State Water Resources Control Board

Notice of Determination

To: Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Submitted via California State Clearinghouse CEQA Submit

From: State Water Resources Control Board (Lead Agency)
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact: Jessica Dyke
Email: jessica.dyke@waterboards.ca.gov
Phone: (916) 341-5448

Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 of the Public Resources Code and Section 15075 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines

State Clearinghouse Number: 2025110960

Project Title: Helms Pumped Storage Project, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No. 2735

Project Applicant: Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Project Location (include county): Fresno County, Madera County, 37° 02' 13" N / 118° 57' 53" W

Project Description:
The Proposed Project covered by this Notice of Determination involves the FERC relicensing of Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) Helms Pumped Storage Project (Project). PG&E has applied for a new FERC license for the Proposed Project, under which it proposes to: (1) continue to operate the Helms Pumped Storage Project; (2) replace and rehabilitate existing recreation facilities; (3) designate approximately 36 miles of existing roads and approximately one mile of existing trails as Project roads and trails; (4) modify the FERC Project boundary to more accurately define lands necessary for Project operation and maintenance activities under a new FERC Project license; and (5) implement new protection, mitigation, and enhancement plans and measures.

The Project transfers water to and from Courtright Lake (upper reservoir) and Lake Wishon (lower reservoir) for power generation and water storage. The Project's two intake-discharge structures are normally underwater, and all Project facilities and structures used to exchange water between the two reservoirs are underground. Courtright Lake and Lake Wishon are impounded by Courtright Dam and Wishon Dam, respectively, all of which are licensed facilities of PG&E's Haas-Kings River Hydroelectric Project. The Project includes Courtright Intake-Discharge Structure; Wishon Intake-Discharge Structure; Tunnels 1, 2, and 3; Helms Penstocks; Lost Canyon Pipe; Helms Powerhouse; Helms Switchyard; approximately 65 miles of transmission and distribution lines; approximately 38 miles of non-recreational Project roads and trails; three helicopter landing zones; an 80-acre wildlife habitat management area; 12 recreational facilities near Courtright Lake and Lake Wishon; and ancillary support facilities.

In accordance with section 15075 of title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, this is to advise that the State Water Resources Control Board, as Lead Agency, has approved the above-described project on July 24, 2026, and has made the following determinations regarding the Project.

1. The Project **will not** have a significant effect on the environment.
2. **A Mitigated Negative Declaration** was prepared and adopted for this Project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act.
3. Mitigation measures **were not** made a condition of the approval of the Project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan **was not** adopted for this Project.

This is to certify that the final Mitigated Negative Declaration is available to the General Public at: 1001 I Street, 2nd Floor, Room 2-114, Sacramento, CA 95814. The Mitigated Negative Declaration is also available on the State Water Resources Control Board's Project webpage at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/helms-pumped-storage.html.

Parker Thaler

Parker Thaler
Environmental Program Manager
Division of Water Rights

July 24, 2026