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# Assembly California Legislature



**BRIAN DAHLE**  
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PB  
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2105

STATE WATER RESOURCES  
CONTROL BOARD  
2015 MAR 23 AM 11:51  
DIV OF WATER RIGHTS  
SACRAMENTO

March 18, 2015

Peter Barnes, Engineering Geologist  
State Water Resources Control Board  
Division of Water Rights  
Water Quality Certification Program  
P.O. Box 2000 Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

Re: Draft EIR, Water Quality Certification of PG&E's Upper North Fork of the Feather River hydroelectric project

Dear Mr. Barnes,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Water Quality Certification of Pacific Gas and Electric Co.'s hydroelectric project on the Upper North Fork of the Feather River – Federal Energy Regulator Commission Project No. 2105.

I understand that the North Fork of the Feather River is listed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as impaired because of high water temperatures, and I appreciate the State Water Board's legal obligation to address that impairment.

At the same time, Lake Almanor itself is already suffering from algae blooms and other signs of declining water quality as temperatures rise in the lake. Recent years' drought has reduced the production of the mountain springs that feed the lake, and like many lakes in the Sierra Nevada, Almanor is experiencing a long-term warming trend. Whatever the combination of causes, the lake's water quality is already measurably declining and removing more cold water is likely to exacerbate the decline. To further impair one body of water with important recreational and regional economic benefits in the name of improving water quality downstream makes little sense.

Further, the DEIR does not adequately account for the latest evidence of water-quality problems in Lake Almanor, nor the risk of escalating impairment from continuing climate change. Both factors heighten the importance of preserving the lake's cold water pool.

I applaud the State Water Board's proposal to try all other means of lowering temperatures in the North Fork first and leaving a thermal curtain as a last resort. Given the lack of apparent support from any stakeholder, however, ideally the thermal curtain should simply be dropped.

If the State Water Board nonetheless concludes that it must remain as a possibility, any adaptive-management plan needs to have clear criteria and thresholds. It is unfair to the community and guarantees

a future of strife to leave the vaguely defined prospect of a thermal curtain hanging as a threat to residents of the Lake Almanor area in perpetuity.

This is a difficult and controversial project, and I appreciate the State Water Board's diligent efforts to craft a workable solution that is acceptable to the residents of Plumas County and other affected stakeholders. If I can be of further assistance, please contact my District Director, Bruce Ross, at (530) 223-6300.

Sincerely,



**BRIAN DAHLE**  
Assemblyman, 1<sup>st</sup> District