

License

Instr. No. 5

Amend. No. 1

Diagrams
letter

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Lettre

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Placer County Water Agency)

Project No. 2079

ORDER AMENDING LICENSE (MAJOR)
(Issued March 18, 1981)

On August 25, 1980, Placer County Water Agency (Applicant) filed an application under the Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. §§791(a)825(r), for amendment of its license for the Middle Fork American River Project No. 2079, located on the Middle Fork American and Rubicon Rivers in Placer County, California. 1/

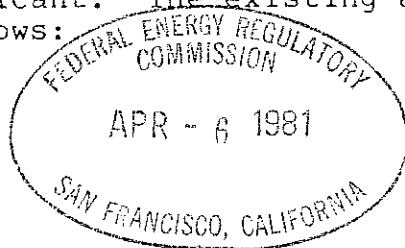
Applicant requests authorization to modify the project by constructing, operating, and maintaining: (a) a powerhouse with an installed capacity of 550 kW, at the existing outlet of the project's Hell Hole Dam on the Rubicon River; and (b) a 2,300-foot long, 12-kV transmission line connecting the proposed powerhouse to the project's existing 12-kV line, west of the powerhouse. The energy generated by the proposed powerhouse would be sold to the Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

Applicant also requests amendment of Article 37 of its license which provides for a schedule of minimum streamflow releases from Hell Hole Reservoir. The proposed changes would provide higher minimum flows during the critically low rainfall period and lower minimum flows during periods of higher rainfall. The total annual volume of water released from the reservoir for minimum flow purposes would remain approximately the same. The changes in minimum flow releases are recommended by the U. S. Forest Service (USFS) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).

Notice of the application has been published. No protests or petitions to intervene have been received. CDFG and USFS filed comments on the application and their concerns are discussed below.

MIMIMUM FLOW RELEASES:

Applicant proposes to revise the schedule of flow releases from Hell Hole Reservoir, as requested by CDFG and USFS in their letters to the Applicant. The existing and proposed minimum flow releases are as follows:



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1/ Authority to act on this matter is delegated to the Director, Office of Electric Power Regulation, under Section 375.308 of the Commission's regulations, 45 Fed. Reg. 21216 (1980), amending 44 Fed. Reg. 46449 (1979) and 18 C.F.R. 3.5(g) (1979).

Forecasted Runoff to Folsom Reservoir	Present Streamflows (cfs)	Proposed Streamflows (cfs)
1,000,000 or more	20, June 1-July 25 15, July 26-August 5 10, August 6-October 31 14, November 1-January 31 20, February 1-May 31	20, May 15-December 14 10, December 15-May 14
less than 1,000,000	8, June 1-December 31 6, January 1-March 25 8, March 26-May 31	10, June 1-October 14 6, October 15-May 31

CDFG and USFS stated that the revised schedule of flow releases would have a beneficial effect on the Rubicon River's fish populations. By providing higher flows during the critical low-flow period, more fish habitat could be maintained.

The proposed schedule of minimum flow releases would ensure an annual release from Hell Hole Reservoir of 11,580 acre-feet in a normal or wet year, and 5,468 acre-feet in a dry year.

Article 37 of the license is revised to incorporate the schedule of flow releases from Hell Hole Reservoir recommended by CDFG and USFS. Furthermore, the limits on total annual releases from Hell Hole and French Creek Reservoirs are eliminated from Article 37. These limits provide no fisheries benefits. Minimum storage capacity for the two reservoirs is required by Article 36 of the license.

WETLAND PROTECTION:

CDFG and USFS recommended that the small wet meadow formed by a seep area at the base of Hell Hole Dam should not be disturbed. Licensee states in the application that the meadow would not be disturbed during installation of the powerhouse or placement of the transmission line. A stream alteration agreement between Licensee and CDFG requires that the wet meadow area of about 50 feet by 30 feet be protected. However, should seepage increase and become a dam safety factor remedial work could be ordered that could affect the wet meadow.

SAFETY, ADEQUACY AND COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT:

The proposed powerhouse is considered safe and adequate if constructed in accordance with accepted engineering practices and construction procedures.

The proposed power plant would not be in conflict with any existing or proposed water resource development in the Rubicon River Basin. It would make efficient use of the flow and head available at the dam. Upon compliance with the terms and conditions of the license, the proposed power plant would not be inconsistent with the comprehensive plan of development of the river basin.

ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY:

Staff performed a feasibility study of the proposed power plant ^{2/} based on the current wholesale price of power in the area and the estimated operating cost. The study showed that construction and operation of the proposed power plant would be economically feasible.

EXHIBITS:

Exhibits J, K, L and M were filed as part of the application for amendment of license. The exhibits conform to the Commission's regulations and are approved and made part of the license. However, the design drawings are preliminary; therefore, Article 43 requires the Licensee to file prior to the start of construction, revised Exhibit L drawings showing the final design of the project works.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Construction of the proposed powerhouse and transmission line would have a minimal impact on the terrestrial environment, affecting a small amount of marginal wildlife habitat. Construction would result in a short-term impact on water quality, due to increased erosion and sedimentation. The stream alteration agreement between the Licensee and CDFG requires: the revegetation of disturbed areas; the use of erosion control measures; and the prohibition of discharging waste water from construction activities into the river. The agreement also requires that sufficient rock or bedrock shall be present at the section of the river receiving the outflow from the powerhouse to prevent bank erosion.

The proposed readjustment of the schedule of minimum streamflow releases from Hell Hole Reservoir would result in long-term benefits to the downstream trout fishery.

^{2/} The proposed power plant, with its average annual generation of 2.93 million kWh, will utilize a renewable resource that will save the equivalent of approximately 4,800 barrels of oil or 1,350 tons of coal per year.

For the above reasons, approval of the application would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

Article 38 of the License required the Licensee to take certain steps to protect environmental resources during an earlier phase of project construction. The requirements of this article are equally applicable to this phase of construction of the project and no additional article to protect the environment is necessary.

It is ordered that:

The license for Project No. 2079 is amended, effective the first day of the month in which this order is issued, as follows:

(A) The Licensee is authorized to construct, operate and maintain a powerhouse, transmission line and appurtenances at the Hell Hole Dam.

(B) Ordering paragraph (B) of the Commission's March 13, 1963, Order Issuing Major License is amended by adding the following:

Hell Hole Power Plant consists of: (a) a powerhouse containing a single generating unit with a total installed capacity of 550 kW; and (b) a 2,300-foot long, 12-kV transmission line connecting the Hell Hole Powerhouse to the 12-kV line west of the powerhouse.

(C) The following exhibits conform to the Commission's rules and regulations and are approved and made part of the license, superseding previously approved exhibits.

<u>Exhibit</u>	<u>FERC Drawing No. 2079-</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Superseding FERC Drawing No. 2079-</u>
J-1	362	General Project Map	272
K-1	363	Hell Hole Reservoir	288
K-2	364	Hell Hole Reservoir	290
L-1	365	Hell Hole Powerhouse	---
L-2	366	Hell Hole Powerhouse	---

Exhibit M - One typewritten page entitled "General Description and Specification of Mechanical, Electrical and Transmission Equipment."

(D) Subparagraph (i) of Article 41 of the license is amended as follows:

(i) For the purpose of reimbursing the United States for the cost of administration of Part I of the Act, a reasonable annual charge as determined by the Commission in accordance with the provisions of its regulations, in effect from time to time. The authorized installed capacity for such purposes is 280,730 horsepower.

(E) Article 37 of the license is revised to read as follows:

Article 37. The Licensee shall release from Duncan Creek Diversion Dam, French Meadows Dam, Hell Hole Dam, South Long Canyon Diversion Dam, North Long Canyon Diversion Dam, Ralston or Middle Fork Interbay, and Oxbow Powerplant, sufficient flows to meet the following schedule:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Forecasted Runoff To Folsom Reservoir in Acre-feet ^{1/}</u>	<u>Stremflow in Cubic Feet Per Second</u>
Duncan Creek Diversion Dam	1,000,000 or more	8, or the natural flow, whichever is less
	Less than 1,000,000	4, or the natural flow whichever is less
French Meadows Dam	1,000,000 or more	8, at all times
	Less than 1,000,000	4, at all times
Hell Hole Dam	1,000,000 or more	20, May 15 thru December 14 10, December 15 thru May 14
	Less than 1,000,000	10, June 1 thru October 14 6, October 15 thru May 31
South Long Canyon Diversion Dam	1,000,000 or more	5, or the natural flow, whichever is less
	Less than 1,000,000	2.5, or the natural flow whichever is less
North Long Canyon Diversion Dam	Any forecast	2, or the natural flow, whichever is less
Ralston or Middle Fork Interbay	1,000,000 or more	23, or the natural flow, whicnever is less
	Less than 1,000,000	12, or the natural flow whichever is less
Oxbow	Any forecast	75, <u>2/</u> year round

1/ See footnote-Article 36, 29 F.P.C. 466.

2/ Measured downstream of the confluence of the Middle Fork American River and the North Fork of the Middle Fork American River.

The Oxbow Powerplant releases shall not cause vertical fluctuation in stream stages (measured in representative section) greater than 1 foot in 1 hour. The schedule of flow releases may be temporarily modified if required by operating emergencies beyond the control of the Licensee, and for short periods of fishery management purposes upon mutual agreement among the Licensee, the U.S. Forest Service, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game.

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(F) The following articles are added to the license.

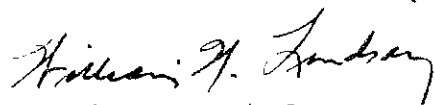
Article 43. The Licensee shall file, with the Commission's Regional Engineer and Director, Office of Electric Power Regulation, one copy each of the contract drawing and specifications for the proposed powerhouse 60 days prior to start of construction. The Director, Office of Electric Power Regulation may require additional contract drawings and specifications and changes in any of the plans and specifications to insure a safe and adequate project.

Article 44. The Licensee shall: (a) commence construction of the Hell Hole Powerplant within one year from the date of issuance of this order; and (b) thereafter in good faith and with due diligence construct and complete the power plant and place it in operation within four years from the date of issuance of this order.

Article 45. The Licensee shall, within one year following the date of commencement of operation of the Hell Hole Powerplant, file "as-built" Exhibits J, K and L showing the power plant and its transmission line as finally constructed and located.

(G) This order is final unless a petition appealing it to the Commission is filed within 30 days from the date of its issuance, as provided in Section 1.7(d) of the Commission's regulations, 18 C.F.R. 1.7(d) (1979), as amended, 44 Fed. Reg. 46449 (1979). The filing of a petition appealing this order to the Commission or an application for rehearing as provided in Section 313(a) of the Act does not operate as a stay of the effective date of this amendment of license or of any other date specified in this order, except as specifically ordered by the Commission.

(S E A L)



William W. Lindsay
Director, Office of Electric
Power Regulation