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## State Water Resources Control Board

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR DRAFT WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION**

### **NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT'S YUBA-BEAR HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 2266**

To: Interested Parties Mailing List

Nevada Irrigation District (NID) has applied to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board or Board) for water quality certification (certification) for the Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Project (Project), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No. 2266, pursuant to section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act. While not required, the State Water Board is providing this opportunity for public review and comment on a draft certification for the FERC relicensing of the Project.

#### Background

NID owns and operates the Project. NID is seeking a new license from FERC for continued operation of the Project, which requires NID to obtain certification from the State Water Board that operation of the Project will be protective of water quality and comply with water quality standards and other appropriate requirements of state law. On August 25, 2024, NID submitted a request for certification for the Project to the State Water Board.

#### Brief Description of Project

The Project is located in the Yuba River and Bear River watersheds, in Nevada, Sierra, and Placer counties. Portions of the Project are on federal lands managed by the United States Forest Service as part of the Tahoe National Forest, and a smaller portion on federal lands are administered by the United States Bureau of Land Management as part of the Sierra Resource Management Area. The Project includes: 13 main dams (18 including minor diversion dams); 11 reservoirs or impoundments; four major water conduits; four powerhouses with associated switchyards; one transmission line; and 13 recreation facilities.

In addition to continued operation of the Project for 50 years, NID proposes to: (1) expand the existing Rollins Development to add the Rollins No. 2 Powerhouse, which will increase the Project's power generation capacity from 79.32 to 90.72 megawatts; (2) add five new streamflow gages; and (3) replace, upgrade, or install new recreation facilities.<sup>1</sup> Additional background on the Project can be found in Attachment A of the draft certification.

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<sup>1</sup> New and proposed updates to recreation facilities include: (1) upgrades to existing recreation facilities (e.g., installation of animal-resistant food lockers; construction of pedestrian trails, vault toilet installation, and boat launch upgrades); (2) development

### Water Quality Certification

In California, the State Water Board is responsible for protecting the State's water quality, including through issuance of certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Certification must ensure compliance with water quality standards and other appropriate requirements of state law, such as water quality control plan standards. A certification is required before FERC can issue a license for a project. If the State denies certification, FERC cannot issue a license for the project. If the State issues a certification with conditions, those conditions become conditions of the federal license.

### Opportunity for Public Comment

This draft certification does not constitute final action by the State Water Board on NID's request for certification of the Project. The State Water Board is releasing this draft certification to provide the public with an opportunity to review and comment on draft conditions developed to protect water quality and beneficial uses. The comment period for the draft certification is from the date of this notice until July 11, 2025. **Comments on the draft certification must be received by 12:00 pm (noon) on Friday, July 11, 2025**, and can be submitted electronically (preferred) or by mail as follows:

#### **Email (preferred):**

[WR401Program@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:WR401Program@waterboards.ca.gov)

or

#### **Mail:**

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

The Project draft certification and additional information regarding the State Water Board's certification process for the Project are available on the State Water Board's webpage for the [Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Project](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/yubabear_ferc2266.html).<sup>2</sup>

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of a new day-use area and camp site at Milton Diversion Impoundment;  
(3) development of a new day-use area and camp site at Bowman Lake; and  
(4) development of 10 new camp sites at Sawmill Lake.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water\\_issues/programs/water\\_quality\\_cert/yubabear\\_ferc2266.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/yubabear_ferc2266.html)

## **KEEP INFORMED OF PROJECT MILESTONES**

To receive emails related to the Project and other projects pursuing certifications managed by the Division of Water Rights, interested persons should enroll in the "Water Rights Water Quality Certification" e-mail notification service. Instructions on how to sign up for the State Water Board's Email Subscription List are outlined below:

1. Visit the [Board's Email Subscription webpage](#)<sup>3</sup> and click on the "State Water Resources Control Board" link.
2. Provide your email in the required fields, then click the "Submit" button.
3. In the next page, below Subscription Topics, select "Water Rights," then "Water Rights Water Quality Certification".
4. Click the "Submit" button.
5. An email will be sent to you. You must respond to the email message to confirm your membership on the selected topic(s).

By enrolling in this email list, you will receive notices for other current projects in the Division of Water Rights' Water Quality Certification Program, including the Project. If you do not have internet access or do not wish to participate in the email notification list, you may contact Annabelle Long by phone at: (916) 327-8555 and leave a message to request to receive notices by mail. You can enroll or un-enroll from the email notification service at any time.

If you have questions related to this notice, the best means of contact is by email to: [WR401Program@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:WR401Program@waterboards.ca.gov).

Parker Thaler  
Parker Thaler  
Environmental Program Manager I  
Water Quality Certification Program  
Division of Water Rights

6/12/25  
Date

<sup>3</sup> [https://waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/](https://waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/)