
State Water Resources Control Board

**NOTICE OF INFORMAL CONSULTATION WITH RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE
AGENCIES REGARDING AN ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT
FOR WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION**

**LEE VINING HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT RELICENSING
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 1388**

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) plans to prepare an environmental document for Southern California Edison's (SCE) Lee Vining Hydroelectric Project (Project) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Res. Code, § 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.).

The Project, described in the *Project Description* section below, is licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and is identified as FERC Project No. 1388. FERC currently issues licenses for the operation of projects for 40 to 50 years. The existing Project license expires on January 31, 2027. SCE applied for a new license on January 28, 2025. On May 28, 2026, FERC issued a Notice of Ready for Environmental Analysis in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. In accordance with section 401 of the Clean Water Act, SCE must apply for a water quality certification (certification) for the Project.

NOTICE OF INFORMAL CONSULTATION

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15063, subdivision (g), notice is hereby given that the State Water Board is conducting informal consultation with the responsible and trustee agencies (Agencies) to solicit input on the Project's CEQA process. Recipients of this notice are encouraged to inform other representatives of Agencies who are interested in this Project about this notice. In addition, the State Water Board will accept similar input and supporting information from California Native American Tribes and other interested entities and persons.

The CEQA analysis will, among other things, evaluate potential impacts associated with the proposed project (i.e., relicensing of the existing Project with the changes noted in the *Project Description* section below). **The State Water Board would like to obtain recommendations, rationale, and supporting information regarding whether an Environmental Impact Report or a Negative Declaration/Mitigated Negative Declaration should be prepared. Recommendations and supporting information should be provided by the deadline in the *Deadline* section of this notice.**

The State Water Board will use the CEQA analysis to support an informed decision whether to issue certification and if so, under what conditions. Certification issuance

Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Other Interested Parties

requires analysis of a Project's overall effect on water quality and an analysis of whether the designated beneficial uses identified in the appropriate water quality control plan (basin plan) are adequately protected.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 11.25-megawatt Project is located on Lee Vining and Glacier Creeks in the eastern Sierra Nevada near Yosemite National Park and Mono Lake. The Project is primarily on federal lands managed by Inyo National Forest, with a small portion owned by SCE. The Project includes three main dams and reservoirs (Saddlebag, Tioga, and Ellery), a 1.2-mile flowline, and the Poole Powerhouse. Water stored in Saddlebag and Tioga reservoirs is discharged through Lee Vining and Glacier Creeks, respectively, to Ellery Lake, where water is either diverted into the penstock to Poole Powerhouse or spills over Rhinedollar Dam (forms Ellery Lake), and then discharges to Lee Vining Creek.

In addition to continued operations and maintenance of the Project under a new FERC license, SCE proposes the following:

- Modify the FERC Project boundary to include additional lands necessary for Project operations and maintenance, and better align with modern spatial data, for a net reduction of 73 acres.
- Minor operational changes to minimum instream flows, with continued hydropeaking operations (rapid increases in flow up to the powerhouse flow capacity of 110 cubic feet per second).
- Implement new or modified protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures for environmental resource and tribal/historic resource management. These new measures include: fish stocking; measures for the protection of rare, threatened, and endangered species during Project maintenance activities; invasive plant monitoring; a historic properties management plan; and measures for erosion and sediment control during Project maintenance activities.

DEADLINE

The State Water Board will accept written input until 5:00 p.m. on July 31, 2026.

Written input should specifically identify that it is provided as part of the "Lee Vining CEQA Section 15063(g) Informal Consultation" and include recommendations as to the CEQA document type as well as the rationale and supporting information for the CEQA document type recommendation. Written input may be submitted by:

Email (preferred) to: Bryan.Muro@waterboards.ca.gov

or

Hard Copy Mail to:
State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights – Water Quality Certification Program
Attn: Bryan Muro
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

KEEP INFORMED OF PROJECT MILESTONES

To receive emails related to the Project, interested persons should enroll in the “Water Rights Water Quality Certification” e-mail notification service. Instructions on how to sign up for the State Water Board’s Email Subscription List are outlined below:

1. Visit the [State Water Board’s Email Subscription webpage](#).
2. Provide your name and email in the required fields.
3. In the categories below the email and name fields, under “State Water Resources Control Board” select “Water Rights,” then “Water Rights Water Quality Certification.”
4. Click the "Subscribe" button.
5. An email will be sent to you. You must respond to the email message to confirm your membership on the selected list(s).

By enrolling in this email list, you will receive notices for the Project’s certification process and other current projects in the Division of Water Rights’ Water Quality Certification Program. If you do not have internet access or do not wish to participate in the email subscription list, you may contact Bryan Muro by phone at (916) 327-8702 to request to receive notices by mail. You can enroll or un-enroll from the email subscription service at any time.

QUESTIONS

If you have questions regarding this notice the best means of contact is by email to: Bryan.Muro@waterboards.ca.gov or phone call to: (916) 327-8702.

Nathan Fisch

acting for

Parker Thaler
Water Quality Certification Program Manager
Division of Water Rights

July 6, 2026

Date

Enclosures: Lee Vining Hydroelectric Project Location Map
Distribution List

Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Other Interested Parties

DISTRIBUTION LIST

Project FERC Docket Via e-file to Project Docket for P-1388	Sahrye Cohen United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9, Water Division R9cwa401@epa.gov
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