

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Washington D.C. 20426

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 2153-028—California
Santa Felicia Hydroelectric Project
United Water Conservation District

December 5, 2012

Mr. E. Michael Solomon, General Manager
United Water Conservation District
106 North 8 Street
Santa Paula, CA 93060

Subject: Final Piru Creek geomorphology study findings report pursuant to article 401(a)

Dear Mr. Solomon:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your final Piru Creek geomorphology study findings report, filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) on October 5, 2012, pursuant to article 401(a) of the Santa Felicia Hydroelectric Project license¹ and the geomorphic effects plan (plan), as amended.² Your plan requires you to prepare and file with the Commission, a final report documenting the results of your geomorphic effects study on Piru Creek. Prior to filing the report with the Commission, you must provide the report to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for its review and comment. The report is due to the Commission within 60 days of consulting with the NMFS.

In accordance with your plan, you collected various data to quantify the type, amount, and extent of geomorphic effects of Santa Felicia Dam and its operations on the quality and quantity of steelhead habitat in Piru Creek downstream of the dam. Specifically, you conducted field surveys within the creek before and after two separate release flows from the dam between August and November 2011. Using the data, you developed a hydraulic model to assist in characterizing hydraulic conditions over a range

¹ Order Issuing New License. 124 FERC ¶ 62,193 (issued September 12, 2008).

² Order Amending Geomorphic Effects Plan Under Article 401(a). 136 FERC ¶ 62,184 (issued September 1, 2011).

of flows, and recommended appropriate flushing and overbank flows to enhance geomorphic processes in lower Piru Creek and to promote a dynamic river ecosystem.³ Your license requires you to use the results from this study to develop a habitat improvement plan⁴ that will identify specific habitat improvement measures for steelhead in Piru Creek downstream of the dam.

With regard to consultation, you provided your draft report to the NMFS for review and comment on June 27, 2012. By letter dated August 29, 2012, you received comments from the NMFS. You revised the report where necessary, and included your response to NMFS' comments in your filing with the Commission.

Your report fulfills the requirements of the aforementioned plan. Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 502-6760.

Sincerely,

Joy M. Kurtz
Aquatic Ecologist
Division of Hydropower Administration and
Compliance

³ The abovementioned geomorphic processes include the mobilization of the streambed every 1-2 years to promote pool scour; the mobilization of coarse material in riffles; the flushing of sand from the gravel substrate during spawning and rearing seasons; and, the re-working of the stream channel approximately every 5 years via overbank flows.

⁴ The habitat improvement plan is required by license article 401(a).