

State Water Resources Control Board

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR VARIANCE TO THE WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION FOR THE SPRING GAP-STANISLAUS HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

A request for variance to the Water Quality Certification (Certification) for the Spring Gap-Stanislaus Hydroelectric Project (Project), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Project No. 2130, has been filed with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E).

BACKGROUND

On May 18, 2012, PG&E submitted a letter of consideration by email for temporary (2012 only) variance to Condition #4 of the Certification issued under State Water Board Order WR 2009-0039 for its Project. PG&E's letter of consideration was sent to accommodate the Tuolumne Utility District's (TUD) request for variance to the Project, received by State Water Board staff on May 15, 2012. Condition #4 of the Certification states in part:

In years when Pinecrest Reservoir cannot be maintained above target elevation 5,608 feet, water releases during the period from the End of Spill through Labor Day shall only be made to meet the minimum streamflow schedule and Spring Gap Powerhouse Demand. Licensee shall draw down Pinecrest Reservoir to reach a target elevation of 5,615 feet as early as reasonably feasible each year after the End of Spill, provided that the minimum streamflow schedule and Spring Gap Powerhouse Demand can be met, and Pinecrest Reservoir elevation can be maintained above a target elevation of 5,608 feet prior to and including Labor Day.

TUD receives 95% of its consumptive water supply from PG&E's Lyons Reservoir, which can be supplemented with releases from Pinecrest Reservoir. Due to the dry water year, TUD estimates that Lyons Reservoir will stop spilling in the first week of June, requiring TUD to request additional water from Pinecrest Reservoir before Labor Day this year. TUD has determined that PG&E cannot both meet water delivery demands to TUD and maintain a reservoir elevation of 5,608 feet as required by the Certification, and has requested that PG&E ask the State Water Board to grant a variance allowing Pinecrest Reservoir to drop to an elevation of 5,606 feet this year (2012) until and including Labor Day.

AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

The Certification for the Project is located on the State Water Board website at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/board_decisions/adopted_orders/orders/2009/wro2009_0039.pdf. Persons without internet access can obtain a paper copy of Order WR 2009-0039 by contacting Mr. Jeffrey Parks by phone at (916) 341-5319. A copy of Order WR 2009-0039 will also be available at the State Water Board's office located in the Cal/EPA Building, by visiting the Division of Water Rights Records Unit, located at: 1001 I Street, 2nd Floor, Room 114, Sacramento, CA 95814.