

March 25, 2015

Peter Barnes
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000
E-Mail: Peter.Barnes@waterboards.ca.gov

Re: Upper North Fork Feather River Hydroelectric Project Draft EIR

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a resident of Plumas County, writing to express my concerns regarding the State Water Resources Control Board's Upper North Fork Feather River Hydroelectric Project Draft Environmental Impact Report ("EIR"). In general, I find the EIR confusing and unclear. Lake Almanor has been operated for the last 50-some years as a hydroproject. The environment and community has adjusted to this. Now significant changes are being proposed. As I understand it, PG&E, the county, and other stakeholders held extensive negotiations and developed a settlement agreement in 2004. That settlement provided more cold water flows down the river while maintaining enough cold water and suitable lake levels at Lake Almanor so that its recreational benefits would be preserved. For some reason the EIR includes two project "alternatives" that involve thermal curtains and even more water releases that would significantly impact Lake Almanor. Why are *any* alternatives necessary when the proposal to operate per the settlement already provides beneficial changes that will cool the river downstream?

Those that live in and visit Plumas County value the natural resources of Lake Almanor. The EIR's thermal curtain and increased cold water outflow alternatives will significantly impact the fisheries and visual beauty of Lake Almanor. The EIR admits that these alternatives will significantly impact Lake Almanor's fisheries and potentially cause a massive fish kill. Why would the State Water Board consider alternatives that will harm Lake Almanor's beneficial uses by draining the lake of its cold water? I thought CEQA prevented public agencies from harming the environment. This is bad policy.

The EIR also fails to evaluate the recreational economy that is tied to the Lake Almanor fisheries – an important economic driver in this region. Harm to the fish means harm to the community because fewer people will visit and fish the lake. This will probably result in closed and abandoned businesses and homes, and declining funds for public services. The EIR should not ignore this issue.

I request that you reject the thermal curtain / increased release alternatives and ensure protection of Lake Almanor and the surrounding community.

Sincerely,

Stephen Tanner
Physical Address: 3382 Hwy 147, Lake Almanor, CA 96137 (Across the road from Lake
Almanor)
Mailing Address: PO Box 112, Canyondam, CA 95923

March 26, 2015

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E-Mail: Peter.Barnes@waterboards.ca.gov

Re: Upper North Fork Feather River Hydroelectric Project Draft EIR

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a resident, voter, and taxpayer in Plumas County, writing to express my concerns regarding the State Water Resources Control Board's Upper North Fork Feather River Hydroelectric Project Draft Environmental Impact Report ("EIR"). In general, I find the EIR confusing and unclear. Lake Almanor has been operated for the last 50-some years and has established a natural ecology and an economic community based on the multi-year operation of Lake Almanor and the hydroelectric power developed from the Feather River water flowing through the lake.

I strongly object to the changes documented in the subject EIR for the following reasons:

1. At a time when our state and country are trying to switch from a dependence on oil, and especially foreign oil, the proposal is the release 250 CFS from the Canyon Dam tower is a waste of energy. The flow will bypass the opportunity to produce electricity through the Butte Lake and Caribou power plants, leaving only limited production at the Belden plant. This is clearly a waste of a God given source of energy.
2. Although economic impact is not a consideration, it should be. We bought property at Lake Almanor based on the beauty of the area and the recreation opportunities provided by Lake Almanor. Part of our decision was based on the understanding that lake levels would be maintained at safe levels during the summer months as described in the 2004 Settlement Agreement. It does not seem possible that the lake levels can be maintained as agreed while drawing down as proposed in the EIR.
3. The down river temperature goals do not seem to be based on scientific data, and there doesn't seem to be any documented examples of damage to the fish from current temperature in the lower Feather River. The flow of water through Lake Almanor seems to be dependent on the overall rain and snow above the lake level. There are seasonal adjustments for flood control, but in general the Feather River reached an equilibrium where what come in, must go out. As you know, California is in a multi-year drought with no guaranteed improvement. The United States has concluded that we are in a long period of global climate change. If this is the case, all stated flow requirements are no longer valid and should be reconsidered.
4. The definitions of Wet, Normal, Dry and Critically Dry are based on in-flow to Oroville. These flows are meaningless to an evaluation of the water levels at Lake Almanor. Criteria relevant to Lake Almanor should be stated and used. Does the current Critically Dry flow match the flows expected now?

5. Based on the briefing given during the Public Hearing in Chester, on 11 February, 2015, the current recommendation is proceed with releasing 250 CFS from the Canyon Dam Tower, while holding off on installing the Thermal Curtains until the initial results can be observed. No criteria was provided for determining if the 250 CFS release is sufficient, nor was any guarantee given as to how much further public discussion would occur before the State began installation of the curtains.

6. The EIR admits that the Thermal Curtain, and increased cold water outflow, will impact Lake Almanor's fisheries and potentially cause a massive fish kill. How can the State of California make such a proposal?

My bottom line question is, Why are any alternatives necessary when the proposal to operate per the settlement already provides beneficial changes that will cool the river downstream. I strongly urge that this EIR be withdrawn, and a more sensible study, including the economic impact and global warming be added as serious concerns

Sincerely,

Stephen Tanner

Physical Address: 3382 Hwy 147, Lake Almanor, CA 96137 (Across the road from Lake
Almanor)

Mailing Address: PO Box 112, Canyon Dam, CA 95923