



DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES

**Alamo Powerplant
Joint Agency Public Meeting**

**Draft Application for Exemption
for
Small Conduit Hydroelectric Facility**

July 10, 2013



Housekeeping

- ❖ Please note this meeting is being recorded
- ❖ Safety Moment – Please note the nearest exits
- ❖ Speaker cards are being provided for your use



Presenters

- ❖ **California Department of Water Resources,
Hydropower License Planning and Compliance
Office (HLPCO)**
 - ❖ **Gwen Scholl, Principal Engineer**
 - ❖ **Olivia Virgadamo, Senior Engineer**
 - ❖ **Lisa Lee, Environmental Scientist**

- ❖ **MWH**
 - ❖ **Barbara McDonnell, Environmental Scientist**



Goals of Today's Joint Agency Public Meeting

- ❖ Satisfy requirements under Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regulations for a conduit exemption
- ❖ Inform the public of DWR's intent to pursue a conduit exemption for Alamo Powerplant
- ❖ Solicit input and address any concerns on the Alamo Powerplant Conduit Exemption
- ❖ Facilitate 1st stage of consultation required by FERC



3 Stage Consultation Process

- ❖ 1st stage of consultation
 - ❖ Distribute Initial Consultation Document (ICD)
 - ❖ Conduct joint agency public meeting
 - ❖ Receive and respond to comments on ICD
- ❖ 2nd stage of consultation
 - ❖ Conduct any necessary environmental studies
- ❖ 3rd stage of consultation
 - ❖ File application with FERC



Initial Consultation Document (ICD)

- ❖ Draft Application for Exemption for Small Conduit Hydroelectric Facility – Alamo Powerplant
 - ❖ Facility Description (Exhibit A)
 - ❖ Environmental Report (Exhibit E)
 - ❖ Project Boundary Map (Exhibit G)
 - ❖ Project Engineering Drawings (Exhibit F)
- ❖ Draft Application for Non-Capacity Amendment of License – South SWP Hydropower, FERC Project No. 2426



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**Alamo Powerplant
Conduit Exemption Application**

California State Water Project (SWP) Overview

**South SWP Hydropower
FERC Project No. 2426**



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DWR's Mission: To manage the water resources of California in cooperation with other agencies, to benefit the State's people, and to protect, restore, and enhance the natural and human environments.

Key Goal in Support of DWR's Mission:

Plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain the State Water Project to achieve maximum flexibility, safety and reliability.



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SWP Overview



- ❖ Nation's largest state owned and operated water delivery system
- ❖ Serves 23 million Californians and 755,000 acres of farmland
- ❖ Includes:
 - ❖ 34 storage facilities
 - ❖ 20 pumping plants
 - ❖ 4 pumping-generating plants
 - ❖ 5 hydroelectric power plants
 - ❖ About 700 miles of canals and pipelines
- ❖ California's fourth largest energy producer of hydropower



SWP's Multiple Benefits

In addition to water supply, benefits include:

- ❖ Flood control
- ❖ Recreation
- ❖ Environmental benefits
- ❖ Delta salinity control
- ❖ Power grid stability

South SWP Hydropower

FERC Project No. 2426



**South SWP Hydropower
West Branch Detail
FERC Project No. 2426**



Alamo Powerplant



Quail Lake



Lower Quail Canal



Warne Powerplant



Pyramid Dam and Lake



Castaic Powerplant



Check 66



Mojave Siphon Pipelines



Mojave Siphon Powerplant



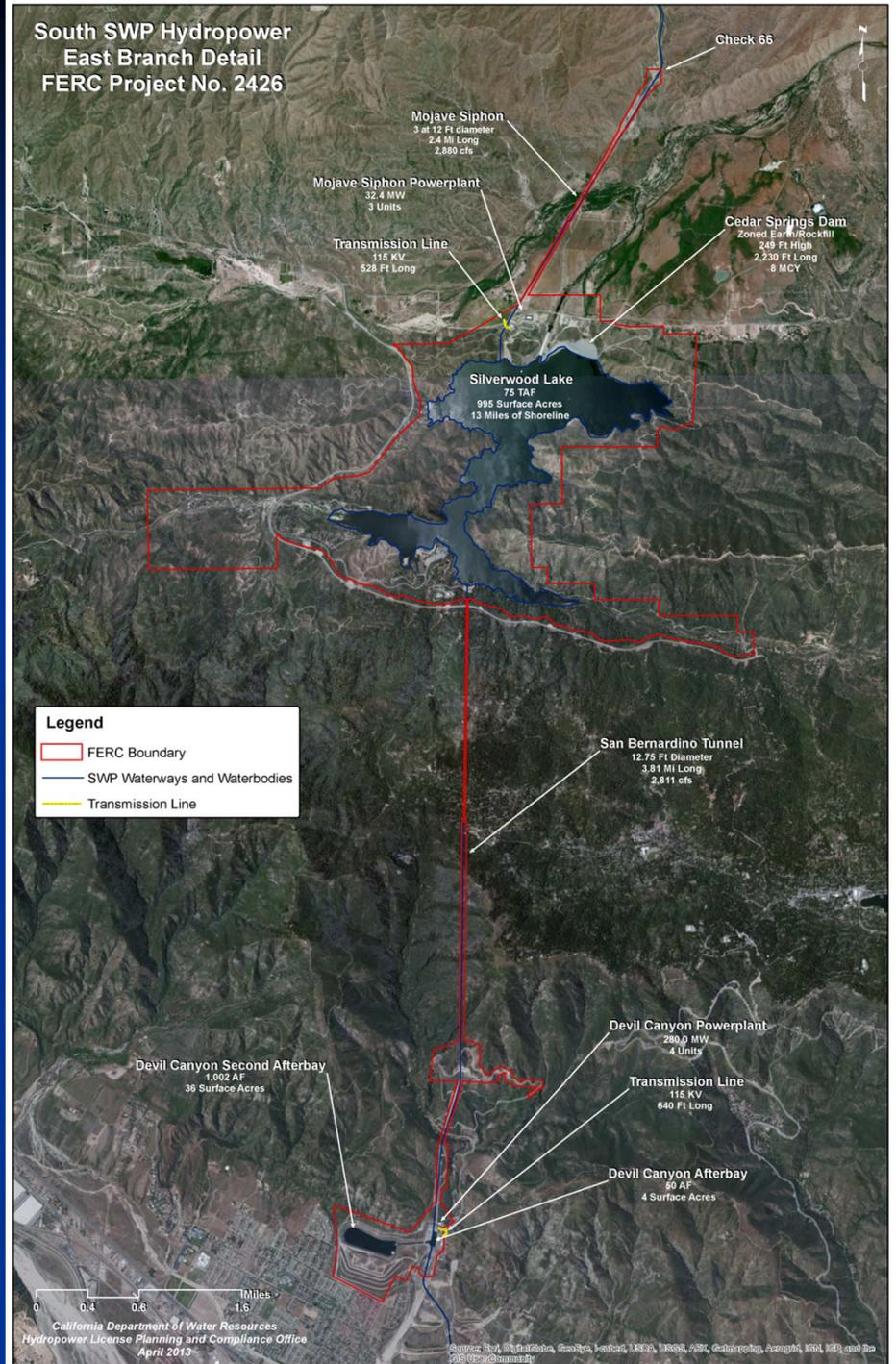
Cedar Springs Dam



Silverwood Lake



Devil Canyon Plant & AB





Why Pursue a Conduit Exemption?

- ❖ Opportunity for business efficiency through administrative change
- ❖ Authorization vehicle made available by FERC in 1980 following issuance of the license for FERC Project No. 2426
- ❖ Alamo Powerplant meets criteria for conduit exemption



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Alamo Powerplant Conduit Exemption Application Overview



What is a Conduit?

- ❖ Conduit ~ any man-made water conveyance
 - ❖ Operated for the distribution of water for agricultural, municipal, or industrial consumption
 - ❖ Not primarily for the generation of electricity



What is a Conduit Exemption?

- ❖ Issued in perpetuity
- ❖ 40 megawatts or less
- ❖ Power facility located entirely on Non-Federal lands
- ❖ Subject to mandatory Fish and Wildlife conditions (under Federal Power Act Section 30(c)), if applicable
- ❖ Boundary is around powerhouse facility
- ❖ Typically associated with new construction
- ❖ Still under FERC jurisdiction and regulatory oversight
- ❖ Regulatory vehicle to promote small hydropower – a source of renewable green energy



Conduit Exemption Application

- ❖ Facility Description (Exhibit A)
- ❖ Environmental Report (Exhibit E)
- ❖ Project Boundary Map (Exhibit G)
- ❖ Project Engineering Drawings (Exhibit F)
 - ❖ Protected technical details regarding the facility



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**Alamo Powerplant
Conduit Exemption Application**

Overview

Facility Description (Exhibit A)

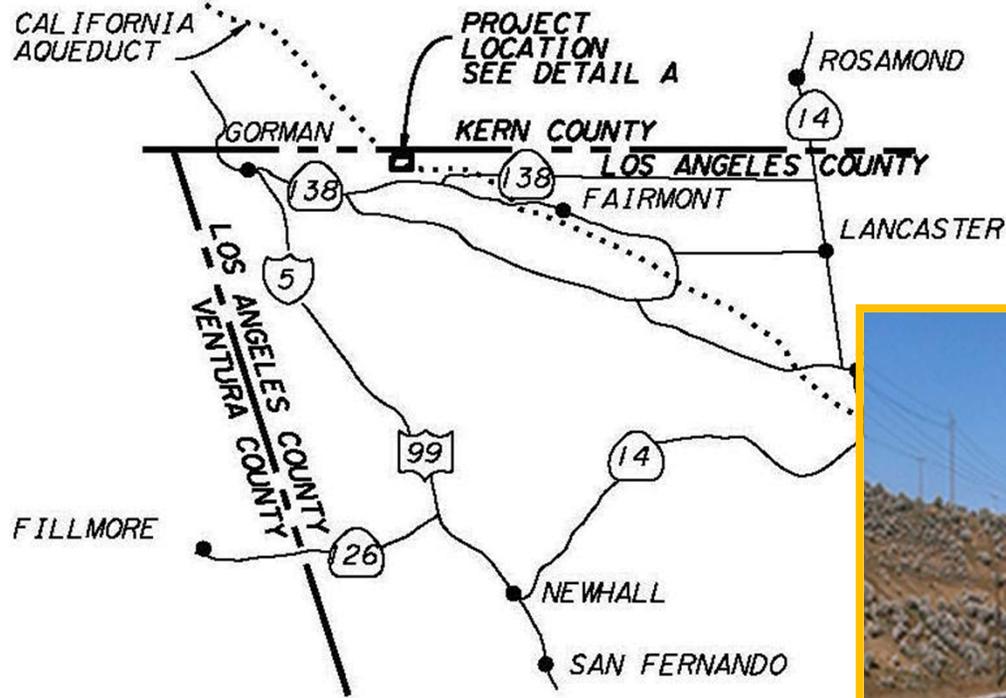
&

Project Boundary Map (Exhibit G)



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Alamo Powerplant Conduit Exemption Application



VICINITY MAP

NO SCALE





Alamo Powerplant

- ❖ Existing licensed facility of FERC Project No. 2426, East Branch
- ❖ Completed and in operation since 1986
- ❖ 17 megawatt facility, 1 unit
- ❖ Located on land owned in fee by DWR
- ❖ No dam associated with and no water is impounded for powerplant operation
- ❖ Located along the SWP aqueduct, in-line facility
- ❖ Flow entering and leaving facility is determined by SWP operations

Alamo Powerplant Conduit Exemption Boundary





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**Alamo Powerplant
Conduit Exemption Application**

**Overview
Environmental Report
(Exhibit E)**



Environmental Report (Exhibit E)

Discusses the following environmental areas:

- ❖ Vegetative Resources
- ❖ Fish and Wildlife Resources
- ❖ Water Quality and Quantity
- ❖ Land and Water Uses
- ❖ Recreational Uses
- ❖ Socio-Economic Conditions
- ❖ Historical and Archaeological Resources
- ❖ Visual Resources



Vegetative and Visual Resources – Surrounding Area

- ❖ Unincorporated Los Angeles County
- ❖ Area vegetation characterized as high desert
- ❖ Surrounding vicinity generally consists of Joshua tree, Russian thistle and other desert scrub and grassland plants

View looking southwest from the top of the northwest ridge access road.





Vegetative and Visual Resources

- ❖ **Powerplant is situated within a depression (constructed) surrounded by previously constructed berms**



View over top of Alamo Powerplant looking from the northwest ridge.



Vegetative and Visual Resources – Conduit Exemption Boundary

- ❖ Encompasses powerplant facility
- ❖ Existing developed facility
- ❖ Site is paved and fenced



View of Alamo
Powerplant access from
northwest ridge.



Vegetative and Visual Resources – Conduit Exemption Boundary

- ❖ California Native Plant Society (CNPS) California Native Plant Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (May 2013)
- ❖ 1 plant species in La Liebre Ranch 7.5' quad within CNPS inventory
- ❖ Round-leaved filaree (*California macrophylla*) – 1B.1
- ❖ No effect to the plant species within CNPS inventory, or state and federal protected plant species
- ❖ No proposed construction or changes in existing operations (change in authorization)
- ❖ No changes in vegetation or visual resources from continued operation and maintenance activities
- ❖ No effect to vegetative and visual resources



Fish and Wildlife Resources – Surrounding Area

- ❖ Surrounding uplands in vicinity inhabited by ground squirrels and mice in adjoining grassland
- ❖ Predators:
 - ❖ Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)
 - ❖ Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)
 - ❖ Sparrow hawk (*Falco sparverius*)
 - ❖ Marsh hawk (*Circus cyaneus*)
 - ❖ Coyote (*Canis latrans*)
- ❖ California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) may fly in the vicinity but not anticipated to be in conduit exemption boundary



Fish and Wildlife Resources – Conduit Exemption Boundary

- ❖ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) species lists
- ❖ California Department of Fish and Wildlife's California Natural Diversity Database
- ❖ Special-status species in general area, but none are anticipated in conduit exemption boundary
- ❖ No USFWS-designated critical habitat for special-species
- ❖ No riparian, wetland and sensitive habitats present
- ❖ Highly disturbed – no potential suitable habitat for listed species



Fish and Wildlife Resources

- ❖ In addition to FERC regulatory oversight, existing adopted policies and procedures in place for complying with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and consulting with appropriate state and federal resource agencies for any proposed future construction and major maintenance activities
- ❖ No proposed construction or change in existing operations
- ❖ No effect to fish and wildlife resources



Water Quality and Quantity

- ❖ **Run-of-aqueduct basis – California SWP flows enter Alamo Powerplant facilities and returned to California SWP (Determined by SWP operations)**
- ❖ **1,006 cfs of annual average flow for energy generation – approximately 83 million kWh (2002 - 2011 annual flow and generation records)**
- ❖ **No natural water bodies or streams in vicinity**
- ❖ **No proposed construction or changes to existing operations**
- ❖ **No change to existing water quality and quantity**
- ❖ **No effect to water quality and quantity**



Land and Water Uses

- ❖ Surrounded by private lands under agricultural production
- ❖ No federal lands affected
- ❖ Land owned in fee by DWR
- ❖ No construction or changes in existing operations
- ❖ No effect to land or water uses



Recreational Uses

- ❖ **Alamo Powerplant and adjoining lands not suitable for public recreation use**
- ❖ **No existing recreational uses within or adjacent to conduit exemption boundary**
- ❖ **No effect to recreational uses**



Socio-Economic Conditions

- ❖ Facility supports 5 full-time and 1 part-time positions
- ❖ Minor contribution to local economy
- ❖ No housing, commerce, or any other public use associated with Alamo Powerplant
- ❖ No impacts to socio-economic conditions of the surrounding area



Historical and Archaeological Resources

- ❖ **Constructed and in operation since 1986**
- ❖ **Not National Register of Historic Places eligible**
- ❖ **No sites discovered during construction**
- ❖ **Not likely to discover sites in the future**



Native American Consultation

- ❖ **Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians**
- ❖ **Kern Valley Indian Council**
- ❖ **Kitanemuk and Yowlumne Tejon Indians**
- ❖ **San Fernando Band of Mission Indians**
- ❖ **San Manuel Band of Mission Indians**
- ❖ **Individuals: Beverly Salazar Folkes, Randy Guzman-Folkes, Ron Wermuth**



State of California Cultural Resources Protections

- ❖ **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**
- ❖ **Governor's Executive Order on Tribal Consultation**
- ❖ **Natural Resources Agency Tribal Consultation Policy**
- ❖ **Protection of Historic Resources (PRC 5024.5)**
- ❖ **Protection of Native American Religion and Places (PRC 5097.95-99)**
- ❖ **Protection of Human Remains (H&SC 7050.5)**
- ❖ **State law protects historic and archaeological resources**



CEQA Requirements for Conduit Exemption

- ❖ **DWR considered the environmental impacts and determined that the issuance of a conduit exemption (change in authorization) for the Alamo Powerplant is exempt under a Class 1 Categorical Exemption (existing facilities)**
- ❖ **A Notice of Exemption (NOE) was filed with the State Clearinghouse on June 24, 2013**



Environmental Report Key Points

- ❖ **Conduit exemption boundary encompasses Alamo Powerplant - an existing developed facility**
- ❖ **No proposed construction or changes in existing operations**
- ❖ **No historic or archaeological resources present**
- ❖ **No effect to natural or cultural resources, or existing environmental conditions**



Environmental Report Key Points

- ❖ Conduit exemption involves a change in authorization
- ❖ Still under FERC regulatory oversight
- ❖ Existing procedures and policies in place for CEQA compliance and consulting with state and federal resource agencies for any proposed future construction and major maintenance activities



3 Stage Consultation Process

- ❖ 1st stage of consultation
 - ❖ Distribute ICD
 - ❖ Conduct joint agency public meeting
 - ❖ Receive and respond to comments on ICD
- ❖ 2nd stage of consultation
 - ❖ Conduct any necessary environmental studies
- ❖ 3rd stage of consultation
 - ❖ File application with FERC



Waiver of 2nd Stage of Consultation

- ❖ 2nd stage of consultation is necessary when natural resource issues need to be resolved or additional studies need to be conducted
- ❖ 18 CFR § 4.38 (e) – waiver of consultation requirements



Waiver of 2nd Stage of Consultation

- ❖ Powerplant is an existing facility
- ❖ No proposed construction or changes in existing operations
- ❖ No effect to natural or cultural resources
- ❖ No studies necessary – since no changes will occur
- ❖ DWR requests approval to waive 2nd stage of consultation
- ❖ Deadline for waivers September 9, 2013



Waiver of Fees from Fish and Wildlife Agencies

❖ Federal Power Act

- ❖ Section 30(c) – Set mandatory terms and conditions for fish and wildlife
- ❖ Section 30(e) – State and Federal fish and wildlife agencies may be eligible for reimbursement of costs to set mandatory terms and conditions



Waiver of Fees from Fish and Wildlife Agencies

- ❖ Powerplant is an existing facility
- ❖ No effect to fish or wildlife
- ❖ Do not anticipate any terms or conditions from fish and wildlife agencies
- ❖ DWR requests agencies to waive the fees
- ❖ Deadline for waivers September 9, 2013



Conduit Exemption Associated License Amendment

- ❖ Removes Alamo Powerplant from FERC Project No. 2426 License
- ❖ Removes/Replaces Associated Exhibits
- ❖ Revises FERC Project No. 2426 License Boundary
- ❖ Reverts boundary to pre-facility addition to FERC Project No. 2426 license



Key Points

- ❖ **Powerplant is an existing developed facility**
- ❖ **Meets FERC conduit exemption criteria**
- ❖ **Small hydropower facility that provides renewable green energy**
- ❖ **Conduit exemption typically associated with new construction; however, this conduit exemption involves a change in authorization**
- ❖ **No proposed construction or changes in existing operations**



Key Points (continued)

- ❖ **No historic or archaeological resources present**
- ❖ **No effect to natural or cultural resources, or existing environmental conditions**
- ❖ **Still under FERC regulatory oversight**
- ❖ **Existing DWR policies and procedures require CEQA compliance, and consulting with state and federal resource agencies for any proposed future construction and major maintenance activities**



What is Next?

- ❖ **September 9, 2013** – Deadline for public comments and waivers
- ❖ **Please send comments to:**
 - Mr. Ted Craddock, Chief**
 - Hydropower License Planning and Compliance Office**
 - California Department of Water Resources**
 - P.O. Box 942836**
 - Sacramento, California 94238-0001**
- ❖ **Mail waivers to DWR**



DEPARTMENT OF
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**Alamo Powerplant
Conduit Exemption Application**

Thank you for attending.

Questions and comments are welcome.

Olivia Virgadamo, Senior Engineer

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