

State Water Resources Control Board  
Division of Water Rights  
P.O. Box 2000  
Sacramento, California 95812-2000

## **Mitigated Negative Declaration**

### **Project Description**

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E or Licensee) proposes to continue to operate the Spring Gap-Stanislaus Project (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission #2130) as it has historically been operated, but with modified streamflow regimes, modified reservoir operations, and other environmental measures. PG&E also intends to remove the Stanislaus Afterbay Dam and construct and operate a fish screen at the intake to the Stanislaus Power Tunnel. The existing Spring Gap-Stanislaus Project (Project) is composed of four developments: Relief, Strawberry (Pinecrest Lake), Spring Gap, and Stanislaus, that have a combined installed capacity of 87.9 megawatts.

### **Location**

The Project is located on the Middle and South Forks of the Stanislaus River in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. Project features range in elevation from about 7,300 feet at Relief Reservoir to 1,000 feet at Stanislaus Powerhouse. Access to the upper regions of the Project is via State Highway 108 (Sonora Pass) and a series of U. S. Forest Service maintained dirt roads. Access to the lower regions is via Highway 49 and Camp Nine Road.

### **Finding**

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act, has determined that although the proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions to the Project have been made by or agreed to by the applicant.

### **Initial Study**

A copy of the initial study/environmental checklist is attached.

## **Mitigation Measures**

The following mitigation measures are included in the Project to reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

**Mitigation Measure 1:** Licensee shall prepare plans to minimize soil erosion and loss of topsoil for the review and approval of the State Water Board Deputy Director for Water Rights (Deputy Director) prior to beginning construction of the Stanislaus Power Tunnel Fish Screen or removal of the Stanislaus Afterbay Dam. The plan shall include the requirement to prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan to address specific site mitigation measures to prevent erosion and protect water quality. The plan shall include Best Management Practices with temporary surface drainage ditches, water bars, and filter barriers along the access road to mitigate any potential erosion from rain during construction as needed.

**Mitigation Measure 2:** Material such as fuel (gasoline/diesel), hydraulic oil, and motor oil, will be used during construction of the Stanislaus Power Tunnel Fish Screen and removal of the Stanislaus Afterbay Dam. Material Safety Data Sheets for all substances used on the job site will be on file at the job headquarters in Angels Camp and at the job site as required by the Hazard Communication Law, General Industry Safety Orders, Sec. 5194.

Hazardous waste products such as grease cartridges and oil absorbents will be placed in proper containers and transported from the job site to an authorized Hazardous Waste Collection Site.

Trucks and equipment will be refueled as required from 110-gallon capacity diesel tanks carried in the back of pickup trucks. No fuel storage tanks will be placed on the site.

Equipment hydraulic oil will be changed out to biodegradable oil for the equipment operating within the stream channel. Oil collection booms will be strategically placed in the Stanislaus River to provide additional protection in the event of an equipment fluid release.

To reduce potentially hazardous conditions and minimize the impacts from the handling of potentially hazardous materials, PG&E will include the following in its construction contract documents:

The contractor(s) shall enforce strict on-site handling rules to keep construction and maintenance materials out of receiving waters and storm drains. In addition, the contractor(s) shall store all reserve fuel supplies only within the confines of a designated construction staging area, refuel equipment only within the designated construction staging area, and regularly inspect all construction equipment for leaks.

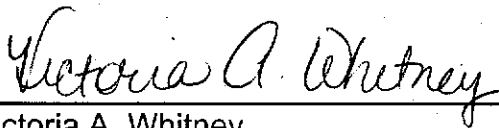
The contractor(s) shall prepare a *Health and Safety Plan*. The plan shall include measures to be taken in the event of an accidental spill.


The construction staging area shall be designed to contain contaminants such as oil, grease, and fuel products so that they do not drain towards receiving waters or storm drain inlets.

Mitigation Measure 3: Sediment samples will be collected for selected trace metal analysis from sediment deposited upstream of Stanislaus Afterbay Dam. Sediment samples will be collected to determine levels of selected metals to insure worker safety and to determine final disposition of the sediments. Sediment samples will be collected at three stations approximately two months prior to construction activities. The methodology and stations selected for sampling will be determined in the field based on access and stream and sediment characteristics. If site characteristics allow, a hand corer, such as an Environmental Sample Processor (ESP), may be used to collect the samples. A composite of fine-grained material at each station will be collected for analysis of selected trace metals. Sediment samples will be analyzed for mercury, methylmercury, arsenic, copper, nickel, lead, chromium, and silver. Sampling and analytical analysis will be performed in accordance with PG&E Environmental Sciences Quality Assurance Program Plan. Sediment sample analysis results and proposed method of sediment disposal will be submitted to the Deputy Director for review and approval prior to removing the sediments.

Mitigation Measure 4: Prior to the beginning of construction of the Stanislaus Power Tunnel Fish Screen and the removal of the Stanislaus Afterbay Dam, Licensee shall obtain all necessary permits. Licensee shall submit final construction plans including measures to protect water quality to the Deputy Director for review and approval prior to beginning work. The plans shall include a water quality monitoring program with monitoring locations upstream and downstream of the project site. The plans shall also include Best Management Practices, and measures that will be used to minimize water quality impacts during instream work.

APPROVED:

  
Victoria A. Whitney  
State Water Resources Control Board  
Deputy Director for Water Rights

  
Date