

**FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
**Washington D.C. 20426**

**OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS**

**February 6, 2014**

Subject: FERC assistance during the 2014 California drought

To the Entities Addressed:<sup>1</sup>

As you are aware, the State of California is experiencing a severe drought. According to the January 30, 2014 U.S. Drought Monitor map (produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the National Drought Mitigation Center),<sup>2</sup> approximately 9 percent of the state is experiencing an exceptional drought, and two-thirds of the state is in an extreme drought. Snow pack near Donner Summit in the Sierra Mountains is at eight inches, the lowest at this time of year since January 1946, and the Drought Monitor suggests that the drought is a short- to long-term condition.

In order to assist the licensees of hydropower projects in responding to the drought conditions, staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is prepared to act swiftly to review requests to amend licenses on a temporary or longer-term basis, as appropriate, in order to conserve water resources at FERC-licensed hydroelectric projects.

Licensees interested in implementing new water conservation measures may wish to review their licenses to determine which license requirements may be temporarily modified in order to retain more water in project reservoirs for future use during the drought. Licensees interested in proposing such measures should promptly begin to consult with state and federal natural resource agencies, Native American Tribes and other appropriate entities to determine whether, and to what extent, to modify flow release requirements.

Some project licenses include articles that allow for a temporary deviation from a license requirement for a short period of time upon mutual agreement with specified

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<sup>1</sup> This letter is being sent to all licensed hydroelectric projects in California as referenced in Attachment 1.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Drought Monitor <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/MapsAndData> last accessed Wednesday, February 5, 2014.

resource agencies. Licensees with these types of licenses may begin implementing water conservation measures immediately upon reaching agreement with the specified agencies. These licensees must promptly notify the Commission of such deviations, and, to the extent that they wish to continue the deviations for more than a short period of time, should immediately file with the Commission requests to amend their licenses to allow longer-term deviations, so that the Commission can issue public notice of, and duly consider, the requests.

For projects with licenses that do not contain a temporary deviation clause, licensees should consult with the appropriate resource agencies and entities, including those specified in the license article that they wish to modify. Following consultation, licensees should file proposed temporary variance requests for Commission consideration. Requests should include the following information: a description of the temporary variance request including proposed changes in flows and/or reservoir elevations; documentation of consultation with the required entities; a description of any impacts to other project resources including recreation, fish and wildlife; the length of time for which the licensee expects to implement the temporary variance; and a description of ongoing and future consultation procedures as appropriate.<sup>3</sup> The Commission will work with stakeholders in consideration of the requested deviation. We expect stakeholders to follow the Commission's rules and regulations concerning communications with staff. In those instances where there may be non-written communication, a summary of such an exchange will be placed into the record.

Commission staff is committed to give high priority to the consideration of these applications. With multiple competing uses for a limited water supply, it is incumbent upon licensees, government, and nongovernmental organizations to work together to preserve water resources for future, as well as current public health, safety and environmental needs.

In a further effort to assist licensees to conserve water, any gate testing scheduled for this spring and summer under Part 12 of the Commission's regulations will be reviewed by the Commission's Division of Dam Safety and Inspections and may be suspended following individual project reviews. A separate letter regarding this matter will be forthcoming.

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<sup>3</sup> The foregoing content requirements also apply to long-term variance amendment applications filed by licensees with temporary variance authority, as discussed in the previous paragraph.

We look forward to working cooperatively with licensees and stakeholders to address project-specific issues resulting from the drought. If you have any questions pertaining to this letter, please contact Thomas LoVullo at (202) 502-8900.

Sincerely,

Edward A. Abrams  
Director  
Division of Hydropower Administration  
and Compliance

Attachment

cc:

Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Regional Director  
Pacific Region  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825

Regional Administrator  
West Coast Region  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
7600 Sand Point Way Northeast  
Seattle, WA 98115

Assistant Regional Administrator  
California Central Valley Area Office  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100  
Sacramento, CA 95814-4700

Assistant Regional Administrator  
California Coastal Area Office  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1655 Heindon Road  
Arcata, CA 95521

Hydropower Program Supervisor  
West Coast Region  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
777 Sonoma Avenue, Room 325  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Director  
Mid-Pacific Region  
Bureau of Reclamation  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825

State Director  
CA State Office  
Bureau of Land Management  
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-1623  
Sacramento, CA 95825

Regional Director  
Pacific West Region  
National Park Service  
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700  
Oakland, CA 94607

Division Commander  
South Pacific Division  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
1455 Market St  
San Francisco CA 94103-1398

Regional Director  
Mid-Pacific Region  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento CA 95825-1886

Regional Forester  
Pacific Southwest Region – 5  
U.S. Department of Agriculture - Forest  
Service  
1323 Club Drive  
Vallejo, CA 94592

Regional Hydropower Coordinator  
U.S. Department of Agriculture - Forest  
Service  
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 8-200  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Regional Director  
Region 8 - California and Nevada  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
2800 Cottage Way Suite W-2606  
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846

Executive Director  
California State Water Resources  
Control Board  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812-100

FERC Coordinator  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Placer Hall, Room 2005  
6000 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95819-6129

Director  
California Department of Fish and  
Wildlife  
1416 Ninth Street, 12th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Statewide FERC Coordinator  
California Department of Fish and  
Wildlife  
601 Locust Street  
Redding, CA 9600

## ATTACHMENT 1

FERC Project No.	Project Name
P-67	BIG CR NOS 2A,8 & EASTWOOD
P-77	POTTER VALLEY
P-96	KERCKHOFF
P-120	BIG CREEK NO 3
P-137	MOKELUMNE RIVER
P-175	BALCH
P-176	ESCONDIDO
P-178	KERN CANYON
P-184	EL DORADO
P-233	PIT 3, 4, & 5
P-298	KAWEAH
P-344	SAN GORGONIO
P-372	LOWER TULE RIVER
P-382	BOREL
P-606	KILARC - COW CREEK
P-619	BUCKS CREEK
P-803	DESABLA-CENTERVILLE
P-1061	PHOENIX
P-1121	BATTLE CREEK
P-1250	AZUSA
P-1333	TULE RIVER
P-1354	CRANE VALLEY
P-1388	LEE VINING
P-1389	RUSH CREEK
P-1390	LUNDY
P-1394	BISHOP CREEK
P-1398	TRANSMISSION LINE NUMBER 1398
P-1403	NARROWS
P-1930	KERN RIVER NO. 1
P-1932	LYTLE CREEK
P-1933	SANTA ANA RIVER 1 & 3
P-1934	MILL CREEK 2/3
P-1962	ROCK CREEK-CRESTA
P-1988	HAAS-KINGS RIVER
P-1992	FIRE MOUNTAIN
P-2005	BEARDSLEY/DONNELLS

<b>FERC Project No.</b>	<b>Project Name</b>
P-2017	BIG CREEK NO. 4
P-2019	UTICA
P-2067	TULLOCH
P-2079	MIDDLE FORK AMERICAN RIVER
P-2085	MAMMOTH POOL
P-2086	VERMILION VALLEY
P-2088	SOUTH FEATHER POWER
P-2100	FEATHER RIVER
P-2101	UPPER AMERICAN RIVER
P-2105	UPPER NORTH FORK FEATHER RIVER
P-2106	MCCLLOUD-PIT
P-2107	POE
P-2118	DONNELLS-CURTIS T. L.
P-2130	SPRING GAP-STANISLAUS
P-2153	SANTA FELICIA
P-2155	CHILI BAR
P-2174	PORTAL
P-2175	BIG CREEK NO.1 & NO.2
P-2179	MERCED RIVER
P-2246	YUBA RIVER
P-2266	YUBA-BEAR
P-2281	WOODLEAF KANAKA T. L.
P-2290	KERN RIVER NO. 3
P-2299	NEW DON PEDRO
P-2310	DRUM-SPAULDING
P-2409	NORTH FORK STANISLAUS RIVER
P-2426	SOUTH SWP HYDROPOWER
P-2467	MERCED FALLS
P-2479	FRENCH MEADOWS T. L.
P-2661	HAT CREEK
P-2678	NARROWS NO. 2-SMARTVILLE T. L.
P-2687	PIT NO. 1
P-2699	ANGELS
P-2735	HELMS PUMPED STORAGE
P-2741	PINE FLAT
P-2780	MONTICELLO
P-2781	NEW MELONES T.L.

<b>FERC Project No.</b>	<b>Project Name</b>
P-2784	ROLLINS T. L.
P-2841	LAKE MENDOCINO
P-2876	PINE FLAT T.L.
P-2888	WHISKEYTOWN
P-2892	FRIANT
P-2903	NEW HOGAN
P-2916	LOWER MOKELUMNE RIVER
P-2958	MADERA CANAL
P-2975	SAND BAR
P-2987	CORNWELL
P-2997	CAMP FAR WEST
P-3038	SUCCESS
P-3189	ROCK CREEK
P-3190	BLACK BUTTE
P-3193	STONY GORGE
P-3351	WARM SPRINGS
P-3863	LOST CREEK HYDROELECTRIC NO. 1
P-3947	TERMINUS
P-4129	RIO BRAVO
P-4627	BAKER CREEK
P-4851	SLY CREEK T. L.
P-5130	LOST CREEK NO. 2
P-5536	PARDEE TAP NO. 2 & CAMANCHE TAP T. L
P-5765	MADERA CANAL
P-5828	MONTICELLO POWERHOUSE T. L.
P-5931	HATCHET CREEK
P-6120	CAMP CREEK
P-6154	MILL AND SULPHUR CREEKS
P-6281	FIVE BEARS
P-6780	DEADWOOD CREEK
P-6885	CINNAMON RANCH
P-6896	FORKS OF BUTTE
P-7009	FRIANT T. L.
P-7120	KEKAWAKA CREEK
P-7178	ARBUCKLE MT
P-7242	KANAKA
P-7252	HIGH LINE CANAL

<b>FERC Project No.</b>	<b>Project Name</b>
P-7282	ROARING CREEK
P-7931	29 MILE CREEK
P-8296	MUCK VALLEY
P-8357	PONDEROSA/BAILEY
P-8361	OLSEN
P-8377	ISABELLA
P-8722	LANDIS-HARDE
P-8936	POWER CANAL
P-9029	GRASSHOPPER FLAT
P-9399	KINGS RIVER SIPHON
P-10505	GRAEAGLE GOLF COURSE
P-10821	CAMP FAR WEST T. L.
P-10852	ACE RANCH
P-10882	THREE FORKS
P-11068	FISHWATER RELEASE
P-11197	COLLIERVILLE & SPICER MEADOW T. L.
P-11322	COLUMBIA WATER SUPPLY
P-11563	UPPER UTICA