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GOVERNOR

MATTHEW RODRIGUEZ
SECRETARY FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

State Water Resources Control Board

MAR 03 2015

Ms. Jessica Albietz
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Mail Code N11C
P.O. Box 770000
San Francisco, CA 94177

Dear Ms. Albietz:

AMENDMENT TO THE PIT 3, 4, AND 5, HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION; FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 233; SHASTA COUNTY

On February 25, 2015, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) requested a temporary amendment to the water quality certification (certification) for the Pit 3, 4, and 5 Hydroelectric Project (Project), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No. 233. The amendment entails: (1) revising Condition 4.A.4. of the certification to allow a temporary increase of up to four feet in Lake Britton's water elevation between March 1, 2015, and March 31, 2015; and (2) revising Condition 4.A.5. of the certification to allow all three spillway rubber bladder control gates at Pit 3 Dam (Lake Britton) to stay fully inflated between March 1, 2015, and March 31, 2015. The State Water Board provided public notice of PG&E's amendment request on February 26, 2015, by posting information regarding the proposal on the Division of Water Rights' website and providing notification to interested parties. Due to low potential for impacts and time constraints associated with the requested Project amendment, a shortened public notice period was provided prior to acting on the amendment request. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 3858.)

The State Water Board finds the proposed amendment to be protective of state water quality standards and other appropriate requirements of state law. The State Water Board hereby temporarily modifies Conditions 4.A.4. and 4.A.5. of the certification as described above for the period between March 1, 2015, and March 31, 2015, to allow testing of the Pit 3 Dam spillway rubber bladder control gates for operational and safety reasons. All other conditions of the certification, including minimum in-stream flows and ramping rates, remain in full effect during the temporary variance period allowed by this amendment.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The State Water Board issued a certification for the Project on January 25, 2007. On July 2, 2007, FERC issued a new license for the Project which includes the certification.

FELICIA MARCUS, CHAIR | THOMAS HOWARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 | Mailing Address: P.O. Box 100, Sacramento, Ca 95812-0100 | www.waterboards.ca.gov

In December 2014, PG&E completed installation of the Pit 3 Dam spillway rubber bladder control gates and conducted manual and automatic functional start-up testing. In order to complete the commissioning of the three rubber bladder control gates, PG&E must test the control gates at the maximum allowable normal lake water level (2757.0 feet PG&E datum, 2737.5 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum [NGVD]), prior to the non-spill season,¹ which begins on April 21, 2015.

Condition 4 of the certification states, in relevant part:

A. Operation Protocols For Pit 3 Dam, Lake Britton, And Pit 3 Powerhouse

4. *During the period from December 1 through at least April 20 of each year, the minimum water surface elevation of Lake Britton shall be 2,731.5 feet (NGVD) (2,751 feet PG&E datum) and to the greatest extent possible, within the limitation of the Pit 3 Powerhouse capabilities and Pit 3 Dam Spillway capacity, the maximum water surface elevation shall be 2,733.5 feet (NGVD) (2,753 feet PG&E datum).*

5. *At least one of the Pit 3 Dam Spillway bladder gates shall remain deflated until April 20 or until there is no flow passing the Pit 3 Dam in excess of the required minimum stream flow for the Pit 3 Reach, whichever is later.*

On February 5, 2015, the United States Forest Service informed PG&E that Condition 17 of the final Section 4(e) License Conditions provides sufficient flexibility to accommodate the Pit 3 Dam rubber bladder control gates testing without the need to obtain a formal variance.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

Issuance of a certification and amendment thereof 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 purpose of CEQA compliance, the State Water Board is the lead agency. Impacts due to Project implementation were thoroughly analyzed in FERC's Environmental Impact Statement and the State Water Board's Supplemental CEQA document developed during relicensing.

The proposed temporary variance to Condition 4 falls under the following CEQA Categorical Exemptions and does not have a reasonable possibility of significant effects due to unusual circumstances or when considered cumulatively with other projects:

- 1) Class 1 Categorical Exemption: Existing Facilities. Operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing structures or facilities not expanding existing ones.
- 2) Class 2 Categorical Exemption: Replacement or Reconstruction. Replacement or reconstruction of existing structures or facilities on the same site having substantially the same purpose and capacity.

(Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §§ 15301-15302.)

¹ During the non-spill season, the water surface elevation of Lake Britton can be increased up to 2,735.5 feet (NGVD) (2,755 feet, PG&E datum) between April 21, 2015, and the Saturday preceding Memorial Day weekend. The water surface elevation may be further increased to the maximum allowable normal water surface elevation of 2,737.5 feet (NGVD) (2,757 feet, PG&E datum) on the Saturday preceding Memorial Day Weekend or once there is no stream flow passing the Pit 3 Dam in excess of the required minimum stream flow for the Pit 3 Reach, whichever is later.

MAR 03 2015

A Notice of Exemption has been prepared and will be filed with the Office of Planning and Research within five days of issuing this amendment. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15062.)

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 Board, Division of Water Rights, 1001 I Street, Sacramento, California, 95814.

If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact Mr. Oscar Biondi, Project Manager, at (916) 323-9397 or by email at Oscar.Biondi@waterboards.ca.gov. Written correspondence can be directed to:

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

Sincerely,



Thomas Howard
Executive Director

Enclosure: Notice of Exemption

cc: Ms. Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20426

Ms. Jane Diamond, Director
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 9, Water Division
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Mr. Joshua Grover
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
830 S Street
Sacramento, CA 95811

Mr. Adam Laputz
Central Valley Regional Water
Quality Control Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Mr. Tristan Leong
USDA, Forest Service
3644 Avtech Parkway
Redding, CA 96002

Ms. Pamela Creedon
Central Valley Regional Water
Quality Control Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of: _____

From: (Public Agency): _____
State Water Resources Control Board

1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Project Title: Pit 3, 4, 5 Hydroelectric Project; Pit 3 Dam Rubber Bladder Gates Replacement Project

Project Applicant: Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)

Project Location - Specific:
Lake Britton, Shasta County

Project Location - City: Not Applicable Project Location - County: Shasta

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:
PG&E is proposing to test the three newly installed spillway rubber bladder control gates at Pit 3 Dam at the maximum normal water level for Lake Britton. Testing is necessary to ensure the safety and reliability of the control gates operation prior to the non-spill period, which begins on April 21, 2015.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: State Water Resources Control Board

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Jessica Albietz, PG&E

Exempt Status: (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Classes 1 and 2, CCR §§ 15301-15302
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:
Class 1 Categorical Exemption (Existing Facilities) and Class 2 Categorical Exemption (Replacement or Reconstruction). The project involves the replacement of existing structures (control gates) that are part of existing facilities.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Oscar Biondi Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 916-323-9397

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: *Thomas Hunter* Date: 3/3/15 Title: Executive Director

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

