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GOVERNOR

JARED BLUMENFELD
SECRETARY FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

State Water Resources Control Board

NOTICE OF INFORMAL CONSULTATION WITH RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES REGARDING AN ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FOR WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

PHOENIX HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT,

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 1061

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies,

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) plans to prepare an environmental document for Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) Phoenix Hydroelectric Project (Project) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Res. Code, § 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.). The Project is located on the South Fork Stanislaus River in Tuolumne County, California and has an installed power capacity of 1.6 megawatts. The primary Project facilities include Lyons Dam; Lyons Reservoir; the Main Tuolumne Canal (MTC); Phoenix Forebay; and Phoenix Powerhouse. The MTC consists of 13.17 miles of ditch, 2.02 miles of flume, and 0.19 miles of pipe, which convey water to the Phoenix Forebay. Water is then diverted through a 5,611-foot penstock to the Phoenix Powerhouse. Water discharged from the Phoenix Powerhouse is used by Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) for irrigation and domestic water needs. Project facilities are depicted in the attached map. The Project occupies 224.57 acres of PG&E owned land, 80.06 acres of privately owned land, 26.99 acres of federal land administered by the United States Forest Service, and 0.59 acres administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

The Project, which is licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), is identified as FERC Project No. 1061. FERC issues licenses for the operation of projects for 40 to 50 years. PG&E applied for a new license in 2020. The existing license expires on August 31, 2022. In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FERC will prepare a scoping document and will conduct an environmental assessment of the Project.

In accordance with section 401 of the Clean Water Act, PG&E must apply for a water quality certification (certification) for the Project. PG&E plans to apply for certification in 2022. The State Water Board must comply with CEQA prior to issuing a certification.

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

NOTICE OF INFORMAL CONSULTATION

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15063, subdivision (g), notice is hereby given that the State Water Board is conducting informal consultation with the responsible and trustee agencies (Agencies) to solicit input on the Project's CEQA process. Recipients of this notice are encouraged to inform other responsible and trustee agency representatives who are interested in this Project about this notice.

The purpose of this consultation is to seek input from the Agencies responsible for resources affected by the Project. The State Water Board would like to obtain recommendations, rationale, and supporting information from Agencies regarding whether an Environmental Impact Report or a Negative Declaration should be prepared.

Recommendations and supporting information should be provided by the deadline in the *Consultation Deadline and Contact* section of this notice.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PG&E's existing Project has an installed operating capacity of 1.6 megawatts. As part of the relicensing process, PG&E proposes to modify some components of the Project, including:

- Project boundary modifications around Lyon's Reservoir, the MTC and spill channels, and the penstock;
- Modifications to Project operations including:
 - Water year types,
 - Minimum instream flows, and
 - Ramping rates;
- Recreational facility upgrades to meet current accessibility standards, including:
 - Addition of a picnic site and designated parking area at the Lyons Reservoir Day Use area,
 - Modifications to the restroom, water faucet, and trash disposal at the Lyons Reservoir Day Use area; and
 - Addition of disabled parking spaces and development of accessible fishing access for the MTC fishing area

The State Water Board will use the CEQA analysis to support an informed decision whether to issue certification and if so, under what conditions. Issuance of a certification requires analysis of a project's overall effect on water quality and an analysis of whether the designated beneficial uses identified in the appropriate water quality control plan (basin plan) are adequately protected.

CONSULTATION DEADLINE AND CONTACT

The State Water Board will accept written input until 5:00pm on June 3, 2021. Written input should specifically identify that it is provided as part of the “Phoenix CEQA Section 15063(g) Informal Consultation” and include recommendations as to the CEQA document type as well as the rationale and supporting information for the CEQA document type recommendation. Written input may be submitted electronically or by mail to:

Email: eric.bradbury@waterboards.ca.gov

or

State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights – Water Quality Certification Program
Attn: Eric Bradbury
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

During the current COVID emergency, most State Water Board staff are working from home. Accordingly, if you have questions regarding this notice the best means of contact is by email to eric.bradbury@waterboards.ca.gov.

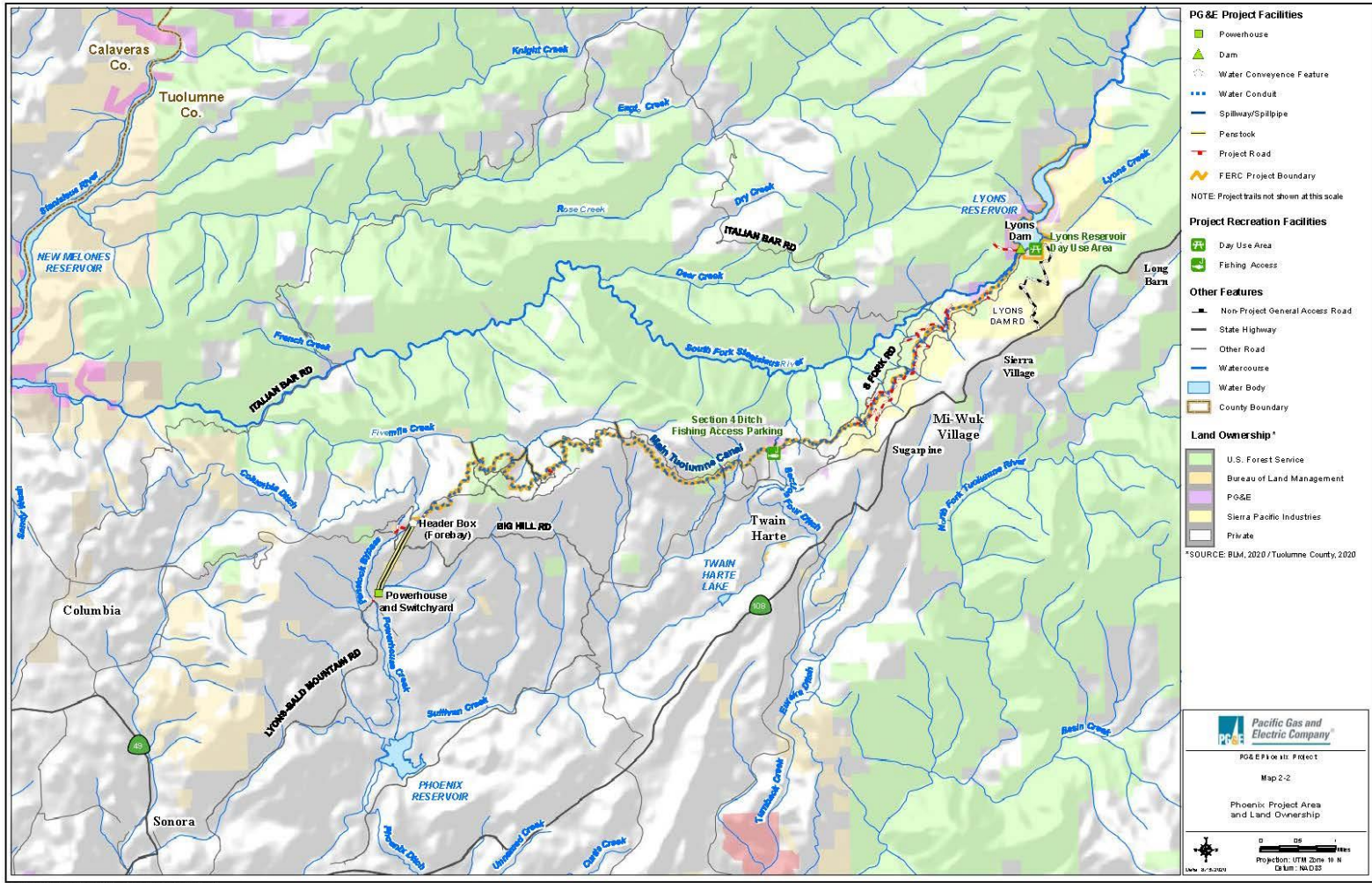
Ann Marie Ore  Digitally signed by Ann Marie Ore

Ann Marie Ore
Water Quality Certification Program Manager

May 4, 2021
Date

Enclosures: Phoenix Hydroelectric Project Location Map
Distribution List

Phoenix Hydroelectric Project Location Map¹



¹ Submitted by PG&E with the Final License Application on August 24, 2020.
 E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | EILEEN SOBECK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DISTRIBUTION LIST

cc:

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Attn: FERC Coordinator 911 NE 11 th Ave Portland, OR 97232-4169	U.S. Bureau of Land Management 2800 Cottage Way Ste W1834 Sacramento, CA 95825-1886
Christopher Calfee California Natural Resources Agency 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311 Sacramento, CA 95814	California Air Resources Board PO Box 2815 Sacramento, CA 95812-2815
Chief US Army Corps of Engineers 333 Market Street, Room 1112 San Francisco, CA 94105-2197	District Chief US Geological Survey Placer Hall- 6000 J Street, Ste 2012 Sacramento, CA 95819-6129

ec:

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