
State Water Resources Control Board

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR PINE CREEK MINE HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

PINE CREEK MINE HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT, FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 12532

To: Interested Parties Mailing List

On August 26, 2019, Pine Creek Mine, LLC filed an application with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) for water quality certification (certification) under section 401 of the Clean Water Act for the *Pine Creek Mine Hydroelectric Project* (Project), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No. 12532.

The State Water Board, as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is proposing to adopt a Negative Declaration (ND) for the Project. This information is provided in satisfaction of the formal written notice requirements for public review of a proposed ND (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15072). Notice is hereby given that the State Water Board is accepting comments on the Project's Initial Study (IS) and proposed ND (together IS/ND).

Project Description:

The Project is located in northwestern Inyo County, northwest of the City of Bishop. The Project site is upstream of the confluence of Morgan Creek and Pine Creek and accessed via Pine Creek Road. The Pine Creek Mine facilities and operations are presently inactive. The Project would include installation of a hydroelectric turbine within the Easy-Go Adit, about 2,480 linear feet underground. The water source for the Project is groundwater draining from the former underground mine. The water percolates through fissures, fractures, and boreholes formed during the mining activities. The quantity of groundwater draining into the adit varies seasonally, ranging from about 7-14 cubic feet per second (cfs) seasonally as an indirect function of snowmelt. Average inflow is estimated to be about 10 cfs. The Project would use an existing concrete plug in the mine to store up to 200 acre-feet of groundwater, creating a gross head of up to 1,320 feet for power generation. The Project would construct an 18-inch-diameter, 30-foot-long steel penstock to connect existing piping and plug features to the proposed generator. Water exiting the turbine would discharge into a V-shaped granite channel within the adit and flow down-gradient to the intake for an existing exempt hydroelectric facility (FERC Project No. 13163) and mine water discharge system, located below the adit. The water would then be routed through that existing facility's existing penstock and turbine and discharged into an existing pond

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | EILEEN SOBECK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

(Pond 6), from which it would flow over that pond's concrete spillway and into Morgan Creek, shortly above its confluence with Pine Creek.

Comment Submittal and Deadline:

The State Water Board is accepting comments on the IS/ND for the Project. The IS/ND comment period is from the date of this notice through July 27, 2020. **Comments on the IS/ND must be received by 5:00 pm on July 27, 2020.** Comments can be submitted electronically or by mail to:

Mr. Philip Meyer
State Water Resources Control Board – Division of Water Rights
Water Quality Certification Program
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

or

Email: wr401program@waterboards.ca.gov

The IS/ND is available on the [Pine Creek Mine Hydroelectric Project](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/pine_creek_mine_ferc12532.html) webpage at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/pine_creek_mine_ferc12532.html

These documents will be available at the following locations no later than June 29, 2020. **We encourage you to call and make an appointment to ensure the office is open and appropriate social distancing can be accommodated during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

State Water Resources Control Board 1001 I Street, 2 nd Floor, Room 2-114 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 341-5300	Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board 15095 Amargosa Road, Building 2 - Suite 210 Victorville, CA 92394 (760) 241-6583
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If you have questions regarding this notice, please contact Mr. Philip Meyer by phone at (916) 341-5369 or by email at philip.meyer@waterboards.ca.gov

Ann Marie Ore
Program Manager
Division of Water Rights

Date