

Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project Surrender and Decommissioning

Public Scoping Meetings

Fortuna – October 14, 2025

Ukiah & Santa Rosa – October 15, 2025

Presented by: Wilhelmina Chon
and Nathan Fisch



State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Rights

Presentation Outline

**Background on
State Water Board**

**Background on
Water Quality
Certifications**

**California
Environmental
Quality Act
(CEQA)
Process**

**Overview of
Potter Valley
Project +
Surrender**

**Verbal
Comment
Period**

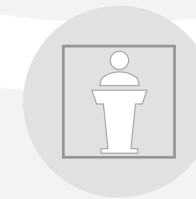
Meeting Logistics & Ground Rules



Help signing up for the State Water Board's email list is available at the back (*optional*)



Please silence all electronic devices or remain on mute



Please respect all speakers and their points of view



Please save all questions and comments until the end of the presentation



Presentation and meeting transcript will be available on the Project webpage



Logistics of the Meeting Site

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/potter_valley_ferc77.html

State Water Resources Control Board

- Provide protection of California's waters with authority over water rights and water quality, including:
 - Protect and enforce many water uses including the needs of industry, agriculture, municipal districts, and the environment
 - Establishing conditions for federally licensed projects via issuance of water quality certifications (Section 401 of Clean Water Act)

Mission Statement:

To preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations.

Water Quality Certifications

- If a water quality certification is issued, its conditions become a mandatory part of the license or surrender order issued by Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
- Water quality certifications ensure that a project will comply with the applicable water quality control plans (basin plans) and policies
- State Water Board must comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in issuing a water quality certification

Policy in Support of Restoration in the North Coast Region (Restoration Policy)

- North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted Restoration Policy in 2015, and approved by Office of Administrative Law in 2016
 - *Boards may permit or certify restoration projects that result in significant and sometimes unavoidable impacts (including temporary exceedances of water quality objectives) if it is shown that the project will result in long-term protection of beneficial uses and water quality.*



California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

- CEQA informs State Water Board and public about the proposed project's potentially significant environmental effects and ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate those impacts
- State Water Board is lead agency for CEQA as PG&E is not a public agency



Photo taken by SWRCB staff

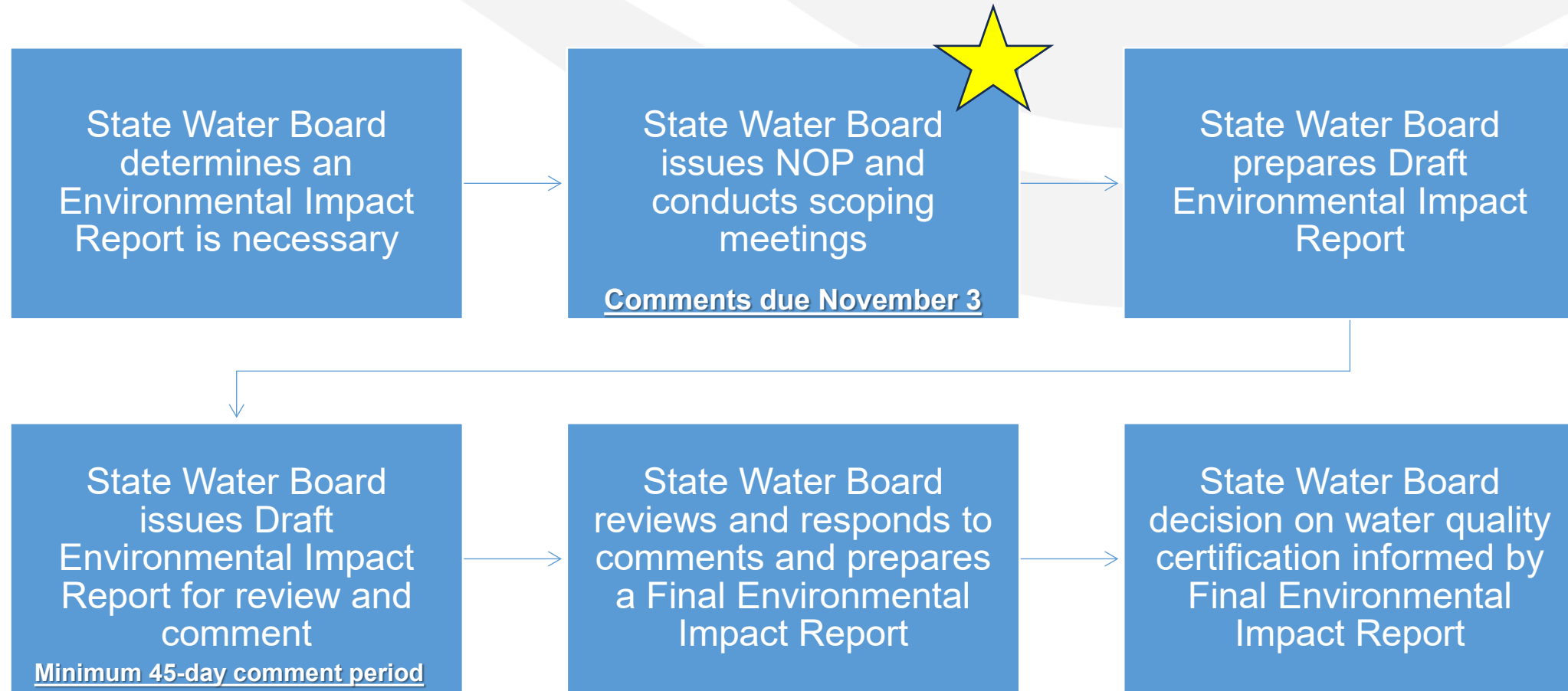
Purpose of CEQA Scoping Process

- Identify potentially significant environmental impacts
- Determine scope of environmental review
- Solicit potential alternatives to proposed project
- Identify mitigation for potentially significant impacts



Photo taken by Board staff

State Water Board's CEQA Process



Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project Overview

- Owned by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)
- Located on Eel River and East Branch Russian River in Lake and Mendocino Counties
- Existing Project comprised of Scott Dam, Lake Pillsbury, Potter Valley Powerhouse, Cape Horn Dam, Van Arsdale Reservoir, and several recreation areas
- Water from Eel River is diverted at Cape Horn Dam and discharged to East Branch Russian River
- PG&E filed Final Surrender and Decommissioning Application with FERC on July 25, 2025

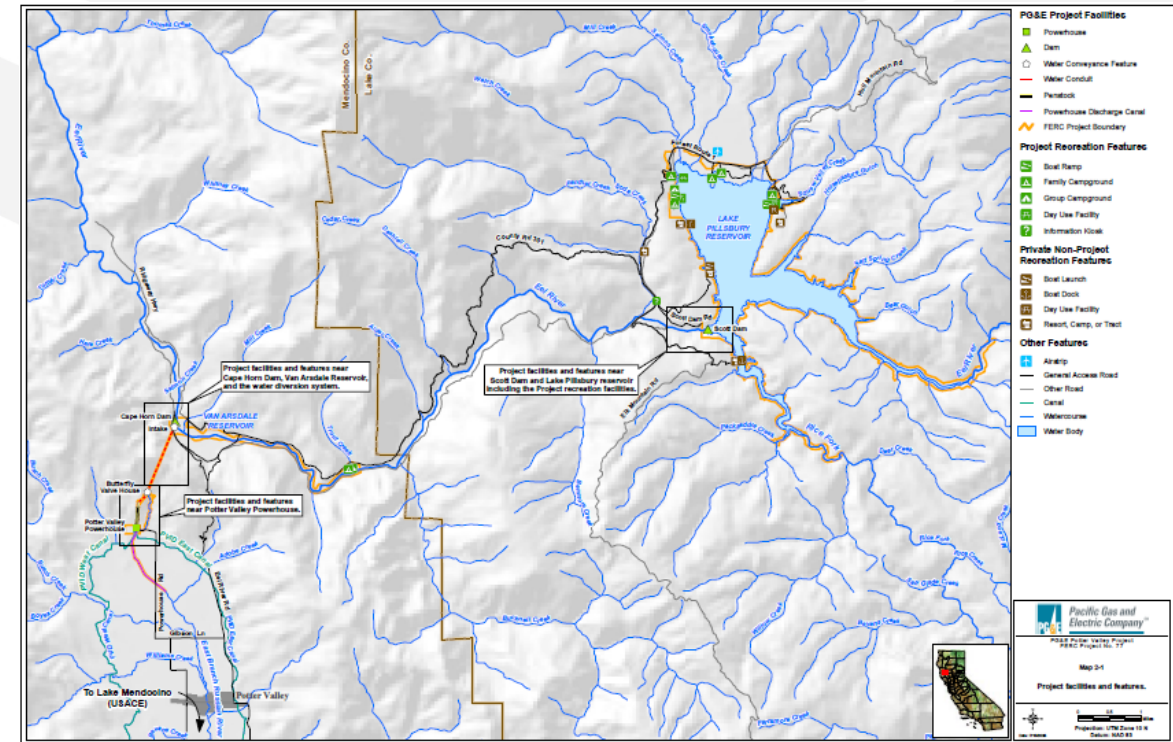


Photo from PG&E's Final License Surrender and Decommissioning Application

Potter Valley License Surrender and Decommissioning Project Overview

- Removal of Scott Dam
- Removal of Cape Horn Dam
 - Leave diversion facilities
- Restoration of remnant reservoir or lake areas
- Removal or restoration of recreational facilities
- Proposed plans and measures (developed and to be developed)



Photo taken by Board staff

Potter Valley Proposed Plans and Measures

- **Construction Management Plan (including Restoration)**
 - *19 measures and subplans (see NOP for detail)*
- **Construction Site Water Diversion, Dewatering, and Drawdown Plan**
- **East Branch Russian River Diversion Plan**
- **Public Safety Measures**
- **Water Quality and Water Temperature Monitoring Plan**
- **Aquatic Resource Management Plan**
 - *Construction Non-native Invasive Aquatic Species Management Plan*
 - *Aquatic Species Management and Monitoring Plan*
 - *Estuary Protection Plan*
- **Sediment/Channel Monitoring and Response Plan**
 - *Tributary-Mainstem Connectivity Plan*
 - *Mainstem Fish Passage Plan*
 - *Infrastructure Monitoring (bridges, diversions)*
 - *Floodplain Sediment Deposition Plan*
- **Flood Monitoring Plan**
- **Terrestrial Wildlife Management Plan**
 - *Wildlife Stranding Measures*
 - *Tule Elk and Game Mammals Measures*
- **Bald Eagle Conservation Plan**
- **Northern Spotted Owl Measures**
- **Scott Dam Slope Stability Monitoring Plan**
- **Cultural and Tribal Resources**

Environmental Factors Potentially Impacted



Photo taken by Board staff

Environmental Resources:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gases
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use
- Population/Housing
- Noise and Vibration
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities/Public Services
- Wildfire

New Eel-Russian Facility (NERF)

Separate Project – Not Part of this CEQA Process



Eel-Russian Project Authority (ERPA) website at:

<https://www.eelrussianauthority.org/>

Email Stuart Tiffen, Public Information Officer at:

communications@eelrussianauthority.org

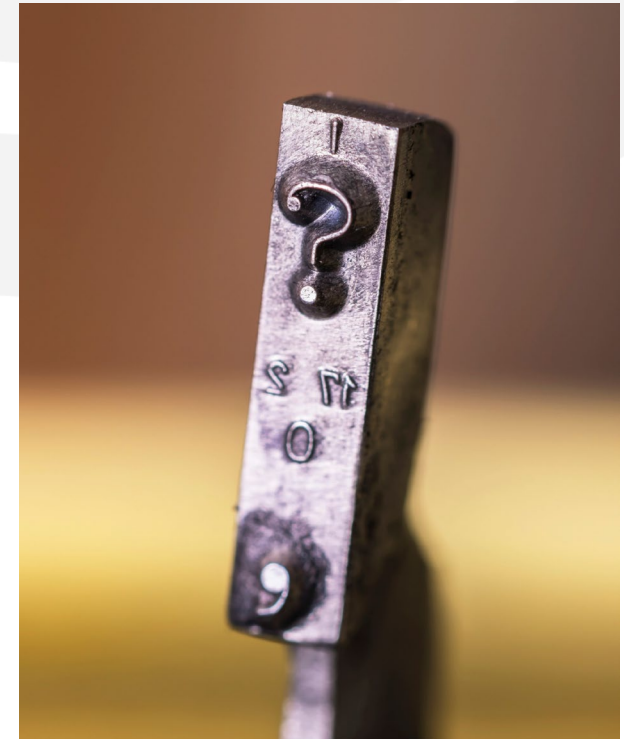
Submit a contact form on the ERPA website at:

<https://www.eelrussianauthority.org/contact-us>

*ERPA is a joint powers authority formed between the County of Sonoma, Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water), and the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission.

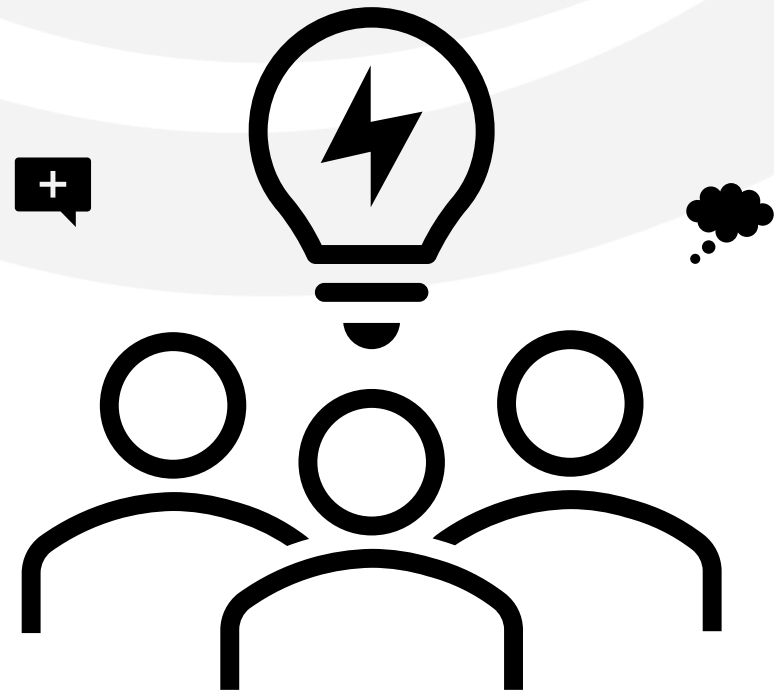
How to Provide Comments

- If you wish to speak, please fill out a speaker card and provide it to a State Water Board staff person
- If you wish to provide written comments, you can indicate “no oral comments” on the speaker card
- Written comments are an alternative to provide additional comments beyond the allotted time
- Please respect time limits so we can hear from everyone who wishes to speak.
 - If we have additional time once everyone has had an opportunity to speak, you can provide additional comments
- Please note, everything said today will be a part of the administrative record.
- **Comment Period extends until November 3, 2025**




Public Input

- State Water Board is seeking comments on:
 - Project alternatives
 - Potentially significant impacts
 - Mitigation measures
 - Comments related to the Proposed Project
- The draft environmental impact report and draft water quality certification will also have public comment periods



Stay Informed on State Water Board Efforts


- [Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project webpage](#)
- [Subscribe](#) to our GovDelivery email list to stay up-to-date on this and other projects
 - Select “State Water Resources Control Board,” then under “Water Rights” select “Water Rights Water Quality Certification”
- Additional information can be found on the [Notice of Preparation](#), which is posted on the project webpage



Home | Waterrights | Water Issues | Programs | Water Quality Cert | Potter Valley Ferc77

Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No. 77



Applicant: Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E)
County: Mendocino and Lake Counties
License Expiration Date: April 14, 2022
Water Quality Certification Status: Awaiting Application
Waterbody: Eel River and East Branch Russian River
FERC Licensing Process: Surrender and Decommissioning

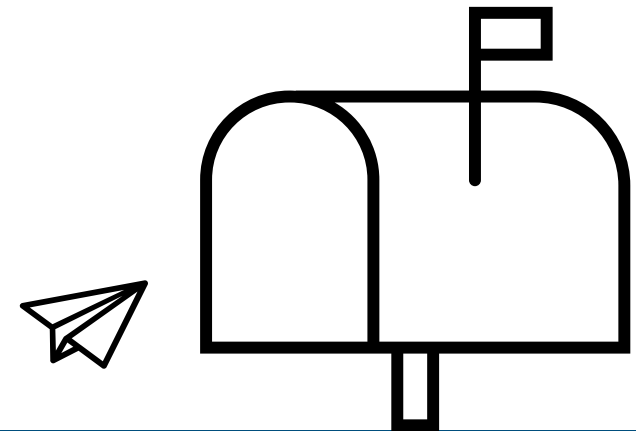
Project Description:

The Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project (Project) is located on the Eel River and the East Branch Russian River in Mendocino and Lake Counties, approximately 15 miles northeast of the City of Ukiah. The uppermost portion of the Project includes Scott Dam (a 130-foot high concrete dam) and its associated storage reservoir, Lake Pillsbury (66,867 usable acre-feet), on the Eel River. Below Scott Dam, the Eel River flows approximately 12 miles to Cape Horn Dam (a 63-foot high earthen and concrete dam) and its associated

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/potter_valley_ferc77.html

How to Provide Comments (after today's meeting)

- Accepting comments until 4:00 pm on November 3, 2025
- Send comments to: Wilhelmina Chon
 - Email: wr401program@waterboards.ca.gov
 - Mail: State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights
Water Quality Certification Program
Attn: Wilhelmina Chon
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000



Public Comments Reminders

- Use the microphone
- One speaker at a time
- **Be sure to state and spell your name before providing your comments**
(for the court reporter)
- Stick to your allotted time
- Respect other speaker's points of view
- Provide written comments if desired



Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project Surrender and Decommissioning

Public Scoping Meetings
Sacramento – October 17, 2025
Presented by: Wilhelmina Chon
and Nathan Fisch



State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Rights

Presentation Outline

**Background on
State Water Board**

**Background on
Water Quality
Certifications**

**California
Environmental
Quality Act
(CEQA)
Process**

**Overview of
Potter Valley
Project +
Surrender**

**Verbal
Comment
Period**

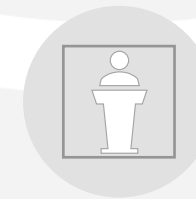
Meeting Logistics & Ground Rules



Help signing up for the State Water Board's email list is available at the back (*optional*)



Please silence all electronic devices or remain on mute



Please respect all speakers and their points of view



Please save all questions and comments until the end of the presentation



Presentation and meeting transcript will be available on the Project webpage



Logistics of the Meeting Site

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/potter_valley_ferc77.html

State Water Resources Control Board

- Provide protection of California's waters with authority over water rights and water quality, including:
 - Protect and enforce many water uses including the needs of industry, agriculture, municipal districts, and the environment
 - Establishing conditions for federally licensed projects via issuance of water quality certifications (Section 401 of Clean Water Act)

Mission Statement:

To preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations.

Water Quality Certifications

- If a water quality certification is issued, its conditions become a mandatory part of the license or surrender order issued by Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
- Water quality certifications ensure that a project will comply with the applicable water quality control plans (basin plans) and policies
- State Water Board must comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in issuing a water quality certification

Policy in Support of Restoration in the North Coast Region (Restoration Policy)

- North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted Restoration Policy in 2015, and approved by Office of Administrative Law in 2016
 - *Boards may permit or certify restoration projects that result in significant and sometimes unavoidable impacts (including temporary exceedances of water quality objectives) if it is shown that the project will result in long-term protection of beneficial uses and water quality.*



California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

- CEQA informs State Water Board and public about the proposed project's potentially significant environmental effects and ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate those impacts
- State Water Board is lead agency for CEQA as PG&E is not a public agency



Photo taken by SWRCB staff

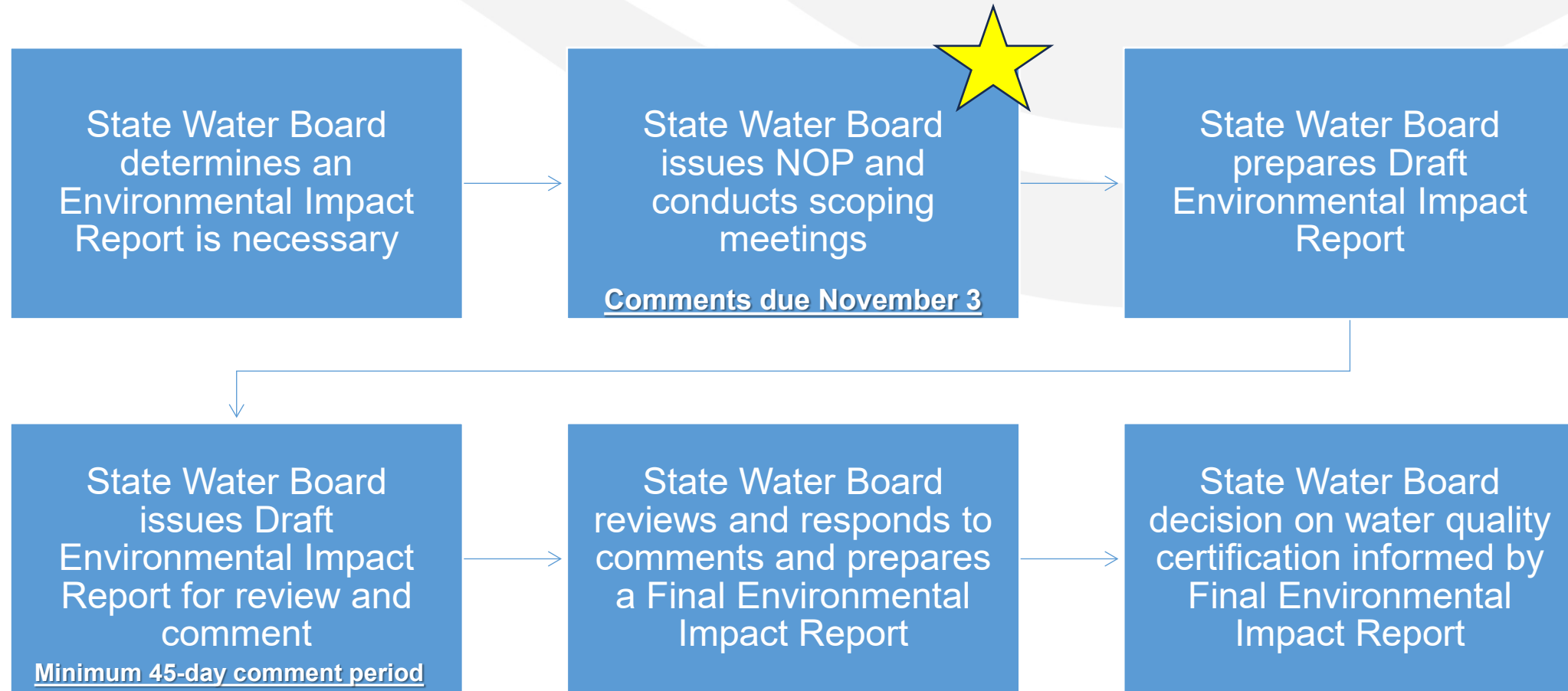
Purpose of CEQA Scoping Process

- Identify potentially significant environmental impacts
- Determine scope of environmental review
- Solicit potential alternatives to proposed project
- Identify mitigation for potentially significant impacts



Photo taken by Board staff

State Water Board's CEQA Process



Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project Overview

- Owned by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)
- Located on Eel River and East Branch Russian River in Lake and Mendocino Counties
- Existing Project comprised of Scott Dam, Lake Pillsbury, Potter Valley Powerhouse, Cape Horn Dam, Van Arsdale Reservoir, and several recreation areas
- Water from Eel River is diverted at Cape Horn Dam and discharged to East Branch Russian River
- PG&E filed Final Surrender and Decommissioning Application with FERC on July 25, 2025

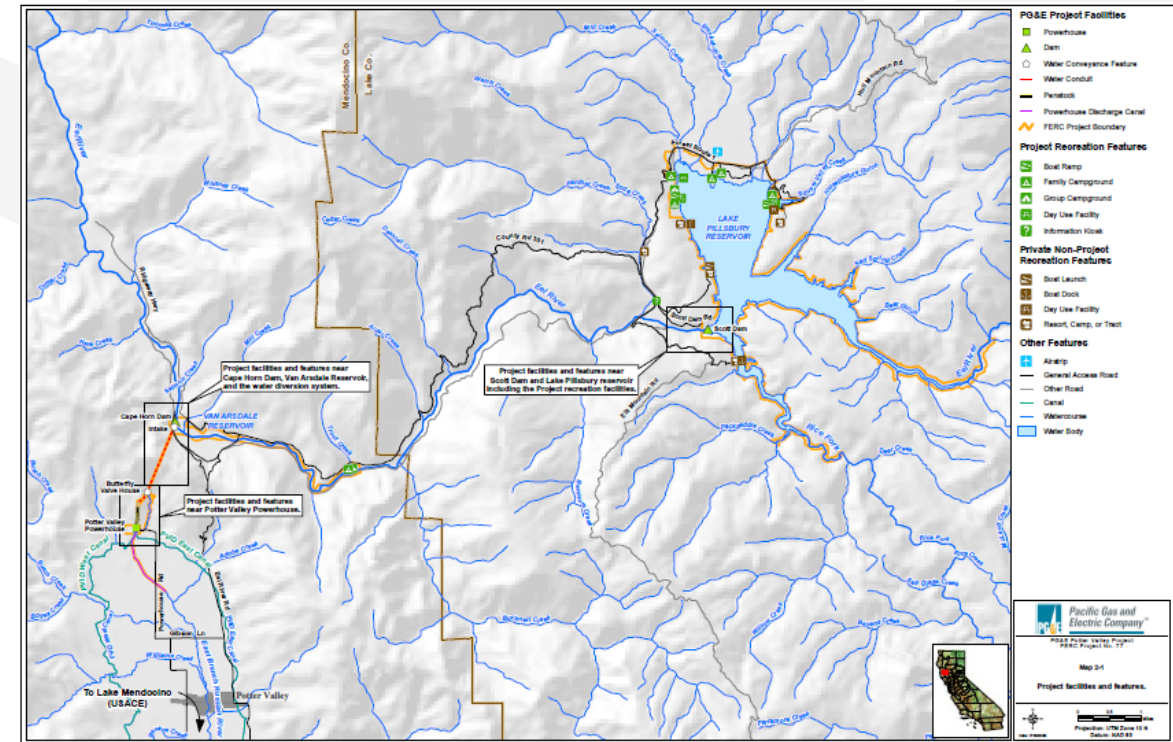


Photo from PG&E's Final License Surrender and Decommissioning Application

Potter Valley License Surrender and Decommissioning Project Overview

- Removal of Scott Dam
- Removal of Cape Horn Dam
 - Leave diversion facilities
- Restoration of remnant reservoir or lake areas
- Removal or restoration of recreational facilities
- Proposed plans and measures (developed and to be developed)



Photo taken by Board staff

Potter Valley Proposed Plans and Measures

- **Construction Management Plan (including Restoration)**
 - *19 measures and subplans (see NOP for detail)*
- **Construction Site Water Diversion, Dewatering, and Drawdown Plan**
- **East Branch Russian River Diversion Plan**
- **Public Safety Measures**
- **Water Quality and Water Temperature Monitoring Plan**
- **Aquatic Resource Management Plan**
 - *Construction Non-native Invasive Aquatic Species Management Plan*
 - *Aquatic Species Management and Monitoring Plan*
 - *Estuary Protection Plan*
- **Sediment/Channel Monitoring and Response Plan**
 - *Tributary-Mainstem Connectivity Plan*
 - *Mainstem Fish Passage Plan*
 - *Infrastructure Monitoring (bridges, diversions)*
 - *Floodplain Sediment Deposition Plan*
- **Flood Monitoring Plan**
- **Terrestrial Wildlife Management Plan**
 - *Wildlife Stranding Measures*
 - *Tule Elk and Game Mammals Measures*
- **Bald Eagle Conservation Plan**
- **Northern Spotted Owl Measures**
- **Scott Dam Slope Stability Monitoring Plan**
- **Cultural and Tribal Resources**

Environmental Factors Potentially Impacted



Photo taken by Board staff

Environmental Resources:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gases
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use
- Population/Housing
- Noise and Vibration
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities/Public Services
- Wildfire

New Eel-Russian Facility (NERF)

Separate Project – Not Part of this CEQA Process



Eel-Russian Project Authority (ERPA) website at:

<https://www.eelrussianauthority.org/>

Email Stuart Tiffen, Public Information Officer at:

communications@eelrussianauthority.org

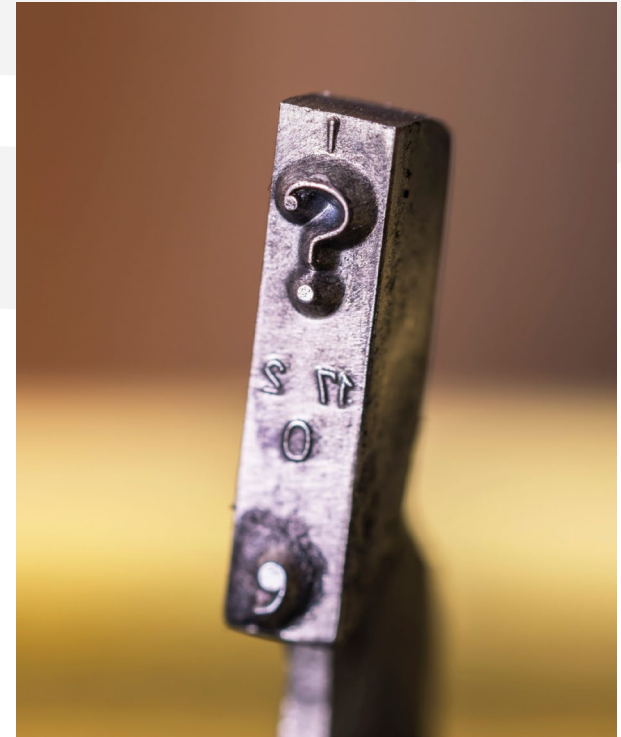
Submit a contact form on the ERPA website at:

<https://www.eelrussianauthority.org/contact-us>

*ERPA is a joint powers authority formed between the County of Sonoma, Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water), and the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission.

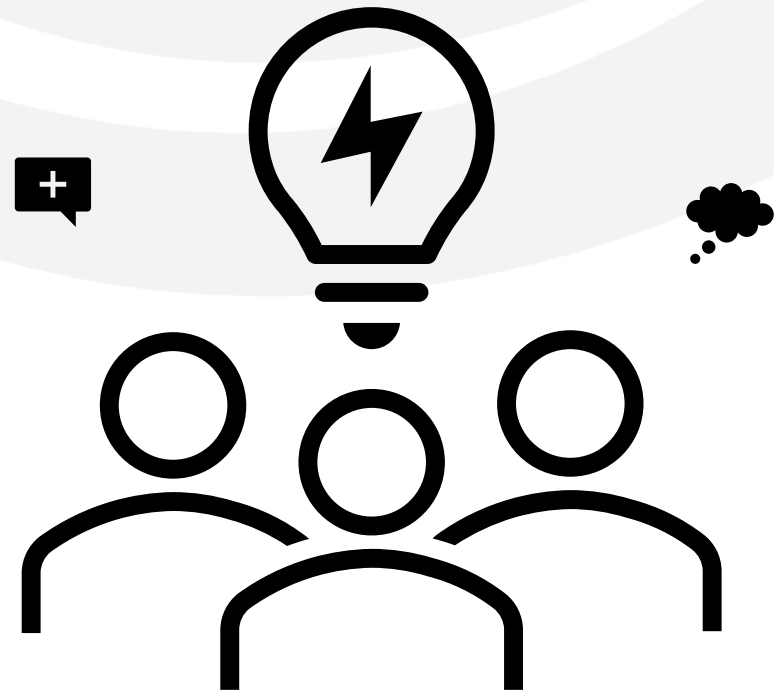
How to Provide Comments

- If you wish to speak, please use the Raise Hand function on Zoom and wait until you are called
 - Please introduce yourself (name and affiliation) prior to speaking
- If you wish to speak in-person, please fill out a speaker card and provide it to a State Water Board staff person
- Please respect time limits so we can hear from everyone who wishes to speak
 - If we have additional time once everyone has had an opportunity to speak, you can provide additional comments
- All comments will become a part of the administrative record
- **Comment deadline is 4:00 pm on Monday, November 3, 2025**



Public Input

- State Water Board is seeking comments on:
 - Project alternatives
 - Potentially significant impacts
 - Mitigation measures
 - Comments related to the Proposed Project
- The draft environmental impact report and draft water quality certification will also have public comment periods



Stay Informed on State Water Board Efforts

- [Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project webpage](#)
- [Subscribe](#) to our GovDelivery email list to stay up-to-date on this and other projects
 - Select “State Water Resources Control Board,” then under “Water Rights” select “Water Rights Water Quality Certification”
- Additional information can be found on the [Notice of Preparation](#), which is posted on the project webpage



Home | Waterrights | Water Issues | Programs | Water Quality Cert | Potter Valley Ferc77

Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No. 77

Applicant: Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E)
County: Mendocino and Lake Counties
License Expiration Date: April 14, 2022
Water Quality Certification Status: Awaiting Application
Waterbody: Eel River and East Branch Russian River
FERC Licensing Process: Surrender and Decommissioning

Project Description:

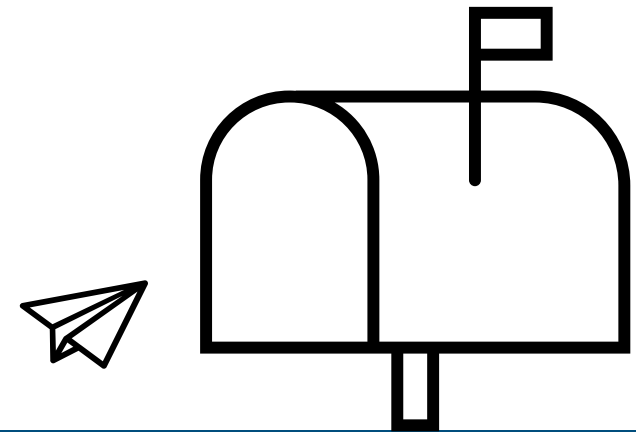
The Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project (Project) is located on the Eel River and the East Branch Russian River in Mendocino and Lake Counties, approximately 15 miles northeast of the City of Ukiah. The uppermost portion of the Project includes Scott Dam (a 130-foot high concrete dam) and its associated storage reservoir, Lake Pillsbury (66,867 usable acre-feet), on the Eel River. Below Scott Dam, the Eel River flows approximately 12 miles to Cape Horn Dam (a 63-foot high earthen and concrete dam) and its associated

Cape Horn Dam

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/potter_valley_ferc77.html

How to Provide Comments (after today's meeting)

- Accepting comments until 4:00 pm on November 3, 2025
- Send comments to: Wilhelmina Chon
 - Email: wr401program@waterboards.ca.gov
 - Mail: State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights
Water Quality Certification Program
Attn: Wilhelmina Chon
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000



Public Comments Reminders

- Use the microphone
- One speaker at a time
- **Be sure to state and spell your name before providing your comments**
(for the court reporter)
- Stick to your allotted time
- Respect other speaker's points of view
- Provide written comments if desired

