



State Water Resources Control Board

March 16, 2026

Mr. Mike Farmer
Senior Land Planner
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Sent via Email: Mike.Farmer@pge.com

Courtright Intake/Discharge Gate, Cylinder, and Piping Improvements Project Fresno County Helms Creek and Courtright Reservoir

AMENDMENT TO WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

Dear Mr. Farmer:

On March 20, 2025, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) received a request from Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) for an amendment to the Courtright Intake/Discharge Gate, Cylinder, and Piping Improvements Project (Project) water quality certification (certification).¹ PG&E is requesting an amendment to the Project's certification to allow for the permanent discharge of fill material associated with constructing and maintaining an access ramp in the southwest corner of Courtright Reservoir (Figure A : Courtright Intake/Discharge Gate, Cylinder, and Piping Improvements Project – Access Ramp Permanent Fill).

Project Background and Amendment Request

PG&E owns and operates Courtright Dam, which is located on Helms Creek, a tributary of the North Fork Kings River, in Fresno County. The Project is located approximately 91 miles northeast of the city of Fresno, California. Courtright Reservoir, Courtright Dam, and all appurtenant facilities are part of PG&E's Haas-Kings River Project and the Helms Pumped Storage Project (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission [FERC] Project Nos. 1988 and 2735, respectively).

The Project, which PG&E substantially completed on March 31, 2025, included replacement of Courtright Dam hydraulic lines, cylinders, intake and discharge bulkhead gates, bypass gates, and associated structures. As part of the Project, PG&E added temporary fill within the reservoir to create an access ramp to the worksite. Originally the Project included removal of the temporary access ramp once updates to Courtright

¹ The Executive Director issued and amended the original Project certification on July 3, 2024, and September 30, 2024, respectively. The September 2024 amendment was to allow for crane refueling within 360 feet of surface waters.

Dam were completed. Following completion of the Courtright Dam improvements, PG&E determined that leaving the ramp would provide future vehicle/boat launch access to the waterline when the water level is below the existing concrete boat ramp. This access would facilitate future inspection and maintenance activities at the intake/discharge gate structure.

PG&E's amendment request proposes to permanently leave the access ramp in place, which will result in a permanent discharge of fill to Courtright Reservoir of 0.10 acres. The Project certification required PG&E to comply with the *State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State* (Dredge or Fill Procedures)² (State Water Board 2019 and 2021)³. The Dredge or Fill Procedures provide California's definition of wetland, wetland delineation procedures, and procedures for submitting applications for activities that could result in discharges of dredged or fill material to waters of the state. The Dredge or Fill Procedures ensure that State Water Board regulatory activities will result in no net loss of wetland quantity, quality, or permanence, consistent with California Water Code, Division 7, Chapter 28, sections 16200-16201. PG&E's proposed amendment would result in a change in permanent fill from 7.958 acres to 8.058 acres and temporary fill from 2.565 acres to 2.465 acres. Permanent impacts shall be compensated for at a minimum of a 1:1 ratio consistent with the Dredge or Fill Procedures and any amendments thereto.

California Environmental Quality Act

Issuance of a certification amendment is a discretionary action that requires the State Water Board to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). For this certification amendment, and for the purposes of CEQA compliance, the State Water Board is the lead agency. The State Water Board reviewed the proposed amendment and determined that the request meets the criteria for the following categorical exemptions: (1) Class 1 (Existing Facilities); and (2) Class 2 (Replacement or Reconstruction). (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, §§ 15301, 15302.) No exceptions to the applicable exemptions apply. The State Water Board will file a Notice of Exemption within five days of issuance of this certification amendment. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15062.)

Noticing

On April 18, 2025, the State Water Board provided public notice of PG&E's request for an amendment to the Project certification, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3858, by posting information describing the amendment request on the Division of Water Rights Water Quality Certification Program Public Notices webpage and noticing interested parties via email. The State Water Board received no comments

² The Dredge or Fill Procedures and any amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/wrapp.html. Accessed on February 10, 2026.

³ The Resolution No. 2021-0012 is available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/docs/wrapp/rs2021_0012.pdf. Accessed on February 10, 2026.

in response to the notice, but did receive communication from the Shingle Springs Rancheria requesting continued consultation for the Project. State Water Board staff reached out to the Shingle Springs Rancheria three times via email and phone calls to follow up on its request and did not receive a response.

Approval of Amendment

No additional direct impacts are anticipated by permanently leaving the access ramp in place. The State Water Board finds that PG&E's request to leave the access ramp in place complies with state water quality standards and other appropriate requirements of state law with the conditions noted below. The State Water Board hereby amends the Project certification (as issued July 3, 2024, and amended September 30, 2024), as noted in this amendment. This certification amendment is issued with the following additional conditions:

1. The Applicant shall ensure no net loss of wetland or riparian habitat functions under the standards and procedures set forth in the Dredge or Fill Procedures (State Water Board 2019 and 2021) and Water Code, Division 7, Chapter 28, sections 16200-16201, and any amendments thereto. The Applicant shall demonstrate compliance with the Dredge or Fill Procedures upon request from the Deputy Director of the Division of Water Rights.
2. This certification amendment is subject to modification or revocation upon administrative or judicial review, including review and amendment pursuant to California Water Code, section 13330 and California Code of Regulations, title 23, division 3, chapter 28, article 6 (commencing with section 3867).
3. This certification amendment is not intended and shall not be construed to apply to any activity involving a hydroelectric facility and requiring a FERC license or an amendment to a FERC license unless the pertinent certification application was filed pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3855, subdivision (b) and that application specifically identified that a FERC license or amendment to a FERC license for a hydroelectric facility was being sought.
4. This certification amendment is conditioned upon total payment of any fee required under California Code of Regulations, title 23, division 3, chapter 28 and owed by the applicant.

All documents and other information that constitute the public record for this amendment will be maintained by the Division of Water Rights and are available for public review at the following address:

State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights
1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Documents are currently available at this location by appointment only. Please email dwr@waterboards.ca.gov to discuss options for document review.

If you have questions regarding this amendment, please contact Wilhelmina Chon, Project Manager, by email to: Wilhelmina.Chon@waterboards.ca.gov or phone call to: (916) 319-0745.

Sincerely,



Eric Oppenheimer
Executive Director

Enclosure: Figure A: Courtright Intake/Discharge Gate, Cylinder, and Piping Improvements Project – Access Ramp Permanent Fill

ec: Debbie-Anne Reese, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Via FERC eFiling

Patrick Pulupa, Executive Officer
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Figure A:
Courtright Intake/Discharge Gate, Cylinder, and Piping Improvements Project –
Access Ramp Permanent Fill

