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## State Water Resources Control Board

**TO:** Mr. Grant Davis, General Manager  
**SONOMA COUNTY WATER AGENCY**  
[Grant.Davis@scwa.ca.gov](mailto:Grant.Davis@scwa.ca.gov)

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

**FROM:** Erik Ekdahl, Deputy Director  
Division of Water Rights  
**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD**

**DATE:** March 5, 2021

**SUBJECT:** APPROVAL OF SONOMA COUNTY WATER AGENCY (SONOMA WATER) MARCH 1, 2021 RAMPING VARIANCE REQUEST

On March 1, 2021, Sonoma Water requested approval to temporarily revise the ramping rates specified in Term 2(d) of the Order approving Sonoma Water's temporary urgency change petition issued on February 4, 2021, and amended on February 12, 2021. Term 2(d) restricts reducing the flow in the East Fork Russian River immediately below Coyote Dam by more than 12 cubic feet per second per hour (cfs/hr) and by more than 24 cfs per day. Term 2(d) also requires a minimum of 4 hours between the end of each flow reduction. The Order provides that the ramping rate requirements in Term 2(d) may be temporarily revised with the concurrence of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and/or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the approval of the Deputy Director for Water Rights.

Both CDFW and NMFS have requested the discharge from Coyote Valley Dam be increased from 25 cfs to 100 cfs to facilitate the second and final release of steelhead smolts from the Coyote Valley Fish Facility. The increase in discharge is necessary to volitionally push the smolts out into the river to reduce the risk of predation. Sonoma Water initially indicated that the related flow increases and decreases from Lake Mendocino would occur on March 13-16, 2021. On March 4, 2021, CDFW informed Sonoma Water that the Coyote Valley Fish Facility is operating on backup pumps following an unexpected shutoff and that the flow increases for steelhead smolt release should now occur at the "earliest possible opportunity." Term 2(d) does not limit increases in ramping, and the reductions requested by Sonoma Water are in conformance with the requirement of a minimum of four hours between each reduction and no more than 12 cfs/hr. However, Sonoma Water indicates that it is requesting daily flow reductions of greater than 24 cfs per day to conserve water stored in Lake Mendocino. Given the already low water storage levels in Lake Mendocino and the absence of species of concern in the East Fork Russian River at this time, the higher

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | EILEEN SOBECK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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- 2 -

MAR 5, 2021

ramping rates of 50 cfs per day on the first day of reductions down from 100 cfs and 25 cfs on the second day of reductions down from 50 cfs are warranted and approved.

This memo approves Sonoma Water's request of the temporary ramping schedule for Lake Mendocino releases, for a single four-day period ending on or before March 16, 2021:

Day 1            09:00 am – 25 cfs increase, new set point 50 cfs  
                    10:00 am – 25 cfs increase, new set point 75 cfs  
                    11:00 am – 25 cfs increase, new set point 100 cfs

Day 3            12:00 pm – 25 cfs decrease, new set point 75 cfs  
                    08:00 pm – 25 cfs decrease, new set point 50 cfs

Day 4            04:00 am – 25 cfs decrease, new set point 25 cfs

If you require further assistance, please contact Jane Ling by email at [jane.ling@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:jane.ling@waterboards.ca.gov).

ec:                North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board  
                    c/o Mr. Bryan McFadin  
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California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
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Russian Riverkeeper  
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Russian River Flood Control  
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