



November 12, 2013
DPG 13-213

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Re: Notification of Low Inflow at Buck Island Reservoir

Dear Interested Party:

The purpose of this letter is to notify you that due to low natural flows in the upper Rubicon River basin, in the very near future SMUD may not be able to meet the minimum streamflow requirement at Buck Island Dam – one of the facilities in SMUD's Upper American River Project (UARP, Project No. 2101). Under our current UARP license, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) does not require SMUD to provide this notice. However, under the new license, which is expected in early 2014, SMUD will be required to notify you in advance of such an impending event. Thus, SMUD is providing this notice proactively and as a courtesy.

The recently issued Water Quality Certification (Clean Water Act, Section 401) for the UARP relicensing states in the footnote to Table 4 on Page 28:

If NF measured in Highland/Rockbound Creek above Buck Island Reservoir is below 1 cfs, the minimum flow shall be 1 cfs. In CD water year types, if the useable storage in Buck Island Reservoir is less than 60 ac-ft and the Licensee cannot maintain 1 cfs due to lack of NF into and storage in Buck Island Reservoir, the Licensee shall make every effort to notify USFS, USFWS, CDFG, and State Water Board at least 30 days prior to the date upon which the Licensee will not meet the streamflow, or as much in advance as possible. After notification of USFS, CDFG, USFWS, and State Water Board, the Licensee may reduce minimum flows below 1 cfs, but at no time shall the minimum streamflow be less than the NF into the Buck Island Reservoir, until sufficient water is available to resume prescribed minimum streamflow releases.

In short, the certification acknowledges that, in Critical Dry years, storage may be insufficient to meet the Buck Island minimum flow and if so requires advance notice.

Although according to the DWR Bulletin 120 forecast the water year classification for the Folsom Lake watershed as a whole is Dry, not Critical Dry (Condition 1, page 26), this calendar year is on course to be the driest on record.

Due to the longtime lack of precipitation in the Buck Island watershed, the water surface elevation of the reservoir has been declining steadily for months. The last rainfall on October 30 did not affect the decline, with estimated inflow still remaining below 1 cfs. SMUD has endeavored to release the required 1 cfs over the past several months, but lacking the ability to release water from an upstream source, such as Rubicon Reservoir, to refill Buck Island Reservoir, we expect the usable storage to attain 60 ac-ft in about 30 days. This may result in an unavoidable release below 1 cfs. In the event this occurs, we will comply with the terms of the effective FERC license and notify you.

If you have any questions concerning this notification please contact Mr. Dudley McFadden, Principal Civil Engineer, at (916) 732-5953.

Sincerely,



R. Joe Davis
Program Manager, Regulatory Compliance