

## State Water Resources Control Board

November 22, 2021

Mr. Jason Lambert  
Senior Wetland Regulatory Specialist  
Southern California Edison  
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue GO-1, Quad 2C, Environmental Services  
Rosemead, CA 91770

### **NOTICE OF APPLICABILITY AND APPROVAL OF CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 401 GENERAL WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON'S POST-STORM DAM 5 EMERGENCY SEDIMENT AND DEBRIS REMOVAL ACTIVITIES PROJECT, FRESNO COUNTY**

On November 4, 2021, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) received a Notice of Intent (NOI) form from Southern California Edison (SCE) requesting coverage under the State Water Board's October 9, 2018, General Water Quality Certification and Order No. 2018-0025-EXEC (General Order)<sup>1</sup> for the Post-Storm Dam 5 Emergency Sediment and Debris Removal Activities Project (Project). SCE's Project involves the removal of approximately 2,000 cubic yards of sediment from the Dam 5 impoundment. The Project area is in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) boundary for the Big Creek Nos. 1 and 2 Project (FERC Project No. 2175) (Attachment 1 – Map of Project Locations). The area of sediment removal and temporary equipment access will include no more than 3.24 acres of temporary impacts and 0.007 acres of permanent impacts. Waterbodies that may be impacted by the Project include the Dam 5 Impoundment and Big Creek. Construction is expected to last approximately four weeks. When working in the impoundment, SCE proposes to conduct visual monitoring for biological resources and water quality. All dredged sediment will be disposed of at an upland disposal site (depicted in Attachment 1).

On August 10, 2018, the United States Army Corps of Engineers permitted Project activities under Regional General Permit (RGP) 8 – Emergency Repair and Protection Activities (RGP 8), and as such, Project activities are subject to the conditions and requirements contained therein. After reviewing SCE's NOI and supplemental materials, State Water Board staff has determined that the Project qualifies for enrollment under the General Order, issued pursuant to section 3838 of the California

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<sup>1</sup> Clean Water Act Section 401 **General Water Quality Certification and Order No. 2018-0025-EXEC** for the State Water Board Certification of the Regional General Permit 8 for Emergency Repair and Protection Activities. Available online at: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/cwa401/docs/generalorders/order\\_rgp8.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/docs/generalorders/order_rgp8.pdf)

Code of Regulations, as the Project involves actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency, including emergency repairs necessary to maintain service essential to public safety and welfare.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

Due to wildfires and heavy precipitation events, a large volume of sediment has migrated into the Dam 5 impoundment. SCE is concerned that continuing accumulation of sediment could cause a collapse of the dams' intake gates. To avoid this collapse, SCE proposes mechanical removal of the sediment.

To access the Dam 5 impoundment, SCE will draw down the Dam 5 reservoir using the low-level outlets. Additionally, SCE will expand the existing access road ramp by approximately 20 feet. The expanded access road will be constructed using up to 200 cubic yards of crushed rock to create a drivable surface. The expanded access road will be left in place after Project completion. A temporary bypass channel will be constructed out of two side-by-side 48-inch-diameter culverts to allow flows to bypass the construction area.

SCE will remove approximately 2,000 cubic yards of sediment located adjacent to the Dam 5 intake structure and directly upstream of the Big Creek Powerhouse No.2. The Project will result in no more than 3.24 acres of temporary impacts to the Dam 5 reservoir.

Once sediment removal is complete, the ramp and culverts and all imported earthen support materials will be removed. Only the permanent rock fill for the base of the extended access road will remain in place.

Project activities shall proceed as described in the NOI and in accordance with the conditions and requirements contained in the General Order and this NOA. The application and supplemental materials provided by SCE include a detailed description of proposed activities and temporary and permanent impacts associated with proposed activities. If Project activities are modified from those described in SCE's application, then coverage under the General Order is no longer permitted. SCE shall promptly notify the State Water Board's Deputy Director for the Division of Water Rights of any significant Project modifications.

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT**

The certification of projects under RGP 8 is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as such Project activities are not expected to have a significant effect on the environment. The Project activities qualify for CEQA exemption under California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15269 (b)(c) (Emergency Projects). (See Attachment 2 – Notice of Exemption for the Post-Storm Dam 5 Emergency Sediment and Debris Removal Activities Project.)

**DETERMINATION**

State Water Board staff has determined that the Project may proceed under the General Order. This determination is contingent on: (a) completion of all proposed measures in strict compliance with the conditions of the General Order (Attachment 3); and (b) compliance with all applicable requirements of statewide Water Quality Control Plans and Policies.

If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact Philip Meyer, Project Manager, by email at [Philip.Meyer@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Philip.Meyer@waterboards.ca.gov). Written correspondence should be directed to:

State Water Resources Control Board  
Division of Water Rights – Water Quality Certification Program  
Attn: Philip Meyer; P.O. Box 2000  
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

Sincerely,



Eileen Sobeck  
Executive Director

Attachments: Attachment 1: Map of Project Locations  
Attachment 2: Notice of Exemption for the Post-Storm Dam 5 Emergency Sediment and Debris Removal Activities Project  
Attachment 3: Clean Water Act Section 401 General Water Quality Certification and Order for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2018 Regional General Permit 8

ec (w/attachments): Ms. Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulation Commission  
**Via FERC e-filing**

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