

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

SACRAMENTO VALLEY - CENTRAL SIERRA REGION
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Telephone (916) 358-2900



June 11, 1999

Mr. Patrick Frost
Sacramento Municipal Utility District
6201 S Street, MS B203
Sacramento, California 95817-1899

Dear Mr. Frost:

The Department of Fish and Game has reviewed Sacramento Municipal Utility District's (SMUD) Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Camino Reservoir Sediment Removal Project (SCH No. 99052093). We have the following comments and concerns:

The Camino Reservoir is a diversion reservoir that is part of the SMUD's Upper American River Hydroelectric Project, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No. 2101. It is located in Jaybird Canyon on Silver Creek and has a capacity of 845 acre feet. In January 1997 high stream flows caused large amounts of material to be deposited in the reservoir, reducing its capacity by 20%. The material has been migrating through the reservoir and is beginning to fill rock traps in the Camino Penstock and damaging the turbine runners in the Camino Powerhouse.

The proposed project will remove approximately 250,000 cubic yards of accumulated sediment from the Camino Reservoir. SMUD will draw down the reservoir and use excavators and dump trucks to move the sediment to stockpile sites located on National Forest System land. The sediment will be removed during two 21-day periods; the first in October 1999 and the second in the autumn of 2000.

The existing FERC license requires that a 20 cubic feet per second (cfs) fish bypass flow be maintained in Silver Creek downstream of the Camino Reservoir for the month of October. In order to provide for fish bypass flows during the sediment removal SMUD will have to pipe the flow around the project area. The minimum flow of 20 cfs will be reduced to 5 cfs for the duration of the 21-day work period. After the 21-day work period, streamflows will be returned to the 20 cfs license requirement. The difference in the amount of water released will be held in reserve (banked) for future release at the discretion of the Department in consultation with the U.S. Forest Service.

The drawdown of the Camino Reservoir will adversely affect fish population that currently reside in the reservoir. This drawdown is anticipated to completely dewater the reservoir and it is anticipated that there will be a loss of fish. In order to mitigate this SMUD has proposed to purchase 400 pounds of catchable rainbow trout to be stocked in either Union Valley Reservoir, Ice House Reservoir, or Loon Lake. This amount is insufficient in our opinion. We propose that this amount be increased to 1,000 pounds. We have based this on a reservoir capacity of 845 acre

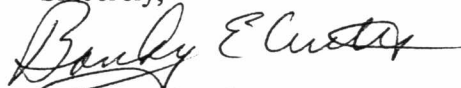
Mr. Patrick Frost
June 11, 1999
Page Two

feet and a mitigation amount of 1.0 pound per acre foot of capacity. This number was then rounded off to an even 1,000 pounds. We suggest that the rainbow trout be placed in either Ice House Reservoir or Loon Lake.

We will defer opinion on spoils pile placement and monitoring to the U.S. Forest Service and their jurisdictional authorities. We do wish to be informed of monitoring results or issues relating to erosion, spills, or other unforeseen problems that may arise during the implementation of the project.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact Mr. Stafford Lehr, Associate Fishery Biologist, at (530) 647-9827, or Mr. Patrick O'Brien, Senior Fishery Biologist, at (916) 358- 2939.

Sincerely,



Banky E. Curtis
Regional Manager

cc: Mr. Stafford Lehr
Mr. Patrick O'Brien
California Department of Fish and Game
Rancho Cordova, California

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draft signed off by O'Brien 6/11/99, Littrell 6/11/99

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