State Water Resources Control Board

Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal

SCH #: 2023050702

Project Title: Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project Relicensing

Lead Agency: State Water Resources Control Board

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Project Location (City, County): Auberry, Fresno and Madera Counties

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences): The Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Project (FERC) No. 96 (Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project) is owned and operated by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). The Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project is located in Fresno and Madera Counties on the San Joaquin River with an installed capacity of 162.72 megawatts. The Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project is comprised of Kerckhoff Dam, Kerckhoff Reservoir, Kerckhoff 1 Powerhouse and associated facilities, Kerckhoff 2 Powerhouse and associated facilities, the Smalley Cove Recreation Area, helicopter landing zones, roads, and gages.

On November 24, 2020, PG&E filed an application with the FERC to request relicensing of the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project for a 50-year term (Project). The original FERC license for the existing Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project expired on November 30, 2022. Since then, the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project has operated under annual licenses issued by FERC. In addition to continued operations, PG&E's Project proposes: 1) decommissioning of the Kerckhoff 1 Powerhouse; 2) construction of a new day use area; 3) Project boundary updates; and 4) implementation of new environmental management plans and measures.

A Notice of Preparation for development of an Environmental Impact Report was issued on May 30, 2023. As part of its relicensing process, PG&E filed an application for a water quality certification with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) on July 16, 2025.

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect:

The following impacts would be potentially significant without mitigation. Associated mitigation measures are listed after each impact.

Impact BIO-1) Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)?

Mitigation Measure: BIO-1 Conduct a Preconstruction Survey for Northwestern Pond Turtle at the New San Joaquin River Gage, BIO-3 Compensate for the Temporary and Permanent Losses of Waters of the United States/Waters of the State

Impact BIO-2) Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS?

Mitigation Measure: BIO-3 Compensate for the Temporary and Permanent Losses of Waters of the United States/Waters of the State

Impact GEO-6) Would the Project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable or that would become unstable as a result of the Project and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Mitigation Measure: GEO-1 Erosion and Sediment Control Plan

Impact HM-2) Would the Project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Mitigation Measure: WQ-3 Construction General Permit, WQMP, and Dewatering Plans

Impact HYD-1) Would the Project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

Mitigation Measure: WQ-1 Retirement Plan for Kerckhoff 1 Powerhouse and Associated Facilities, WQ-2 San Joaquin River Above Kerckhoff Reservoir Inflow Gage Plan, WQ-3 Construction General Permit, WQMP, and Dewatering Plans, and WQ-4 A Low-Level Outlet Sediment Sluicing Management Plan

The following impacts would be potentially significant and unavoidable without mitigation. Associated mitigation measures are listed after each impact.

Impact AQ-1) Would the Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Mitigation Measure: AQ-1 Fugitive Dust PM10 Measures and Construction Equipment, GEO-1 Erosion and Sediment Control Plan

Impact BIO-1) Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS?

Mitigation Measure: BIO-2 Roosting Bats

Impact HYD-5) Would the Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Mitigation Measure: WQ-1 Retirement Plan for Kerckhoff 1 Powerhouse and Associated Facilities, WQ-2 San Joaquin River Above Kerckhoff Reservoir Inflow Gage Plan, WQ-3 Construction General Permit, WQMP, and Dewatering Plans, and WQ-4 A Low-Level Outlet Sediment Sluicing Management Plan; Recommended WQ-5 Instream Flow Public Safety Plan

<u>If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public</u>:

The State Water Board has identified the following list of environmental factors potentially affected by the Project:

The Project has the potential to affect, either directly or through habitat modifications, species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or the USFWS.

The Project has the potential to violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements.

The Project has the potential to expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death.

The Project has the potential to include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that may have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

The Project has the potential to impact the safety and availability of contact recreation and non-contact recreation.

The Project has the potential to generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, which may have an adverse effect on the environment.

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

Trustee agencies: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, University of California Natural Reserve System, State Lands Commission, California Department of Parks and Recreation.

Responsible agencies: Native American Heritage Commission, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Energy Commission, Fish and Game Region #4, San Joaquin River Conservancy, Resources Agency, Regional Water Quality Control Board #5, Public Utilities Commission, Office of Historic Preservation, Air Resources Board, California Emergency Management Agency, and CalTrans District #6