

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD**

In the Matter of Water Quality Certification for

**PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY'S
CAMP FAR WEST TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 10821**

Transmission

**Lines Cross: Camp Far West Reservoir, Bear River, Grasshopper Slough,
 and Dry Creek**

Counties: Placer and Yuba

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION FOR FEDERAL PERMIT OR LICENSE

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

<i>2020-2022 California Integrated Report</i>	<i>2020-2022 California Integrated Report for Clean Water Act Sections 303(d) and 305(b)</i>
<i>Antidegradation Policy</i>	<i>Statement of Policy with Respect to Maintaining High Quality Waters in California</i>
<i>Aquatic Weed Control Permit</i>	<i>Statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for Residual Aquatic Pesticide Discharges to Water of the United States from Algae and Aquatic Weed Control Applications</i>
<i>Bay-Delta Plan</i>	<i>Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary</i>
<i>CDFW</i>	<i>California Department of Fish and Wildlife</i>
<i>Central Valley Basin Plan</i>	<i>Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the Sacramento River Basin and the San Joaquin River Basin</i>
<i>Central Valley Regional Water Board</i>	<i>Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board</i>
<i>CEQA certification</i>	<i>California Environmental Quality Act water quality certification</i>
<i>Construction General Permit</i>	<i>National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities</i>
<i>CPRC</i>	<i>California Public Resources Code</i>
<i>Deputy Director</i>	<i>Deputy Director of the Division of Water Rights</i>
<i>Dredge or Fill Procedures</i>	<i>State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State</i>
<i>DOI</i>	<i>United States Department of Interior</i>
<i>ESA</i>	<i>Endangered Species Act</i>
<i>Executive Officer</i>	<i>Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Executive Officer</i>
<i>FERC</i>	<i>Federal Energy Regulatory Commission</i>
<i>FPA</i>	<i>Federal Power Act</i>
<i>kV</i>	<i>kilovolt</i>
<i>Licensee</i>	<i>Pacific Gas and Electric Company</i>

<i>Low Threat Waiver</i>	Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs), Reports of Waste Discharge (RWDs), and/or Water Recycling Requirements (WRRs) for Specific Types of Discharge Within the Central Valley Region
<i>NPDES</i>	<i>National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System</i>
<i>PG&E</i>	<i>Pacific Gas and Electric Company</i>
<i>Project</i>	<i>Camp Far West Transmission Line Project</i>
<i>Regional Water Boards</i>	<i>Regional Water Quality Control Boards</i>
<i>ROW</i>	<i>right-of-way</i>
<i>SSWD</i>	<i>South Sutter Water District</i>
<i>State Water Board</i>	<i>State Water Resources Control Board</i>
<i>USEPA</i>	<i>United States Environmental Protection Agency</i>
<i>USFWS</i>	<i>United States Fish and Wildlife Service</i>
<i>Water Boards</i>	<i>State Water Board and Regional Water Boards, collectively</i>
<i>WQMP Plans</i>	<i>Water Quality Monitoring and Protection Plans</i>

1.0 Project Description

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E or Licensee) owns and operates the Camp Far West Transmission Line Project (Project), which is also referred to as Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No. 10821. The transmission line is located in Placer and Yuba Counties, approximately five miles northeast of Wheatland, California (See Attachment A: Project Overview Map). The Project crosses: Camp Far West Reservoir on public lands administered by South Sutter Water District (SSWD), the Bear River and Grasshopper Slough on private lands, and Dry Creek on public lands administered by the Department of Defense at Beale Air Force Base.

The existing Project FERC license includes a 1.9-mile-long, 60-kilovolt (kV), wood pole transmission line. The transmission line has a right-of-way (ROW)¹ that is 40 feet in width, except for two small sections that are 10 feet and 20 feet in width near SSWD's Camp Far West Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 2997) Powerhouse.

As part of FERC Project relicensing, PG&E is seeking to add an existing 9-mile-long section of the Smartville-Lincoln 60-kV line to the Project. The combined 10.9-mile-long Project transmission line is supported by 189 wooden structures and two steel structures. The Project transmits an annual average of approximately 26,900 megawatt hours from SSWD's Camp Far West Hydroelectric Project to a switch on the Smartville-Nicholas No. 1 60-kV transmission line near the Beale Air Force Base Meter Station.

In addition to continued delivery of hydroelectric power, PG&E proposes continued maintenance procedures to ensure safe and ongoing operations. For additional information on the Project, please refer to Attachment B (Project Overview).

2.0 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Proceedings

In 1981, at the request of SSWD, PG&E built the Project's 1.9-mile-long transmission line to provide electricity from SSWD's Camp Far West Hydroelectric Project Powerhouse to SSWD's Camp Far West Reservoir South Shore Recreation Area and PG&E's integrated transmission and distribution system (PG&E 2019). The transmission line was originally included in SSWD's 1981 Camp Far West Hydroelectric Project license. In 1989, FERC requested that PG&E and SSWD either revise the existing Camp Far West Hydroelectric Project license to include PG&E as a co-licensee or PG&E would need to independently license the transmission line with FERC.

On June 26, 1989, SSWD requested FERC remove the transmission line from its license and separately license it to PG&E. On April 19, 1990, FERC issued PG&E an independent license for the Project and separately amended SSWD's Camp Far West Hydroelectric Project license to remove the transmission line. PG&E's Project license

¹ Right-of-way is the corridor of land immediately below and adjacent to the Project's transmission line that PG&E uses to access, inspect, maintain, and operate Project facilities.

expired on June 30, 2021, concurrently with SSWD's Camp Far West Hydroelectric Project license.

On June 27, 2019, PG&E filed a final license application with FERC proposing to relicense the Project for a new license term of 40 years (PG&E 2019). On October 26, 2022, FERC requested PG&E provide documentation from the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) of either an application for, or waiver of water quality certification (certification) for the Project under Clean Water Act section 401.

3.0 Regulatory Authority

3.1 Water Quality Certification and Related Authorities

The federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §§ 1251-1388) was enacted "to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters." (33 U.S.C. § 1251(a).) The Clean Water Act relies significantly on state participation and support in light of "the primary responsibilities and rights of States to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution" and "plan the development and use" of water resources. (33 U.S.C. § 1251(b).) Section 101 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1251(g)) requires federal agencies to "co-operate with State and local agencies to develop comprehensive solutions to prevent, reduce and eliminate pollution in concert with programs for managing water resources." (33 U.S.C. § 1251(g).)

Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1341) requires any applicant for a federal license or permit that may result in a discharge into navigable waters to provide the licensing or permitting federal agency with certification that the project will comply with specified provisions of the Clean Water Act, including water quality standards and implementation plans promulgated pursuant to section 303 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1313). Clean Water Act section 401 directs the agency responsible for certification to prescribe effluent limitations and other conditions necessary to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act and with "any other appropriate requirement of State law." (33 U.S.C. § 1341(d).) Section 401 further provides that certification conditions shall become conditions of any federal license or permit for the project. (*Ibid.*)

The State Water Board is the state agency responsible for Clean Water Act section 401 certification in California. (Wat. Code, § 13160.) The State Water Board has delegated authority to act on applications for certification to the Executive Director of the State Water Board. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 3838, subd. (a).)

Water Code section 13383 authorizes the State Water Board to "establish monitoring, inspection, entry, reporting, and recordkeeping requirements" and obtain "other information as may be reasonably required" for activities subject to certification under section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

Procedure, Application, and Noticing

The State Water Board received a certification application from PG&E for the Project, dated July 11, 2023. On July 14, 2023, FERC issued a notice of waiver period for the certification application, stating the State Water Board received the application on July 13, 2023 and that if the State Water Board fails or refuses to act on the certification request on or before July 13, 2024, then the agency certifying authority is deemed waived pursuant to Section 401(a)(1) of the Clean Water Act. (33 U.S.C. § 1341(a)(1).) (FERC 2023.) On August 11, 2023, State Water Board staff provided public notice of the application pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3858, by posting information describing the Project on the State Water Board's website. No comments were received in response to this notice.

On May 10, 2024, State Water Board staff requested comments on the Project certification conditions from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Regional Water Board). (See Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 3855, subd. (b)(2)(B).) Central Valley Regional Board staff did not provide comments.

3.2 Water Quality Control Plans and Related Authorities

The State Water Board's certification for the Project must ensure compliance with applicable water quality standards in the Central Valley Regional Water Board's *Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the Sacramento River Basin and San Joaquin River Basin* (Central Valley Basin Plan) (Central Valley Regional Water Board 2019), and the *Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary* (Bay-Delta Plan) (State Water Board 2018).²

Water quality control plans designate the beneficial uses of water to be protected (such as municipal and domestic supply, industrial, agriculture, and fish and wildlife habitat), water quality objectives for the reasonable protection of the beneficial uses and the prevention of nuisance, and a program of implementation to achieve the water quality objectives. (Wat. Code, §§ 13241, 13050, subds. (h), (j).) The beneficial uses, together with the water quality objectives contained in the water quality control plans and applicable state and federal anti-degradation requirements, constitute California's water quality standards for purposes of the Clean Water Act. In issuing certification for a project, the State Water Board must ensure consistency with the designated beneficial uses of waters affected by the project, the water quality objectives developed to protect those uses, and anti-degradation requirements. (*PUD No. 1 of Jefferson County v. Washington Dept. of Ecology* (1994) 511 U.S. 700, 714-719.)

The California Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards) have primary responsibility for the formulation and adoption of water quality control plans for their respective regions, subject to State Water Board and United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) approval, as appropriate. (Wat. Code, § 13240 et seq.) As noted above, the State Water Board may also adopt water quality control plans, which

² Based on the nature of the Project and distance from the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary, impacts to water quality objectives listed for waterbodies in the Bay-Delta Plan are not anticipated to occur from Project activities.

will supersede regional water quality control plans for the same waters to the extent of any conflict. (Wat. Code, § 13170.) The State Water Board and Regional Water Boards (collectively Water Boards) adopt the plans pursuant to their authorities under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Wat. Code, § 13000 et seq.) and the federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1313).

Central Valley Basin Plan

The Central Valley Regional Water Board adopted, and the State Water Board and USEPA approved, the Central Valley Basin Plan. The Central Valley Basin Plan designates the beneficial uses of water to be protected along with the water quality objectives necessary to protect those uses. The Central Valley Basin Plan specifies that the beneficial uses of any specifically identified waterbody generally apply to its tributary streams. The Central Valley Basin Plan identifies the existing beneficial uses for the Bear River and its tributaries (including Dry Creek, Grasshopper Slough, and Camp Far West Reservoir) as: municipal and domestic supply; irrigation; stock watering; power; water contact recreation; canoeing and rafting; other non-contact recreation; warm freshwater habitat; cold freshwater habitat; and wildlife habitat. Additionally, the Central Valley Basin Plan identifies potential beneficial uses of the Bear River and its tributaries (including Dry Creek, Grasshopper Slough, and Camp Far West Reservoir) as: warm water migratory habitat; cold water migratory habitat; warm spawning habitat; and cold spawning habitat.

Antidegradation Policy

The State Water Board's [Statement of Policy with Respect to Maintaining High Quality Waters in California](#) (Antidegradation Policy)³ (State Water Board 1968) requires that the quality of existing high-quality water be maintained unless any change will be consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the state, will not unreasonably impact present or anticipated future beneficial uses of such water, and will not result in water quality less than that prescribed in water quality control plans or policies. The Antidegradation Policy further requires best practicable treatment or control of the discharge necessary to assure that pollution or nuisance will not occur and the highest water quality consistent with maximum benefit to the people of the state will be maintained. The state Antidegradation Policy incorporates the federal Antidegradation Policy (40 C.F.R. § 131.12), which requires "[e]xisting instream water uses and the level of water quality necessary to protect the existing uses shall be maintained and protected." (*Id.*, § 131.12(a)(1).)

Comprehensive Plan

Section 10(a)(2)(A) of the Federal Power Act requires FERC to consider the extent to which a project is consistent with Federal or state comprehensive plans for improving, developing, or conserving a waterway or waterways affected by a project. In March 2019, the State Water Board submitted to FERC the plans and policies included in the state's comprehensive plan for orderly and coordinated control, protection,

³ State Water Board Resolution No. 68-16 and any amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/1968/rs68_016.pdf. Accessed on July 1, 2024.

conservation, development, and utilization of the water resources of the state. This submission included the Central Valley Basin Plan and Antidegradation Policy, which are discussed above, and other applicable plans and policies for water quality control. (FERC 2024.)

3.3 Construction General Permit

Coverage under the State Water Board's [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System \(NPDES\) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities](#) (Construction General Permit)⁴ (State Water Board 2022) is required for activities that disturb one or more acres of soil, or that disturb less than one acre but are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres. Construction activities subject to the Construction General Permit include clearing, grading, and disturbances to the ground such as stockpiling or excavation, but do not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility. Coverage is required pursuant to Clean Water Act sections 301 and 402 which prohibit certain discharges of stormwater containing pollutants except in compliance with a NPDES permit. (33 U.S.C. §§ 1311, 1342(p); 40 C.F.R. pts. 122, 123, and 124.)

3.4 Aquatic Weed Control General Permit

The [Statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit for Residual Aquatic Pesticide Discharges to Waters of the United States from Algae and Aquatic Weed Control Applications](#) (Aquatic Weed Control General Permit)⁵ (State Water Board 2013) applies to projects that require aquatic weed management activities. The Aquatic Weed Control General Permit sets forth detailed management practices to protect water quality from pesticide and herbicide use associated with aquatic weed control.

3.5 Utility Wildfire General Order

On June 28, 2024, the State Water Board released for public review and comment a draft [Utility Wildfire and Similar Operations and Maintenance Activities Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification and Waste Discharge Requirements General Order](#) (Utility

⁴ State Water Board Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ and NPDES No. CAS000002, as amended by Order No. 2010-0014-DWQ, Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ, Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, and any amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/construction.html. Accessed on July 1, 2024.

⁵ Water Quality Order No. 2013-0002-DWQ and NPDES No. CAG990005, as amended by Order No. 2014-0078-DWQ, Order No. 2015-0029-DWQ, Order No. 2016-0073-EXEC, and any amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/npdes/pesticides/weed_control.html. Accessed on July 1, 2024.

Wildfire General Order)⁶ (State Water Board 2024). The draft Utility Wildfire General Order covers the following activities that may cause or threaten to cause a discharge of waste into waters of the state or potentially effect water quality: (1) electric utility company wildfire risk mitigation, response, and cleanup activities; and (2) electric utility infrastructure operations and maintenance activities that are not directly related to wildfire. The activities covered by the Utility Wildfire General Order have the potential to discharge waste to waters of the state including sediment, herbicides, oils and greases, and some vegetative waste. The Utility Wildfire General Order imposes conditions that avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to waters of the state. The Utility Wildfire General Order seeks to provide a consistent set of requirements for owners and operators of electrical utility infrastructure located throughout the state in order to avoid inconsistent procedures and additional costs. The Utility Wildfire General Order establishes a framework to streamline the permitting process so that authorization of critical operation and maintenance activities is issued efficiently while protecting water quality.

California has had an increase in wildfire intensity and frequency in recent years due to drought, tree mortality due to pests, climate change, fuel accumulation, and fire suppression. One of the drivers of wildfire in California has been ignition sources associated with the electrical power grid. The Utility Wildfire General Order seeks to facilitate wildfire prevention work to reduce risks to water quality posed by wildfires and to facilitate post-wildfire response activities that help mitigate the negative water quality impacts caused by wildfire.

3.6 Waste Discharge Requirements or Waiver

Waste discharge requirements or waivers thereof regulate the discharge of waste that may affect the waters of the state. For example, the Central Valley Regional Water Board adopted [Resolution R5-2023-0061](#), establishing a Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs), Reports of Waste Discharge (RWDs), and/or Water Recycling Requirements (WRRs) for Specific Types of Discharge Within the Central Valley Region (Low Threat Waiver) (Central Valley Regional Water Board 2023). Discharges that may be regulated under WDRs or waiver of WDRs include disposal of dredge material to land, recycled water for construction projects and dust control, construction dewatering operations, and short-term or intermittent vehicle and equipment washing. As applicable, PG&E may obtain coverage under the Central Valley Regional Water Board's Low Threat Waiver or other applicable permits approved by the Deputy Director of the Division of Water Rights (Deputy Director).

⁶ Statewide Utility Wildfire and Similar Operations and Maintenance Activities available in Draft online at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/statewide-utility-wildfire-mitigation-general-order.html. Anticipated final in 2024.

3.7 State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State

The [State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State](#) (Dredge or Fill Procedures)⁷ (State Water Board 2019 and 2021) provide California's definition of wetland, wetland delineation procedures, and procedures for submitting applications for activities that could result in discharges of dredged or fill material to waters of the state. The Dredge or Fill Procedures ensure that State Water Board regulatory activities will result in no net loss of wetland quantity, quality, or permanence, compliant with the *California Wetlands Conservation Policy*, Executive Order W-59-93. PG&E must comply with the Dredge or Fill Procedures when conducting dredge or fill activities that may impact waters of the state, including wetlands and vernal pools.

3.8 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Listing

On January 19, 2022, the State Water Board adopted the [2020-2022 California Integrated Report for Clean Water Act Sections 303\(d\) and 305\(b\)](#)⁸ (2020-2022 California Integrated Report; State Water Board 2022) and it was approved by USEPA on May 11, 2022. The 2020-2022 California Integrated Report lists portions of the Bear River as follows:

- Camp Far West Reservoir is listed for mercury; and
- Bear River downstream of Camp Far West Reservoir is listed for mercury, aluminum, iron, and chlorpyrifos.

Dry Creek, tributary to Lower Bear River in Yuba and Nevada Counties, and Grasshopper Slough, a tributary to Lower Bear River in Yuba County, are not listed per the 2020-2022 California Integrated Report.

Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires total maximum daily loads to be developed for impaired waterbodies. Total maximum daily loads are control programs that define the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive without exceeding water quality standards and establish waste load allocations and load allocations for point and nonpoint sources of pollution, respectively. Total maximum daily load allocations for Project-affected waters are expected to be completed by 2037.

⁷ The Dredge or Fill Procedures and any amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/wrapp.html. Accessed on July 1, 2024.

⁸ 2020-2022 California Integrated Report. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/2020_2022_integrated_report.html. Accessed on July 1, 2024.

4.0 California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) applies to discretionary projects that may cause a direct or indirect physical change in the environment. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) When proposing to undertake or approve a discretionary project, state agencies must comply with the procedural and substantive requirements of CEQA. The State Water Board is the lead agency for the purpose of compliance with CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.).

The Project's activities are not expected to have a significant effect on the environment and the State Water Board has determined that the Project is categorically exempt from CEQA under California Code of Regulations, title 14, sections 15301 (Existing Facilities), 15302 (Replacement or Reconstruction), 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land), and 15309 (Inspections). Additionally, the State Water Board finds that no exceptions to these exemptions apply to the Project activities covered by this certification. The State Water Board will file a Notice of Exemption with the Office of Planning and Research within five days of issuance of this certification. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15062.)

5.0 Rationale for Water Quality Certification Conditions

This section of the certification explains that the grant of certification, as conditioned, is warranted and why the conditions in Section 7.0 are necessary to ensure that the Project activities will comply with water quality requirements. This section also includes, as necessary, citations to federal, state, or tribal laws that authorize the conditions and sets forth citations to applicable regulatory authority. Section 3.0 also sets forth citations to applicable regulatory authority. The explanation and citations should be evaluated in the context of the certification as a whole, but the certification conditions are set forth only in Section 7.0.

As explained in this section, the conditions in this certification are generally required pursuant to the Central Valley Basin Plan, as described in Section 3.0, Regulatory Authority.

The Dredge or Fill Procedures, adopted pursuant to Water Code sections 13140 and 13170, authorize approval of dredge or fill projects subject to satisfaction of specified requirements. California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3830 et seq., set forth state regulations pertaining to certifications. In particular, section 3856 sets forth information that must be included in certification requests, and section 3860 sets forth standard conditions that shall be included in all certification actions.

Water Code sections 13267 and 13383 authorize the Water Boards to establish monitoring and reporting requirements for persons discharging or proposing to discharge waste to navigable waters. Water Code section 1051 additionally authorizes the State Water Board to investigate waters diverted for beneficial use. Moreover, this certification ensures continued monitoring, reporting, and assessment of water quality for the Project activities that may impact waters of the state.

In general, the code citations, plans, and policies that support issuance of this certification that are described in Section 3.0 are not duplicated in this section. The conditions in this certification were developed to ensure compliance with water quality standards and water quality requirements established under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act and the federal Clean Water Act, including requirements in applicable water quality control plans and other appropriate requirements of state law. The conditions in Section 7.0 of this certification are necessary to protect the beneficial uses of waters of the state identified in water quality control plans, prevent degradation of water quality, and help ensure compliance with state and federal water quality requirements.

When preparing the conditions in this certification, State Water Board staff reviewed and considered the following information:

- PG&E's July 2023 application for certification (PG&E 2023) which includes by reference additional information on Project activities provided by PG&E on December 22, 2022 (PG&E 2022);
- PG&E's final license application (PG&E 2019);
- Recommended and preliminary FERC license terms and conditions submitted by state and federal agencies pursuant to Federal Power Act (FPA) section 10(j).
 - California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) August 27, 2020, FPA section 10(j) recommendations for the Project (CDFW 2020); and
 - United States Department of Interior (DOI), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), September 25, 2020 FPA section 10(j) recommendations for the Project (USFWS DOI 2020a);
- FERC's National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Assessment for the Project (FERC 2022);
- Beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and implementation measures and programs described in the Central Valley Basin Plan;
- Applicable water quality information, permits, policies, objectives, implementation measures, and programs (e.g., Dredge or Fill Procedures, Construction General Permit, etc.);
- Project-related controllable water quality factors; and
- Other information in the record.

This certification is issued pursuant to the final 2023 *Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification Rule* (Fed. Reg. 66558-66666 (September 27, 2023) [amending 40 C.F.R. Parts 121, 122, 124]) that went into effect on November 27, 2023 (2023 Rule), but also complies with the previous USEPA's *Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification Rule*, 85 Fed. Reg. 42, 210 (July 13, 2020) (2020 Rule) that was in effect for portions of 2020-2023 should it reemerge as a result of litigation or any other reason. To the extent FERC or any other federal agency considers any certification condition to include requirements outside the substantive scope of the 2020 Rule—including but not limited to 40 C.F.R. §§ 121.1(f) and (n), 121.3, 121.7(d)(1), and 121.9(b)—the 2020 Rule is inconsistent with federal law and controlling case law. The 2023 Rule restores the scope of certification “that is consistent with not only the statutory language and congressional intent but also longstanding [USEPA] guidance and decades of Supreme

Court case law.” (Fed. Reg. 65591-66606 [Scope of Certification].) Under section 401 of the Clean Water Act, when an activity requiring a federal permit or license “may result in any discharge into the navigable waters,” the applicant is required to obtain a certification that states the activity will comply with applicable water quality standards and that also sets forth any “limitations” and “monitoring requirements” necessary to assure that the “applicant” will comply with water quality standards and “any other appropriate requirement of State law.” (33 U.S.C. § 1341(a) & (d).) Certification is required for such activity as a whole, not merely for its point-source discharges to waters of the United States. (*PUD No. 1*, supra, 511 U.S. at pp. 711-712.) USEPA replaced the 2020 Rule because, among other faults, it “may prevent state and tribal authorities from adequately protecting their water quality,” “may result in a state or tribe’s certification or conditions being permanently waived as a result of non-substantive and easily fixed procedural concerns,” and “may limit the flexibility of certifications and permits to adapt to changing circumstances.” (86 Fed. Reg. 29,543-29,544 (June 2, 2021).) As explained in this certification, each certification condition is authorized by applicable state and federal law and is necessary to ensure compliance with such laws. This paragraph is hereby incorporated as part of the explanatory statement for each condition of this certification.

5.1 Rationale for Condition 1: Project Activities

As described in Section 5.0, this certification is granted based on the application and supporting information submitted in accordance with the State Water Board’s regulations and subject to requirements of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Condition 1 requires PG&E to implement the Project as: (1) described in PG&E’s July 2023 certification application (PG&E 2023), which includes by reference additional information on Project activities provided by PG&E on December 22, 2022 (PG&E 2022) and PG&E’s 2019 final license application for the Project (PG&E 2019); and (2) modified by the conditions of this certification. Condition 1 will help ensure that the Project is implemented in a manner that protects water quality objectives and avoids unreasonable impacts to beneficial uses. Any changes to the Project description that are inconsistent with the Project certification application could impact the findings, conclusions, and conditions of the certification and may necessitate the filing of an amendment or new application as well as trigger additional environmental review.

Existing and potential beneficial uses of the Bear River and its tributaries (including Dry Creek, Grasshopper Slough, and Camp Far West Reservoir) that may be impacted by Project activities, which involve implementation of routine operation and maintenance of the Project facilities, include: municipal and domestic supply; irrigation; stock watering; power; contact recreation; canoeing and rafting; other non-contact recreation; warm freshwater habitat; cold freshwater habitat; warm water migratory habitat; cold water migratory habitat; warm spawning habitat; cold spawning habitat; and wildlife habitat.

5.2 Rationale for Condition 2: Construction General Permit, Water Quality Monitoring and Protection Plans, and Other Applicable Permits

Erosion and sedimentation can contribute to degradation of waters of the state; therefore, it is necessary to implement measures during Project activities in order to protect water quality and associated beneficial uses. Project activities, in part, include: inspections; vegetation management; repair and replacement of transmission line poles, conductors, and electrical equipment; and road repair and maintenance that may result in discharges to waters of the United States and waters of the state. Condition 2 includes provisions for the protection of water quality and beneficial uses from erosion related to Project activities. Increases in erosion and sedimentation can violate water quality objectives and impact existing and potential beneficial uses of the Bear River and its tributaries (including Dry Creek, Grasshopper Slough, and Camp Far West Reservoir) including, but not limited to: municipal and domestic supply; irrigation; stock watering; contact recreation; warm freshwater habitat; cold freshwater habitat; warm water migratory habitat; cold water migratory habitat; warm spawning habitat; cold spawning habitat; and wildlife habitat.

Condition 2 requires PG&E to, as applicable, comply with the Construction General Permit, other applicable permits approved by the Deputy Director, or to develop and implement Water Quality Monitoring and Protection Plans (WQMP Plans) to protect water quality and beneficial uses that may be impacted by Project activities. WQMP Plans will be developed for Project activities with the potential to cause erosion, stream sedimentation, release of hazardous materials, or otherwise impair water quality that are not otherwise covered by other provisions of the certification. Condition 2 is required pursuant to Clean Water Act sections 301 and 402 that prohibit certain discharges of stormwater containing pollutants except in compliance with an NPDES permit. (33 U.S.C. sections 1311, and 1342(p); 40 C.F.R. pts. 122, 123, and 124.). Condition 2 is required pursuant to Water Code section 13264, which prohibits any discharge that is not specifically authorized in this certification. Additionally, Condition 2 includes procedures for work stoppage and reporting exceedances of water quality objectives related to Project activities.

5.3 Rationale for Condition 3: Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials management is essential to ensure hazardous materials are properly stored, transported, and managed in the Project area to avoid the discharge of hazardous materials to surface waters. Such discharges could result in impacts to beneficial uses, including impacts to aquatic resources and their habitats.

Project activities, in part, include: inspections; vegetation management; repair and replacement of transmission line poles, conductors, and electrical equipment; and road repair and maintenance that may result in the use of heavy equipment that will require refueling and servicing. Hazardous materials management requires implementation of best management practices to prevent, minimize, and/or clean up spills. Fuels and lubricants associated with the use of mechanized equipment have the potential to result in toxic discharges to surface water or violation of water quality standards, including the toxicity and floating materials Central Valley Basin Plan water quality objectives.

The Central Valley Basin Plan includes narrative water quality objectives for oil, grease, and other hazardous materials. Waters must be free of hazardous materials in concentrations that cause nuisance or “detrimental physiological responses in human, plant, animal, or aquatic life.” (Central Valley Regional Water Board 2019.) Condition 3 requires implementation of hazardous materials management measures to prevent hazardous material spills into waterways, including containment pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 27, section 20320. Secondary containment around hazardous materials storage sites helps ensure that any leaks or spills of hazardous materials do not result in a discharge to waters. Condition 3 is required pursuant to Water Code section 13264, which prohibits any discharge that is not specifically authorized in this certification.

Existing and potential beneficial uses of the Bear River and its tributaries (including Dry Creek, Grasshopper Slough, and Camp Far West Reservoir) that may be impacted by releases of hazardous materials during Project activities include: municipal and domestic supply, irrigation; stock watering; power; contact recreation; canoeing and rafting; other non-contact recreation; warm freshwater habitat; cold freshwater habitat; warm water migratory habitat; cold water migratory habitat; warm spawning habitat; cold spawning habitat; and wildlife habitat.

5.4 Rationale for Condition 4: Biological Resources

According to PG&E’s 2019 final license application, Project activities, in part, consist of vegetation management required for compliance with California Public Resources Code (CPRC) sections 4292 and 4293 (PG&E 2019) and may include the use of herbicides to maintain clearance around the Project’s transmission line ROWs. CPRC section 4292 requires the removal of vegetation around non-exempt electrical transmission or distribution line poles and towers. CPRC section 4293 and California Public Utilities Commission, General Order 95, Rule 35 require the removal of hazard trees and specify minimum clearances between Project structures and adjacent vegetation. Through PG&E’s Integrated Vegetation Management Program, the Project involves vegetation management in the immediate vicinity of the overhead electric facilities in order to reduce the risk of possible ignitions associated with vegetation contact.

Vegetation management activities may result in erosion, increased sediment loads, and turbidity that adversely affect water quality and the beneficial uses of the receiving water. Condition 4(A) is necessary to ensure that vegetation management and herbicide application activities do not exceed water quality objectives established in the Central Valley Basin Plan, including water quality objectives for sediment, settleable materials, and toxicity. Condition 4(A) also requires PG&E to comply with, as applicable, the terms and conditions in the State Water Board’s Aquatic Weed Control General Permit (State Water Board 2013), and amendments thereto.

Condition 4(B) is necessary to protect water quality as soil borne pathogens and non-native invasive plant species can cause disease and death to native wetland and riparian plant species, which may alter ecosystem processes such as nutrient cycling, hydrological cycles, frequencies of wildfires, erosion, and sediment deposition. The spread of soil borne pathogens devastate native species populations in riparian

ecosystems (Bossard et al., 2000). Non-native invasive plant species degrade physical and chemical water quality characteristics, and overgrown invasive vegetation reduces native plant species habitat and alters habitat for native terrestrial and aquatic species. Species diversity and growth anomalies, which are adversely affected by invasive species and soil borne pathogens, are measures of water quality health as it relates to water quality objectives for toxic substances. The Central Valley Basin Plan provides: “All waters shall be maintained free of toxic substances in concentrations that produce detrimental physiological responses in human, plant, animal, or aquatic life. This objective applies regardless of whether the toxicity is caused by a single substance or the interactive effect of multiple substances. Compliance with this objective will be determined by analyses of indicator organisms, species diversity, population density, growth anomalies, and biotoxicity tests of appropriate duration or other methods as specified by the [Central Valley Regional Water Board]” (Central Valley Basin Plan, section 3.1.20; Central Valley Regional Water Board 2019).

Condition 4(C) requires the Licensee mitigate impacts to riparian, stream, or wetland areas in compliance with the Dredge or Fill Procedures (State Water Board 2019) and through implementation of TE-1 as proposed in PG&E’s final license application, and as modified by this certification. Per the Dredge or Fill Procedures, impacts to waters of the state are not authorized and shall not occur until a compensatory mitigation plan has been approved by the Deputy Director. State Water Board staff understands that PG&E’s 2019 final license application identified 0.2 acre of vernal pools within the FERC Project boundary. PG&E’s 2019 final license application states that the vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*) is the only federal Endangered Species Act listed species that has been reported in the Project boundary or near the Project (PG&E 2019).

Existing and potential beneficial uses of the Bear River and its tributaries (including Dry Creek, Grasshopper Slough, and Camp Far West Reservoir) that may be adversely affected by Project vegetation management and herbicide application activities, the spread of invasive species and soil borne pathogens, and wetland impacts, include but are not limited to: irrigation; other non-contact recreation; warm freshwater habitat; cold freshwater habitat; warm water migratory habitat; cold water migratory habitat; warm spawning habitat; cold spawning habitat; and wildlife habitat. Wildlife habitat is a designated beneficial use of water that supports “terrestrial or wetland ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation and enhancement of terrestrial habitats or wetlands, vegetation, wildlife (e.g., mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates), or wildlife water and food sources. (Central Valley Basin Plan, section 2.0; Central Valley Regional Water Board 2019.)

5.5 Rationale for Condition 5: Wildfire

California has had an increase in wildfire intensity and frequency in recent years due to drought, tree mortality due to pests, climate change, fuel accumulation, and fire suppression. One of the drivers of wildfire in California has been ignition sources associated with the electrical power grid. Project activities relate to wildfire management because maintenance of Project facilities reduces the risk of future wildfires. Wildfires pose a significant public risk and adversely impact water quality through contribution to

erodible surfaces and the potential discharge of hazardous materials. Waste discharges from wildfire prevention and response activities can adversely impact water quality and often require a permit from the Water Boards. The State Water Board is developing a Utility Wildfire General Order to protect water quality from discharges related to these activities. PG&E did not propose a wildfire plan as part of its Project, and pointed to its 2012 overall company-wide Fire Prevention Plan (PG&E 2012). Condition 5 requires PG&E to comply with the Utility Wildfire General Order (State Water Board 2024), if adopted, and any amendments thereto. Condition 5 further specifies that in the event of any conflict between this certification and applicable requirements of the Utility Wildfire General Order, the more stringent shall apply.

Existing and potential beneficial uses of the Bear River and its tributaries (including Dry Creek, Grasshopper Slough, and Camp Far West Reservoir) that may be impacted by Project activities and wildfire response, mitigation, and/or clean-up activities include: municipal and domestic supply; irrigation; stock watering; power; contact recreation; canoeing and rafting; other non-contact recreation; warm freshwater habitat; cold freshwater habitat; warm water migratory habitat; cold water migratory habitat; warm spawning habitat; cold spawning habitat; and wildlife habitat.

5.6 Rationale for Condition 6: Reporting

Condition 6 requires PG&E to submit reports every five years. The purpose of the reports is to identify planned maintenance activities, identify activities that have had or may have the potential to impact water quality and beneficial uses, and identify measures that will be implemented to avoid or mitigate such potential impacts. The reports will assist USFWS, CDFW, Central Valley Regional Board, and State Water Board staff in evaluating Project impacts, including those to water quality and beneficial uses, associated with the implementation of the new FERC license for the Project. The reports provide an opportunity for communication and coordination between PG&E and resource agencies. The reports will summarize Project activities completed in the previous five years and planned for the next five years, in order to inform the ongoing protection of water quality and beneficial uses.

The reports allow for the identification of any changed conditions (e.g., newly listed species that could be impacted by the Project and confirm that the certification conditions are being implemented and are sufficient to protect beneficial uses and water quality objectives or additional measures are needed. Reporting of compliance failures also ensures that corrective actions can be taken. This reporting condition is authorized because the Water Boards have the authority to investigate the quality of any waters of the state under Water Code sections 13383 and 13267. The burden of preparing these reports, including costs, are reasonable to the need and benefits of obtaining the reports. The anticipated costs are minimal. Water Code section 13264 prohibits any discharge that is not specifically authorized in this certification.

Existing and potential beneficial uses of the Bear River and its tributaries (including Dry Creek, Grasshopper Slough, and Camp Far West Reservoir) that may be impacted by Project activities include: municipal and domestic supply; irrigation; stock watering; power; contact recreation; canoeing and rafting; other non-contact recreation; warm

freshwater habitat; cold freshwater habitat; warm water migratory habitat; cold water migratory habitat; warm spawning habitat; cold spawning habitat; and wildlife habitat.

5.7 Rationale for Conditions 7 through 25

This certification imposes additional conditions regarding Project approvals, monitoring, enforcement, and potential future revisions. This section explains why a condition is necessary to assure that the authorized Project activities will comply with water quality requirements, and cites to federal, state, or tribal law that authorizes the condition. (40 C.F.R. § 121.7(d)(1).) The statements in this section correspond with the conditions set forth in Conditions 7 through 25. In addition, the code citations, plans, and policies that support issuance of this certification are described in Sections 3.0 and are not duplicated in this section but are incorporated herein. Conditions 7 through 25 are necessary to protect the beneficial uses of waters of the state identified in water quality control plans, prevent degradation of water quality, and help ensure compliance with state and federal water quality requirements.

Condition 7 is necessary to comply with Water Code section 13167 and Conditions 8 through 11 contain important clarifications concerning the scope and legal effect of this certification, and other legal requirements that may apply to the Project.

Monitoring, reporting, and assessment actions, and the information developed through such actions, must be readable, shared, and coordinated with other appropriate entities, and accessible to ensure that Project activities comply with water quality requirements. Water Code section 13167 requires the Water Boards to ensure that monitoring data and assessment information are available in a single location and that the information is presented in a manner easily understandable by the public. To fulfill this legislative mandate, Condition 7 requires electronic data submittal in a compatible format with existing system specifications. Compliance with this condition enhances the accessibility of data and transparency of regulatory actions. This allows regulatory agencies and the public to better assess compliance and understand water quality trends or data anomalies by compiling data and making it readily available.

Pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) and federal Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.), Condition 8 of the certification does not authorize any act which results in the taking of a threatened, endangered, or candidate species.

An applicant for certification is required to identify other licenses, permits, and agreements in the application. In the event an applicant for certification needs authorization from the state or federal authorities, California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3856, subdivision (e), requires that the applicant provide copies of “any final and signed federal, state, and local licenses, permits, and agreements (or copies of the draft documents, if not finalized) that will be required for any construction, operation, maintenance, or other actions associated with the activity. If no final or draft document is available, a list of all remaining agency regulatory approvals being sought shall be included.” Water Code section 13160, subdivision (b)(1) allows the State Water Board to issue a certification when there is “reasonable assurance that an activity of any

person subject to the jurisdiction of the state board will comply with applicable requirements” of state and federal law. To help ensure the integrity of the certification process and its focus on the protection of water quality and compliance with other applicable state requirements, Condition 9 serves to notify applicants that there may be additional applicable federal, state, or local laws or ordinances with which they must comply.

Because agency organization and authorities change over time, Condition 10 provides direction for continuity of oversight in the event an agency’s authority or responsibility is transferred to or subsumed by another agency. The State Water Board is responsible for the water right, water quality, and drinking water functions of the California state government. (Wat. Code, § 174.) Certain certifications involve an appropriation of water subject to part 2 of division 2 of the Water Code or the diversion of water for certain beneficial uses. (See, e.g., Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 3855, subd. (b)(1)(A).) Condition 11 explains the State Water Board’s issuance of this certification is not adjudicating or approving the validity of water rights that may be related to the Project. It also recognizes the State Water Board’s authority, independent of its water quality authority, to prevent unauthorized or threatened unauthorized diversions of water. This helps to ensure that an applicant for a federal license or permit that involves a discharge to navigable waters understands that, except as specified in the certification, the certification does not constitute, or excuse the applicant from obtaining any other State Water Board approvals required for the activity.

Conditions 12 through 14 are necessary to assure that any Project activities authorized under the certification will comply with water quality requirements. These conditions are included to comply with California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3860, which sets forth conditions that must be included in all certifications. Condition 12 is a standard condition that “shall be included as conditions of all certification actions” pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3860, subdivision (a). This condition places the permittee on notice that the certification action may be modified or revoked following administrative or judicial review. Condition 13 is a standard condition that “shall be included as conditions of all water quality certification actions” pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3860, subdivision (b). This condition clarifies the scope of the certification’s application and ensures that any applicant for a federal license or permit, which may result in a discharge into navigable waters, is subject to the appropriate State certification. Condition 14 is a standard condition that “shall be included as conditions of all water quality certification actions” pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3860, subdivision (c). This fee requirement condition is also required pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3833, subdivision (b), which requires payment of fees by those applying for certification. Fees are essential to support the Water Boards certification program, which includes the development of certifications and related inspections to ensure the protection of water quality and beneficial uses that may be impacted by a project.

Conditions 15 through 25 are necessary to ensure that the Project operates to meet water quality standards and other appropriate requirements of state law, or that adjustments are made to ensure continued compliance with water quality standards in

light of new information, changes to the Project, or changes to the standards themselves.

This certification requires monitoring, reporting, and analysis as important elements to ensure that the Project activities will comply with state and federal water quality requirements and other appropriate requirements of state law. Conditions 15, 16, and 17 provide for extensions of time to comply with requirements, prevention or remedy of violations, and notification of changed conditions to ensure compliance and prevent violations of water quality standards. In the event of non-compliance, additional actions may be necessary to return the Project to compliance and prevent violation of water quality standards. Conditions 18 and 19 require compliance with the Central Valley Basin Plan and implementation of all reasonable measures to protect water quality and beneficial uses, in accordance with plans adopted pursuant to state and federal water laws. Water Code section 13267 authorizes the State Water Board to require any person or entity who has discharged, discharges, or is suspected of having discharged or discharging, or who proposes to discharge waste to furnish, under penalty of perjury, technical or monitoring reports when necessary to investigate the quality of any waters of the state. Condition 20 requires such reports that are necessary to ensure compliance with water quality standards.

Condition 21, related to site access requirements, is authorized pursuant to the Water Boards' authority to investigate the quality of any waters of the state, including specific site access authorized under Water Code sections 13267 and 13383. Site access is needed to ensure compliance with the certification and associated protection of water quality and beneficial uses. Condition 22 requires site personnel and agencies to be familiar with the content of the certification and availability of the document at the Project site. This condition is required to assure that site personnel are familiar with the conditions needed to protect water quality and Project activities will comply with the terms and conditions of this certification, which requires compliance with water quality objectives and beneficial uses adopted or approved under sections 13170 or 13245 of the Water Code, and with other appropriate requirements of state law.

Condition 23 requires that PG&E use analytical methods approved by California's Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program, when available, to ensure that such analyses are done in a consistent, approved manner.

Condition 24 provides that the State Water Board will provide notice and an opportunity to be heard in exercising its authority to add or modify certification conditions.

In the event that any provision of this certification is found invalid, Condition 25 ensures that the certification will remain effective and water quality will still be protected. (Wat. Code, § 13160.)

6.0 Conclusion

The State Water Board finds that, with the conditions and limitations imposed by this certification, the Project will be protective of the state and federal water quality standards and other appropriate requirements of state law.

7.0 Water Quality Certification Conditions

ACCORDINGLY, BASED ON ITS INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE RECORD, THE STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD CERTIFIES that implementation of the Camp Far West Transmission Line Project (Project) by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E or Licensee) will comply with sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Clean Water Act, and with applicable provisions of state law, under the following terms and conditions.

CONDITION 1 Project Activities

Unless otherwise modified by conditions of this water quality certification (certification), the Licensee shall implement Project activities and best management practices as described in PG&E's July 2023 certification application (PG&E 2023), as augmented by PG&E on December 22, 2022 with additional information on Project activities (PG&E 2022) and PG&E's June 27, 2019 final license application.

For Project activities involving planned in-water work, dewatering, or water diversion, water quality monitoring shall be conducted in accordance with a Water Quality Monitoring and Protection Plan (WQMP Plan) (See Condition 2) approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Deputy Director of the Division of Water Rights (Deputy Director).

CONDITION 2 Construction General Permit, Water Quality Monitoring and Protection Plans, and Other Applicable Permits

2(A) Construction General Permit

When applicable, the Licensee shall comply with the State Water Board's *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities* ([Construction General Permit](#))⁹ (State Water Board 2022), and amendments thereto. If there is any conflict between the conditions of this certification and applicable conditions in the Construction General Permit, the more stringent shall apply.

2(B) Water Quality Monitoring Protections Plans (WQMP Plans) or Coverage Under Other Applicable Permit

For construction or other activities with the potential to impact water quality or beneficial uses that are not covered by the Construction General Permit, the Licensee shall:

⁹ Water Quality Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ and NPDES No. CAS000002, as amended by Order No. 2010-0014-DWQ, Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ, and amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/construction.html. Accessed on July 1, 2024.

(a) enroll under an applicable permit¹⁰ for the proposed activities, if approved to do so by the Deputy Director; or (b) prepare and implement site-specific WQMP Plans for Deputy Director review and consideration of approval. The Deputy Director may require modifications as part of any approval.

WQMP Plans. The WQMP Plans must demonstrate compliance with water quality objectives in the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's (Central Valley Regional Water Board) *Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the Sacramento River Basin and San Joaquin River Basin* (Central Valley Basin Plan) (Central Valley Regional Water Board 2019), as adopted and may be amended by the Central Valley Regional Water Board. At a minimum, water quality objectives that shall be evaluated for monitoring and discussed in the WQMP Plans include sediment, turbidity, pH, temperature, and dissolved oxygen. The WQMP Plans shall describe why monitoring for certain parameters is not needed or describe the monitoring that will be implemented for a given parameter.

The Licensee shall submit WQMP Plans to the Deputy Director for review and consideration for approval at least 90 days prior to the desired start date of the applicable construction or maintenance activity unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Director. The objective of the WQMP Plans shall be to identify and implement control measures for construction, maintenance, or other activities with the potential to cause erosion, stream sedimentation, fugitive dust, soil mass movement, release of hazardous materials, or other water quality impairment.

WQMP Plans shall be based on site conditions, and at a minimum shall include:

- (1) A description of site conditions and the proposed activity;
- (2) Detailed descriptions, design drawings, and specific topographic locations of all control measures in relation to the proposed activity, which may include:
 - a. Measures to divert runoff away from disturbed land surfaces;
 - b. Measures to collect and treat (as necessary) runoff from disturbed land surfaces prior to being discharged to surface waters; and
 - c. Measures to dissipate energy and prevent erosion.
- (3) Revegetation measures for disturbed areas, which shall include use of native plants and locally-sourced plants and seeds; and
- (4) A monitoring, maintenance, and reporting schedule.

The Licensee shall file with FERC the Deputy Director-approved WQMP Plans, and any approved amendments thereto. The Licensee shall implement the WQMP Plans upon receipt of Deputy Director and any other required approvals, in accordance with the

¹⁰ An example of a potentially applicable permit available at the time of certification issuance is the Central Valley Regional Water Board [Resolution R5-2023-0061](#), establishing a *Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs), Reports of Waste Discharge (RWDs), and/or Water Recycling Requirements (WRRs) for Specific Types of Discharge Within the Central Valley Region (Low Threat Waiver)* (Central Valley Regional Water Board 2023).

schedule and requirements specified therein. Any changes to an approved WQMP Plan shall be submitted to the Deputy Director for approval prior to implementation.

2(C) Reporting of Exceedances

The Deputy Director and the Central Valley Regional Water Board Executive Officer (Executive Officer) shall be notified promptly, and in no case more than 24 hours following an exceedance of any water quality objective, as described in the Central Valley Basin Plan, and any amendments thereto. The notice shall include the cause of the exceedance, measures taken to correct the exceedance, and measures the Licensee will implement to prevent future exceedances. Regardless of when such notification occurs, activities associated with the Central Valley Basin Plan exceedance shall cease immediately upon detection. Work activities may resume after corrective actions have been implemented (if applicable), water quality meets the Central Valley Basin Plan water quality objective(s), and the Deputy Director has provided approval to resume work. The Deputy Director may require additional actions to help prevent similar exceedances in the future or to address impacts associated with the exceedance.

CONDITION 3 Hazardous Materials

Unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Director, vehicles, construction equipment, all material, debris, spoils, soil, silt, sawdust, rubbish, steel, waste material, waste containers, other organic or earthen material, or any substances which could be detrimental to water quality or hazardous to aquatic life that could be discharged as a result of Project activities, shall be prevented from entering waters of the state. Unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Director, the Licensee shall implement the hazardous materials control measures listed below:

- Caution shall be used when handling and storing hazardous materials near waterways. Appropriate materials shall be on site to prevent and manage spills. On-site spill response materials shall be onsite when performing Project activities with the potential to impact water quality. At a minimum, hazardous materials spill kits shall be clearly marked and maintained onsite adjacent to all work areas, in staging areas, and in vehicles. These kits shall include oil-absorbent material and tarps to contain and control any minor releases.
- Equipment refueling, maintenance, and washing shall be conducted in a manner that prevents hazardous materials from spilling on the ground or reaching waterways.
- Equipment associated with ground disturbing activities shall be inspected for leaks before entering the Project work area and inspected daily while on site to prevent leaks of fuels, lubricants, or other hazardous materials into aquatic habitat or waterways.
- When not in use, equipment shall be stored in upland areas outside the ordinary high-water mark of any water of the state.
- All containment areas shall include secondary containment. All containment structures shall comply with California Code of Regulations, title 27, section 20320. Secondary containment shall be specifically designed for hazardous material storage and sized to contain the most likely volume of

hazardous materials that could be spilled. Secondary containment shall be positioned to catch any hazardous material spills due to overfilling or any other spills that may occur.

- In the event a spill is not captured by the secondary containment, it shall be considered hazardous waste and must be removed and disposed of in accordance with local and state requirements.
- Any water contaminated by hazardous materials shall be considered a hazardous material and stored or disposed of in accordance with local and state requirements and in a manner that does not impair water quality.
- All waste, including trash and litter, garbage, other solid waste, petroleum products, and other potentially hazardous materials (including equipment lubricants, solvents, and cleaners), shall be removed to an appropriate waste facility permitted or otherwise authorized to treat, store, or dispose of such materials.

Following a discharge of a reportable quantity of a hazardous material or an unknown material as set forth by Water Code section 13271, the Licensee shall take all of the following actions listed in the bullets below once the Licensee has: (1) knowledge of the discharge; (2) notification is possible; and (3) notification can be provided without substantially impeding cleanup or other emergency measures:

- Call 911 or notify local response agency;
- Call the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) State Warning Center at: (800) 852-7550 or (916) 845-8911; and
- Follow the required *California Office of Emergency Services* procedures as set forth in the [Office of Emergency Services' Spill Release Reporting Web Page](#).¹¹

The Licensee shall also notify the Deputy Director and Executive Officer per requirements of Condition 2(C).

CONDITION 4 Biological Resources

4(A) Vegetation Management and Herbicide Application

The discharge or threatened discharge of vegetation management waste into waters of the state is prohibited. Unless authorized by the Deputy Director, vegetation management waste shall not be stored or staged in waters of the state, or in locations where the waste has potential to discharge to waters of the state. If vegetation is accidentally felled into or across a water of the state, it must be removed and placed outside of and away to the farthest practicable distance from waters of the state, immediately. The Licensee shall limit the removal of non-invasive vegetation to the minimum extent needed to complete Project activities. Vegetation management shall comply with applicable regulatory requirements (e.g., California Public Utilities

¹¹ Office of Emergency Services' Spill Release Reporting Webpage. Available at: <https://www.caloes.ca.gov/office-of-the-director/operations/response-operations/fire-rescue/hazardous-materials/spill-release-reporting/>. Accessed on July 1, 2024.

Commission, General Order 95; CPRC sections 4292 and 4293). The Licensee shall prioritize manual or mechanical methods over chemical methods. The Licensee shall preserve the riparian canopy to the greatest practicable extent that still complies with applicable regulatory requirements.

Herbicides shall not be applied in a manner, or at rates that cause or threaten to cause a discharge of waste to waters of the state at levels that cause or contribute to an exceedance of water quality objectives or impairment of beneficial use. If an NPDES permit is needed for potential herbicide discharges to waters of the United States, the Licensee shall comply with the *Statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit for Residual Aquatic Pesticide Discharges to Waters of the United States from Algae and Aquatic Weed Control Applications* ([Aquatic Weed Control General Permit](#))¹² (State Water Board 2013), or any amendments thereto as well as any other required permits or approvals.

Herbicide applications must comply with all laws and regulations, including any applicable water quality control plan requirements, pertaining to the storage, use, and application of herbicides. Herbicide application is prohibited under the following conditions: in winds that exceed seven miles per hour, during a precipitation event¹³ or in violation of any label directions related to precipitation, or during wildfire or wildfire response activities. Unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Director, herbicides shall not be applied within 50 feet of waters of the state. In requesting Deputy Director approval to apply herbicides within 50 feet of waters of the state, the Licensee shall provide a summary of the proposed application, including a map and verification of all necessary permits and approvals. The Deputy Director may require modifications to the herbicide application proposal as part of any approval.

4(B) Invasive Species and Soil Borne Pathogens

For the protection of wetland and riparian habitat, the Licensee is responsible for ensuring that all Project personnel follow proper weed control practices. Any straw, hay, or other unprocessed plant material used for any purpose during Project activities must be certified or documented as weed free.

¹² Water Quality Order No. 2013-0002-DWQ and NPDES No. CAG990005, as amended by Order No. 2014-0078-DWQ, Order No. 2015-0029-DWQ, Order No. 2016-0073-EXEC, and any amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/npdes/pesticides/weed_control.html. Accessed on July 1, 2024.

¹³ A precipitation event is any weather pattern that results in precipitation (rain, snow, sleet, or hail).

To prevent the spread of soil borne pathogens¹⁴, equipment used for ground disturbing Project activities must be cleaned prior to entering the Project area. Any equipment used for ground disturbing activities shall be thoroughly cleaned using methods appropriate for any known pathogen before leaving the Project area. If no known pathogens exist in the Project area, the Licensee shall document that no known soil borne pathogen infestations are present in the Project area. If equipment is cleaned in the Project area, the cleaning station shall be located at least 100 feet away from any waters of the state.

4(C) Wetland Protection

PG&E's 2019 final license application identified 0.2 acre of vernal pool habitat in the FERC Project boundary. The Licensee shall comply with the [State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State](#) (Dredge or Fill Procedures)¹⁵ (State Water Board 2019 and 2021) and any amendments thereto and ensure no net loss of wetland or riparian habitat functions associated with the Project.

Additionally, to reduce potential impacts to vernal pool habitat during Project activities, the Licensee shall implement the following vernal pool protection measure, which modifies the TE-1 measure described in Section 3.8.3 of PG&E's 2019 final license application.

TE-1 – Vernal Pool Protection Measure:

For any Project activities that could potentially impact vernal pools including those between existing poles 11/227 and 12/232, the Licensee shall implement the following avoidance and minimization measures:

- Conduct environmental awareness and site-specific training prior to commencing work around vernal pool feature. The training shall inform personnel of the sensitive vernal pool habitats, the vernal pool fairy shrimp, and the avoidance and minimization measures that shall be implemented during Project activities.
- Use existing roads to access the work site.
- Minimize the footprint of Project activities to avoid adverse impacts to vernal pools and associated aquatic species. Avoid vernal pool habitats, including vernal pools occurring between two existing poles (i.e., 11/227

¹⁴ Soil borne pathogens are any nematodes, or any bacterial, protozoan, viral or fungal pathogens that can cause disease or death to native plants, agricultural crops, or ornamental plants (e.g., *Phytophthora ramorum*, the cause of sudden oak syndrome, and *Phytophthora lateralis*, the cause of Port Orford cedar root disease). The fungus that causes Valley Fever, *Coccidioides spp.*, is not considered a soil borne pathogen in this certification.

¹⁵ The Dredge or Fill Procedures and any amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/wrapp.html. Accessed on July 1, 2024.

and 12/232), during Project activities, by maintaining a buffer of 250 feet from the edge of all vernal pools. If maintaining the buffer is not practicable because the covered activity footprint is within the buffered area, minimization measures shall be implemented, as follows:

- Photos of the vernal pools shall be taken prior to, during, and following Project work in the area of any vernal pool documenting the state of the vernal pools (e.g., dry or wet) and any measures implemented to protect the vernal pools. Photo documentation of vernal pools and protection measures shall be provided to the Deputy Director upon request and within 30 days of completing any work with the potential to impact vernal pools.
- Whenever possible, the primary minimization measure shall be to restrict Project activities until the vernal pool has completely dried. If waiting for the complete drying of the vernal pool is not an option, the Licensee shall document why it is infeasible and provide this information to the Deputy Director prior to commencing any work with the potential to impact the wetted vernal pools.
- In the event that activities may not be delayed until the feature is dried and Project activities are required within the 250-foot buffer while the vernal pool remains- wetted, a biological monitor shall be present and secondary minimization measures shall be implemented as appropriate. Such minimization measures include: flagging access routes or paths; requiring foot access; and ensuring vehicles used within 250 feet of the vernal pool have rubber tires to minimize soil disturbance and that vehicles do not drive on vernal pools. The biological monitor shall remain present during Project activities associated with a wetted vernal pool and establish an appropriate buffer with flagging to protect the wetted portion of the vernal pool. This buffer shall be no less than 25 feet from the wetted edge of the vernal pools.
- Unless access to the wetted vernal pool is needed during an emergency¹⁶, at no time shall personnel or equipment enter the wetted portion of the vernal pools. No later than 30 days following completion of any emergency action, the Licensee shall provide the Deputy Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Central Valley Regional Board with: (1) a written description of the emergency event; (2) photo documentation of the emergency event; (3) a timeline of the emergency event that documents any

¹⁶ An emergency is defined as an unforeseen event that is reasonably out of the control of the Licensee and requires the Licensee to take immediate action, either unilaterally or under instruction by law enforcement or other regulatory agency staff, to prevent imminent loss of human life or substantial property damage. An emergency may include but is not limited to: natural events such as landslides, storms, or wildfires; vandalism; malfunction or failure of Project facilities; recreation accidents; or other public safety incidents.

restoration actions to return the vernal pool to pre-emergency conditions; (4) a description of any protection measures implemented during the emergency event; and (5) a plan to prevent the need for accessing wetted vernal pools resulting from a similar emergency event in the future. The Deputy Director may require modifications to the Licensee's plan to prevent future needs for accessing wetted vernal pools from similar emergencies events. The Licensee shall implement its plan and any modifications required by the Deputy Director.

- Equipment refueling shall not occur within 250 feet from the edge of vernal pools unless approved by the Deputy Director. The Deputy Director may require implementation of additional measures as part of any approval. The Licensee shall maintain spill prevention and cleanup equipment in any refueling areas consistent with Condition 3 (Hazardous Materials).
- Implement erosion and sediment control best management practices (pursuant to the most current version of PG&E's Stormwater Field Manual for Construction Best Management Practices) to prevent construction site runoff into vernal pools.
- Implement requirements pertaining to vernal pool protection from approved Habitat Conservation Plans in effect for the Licensee's activities in the Project area. If there is any conflict between this condition and application requirements of a Habitat Conservation Plan, the more stringent shall apply.

CONDITION 5 Wildfire

As applicable, and if adopted and in effect, the Licensee shall comply with the conditions of the [Statewide Utility Wildfire and Similar Operations and Maintenance Activities General Order](#) (Utility Wildfire General Order)¹⁷, any amendments thereto, or successor permits for Project activities covered by the order. If there is any conflict between this certification and the Utility Wildfire General Order, the more stringent shall apply.

CONDITION 6 Reporting

In the sixth year following license issuance and every five years thereafter, the Licensee shall submit a Progress Report to the Deputy Director. The Progress Reports shall be filed by June 30th of the sixth year following license issuance and every fifth year thereafter and cover the preceding five-year period. At a minimum the Progress Report shall include:

- (i) A summary of Project activities performed during the previous five years, including any ground disturbing activities and herbicide use.

¹⁷ Statewide Utility Wildfire and Similar Operations and Maintenance Activities available in Draft online at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/statewide-utility-wildfire-mitigation-general-order.html. Anticipated final in 2024.

- (ii) Documentation of compliance with each condition of this certification and details of any failure to meet the certification requirements.
- (iii) A summary of any wildfire response, mitigation, and clean-up actions implemented for the Project.
- (iv) Details of any Project-related adverse impacts to water quality and beneficial uses, if applicable.
- (v) Discussion of any foreseeable changes to Project facilities or features.
- (vi) Description and schedule of anticipated Project activities planned for the next five years. The report shall identify anticipated local, state, or federal regulatory authorizations, as applicable.
- (vii) Identification of any newly listed or proposed special status species, as well as any additional protection measures the Licensee proposes to implement to protect the newly listed or proposed special status species; and
- (viii) Photos or other documentation of Project facilities within 150 feet of waters of the state that demonstrate that Project activities are not contributing to erosion and discharge.

The Licensee shall file the Progress Reports with FERC. The Licensee shall provide the Progress Reports to USFWS, CDFW, Central Valley Regional Water Board, and State Water Board staff. The Licensee shall provide any additional information or clarification requested by the Deputy Director related to a Progress Report. Upon request from State Water Board staff, the Licensee shall meet with staff to discuss a Progress Report. The Deputy Director may require the Licensee to implement actions or approve additional measures proposed by the Licensee in response to the information provided in a Progress Report, a request for consultation, new information in the record, or approval of additional measures to protect water quality and beneficial uses.

CONDITIONS 7 – 25

CONDITION 7. Unless otherwise specified in this certification or at the request of the Deputy Director, data and/or reports shall be submitted electronically in a format accepted by the State Water Board to facilitate the incorporation of this information into public reports and the State Water Board's water quality database systems in compliance with California Water Code section 13167.

CONDITION 8. This certification does not authorize any act which results in the take of a threatened, endangered, or candidate species or any act which is now prohibited, or becomes prohibited in the future, under either the California Endangered Species Act (ESA) (Fish & G. Code, §§ 2050 – 2097) or the federal ESA (16 U.S.C. §§ 1531 – 1544). If a “take” will result from any act authorized under this certification or water rights held by the Licensee, the Licensee must obtain authorization for the take prior to any construction or operation of the portion of the Project that may result in a take. The Licensee is responsible for meeting all requirements of the applicable ESAs for the Project authorized under this certification.

CONDITION 9. This certification shall not be construed as replacement or substitution for any necessary federal, state, and local approvals. The Licensee is responsible for compliance with all applicable federal, state, or local laws or ordinances and shall obtain authorization from applicable regulatory agencies prior to the commencement of Project activities.

CONDITION 10. Any requirement in this certification that refers to an agency whose authorities and responsibilities are transferred to or subsumed by another state or federal agency, will apply equally to the successor agency.

CONDITION 11. Nothing in this certification shall be construed as State Water Board approval of the validity of any water rights, including pre-1914 or riparian claims. The State Water Board has separate authority under the Water Code to investigate and take enforcement action, if necessary, to prevent any unauthorized or threatened unauthorized diversions of water.

CONDITION 12. This certification is subject to modification or revocation upon administrative or judicial review, including but not limited to review and amendment pursuant to Water Code section 13330 and California Code of Regulations, title 23, division 3, chapter 28, article 6 (commencing with section 3867).

CONDITION 13. This certification is not intended and shall not be construed to apply to any activity involving a hydroelectric facility and requiring a FERC license or an amendment to a FERC license unless the pertinent application for certification was filed pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3855, subdivision (b) and that application for certification specifically identified that a FERC license or amendment to a FERC license for a hydroelectric facility was being sought.

CONDITION 14. This certification is conditioned upon total payment of any fee required under California Code of Regulations, title 23, division 3, chapter 28.

CONDITION 15. Notwithstanding any more specific provision of this certification, any plan or report developed as a condition of this certification requires review and approval by the Deputy Director. The State Water Board's approval authority, including authority delegated to the Deputy Director or others, includes the authority to withhold approval or to require modification of a plan, proposal, or report prior to approval. The State Water Board may take enforcement action if the Licensee fails to provide or implement a required item in a timely manner. Notwithstanding any other condition of this certification, if a time extension is needed to submit an item for Deputy Director approval, the Licensee shall submit a written request for the extension, with justification, to the Deputy Director no later than 15 days prior to the deadline. The Licensee shall not implement any plan, proposal, or report until after the applicable State Water Board approval and any other necessary regulatory approvals.

CONDITION 16. In the event of any violation or threatened violation of the conditions of this certification, including if monitoring results indicate that Project activities could violate water quality objectives or impair beneficial uses, the violation or threatened violation is subject to any remedies, penalties, process, or sanctions as provided for

under applicable state or federal law. For the purposes of section 401(d) of the Clean Water Act, the applicability of any state law authorizing remedies, penalties, process, or sanctions for the violation or threatened violation constitutes a limitation necessary to ensure compliance with the water quality standards and other pertinent requirements incorporated into this certification. In response to any violation or threatened violation of the conditions of this certification, the Licensee shall, by a deadline required by the Deputy Director, submit a plan that documents why the violation occurred and steps the Licensee will implement to address the violation. The Licensee shall implement the plan upon approval from the Deputy Director, and the Deputy Director may require modifications as part of any approval.

CONDITION 17. The Licensee shall submit any change to the Project, including, operations, facilities, technology changes or upgrades, or methodology, which could have a significant or material effect on the findings, conclusions, or conditions of this certification, to the State Water Board for prior review and written approval. The State Water Board shall determine significance and may require consultation with state and/or federal agencies. If the State Water Board is not notified of a change to the Project, it will be considered a violation of this certification.

CONDITION 18. This certification is contingent on compliance with all applicable requirements of the Central Valley Basin Plan (Central Valley Regional Board 2019).

CONDITION 19. Unless otherwise specified by conditions in this certification, Project activities shall be conducted in a manner consistent with all water quality standards and implementation plans adopted or approved pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act or section 303 of the Clean Water Act. The Licensee shall take all reasonable measures to protect the beneficial uses of waters of the state, including the Bear River and its tributaries.

CONDITION 20. In response to a suspected violation of any condition of this certification, the State Water Board or Central Valley Regional Water Board may require the holder of any federal permit or license subject to this certification to furnish, under penalty of perjury, any technical or monitoring reports the State Water Board deems appropriate, provided that the burden, including costs, of the reports shall bear a reasonable relationship to the need for the reports and the benefits to be obtained from the reports. (Wat. Code, §§ 1051, 13165, 13267, and 13383.)

CONDITION 21. Upon request, a work schedule shall be provided to State Water Board and Central Valley Regional Water Board staff. The Licensee shall provide State Water Board and Central Valley Regional Water Board staff access to Project sites to document compliance with this certification.

CONDITION 22. A copy of this certification shall be provided to any contractors and subcontractors conducting Project-related work, and copies shall remain in their possession at the Project site. The Licensee shall be responsible for work conducted by their contractors, subcontractors, or other persons conducting Project-related work.

CONDITION 23. The Licensee shall use analytical methods approved by California's Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program, where such methods are available. Samples that require laboratory analysis shall be analyzed by Environmental Lab Accreditation Program-certified laboratories.

CONDITION 24. The State Water Board shall provide notice and an opportunity to be heard in exercising its authority to add to or modify the conditions of this certification.

CONDITION 25. Certification that the Project will be protective of the state and federal water quality standards and other appropriate requirements of state law is dependent upon the conditions and limitations imposed by this certification, however, to ensure the validity of this certification upon any challenge that is not addressed by another condition of this certification, the provisions of this certification are severable. Upon remand from determination on administrative or judicial review that a provision of this certification is invalid or affects the validity of the certification the State Water Board may adopt an alternative term that addresses the water quality issue while avoiding the invalidity.



Eric Oppenheimer
Executive Director

July 11, 2024

Date

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**CAMP FAR WEST TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT
WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION**

**ATTACHMENT A:
PROJECT OVERVIEW MAP**

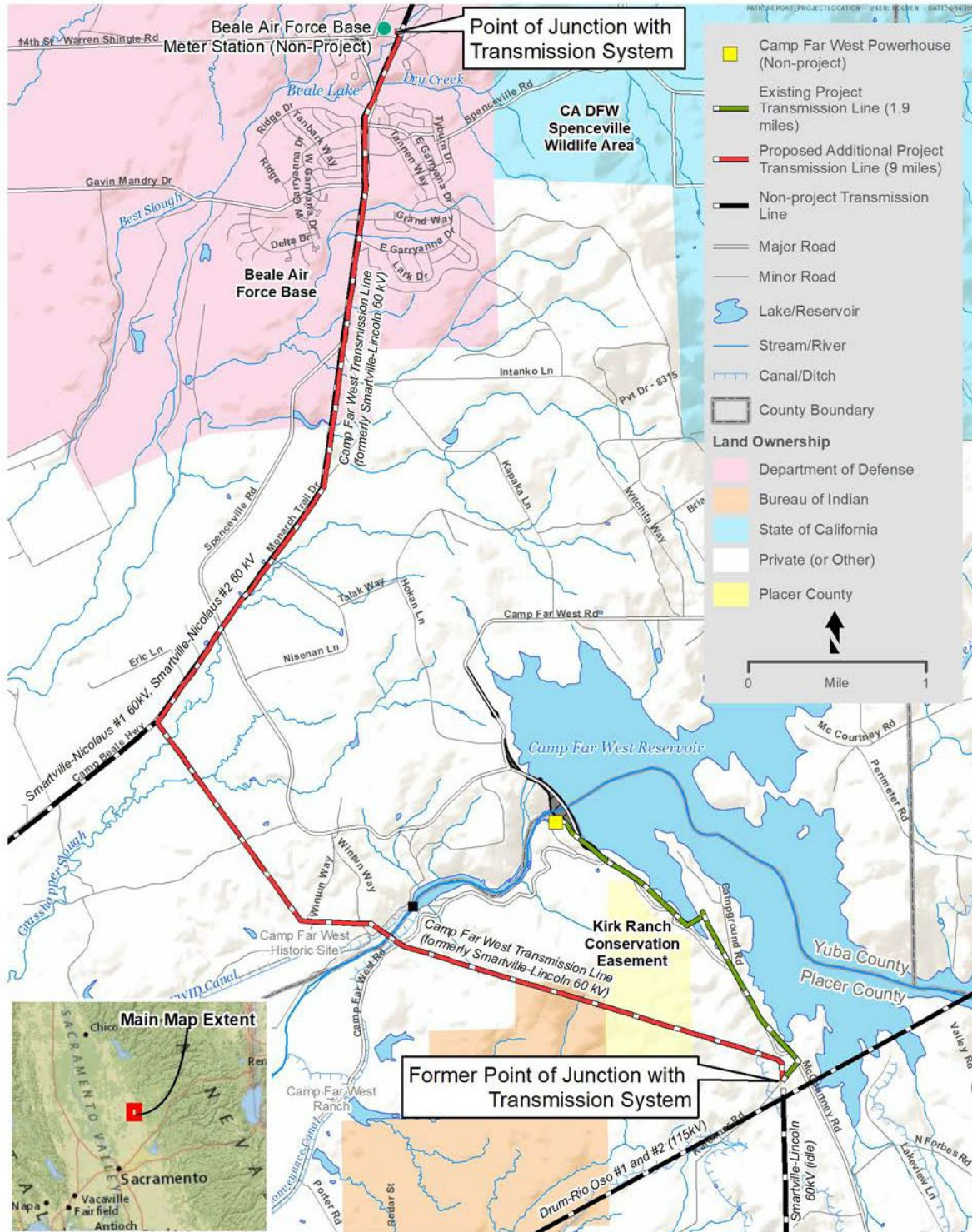


Figure 1. Camp Far West Transmission Line Project Area Map (PG&E 2019)

**CAMP FAR WEST TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT
WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION**

**ATTACHMENT B:
PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The Camp Far West Transmission Line Project (Project), also known as Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No. 10821, is owned and operated by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). The Project boundary is located in Placer and Yuba Counties and comprised of 52.3 acres within the Project right-of-way (ROW) and includes:

- 13.2 acres of federal land, of which 10.9 acres are managed by the Department of Defense and 2.3 acres are administered by the United States Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- 2.5 acres managed by Placer County;
- 6.1 acres managed by South Sutter Water District (SSWD); and
- 30.5 acres on privately-owned lands.

The Project consists of a three-phase, 10.9-mile-long Project transmission line supported by 189 wooden and two steel transmission poles. No additional access routes are anticipated to be required for Project activities. In addition to delivery of power from SSWD's Camp Far West Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 2997), PG&E's Project consists of continued operation and maintenance procedures; measure TE-1 (PG&E 2019) for the protection of vernal pools and associated aquatic species; and compliance with the DOI United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Section 10(a)(1)(B) Incidental Take permit (DOI USFWS 2020b) for the PG&E Multiple Region Operations and Maintenance Habitat Conservation Plan (PG&E 2020).

Operation and Maintenance Procedures

PG&E's proposed operation and maintenance procedures consist of periodic facility inspections, equipment repairs, and vegetation management required for compliance with California Public Resources Code (CPRC) sections 4292 and 4293. CPRC section 4292 requires the removal of vegetation around non-exempt electrical transmission or distribution line poles and towers. CPRC section 4293 and California Public Utilities Commission, General Order 95, Rule 35 require the removal of hazard trees and specify minimum clearances between Project structures and adjacent vegetation.

The California Independent System Operator ultimately controls Project transmission line operations and specifies maintenance practices to prioritize, inspect, and maintain Project transmission lines. According to PG&E's 2019 final license application for the Project, operation and maintenance activities fall into seven categories: (1) routine inspections; (2) minor repairs to transmission equipment; (3) vegetation management and hazard tree removal and fuels reduction/fire protection; (4) wood pole tests and treatment; (5) pole maintenance, repair, and replacement; (6) conductor repair and replacement; and (7) road maintenance, construction, and use. Table A1 is reproduced from PG&E's 2019 final license application.

**Table A1. Routine Project Activities for Wood Pole Transmission Lines
 (PG&E 2019)**

Activity	Description of Activity	Equipment Used [Method of Transportation]
Aerial Inspections	Survey of transmission lines every other year	Helicopter
Ground Inspections	Visual and physical inspection every other year	Motorized vehicle or on foot
Minor Repairs to Electrical Equipment	Infrequent replacement of cross-arms, insulators, or other minor repairs	Motorized vehicle, helicopter, boom, or on foot
Vegetation Management	Cutting or trimming of trees and brush from ROW (per CPRC section 4293)	On foot and hand tools
Wood Pole Test and Treat	Take bore samples and inject internally with chemical preservative	On foot
Tubular Steel Pole Inspection	Visual and physical inspection about every 5 years	Motorized vehicle or on foot
Pole Repair and Replacement	Remove existing pole and replace with new pole	Motorized vehicle, helicopter, line truck or on foot
Conductor Repair or Replacement	Infrequent repairs or replacement	Motorized vehicle or by hand
Road Repair or Maintenance	Infrequent repairs	Motorized vehicle or by hand

PG&E annually inspects each transmission structure (e.g., poles and power lines), alternating between ground and aerial inspections. Inspections are generally conducted from a vehicle on a public road or on foot.

When PG&E performs required tree pruning and hazard tree removal within the riparian zone of watercourses, work is conducted by hand, and trees are felled away from the watercourse, topped, or pieced down and left on the ground. At the time of FERC relicensing for the Project, there is relatively little vegetation in riparian zones within or near the Project ROW that would require trimming or removal, as seen in PG&E's 2019 final license application, Figures 3.3-1 and 3.3-2. PG&E proposes to obtain required jurisdictional permits (e.g., a California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW] Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement may be needed to remove riparian vegetation) prior to vegetation work, as necessary.

PG&E does not have a specific construction schedule for the replacement of Project poles. Poles are inspected annually and replaced on an as-needed basis. PG&E evaluated 86 poles and found that all but a single pole frame (6/134) are consistent with Avian Power Line Interaction Committee guidelines (Avian Power Line Interaction Committee 2006). The single pole frame will be reframed within the first year of the new

Project license's issuance. Generally, repair and maintenance of poles and transmission structures would be infrequent, localized, and short duration. Heavy equipment could be used infrequently, because wood poles and tubular steel poles normally have life spans of 50 and 80 years, respectively. Additionally, in areas without vehicle access, crews would likely hand-dig holes and poles would be placed by helicopter.

Project road maintenance and construction activities could include grading dirt Project roads, excavation of ditches for drainage, and replacement of ineffective culverts.

A Project map can be found in Attachment A. Additional information regarding the Project facilities, current operations, and anticipated Project activities can be found in PG&E's 2019 final license application Exhibit E sections 2.4 and 3.13.4.1 (PG&E 2019).

PG&E's 2019 final license application identified 0.2 acre of vernal pools within the FERC Project boundary. PG&E's final license application for the Project notes that the vernal pool fairy shrimp is the only federal Endangered Species Act-listed species that has been reported within the Project boundary or near the Project (PG&E 2019). PG&E collaborated with USFWS and CDFW to develop proposed measure TE-1, which is outlined in Section 3.8.3 of PG&E's final license application for the Project.