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**DATE:** March 22, 2021  
**TO:** Agencies, organizations, and interested parties  
**FROM:** California Department of Water Resources  
**SUBJECT:** Notice of Intent to Adopt an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND)

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This serves as the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Notice of Intent to Adopt the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and State CEQA Guidelines.

**PROJECT TITLE:** South SWP Hydropower Relicensing, FERC Project No. 2426 (Project)

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The South SWP Hydropower is located along the West Branch of the State Water Project (SWP) in Los Angeles County, California, between the towns of Castaic and Gorman.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The State of California, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), and the United States government own the land, and DWR and LADWP (Licensees) operate the South SWP Hydropower facilities, an existing power recovery project that includes existing hydroelectric facilities, access roads, maintenance areas, recreation areas, rights-of-way, and other supporting facilities. The Licensees operate the South SWP Hydropower under an existing Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license that is scheduled to expire on January 31, 2022. The Licensees have used the Integrated Licensing Process in seeking a new license from FERC pursuant to the Federal Power Act. Under this CEQA analysis, the proposed Project is the continued operation of the South SWP Hydropower, including the hydroelectric, recreation, and supporting facilities, in accordance with the Licensees' proposed terms and conditions for inclusion in the new FERC license, as described in the Licensees' Final License Application, as amended.

The Licensees' proposed changes to the existing South SWP Hydropower include administrative changes that do not involve any physical changes and potential FERC-required protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures, such as upgrades to existing recreation facilities, vegetation management, cultural resources protection and management, plant, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species protections, and other environmental measures. The proposed administrative changes include: (1) a change in the FERC Project boundary, resulting in an overall reduction in land area designated in the license that encompasses all existing facilities and lands necessary for the operation and maintenance of the South SWP Hydropower; (2) addition of the existing Quail Detention Embankment as a licensed facility; (3) addition of an existing lake level gage; (4) designation of access roads currently maintained by the Licensees that are used exclusively for accessing the South SWP Hydropower facilities; (5) addition of the existing Los Alamos Campground in the proposed Project boundary; and (6) removal of

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the Warne Transmission Line, owned by Southern California Edison, from the license Project description.

DWR, as the lead agency, has initiated the CEQA process to inform DWR's discretionary decision on whether to approve the proposed Project and accept the new license when issued, request rehearing on a new license when issued or otherwise challenge its issuance, or reject the new license.

**SIGNIFICANT PROJECT IMPACTS DISCUSSED IN DOCUMENT:** The IS/MND did not identify any significant and unavoidable impacts; mitigation was incorporated, where necessary, to reduce all potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level.

**PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD:** The IS/MND will be circulated for a 30-day public review period beginning on March 22, 2021, and concluding on April 21, 2021. In accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines, any comments concerning the findings of the IS/MND must be submitted in writing and received by DWR no later than 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Standard Time) on April 21, 2021, in order to be considered. Please include a name, address, and telephone number of a contact person for all future correspondence on this subject. Please mail or email your written comments or questions to DWR's contact listed below.

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**AVAILABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION:** Once circulated, the IS/MND may be viewed at the following locations:

- On the web: <http://south-swp-hydropower-relicensing.com/>
- Public Library: Old Town Newhall Library  
24500 Main Street  
Santa Clarita, California 91321  
(Please check with the library for hours of operation, including potential closures due to COVID-19 restrictions. Visitors are advised to follow the California Department of Public Health guidelines, as well as Los Angeles County guidelines.)

For more information on the Project, or if you would like to request a hard copy, please contact Lon Maier, DWR's Environmental Program Manager at (916) 557-8151, or by email at Lon.Maier@water.ca.gov.

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