



CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

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June 25, 2012

Jeff Parks, WQ Cert. WRCE
Division of Water Rights
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

**Re: Tuolumne Utilities District – Request for Variance
Spring Gap-Stanislaus Hydroelectric Project – FERC Project No. 2130**

Dear Mr. Parks:

This letter is written in support of the request of the Tuolumne Utilities District (“TUD”) for a variance from an elevation condition written into a Water Quality Certification Condition issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (“Board”) for the operation of PG&E’s Spring Gap-Stanislaus Hydroelectric Project.

The California Farm Bureau Federation is a non-governmental, non-profit, voluntary membership California corporation whose purpose is to protect and promote agricultural interests throughout the state of California and to find solutions to the problems of the farm, the farm home and the rural community. Farm Bureau is California's largest farm organization, comprised of 53 county Farm Bureaus currently representing more than 74,000 agricultural, associate and collegiate members in 56 counties. Farm Bureau strives to protect and improve the ability of farmers and ranchers engaged in production agriculture to provide a reliable supply of food and fiber through responsible stewardship of California's resources. As part of this advocacy, Farm Bureau works to secure and maintain affordable and reliable water supplies for California’s farmers and ranchers throughout the state.

It is our understanding that TUD’s primary source of water to serve its customer base is through a contract entered into with PG&E, which provides for the delivery of water from Pinecrest Lake. TUD, which serves a diversified population of agriculturalists, residences, and wholesale customers through a common system, has no significant alternative supply of water. Through the Water Quality Certification Condition referenced above, PG&E is required to maintain the surface elevation of Pinecrest Lake at no lower than 5,608 feet above mean sea level, primarily for the benefit of recreational and discretionary tourism interests. In this dry year, TUD and its customers will suffer significant hardship if this condition is enforced.

NANCY N. McDONOUGH, GENERAL COUNSEL

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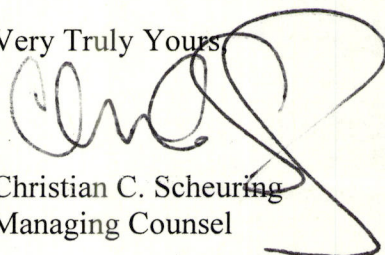
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It is also our understanding that the Deputy Director may consider a one-year modification of the condition respecting the surface elevation of Pinecrest Lake, during the time in which the Board considers a broader and more permanent request by PG&E for a modification of the target elevation of Pinecrest Lake. That request was submitted by PG&E on December 16, 2011. In the meantime, both PG&E and TUD have requested that the Deputy Director act to approve that one-year modification of the restriction on the surface elevation of Pinecrest Lake from 5,608 feet above mean sea level to 5,606 feet above mean sea level.

Farm Bureau supports these requests, and respectfully asks that the Deputy Director approve a variance for 2012 which allows the surface elevation on Pinecrest Lake to be drawn down to 5,606 feet above mean sea level. This incremental drawdown is unlikely to have a significant impact on either recreation or tourism, and during this dry year it is likely that TUD's customers – including not only Farm Bureau members but a much broader community in Tuolumne County – will suffer significant hardship as a result of a reduced water supply if the variance is not granted. TUD's laudable accomplishments over the years in conserving water at the same time its customer base has grown would underscore the likelihood that such adverse impacts will occur without the variance.

Thank you for your consideration of the foregoing, and we hope the Deputy Director is able to approve the variance request for 2012 at Pinecrest Lake. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly in regard to this letter.

Very Truly Yours



Christian C. Scheuring
Managing Counsel

CCS/dkc

cc: Pete Kampa, General Manager, Tuolumne Utilities District
Richard J. Doble, Sr. License Coordinator – Hydro Licensing, Pacific Gas & Electric Co.