

Project Title: Merced River/Merced Falls Hydroelectric Projects

Lead Agency Name and Address: Merced Irrigation District, 744 W. 20th Street, Merced, CA 95340

Contact Person and Phone Number: Juan Sandoval, Deputy General Manager - Energy Resources, 209-722-3041

Project Location: Eastern Merced County and southwestern Mariposa County

Project Sponsor's Name and Address: Merced Irrigation District, 744 W. 20th Street, Merced, CA 95340

General Plan Designation: Not applicable

Zoning: Not applicable

Description of Project: Merced ID is proposing to relicense the Merced River Hydroelectric Project (P-2179-043) and Merced Falls Hydroelectric Project (P-2467-020) in Merced and Mariposa Counties, California under the auspices of the FERC relicensing process. Merced ID has applied to FERC for licenses with 50-year terms for both projects, For both projects, alterations to existing project boundaries are proposed. In addition, Merced ID proposes improvements to its existing recreational facilities and construction of a new recreational facility, which are analyzed in a separate CEQA document (Merced Recreation PEIR; SCH# 2024051222 (<https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2024051222>)). Outside of recreation area upgrades, no changes to existing hydroelectric facilities or operations and maintenance of both projects are proposed.

Surrounding Land Uses and Setting: See Recreation PEIR (incorporated by reference).

Other Public Agencies whose Approval is Required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.): Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is required to approve relicensing. Other agencies from whom permits and approvals are required are listed in Table 2-1.

Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.? California Native American tribes traditional and cultural affiliated with the project area were notified via certified mail on August 1, 2024. No California Native American tribes have requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1. As described in the FEIS, Condition 21 of the Section 4(e) Land Management Conditions requires Merced ID, upon Commission approval, to implement the Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP). Section 5.4 of the HPMP describes Merced ID's responsibilities for ongoing consultation with the Native American community throughout the term of the new license both as a general management measure as well as in support of any new undertaking (for the purposes of Section 106) or project (for the purposes of CEQA).

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils	<input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials
<input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire	<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance

Determination (To be Completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find 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 in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the Proposed Project may have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the Proposed Project may have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the Proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the Proposed Project, nothing further is required.

Signature

Date: