



**Sonoma  
Water**

July 17, 2024

Erik Ekdahl, Deputy Director of Water Rights  
State Water Resources Control Board  
Division of Water Rights  
P.O. Box 2000  
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

**RE: Notice of Change in Russian River Hydrologic Conditions**

Dear Mr. Ekdahl:

The Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) staff have prepared this letter to notify you of a significant change to the hydrologic conditions of the East Branch and mainstem Russian River. On June 26, 2024, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued an order approving Pacific Gas & Electric Company's (PG&E) temporary flow variance request for the Potter Valley Project (Project). The order initially approves a reduction in minimum releases of Eel River water into the East Branch Russian River from 75 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 25 cfs and authorizes further reductions to 5 cfs if daily average release water from Lake Pillsbury exceeds 15 degrees C or as needed based on determinations by PG&E, the resource agencies and the Round Valley Indian Tribes. On July 5<sup>th</sup> PG&E decreased releases to the East Branch Russian River to 5 cfs based on a recommendation from the resource agencies and the Round Valley Indian Tribes due to Lake Pillsbury release water temperatures exceeding 17 degrees C. A copy of the order is enclosed.

With this significant reduction of Eel River water imports into the Russian River basin, Sonoma Water is deeply concerned that, as natural flow declines, there may no longer be water available for many diverters on the East Branch and mainstem Russian River. The attached figure shows projected Lake Mendocino storage through the end of the water year without the FERC order in place and under the FERC order with a minimum release into the East Branch of 25 cfs starting June 27, reduced to 5 cfs on July 5<sup>th</sup>. Both projections assume all historical East Branch and mainstem Russian River water demands, regardless of basis of right, are being met during the modeling period. As the attached figure shows, Sonoma Water projects that Lake Mendocino storage will be about 12,000 acre-feet lower by the end of this water year with the FERC order than it would have been otherwise.

Sonoma Water staff would be more than willing to schedule a time to meet with you and/or your staff to discuss further and provide additional information. Please contact me at [Grant.Davis@scwa.ca.gov](mailto:Grant.Davis@scwa.ca.gov) or Don Seymour at [Donald.Seymour@scwa.ca.gov](mailto:Donald.Seymour@scwa.ca.gov) if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Grant Davis  
General Manager

c: J. Ling, K. Emanuel – State Water Resources Control Board  
P. Jeane, D. Seymour, T. Schram, J. Martini Lamb, K. Gylfe – Sonoma Water  
C. O'Donnell, A. Brand – Sonoma County Counsel  
R. Bezerra – Bartkiewicz, Kronick & Shanahan

### Lake Mendocino Storage Projection: Comparing Impact of Potter Valley Project Flow Variance Operations (Variance Starts 6/27/2024)

