified as significant and unavoidable.

STATE WATER BOARD STAFF RECOMMENDATION

In accordance with the Clean Water Act, the State Water Board staff recommendation is designed to ensure the UNFFR Project will protect water quality and beneficial uses through the term of the new FERC license and any amendments thereto. State Water Board staff developed a preliminary recommendation comprised of the following:

- implementation of the Proposed UNFFR Project with the alternative minimum flows, as outlined in Chapter 4 of the Draft EIR;
- increased releases of 250 cubic feet per second for purposes of temperature control from the low level outlet at Canyon dam from June 15 to September 15;
- monitoring of the Upper North Fork Feather River and Lake Almanor to evaluate temperatures and fisheries effects resulting from implementation of the Proposed UNFFR Project with increased Canyon dam flows; and
- adaptive management and a reservation of authority, whereby the State Water Board could require installation of thermal curtains at Lake Almanor and Butt Valley reservoir based on monitoring results, if appropriate.

In developing a recommendation, State Water Board staff considered the Draft EIR and all supporting information. This includes, but is not limited to: FERC's Final *Environmental Impact Statement for the Upper North Fork Feather River Project*, PG&E's application for certification; studies; reports; meeting notes; and stakeholder comments. Throughout the FERC relicensing process, State Water Board staff heard concerns from stakeholders related to potential impacts associated with use of thermal curtains. State Water Board staff believes that adaptive management coupled with the ongoing relicensing efforts of the Poe Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 2107) and the Bucks Creek Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 619) will provide opportunities to further evaluate temperature in the North Fork Feather River.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

The Draft EIR and State Water Board staff recommendation were released for public comment on November 26, 2014. Interested parties are encouraged to provide comments. The State Water Board will consider all comments submitted by noon (12:00 pm) on **March 26, 2015**. Comments should be submitted to Mr. Peter Barnes as follows:

Peter Barnes, Engineering Geologist
State Water Board Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights
Water Quality Certification Program
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812

or

Email: Peter.Barnes@waterboards.ca.gov

AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT EIR

The Draft EIR and Notice of Availability, which contains the State Water Board staff recommendation, are available on the State Water Board's Project webpage at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/unfr_ferc_2105.shtml

Copies of the Draft EIR are also available for review at the following locations:

State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 2nd Floor, Room 2-114
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 341-5300

Plumas County Library–Chester
210 First Street
Chester, CA 96020
(530) 258-2742

Plumas County Library–Greenville
204 Ann Street
Greenville, CA 95947
(530) 284-7416

Plumas County Library–Quincy
445 Jackson
Quincy, CA 95971
(530) 283-6310

Butte County Library–Chico
1108 Sherman Avenue
Chico, CA 95926
(530) 891-2762

Central Valley Regional Water Quality
Control Board, Redding
364 Knollcrest Drive, Suite 2015
Redding, CA 96002
(530) 224-4845

Central Valley Regional Water Quality
Control Board, Sacramento
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6114
(916) 464-3291

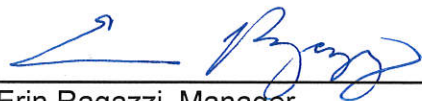
KEEP INFORMED OF PROJECT MILESTONES

To receive emails related to the UNFFR Project and other projects pursuing certifications managed by the State Water Board Division of Water Rights, interested persons should enroll in the "Water Rights Water Quality Certification" e-mail notification service. Click the SUBSCRIBE button at the bottom of the Division of Water Rights' Water Quality Certification Program webpage at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/

By enrolling in this email list, you will receive notices for all current projects in the Division of Water Rights' Water Quality Certification Program, including the project announced in this notice. You will need a valid e-mail address to use this service. If you do not have internet access or do not wish to participate in the email subscription list, you may contact Mr. Peter Barnes, Project Manager, at (916) 445-9989 and request to receive notices by mail. You can enroll or un-enroll from the email subscription service at any time.

Sincerely,



Erin Ragazzi, Manager
Water Quality Certification Program
Division of Water Rights

FEB 03 2015

Date

Document Content(s)

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