
State Water Resources Control Board

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE KERCKHOFF HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT RELICENSING FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 96

To: Interested Parties, California Native American Tribes, and Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation

Notice is hereby given that a *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project Relicensing* (Draft EIR) is available for public review and comment.

Background

On November 24, 2020, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) filed an application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to request relicensing of the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project for a 50-year term (Proposed Project)¹. The original FERC license for the existing Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project expired on November 30, 2022. Since then, the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project has operated under annual licenses issued by FERC. As part of its relicensing process, on July 16, 2025, PG&E filed an application for a water quality certification (certification) under section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1341) with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board).

When the State Water Board considers issuing a certification for a project, it evaluates whether the project will comply with applicable water quality standards, and other applicable requirements of state law, and determines conditions necessary to protect water quality. In California, water quality standards are established in regional water quality control plans (e.g., basin plans). Regional Water Quality Control Boards prepare basin plans that designate the beneficial uses of waters to be protected and establish the water quality objectives necessary to protect those uses, as required under section 303 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1313) and sections 13240 and 13241 of the California Water Code.

Additionally, in issuing a certification, the State Water Board must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.). The State Water Board, as lead agency under CEQA, directed the

¹ Supplemental filings clarifying FERC Project Boundaries and additional updates were submitted to FERC on May 27, 2022, March 31, 2023, and February 16, 2024.

preparation of a Draft EIR to analyze the potential impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives to inform and support its decision regarding PG&E's certification application for the relicensing of the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project. A Notice of Preparation for the draft EIR was issued on May 30, 2023.

The following information is provided in satisfaction of the formal written notice requirements for the public review of a Draft EIR (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15087).

Applicant: Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Project Name: Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project Relicensing
Project Location: Fresno and Madera Counties, California

Project Description

The Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project is located in Fresno and Madera counties on the San Joaquin River with an installed capacity of 162.72 megawatts. The existing Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project is comprised of Kerckhoff Dam, Kerckhoff Reservoir, Kerckhoff 1 Powerhouse and associated facilities, Kerckhoff 2 Powerhouse and associated facilities, the Smalley Cove Recreation Area, helicopter landing zones, roads, and gages.

The Proposed Project involves the relicensing (continued operations) of the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project. In addition to continued operations, PG&E proposes: (1) decommissioning of the Kerckhoff 1 Powerhouse (Out of Service since 2017); (2) construction of a new day use area; (3) updates to the FERC boundaries for the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project; and (4) implementation of new environmental management plans and measures. Additional information on the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project, including the Proposed Project, can be found in the State Water Board's [Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project webpage](#).²

Overview of Draft EIR

The Draft EIR evaluates the Proposed Project as well as three alternatives: Alternative 1: Proposed Project with Alternative Spill Recession and Flow Ramping; Alternative 2: Proposed Project with United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Revised 4(e) Conditions; and the No Project alternative. The alternatives are described in detail in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the Draft EIR.

The Draft EIR identifies potentially significant impacts for the following resources, for which there are mitigation measures that will be implemented to prevent or avoid significant environmental impacts:

- Biological Resources – Aquatics
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Geology and Soils

² https://waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/kerckhoff_hydroelectric_ferc96.html

The Draft EIR identifies significant and unavoidable impacts for the following resources:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources – Terrestrial
- Hydrology/Water Quality

Public Review Period

The comment period for the Draft EIR is from the date of this notice until **Tuesday, May 26, 2026. Comments on the Draft EIR must be received by 5:00 pm on May 26, 2026**, and can be submitted electronically or by mail as follows:

Email (preferred):
WR401Program@waterboards.ca.gov

or

Mail:
 Chase McCormick
 State Water Resources Control Board
 Division of Water Rights – Water Quality
 Certification Program
 P.O. Box 2000
 Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

The Draft EIR and associated appendices, along with additional information regarding the State Water Board’s certification process are available on the State Water Board’s [Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project webpage](#).³

Document Availability

If you cannot access the documents online, you can review electronic copies of the Draft EIR and associated appendices at the following locations. Please note the days the locations are open are provided for convenience; locations may be closed on the indicated days for holidays or other reasons.

<p>Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board 1685 E Street Fresno, CA 93706 (559) 445-5116 Open Monday – Friday</p>	<p>Auberry Branch Library 33049 Auberry Road Auberry, CA 93602 (559) 855-8523 Open Tuesday - Saturday</p>
<p>Madera Main Library 121 N G Street Madera, CA 93637 559-675-7871 Open Monday - Saturday</p>	<p>West Fresno Branch Library 188 E. Cesar Chavez Blvd Fresno, CA 93706 559-600-9277 Open Monday - Friday</p>

³ https://waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/kerckhoff_hydroelectric_ferc96.html

The Draft EIR and associated appendices are also available at the **State Water Board's office**, which is located at 1001 I Street, 2nd Floor (Room 2-114) in **Sacramento**. The document is available at this location Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., by appointment only. Please email dwr@waterboards.ca.gov to schedule an appointment.

Public Comment Meeting

On April 30, 2026, State Water Board staff will host an online public forum to receive oral comments on the Draft EIR as follows:

April 30, 2026
Starting at 4:00 p.m.

Registration Link:

https://waterboards.zoom.us/meeting/register/C2lBdm42TnuE1DLe6_XKUA

The forum will conclude after all interested persons have provided their comments.

You must register to attend the virtual meeting. Once you register, you will receive an email with a meeting invite.

KEEP INFORMED OF PROPOSED PROJECT MILESTONES

To receive emails related to the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project and other projects pursuing certifications managed by the State Water Board's Division of Water Rights, interested persons should enroll in the "Water Rights Water Quality Certification" email notification service. Instructions on how to sign up for the State Water Board's email notification service are outlined below:

1. Visit: [State Water Board's Email Subscription webpage](#).⁴
2. Provide your email in the required field, then click the "Submit" button.
3. In the next page, below Subscription Topics, select "Water Rights", then "Water Rights Water Quality Certification."
4. Click the "Submit" button.
5. An email will be sent to you. You must respond to the email message to confirm your membership on the selected Topic(s).

By enrolling in this email notification service, you will receive notices for other current projects overseen by the Division of Water Rights' Water Quality Certification Program, including the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project. If you do not have internet access or do not wish to participate in the email notification service, you may contact Chase McCormick at (916) 323-9390 to request to receive notices for the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project by mail. You can enroll or un-enroll from the email notification service at any time.

If you have questions regarding this notice, please contact Water Quality Certification Program staff by email at: WR401Program@waterboards.ca.gov, or Mr. Chase McCormick by phone call to: 916-323-9390.

⁴ http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml#rights

Sincerely,

Parker Thaler

Parker Thaler
Water Quality Certification Program Manager
Division of Water Rights

4/10/26

Date

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that I have this day filed electronically with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and served the foregoing document upon each person designated on the official service list compiled by the Secretary in this proceeding.

Dated this 10th day of April 2026.

Chase McCormick

Chase McCormick
Environmental Scientist
Division of Water Rights
State Water Resources Control Board
Chase.McCormick@waterboards.ca.gov