

CF/42-0.19-9 SWRCB Order Approving
Temporary Urgency Change in Permits
12947A, 12949, 12950 & 16596 for 2015 (ID
5315)

April 21, 2015

Barbara Evoy, Deputy Director of Water Rights
State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

**RE: Petition for Temporary Urgency Change—Permits 12947A, 12949,
12950, and 16596**

Dear Ms. Evoy:

Enclosed is a Petition for Temporary Urgency Change to modify the minimum instream flow requirements for the Russian River as established by Decision 1610 for Permits 12947A, 12949, 12950 and 16596. Accompanying the petition are the following:

- 1) Attachment 1, *Description of April 2015 Temporary Urgency Change Petition Request*
- 2) Attachment 2, *Supplement to the April 2015 Temporary Urgency Change Petition*
- 3) *Environmental Information for Petitions*
- 4) Notice of Exemption
- 5) State Water Resources Control Board Petition Fee Payment

Unfortunately, the payment for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife review fee is not ready at this time and, therefore, we will be sending under separate cover in approximately two days.

We are submitting this petition to preserve the drought-limited water supply that is in Lake Mendocino and to avoid the excessively high releases from Lake Sonoma into Dry Creek that would result from maintaining the Decision 1610 minimum instream flow requirements. The Sonoma County Water Agency requests that the Division of Water Rights act expeditiously to approve the requested changes.

Barbara Evoy, Deputy Director of Water Rights
State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights
April 21, 2015
Page 2 of 2

I look forward to working with the State Water Resources Control Board and Division of Water Rights staff on this important conservation effort.

Sincerely,


Grant Davis
General Manager

- c: Katy Lee – State Water Resources Control Board
- R. Coey, J. Fuller – National Marine Fisheries Service
- E. Larson - California Department of Fish & Wildlife
- P. Jeane, D. Seymour, T. Schram, J. Martini Lamb, J. Jasperse – Sonoma County Water Agency
- S. Shupe, C. O'Donnell – Sonoma County Counsel
- A. Lilly – Bartkiewicz, Kronick & Shanahan

Please indicate County where your project is located here:

Sonoma / Mendoc.

MAIL FORM AND ATTACHMENTS TO:
State Water Resources Control Board
DIVISION OF WATER RIGHTS
P.O. Box 2000, Sacramento, CA 95812-2000
Tel: (916) 341-5300 Fax: (916) 341-5400
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights

PETITION FOR CHANGE

Separate petitions are required for each water right. Mark all areas that apply to your proposed change(s). Incomplete forms may not be accepted. Location and area information must be provided on maps in accordance with established requirements. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 715 et seq.) Provide attachments if necessary.

- Point of Diversion, Point of Rediversion, Place of Use, Purpose of Use, Distribution of Storage, Temporary Urgency, Instream Flow Dedication, Waste Water, Split, Terms or Conditions, Other
Application 12919A Permit 12947A License Statement

I (we) hereby petition for change(s) noted above and described as follows:

Point of Diversion or Rediversion - Provide source name and identify points using both Public Land Survey System descriptions to 1/4-1/4 level and California Coordinate System (NAD 83).

Present: Proposed:

Place of Use - Identify area using Public Land Survey System descriptions to 1/4-1/4 level; for irrigation, list number of acres irrigated.

Present: Proposed:

Purpose of Use

Present: Proposed:

Split

Provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers for all proposed water right holders.

[Empty box for split details]

In addition, provide a separate sheet with a table describing how the water right will be split between the water right holders: for each party list amount by direct diversion and/or storage, season of diversion, maximum annual amount, maximum diversion to offstream storage, point(s) of diversion, place(s) of use, and purpose(s) of use. Maps showing the point(s) of diversion and place of use for each party should be provided.

Distribution of Storage

Present: Proposed:

Temporary Urgency

This temporary urgency change will be effective from to

Include an attachment that describes the urgent need that is the basis of the temporary urgency change and whether the change will result in injury to any lawful user of water or have unreasonable effects on fish, wildlife or instream uses.

Instream Flow Dedication – Provide source name and identify points using both Public Land Survey System descriptions to ¼-¼ level and California Coordinate System (NAD 83).

Upstream Location:

Downstream Location:

List the quantities dedicated to instream flow in either: cubic feet per second or gallons per day:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Will the dedicated flow be diverted for consumptive use at a downstream location? Yes No

If yes, provide the source name, location coordinates, and the quantities of flow that will be diverted from the stream.

Waste Water

If applicable, provide the reduction in amount of treated waste water discharged in cubic feet per second.

Will this change involve water provided by a water service contract which prohibits your exclusive right to this treated waste water? Yes No

Will any legal user of the treated waste water discharged be affected? Yes No

General Information – For all Petitions, provide the following information, if applicable to your proposed change(s).

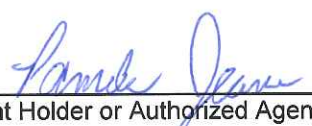
Will any current Point of Diversion, Point of Storage, or Place of Use be abandoned? Yes No

I (we) have access to the proposed point of diversion or control the proposed place of use by virtue of:
 ownership lease verbal agreement written agreement

If by lease or agreement, state name and address of person(s) from whom access has been obtained.

Give name and address of any person(s) taking water from the stream between the present point of diversion or redirection and the proposed point of diversion or redirection, as well as any other person(s) known to you who may be affected by the proposed change.

All Right Holders Must Sign This Form: I (we) declare under penalty of perjury that this change does not involve an increase in the amount of the appropriation or the season of diversion, and that the above is true and correct to the best of my (our) knowledge and belief. Dated at



Right Holder or Authorized Agent Signature

Right Holder or Authorized Agent Signature

NOTE: All petitions must be accompanied by:
(1) the form Environmental Information for Petitions, including required attachments, available at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/publications_forms/forms/docs/pet_info.pdf
(2) Division of Water Rights fee, per the Water Rights Fee Schedule, available at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/fees/
(3) Department of Fish and Wildlife fee of \$850 (Pub. Resources Code, § 10005)

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- Point of Diversion, Point of Rediversion, Place of Use, Purpose of Use, Distribution of Storage, Temporary Urgency, Instream Flow Dedication, Waste Water, Split, Terms or Conditions, Other. Application 15736, Permit 12949, License, Statement.

I (we) hereby petition for change(s) noted above and described as follows:

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If yes, provide the source name, location coordinates, and the quantities of flow that will be diverted from the stream.

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Will any legal user of the treated waste water discharged be affected? Yes No

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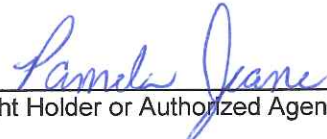
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All Water Right Holders Must Sign This Form: I (we) declare under penalty of perjury that this change does not involve an increase in the amount of the appropriation or the season of diversion, and that the above is true and correct to the best of my (our) knowledge and belief. Dated at


Water Right Holder or Authorized Agent Signature

Water Right Holder or Authorized Agent Signature

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Application 15737 Permit 12950 License Statement

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Ramona Jones

Water Right Holder or Authorized Agent Signature

Water Right Holder or Authorized Agent Signature

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Samela Jeanne

Water Right Holder or Authorized Agent Signature

Water Right Holder or Authorized Agent Signature

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ATTACHMENT 1

DESCRIPTION OF APRIL 2015 TEMPORARY URGENCY CHANGE PETITION REQUEST

The Sonoma County Water Agency requests that the State Water Resources Control Board make the following temporary changes to the Decision 1610 (D-1610) instream flow requirements for the period of 180 days from May 1, 2015 through October 27, 2015: (a) reduce the required D-1610 minimum instream flow in the Russian River from the confluence of the East and West Forks to the river's confluence with Dry Creek (Upper Russian River) from 185 cfs to 75 cfs; and (b) reduce required D-1610 minimum instream flow in the Russian River from its confluence with Dry Creek to the Pacific Ocean (Lower Russian River) from 125 cfs to 85 cfs.

To improve its efforts in optimally managing flows in the Russian River, the Water Agency requests that the minimum instream flow requirements be implemented on a 5-day running average of average daily stream flow measurements with instantaneous flows on the Upper Russian River being no less than 65 cfs and on the Lower Russian River being no less than 75 cfs.

April 2015

Sonoma County Water Agency

Supplement to the April 2015 Temporary Urgency Change Petition

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Sonoma County Water Agency (Water Agency) controls and coordinates water supply releases from Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma to implement the minimum instream flow requirements in water rights Decision 1610, which the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopted on April 17, 1986. Decision 1610 specifies minimum flow requirements for the Upper Russian River, Dry Creek and the Lower Russian River. These minimum flow requirements vary based on water supply conditions, which are also specified in Decision 1610. The Decision 1610 requirements for the Upper Russian River and Lower Russian River are contained in term 20 of the Water Agency's water-right Permit 12947A (Application 12919A). The Decision 1610 requirements for the Lower Russian River are contained in term 17 of the Water Agency's water-right Permit 12949 (Application 15736) and term 17 of the Water Agency's water-right Permit 12950 (Application 15737). The Decision 1610 requirements for Dry Creek and the Lower Russian River are contained in term 13 of the Water Agency's water-right Permit 16596 (Application 19351).

The Water Agency's operations are also subject to the Russian River Biological Opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service on September 24, 2008.

1.1 Minimum Flow Requirements

Decision 1610 requires a minimum flow of 25 cubic feet per second (cfs) in the East Fork of the Russian River from Coyote Valley Dam to the confluence with the West Fork of the Russian River under all water supply conditions. From this point to Dry Creek, the Decision 1610 required minimum Russian River flows are 185 cfs from April through August and 150 cfs from September through March during *Normal* water supply conditions, 75 cfs during *Dry* conditions and 25 cfs during *Critical* conditions. Decision 1610 further specifies two variations of the *Normal* water supply condition, commonly known as *Dry Spring 1* and *Dry Spring 2*. These conditions provide for lower required minimum flows in the Upper Russian River during times when the combined storage in Lake Pillsbury (owned and operated by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company) and Lake

Mendocino on May 31 is unusually low. *Dry Spring 1* conditions exist if the combined storage in Lake Pillsbury and Lake Mendocino is less than 150,000 acre-feet on May 31. Under *Dry Spring 1* conditions, the required minimum flow in the Upper Russian River between the confluence of the East Fork and West Fork and Healdsburg is 150 cfs from June through March, with a reduction to 75 cfs during October through December if Lake Mendocino storage is less than 30,000 acre-feet during those months. *Dry Spring 2* conditions exist if the combined storage in Lake Pillsbury and Lake Mendocino is less than 130,000 acre-feet on May 31. Under *Dry Spring 2* conditions, the required minimum flows in the Upper Russian River are 75 cfs from June through December and 150 cfs from January through March.

From Dry Creek to the Pacific Ocean, the required minimum flows in the Lower Russian River are 125 cfs during *Normal* water supply conditions, 85 cfs during *Dry* conditions and 35 cfs during *Critical* conditions.

In Dry Creek below Warm Springs Dam, the required minimum flows are 75 cfs from January through April, 80 cfs from May through October and 105 cfs in November and December during *Normal* water supply conditions. During *Dry* and *Critical* conditions, these required minimum flows are 25 cfs from April through October and 75 cfs from November through March.

Figure 1 shows all of the required minimum instream flows specified in Decision 1610 by river reach, gaging stations used to monitor compliance, and criteria for the various water supply conditions.

1.2 Water Supply Conditions

There are three main water supply conditions that are defined in Decision 1610, which set the minimum instream flow requirements based on the hydrologic conditions for the Russian River system. These water supply conditions are determined based on criteria for the calculated cumulative inflow into Lake Pillsbury from October 1 to the first day of each month from January to June. Decision 1610 defines cumulative inflow for Lake Pillsbury as the algebraic sum of releases from Lake Pillsbury, change in storage and lake evaporation.

Dry water supply conditions exist when cumulative inflow to Lake Pillsbury from October 1 to the date specified below is less than:

- 8,000 acre-feet as of January 1;
- 39,200 acre-feet as of February 1;
- 65,700 acre-feet as of March 1;

- 114,500 acre-feet as of April 1;
- 145,600 acre-feet as of May 1; and
- 160,000 acre-feet as of June 1.

Critical water supply conditions exist when cumulative inflow to Lake Pillsbury from October 1 to the date specified below is less than:

- 4,000 acre-feet as of January 1;
- 20,000 acre-feet as of February 1;
- 45,000 acre-feet as of March 1;
- 50,000 acre-feet as of April 1;
- 70,000 acre-feet as of May 1; and
- 75,000 acre-feet as of June 1.

Normal water supply conditions exist whenever a *Dry* or *Critical* water supply condition is not present. As indicated above, Decision 1610 further specifies three variations of the *Normal* water supply condition based on the combined storage in Lake Pillsbury and Lake Mendocino on May 31. These three variations of the *Normal* water supply condition determine the required minimum instream flows for the Upper Russian River from the confluence of the East Fork and the West Fork to the Russian River's confluence with Dry Creek. This provision of Decision 1610 does not provide for any changes in the required minimum instream flows in Dry Creek or the Lower Russian River (the Russian River between its confluence with Dry Creek and the Pacific Ocean). A summary of the required minimum flows in the Russian River for *Normal*, *Normal — Dry Spring 1* and *Normal — Dry Spring 2* water supply conditions is provided here:

1. *Normal*: When the combined water in storage in Lake Pillsbury and Lake Mendocino on May 31 of any year exceeds 150,000 acre-feet or 90 percent of the estimated water supply storage capacity of the reservoirs, whichever is less:

From June 1 through August 31	185 cfs
From September 1 through March 31	150 cfs
From April 1 through May 31	185 cfs

2. *Normal-Dry Spring 1*: When the combined water in storage in Lake Pillsbury and Lake Mendocino on May 31 of any year is between 150,000 acre-feet or 90 percent of the estimated water supply storage capacity of the reservoirs, which ever is less,

and 130,000 acre-feet or 80 percent of the estimated water supply storage capacity of the reservoirs, whichever is less:

From June 1 through March 31	150 cfs
From April 1 through May 31	185 cfs
If from October 1 through December 31, storage in Lake Mendocino is less than 30,000 acre-feet	75 cfs

3. *Normal-Dry Spring 2*: When the combined water in storage in Lake Pillsbury and Lake Mendocino on May 31 of any year is less than 130,000 acre-feet or 80 percent of the estimated water supply storage capacity of the reservoirs, whichever is less:

From June 1 through December 31	75 cfs
From January 1 through March 31	150 cfs
From April 1 through May 31	185 cfs

2.0 CURRENT WATER SUPPLY CONDITION

From October 1, 2014 to April 19, 2015, the cumulative inflow into Lake Pillsbury was 170,019 acre-feet (AF). Consequently, the Decision 1610 water supply condition is categorized as *Normal* for the remainder of the year. Based on these criteria, the Decision 1610 required minimum instream flows in the Upper Russian River (will be 185 cfs between April 1 and May 31). The required minimum in-stream flows starting June 1 will be determined based on the combined storage of Lake Pillsbury and Lake Mendocino on May 31. At this time, the projected combined storage amount is difficult to predict because it is heavily dependent on late spring precipitation. However, based on the current hydrologic trends, the Water Agency anticipates *Normal-Dry Spring 2* water supply conditions starting June 1. Consequently, the Decision 1610 required minimum instream flows in the Upper Russian River will likely be 75 cfs and on the Lower Russian River 125 cfs.

2.1 Lake Mendocino

As of April 21, 2015 the water supply storage level in Lake Mendocino was 60,273 AF. This storage level is 62 percent of the available water conservation pool. The below normal storage level is a result of the unusually low rainfall in the region since January of

this year. Precipitation records for Ukiah indicate 7.15 inches of rainfall in the area since January 1st, which is just 35 percent of the average for this period based on records going back to 1952. In addition, Eel River transfers through the Potter Valley Project (PVP) were significantly reduced between November 15, 2014 and February 28, 2015 due to an emergency project by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) to replace the penstock shutoff valves. During the term of this emergency project, PG&E operated under a variance of their Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license which reduced minimum instream flow requirements in the East Fork of the Russian River from 35 cfs to 20 cfs. There were many periods during which PG&E could have operated the Potter Valley Project at up to 300 cfs to generate power, if the emergency repair project had not been occurring. Based on an analysis provided by PG&E, an additional 13,100 AF would have been transferred through PVP into the East Fork of the Russian River if the emergency repair project had not been occurring. Figure 2 shows the average annual cumulative diversion through PVP from 2006 to 2014 and cumulative diversion that has occurred during 2015. As shown in the figure, diversions through PVP in 2015 have been significantly below the annual average of 2006 to 2014.

A water supply analysis recently prepared by Water Agency engineering staff indicates that without significant storm events between now and early fall, the storage levels in Lake Mendocino will decline to below 30,000 AF by October 1 due to releases to meet downstream water demands and the anticipated minimum instream flow requirements on the Russian River. The analysis assumes a water supply condition of *Normal- Dry Spring 2*, which Decision 1610 specifies requirements for minimum in-stream flows in the Upper Russian River of 185 cfs from April 1 through May 31 and 75 cfs from June 1 through December 31. Furthermore, the analysis used to calculate the projected Lake Mendocino storage was completed using the Water Agency's Russian River simulation model with the following assumptions: (1) Decision 1610 minimum instream flow requirements; (2) 2013 hydrology; (3) current Russian River system losses; and (4) PVP operations based on the 2004 amended license issued by the FERC. Figure 3 shows the Lake Mendocino storage levels that have occurred so far during 2015 and the storage levels that are projected to occur during the remainder of 2015 if the Decision 1610 minimum instream flow requirements are not changed.

The low projected storage level in Lake Mendocino could: (a) severely impact Russian River fish species that are listed as threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), (b) create more serious water-supply impacts in Mendocino County and the Alexander Valley in Sonoma County, and (c) further harm Lake Mendocino and Russian River recreation.

2.2 Lake Sonoma

As of April 21, 2015 the water supply storage level in Lake Sonoma was 214,014 AF. This storage level is 87 percent of the available water conservation pool. This storage level is

slightly below normal for this time of year. However, the much larger water supply pool of Lake Sonoma provides multiple years of carryover storage. Consequently, no changes to the minimum instream flow requirements in Dry Creek are being requested in this petition.

2.3 River System Operational Constraints

As discussed in Section 3.0 below, along with requesting changes to minimum instream flow requirements for the Upper Russian River, the Water Agency is also requesting changes to the minimum instream flow requirements for the Lower Russian River. These changes are necessary because implementation of the lower minimum instream flow requirements that are being requested for the Upper Russian River, which are necessary to preserve Lake Mendocino storage, will result in the Upper Russian River providing significantly lower contributions of flows to meet minimum instream flow requirements for the Lower Russian River. Consequently, increased releases from Lake Sonoma into Dry Creek would be necessary to maintain present Decision 1610 minimum instream flow requirement (125 cfs) for the lower river. However, such increased releases into Dry Creek would likely result in the Water Agency's violating the Incidental Take Statement in the Russian River Biological Opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)¹. The Incidental Take Statement restricts releases from Lake Sonoma into Dry Creek during June through October of each year because high flows in Dry Creek during these months result in sub-optimal habitat conditions for juvenile salmonids.

Furthermore, NMFS concluded in the Biological Opinion that flows lower than those required by Decision 1610 for the Lower Russian River may improve opportunities in the Russian River estuary to maintain a freshwater lagoon, which is beneficial for the ESA-listed salmonids and their critical habitats. Consequently, lowering minimum instream flows on the Lower Russian River is consistent with the objectives of the Biological Opinion.

3.0 REQUESTED TEMPORARY URGENCY CHANGE TO PERMITS 12947A, 12949, 12950 AND 16596

To preserve the drought-limited water supply in Lake Mendocino and to avoid excessively high releases from Lake Sonoma down Dry Creek that could result in

¹ See *Biological Opinion for Water Supply, Flood Control Operations and Channel Maintenance conducted by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Sonoma County Water Agency and the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District in the Russian River Watershed*, pp. 297-299 (NMFS, Sept. 24, 2008) for details on the incidental take statement and criteria.

violations to the Incidental Take Statement in the Biological Opinion, the Water Agency is filing this Temporary Urgency Change Petition (TUCP), which requests that the State Water Board make the following changes to the Water Agency's permits for a period of 180 days from May 1, 2015 until October 27, 2015: (1) reduce the required minimum instream flow in the Russian River from the confluence of the East and West Forks to the river's confluence with Dry Creek from 185 cfs to 75 cfs for May 1 to October 27; and (2) reduce required minimum instream flow in the Russian River from its confluence with Dry Creek to the Pacific Ocean from 125 cfs to 85 cfs for May 1 to October 27.

To allow the Water Agency to optimally manage flows in the Upper Russian River and Lower Russian River, the Water Agency is requesting that the TUCP minimum instream flow requirements be specified as 5-day running averages of average daily stream flow measurements, with the conditions that instantaneous flows in the Upper Russian River are not less than 65 cfs and instantaneous flows in the Lower Russian River are not less than 75 cfs. These 5-day running average provisions will allow the Water Agency to reduce the operational buffers needed to manage these stream flows, thereby allowing the Water Agency to conserve more water in Lake Mendocino. Higher Lake Mendocino storage levels in the fall will benefit migrating Chinook salmon and improve carryover storage volumes to meet Upper Russian River demands into 2016 if dry conditions persist.

Figure 3 shows the Lake Mendocino storage levels that are projected to occur during the remainder of 2015 with the instream flow requirements required by D-1610 and the requested changes. As shown in Figure 3, the requested changes will preserve approximately 6,300 AF of water storage in Lake Mendocino. This will be a significant benefit if the drought continues through the 2016 water year. Furthermore, PG&E has indicated that it is planning to file another request for variance with FERC to reduce the Potter Valley Project's minimum instream flow requirements for the Russian River watershed from November 2015 to March 2016 to perform additional repairs to the PVP penstocks. Consequently, water transfers from the Eel River to the East Fork of the Russian River through PVP will be significantly reduced again this year, making Lake Mendocino more reliant on carryover storage and inflow from storm events from its own watershed to fill during the 2016 water year.

4.0 CRITERIA FOR APPROVING TEMPORARY URGENCY CHANGE TO PERMITS 12947A, 12949, 12950, 16596

As required by Water Code section 1435, subdivision (b), the Board must make the following findings before issuing a temporary change order:

1. The permittee or licensee has an urgent need to make the proposed change;

2. The proposed change may be made without injury to any other lawful user of water;
3. The proposed change may be made without unreasonable effect upon fish, wildlife, or other instream beneficial uses; and
4. The proposed change is in the public interest.

4.1 Urgency of the Proposed Change

Under Water Code section 1435, subdivision (c), an urgent need to make a proposed change exists when the State Water Board concludes that the proposed temporary change is necessary to further the constitutional policy that the water resources of the State be put to beneficial use to the fullest extent of which they are capable and that waste of water be prevented.

In this case, an urgent need for the requested flow changes exists because Lake Mendocino storage levels are very low for this time of year. The Water Agency projects that water storage in Lake Mendocino could decline to below 30,000 AF by October 1, 2015 unless the requested temporary urgency changes are approved. Water supplies sufficient to support survival of listed Russian River salmonid fisheries, agricultural and municipal use, and recreation are at risk. Without the proposed changes, the Water Agency would need to release additional stored water from Lake Mendocino, which would significantly deplete storage and result in very limited water supplies for water users in Mendocino County and northern Sonoma County (above the confluence with Dry Creek) during the fall, which would cause serious impacts to human health and welfare, and reduce water supplies needed for fishery protection and stable flows in the Upper Russian River during the fall when spawning state- and federally-listed fish species are most sensitive to flow and water temperatures. Furthermore, if the upcoming Water Year 2016 is a dry year, carryover storage in Lake Mendocino from 2015 will be crucial for the continued recovery of the Russian River salmonid fishery and the water supply reliability through 2016.

An urgent need exists for the proposed changes on the Lower Russian River because the Water Agency will violate the Incidental Take Statement contained in the Biological Opinion unless the requested temporary urgency change is approved. Furthermore, NMFS concluded in the Biological Opinion that minimum instream flows lower than those required by Decision 1610 may result in flows into the estuary that improve opportunities to maintain a freshwater lagoon while preventing flooding of adjacent properties.

The Water Agency predicts that, without the proposed change, Lake Mendocino would be drawn down to storage levels that would jeopardize the Water Agency's ability to release water to the Russian River. In this event, water supplies for domestic and municipal uses of Russian River water would be severely impaired. The purpose of this order is, in part, to prevent Lake Mendocino storage from dropping below 30,000 AF. The Water Agency's

forecasts indicate that Lake Mendocino storage will drop below 30,000 AF by October 1 unless the Temporary Urgency Change Petition is approved. For the reasons stated above, an urgent need for the proposed changes exists.

4.2 No Injury to Any Other Lawful User of Water

If this petition is granted, the Water Agency still will be required to maintain specific minimum flows in the Russian River. Because these minimum flows will be present, all other legal users of water still will be able to divert and use the amounts of water that they may legally divert and use. Moreover, approval to implement the reduced instream flow will result improved water supply storage in Lake Mendocino, which in turn could result in water supply benefits to entitled users of water downstream of Lake Mendocino later in the year. Accordingly, granting this petition will not result in any injury to any other lawful user of water.

4.3 No Unreasonable Effect upon Fish, Wildlife, or Other Instream Beneficial Uses

Although flows in the main stem Russian River will be reduced if this petition is approved, conservation of water in Lake Mendocino will allow enhanced management of flows in early fall for the benefit of salmon migration and spawning. It is possible that reduced flows in the Russian River may impair some instream beneficial uses, principally recreation uses. Although some recreation uses may be affected by these reduced flows, such effects will not be unreasonable, considering the potential impacts to fisheries, water supply and recreation in Lake Mendocino and the loss of juvenile salmonid habitat in Dry Creek that could occur if the petition were not approved.

4.4 The Proposed Change is in the Public Interest

Approval of this petition will help conserve stored water in Lake Mendocino so that it can be released for listed Russian River salmonid fisheries present in the Russian River during the fall Chinook salmon migration season. In addition, approval of this petition will help preserve storage in Lake Mendocino as a precaution in case 2016 also is a dry water year. Furthermore, the preserved storage will help mitigate the significantly reduced transfers of Eel River water into the East Fork of the Russian River due to scheduled repair activities of the PVP penstocks between November 2015 and March 2016. It is in the public interest to preserve water supplies for these beneficial uses when hydrologic circumstances cause severe reductions to water supplies.

5.0 WATER CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

The Water Agency's water contractors are committed to eliminating unnecessary use of potable water for landscape irrigation and other waste. The Water Agency and its water

contractors continue to implement water use efficiency programs that align with the California Urban Water Conservation Council's Best Management Practices (BMPs) and comply with SB 7x-7. While these BMPs remain the baseline for the region, the establishment of the Sonoma-Marín Water Saving Partnership (Partnership) in December 2010 memorialized the region's commitment to long-term, year-round water use efficiencies. The Partnership removes one of the most significant barriers to implementing conservation programs, funding. Each Partner has committed to a sustained level of funding that is allocated specifically to implementing conservation programs.

The Partnership represents ten water utilities in the North Bay in Sonoma and Marin counties that have joined together to provide regional solutions for water use efficiency. The utilities (Partners) include: the Cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Petaluma, Sonoma, Cotati, North Marin, Valley of the Moon and Marin Municipal Water Districts, the Town of Windsor and the Sonoma County Water Agency. The Partnership was formed to identify and recommend water use efficiency projects and to maximize the cost-effectiveness of water use efficiency programs in our region.

Each Partner is continuously implementing water conservation programs to reduce overall regional water use. Over the last few years, in response to the drought, the Partnership has increased outreach, revised education programs and expanded the available conservation incentives.

At the onset of the drought in 2013, the Partnership doubled its annual public education campaign to encourage residents to voluntarily reduce water consumption. The Partnership launched the "20-Gallon Challenge" campaign to increase awareness of the water supply situation and as a call to action. The campaign featured a pledge to save 20 gallons per person per day. As an incentive to pledge, entries for monthly prize drawings for high-efficiency toilets and clothes washers, rainwater catchment and gray water systems, and custom water-wise landscape designs were provided. Pledges and contest entries were accepted from participants throughout the Russian River Watershed to encourage water users in both Upper Russian River and Lower Russian River areas to participate in the challenge.

In January 2014, in response to Governor Brown's emergency drought proclamation, the Partnership launched a regional multi-media effort throughout the North Bay region with a simple message: 'There's a drought on. Turn the water off.' The campaign has included: (1) outdoor water conservation tips that have been rotated in local and regional publications; and (2) advertisements on local radio stations and online media. Each advertisement spotlights a creative or humorous method for saving water. The Water Agency sponsored four drought town hall meetings in Sonoma County in April 2014 to educate the public about the drought and the need to conserve water. The meetings were held in Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Windsor and Petaluma. Water managers, officials from the County's Permit and Resources Management Department and Office of Emergency

Services attended each meeting to provide drought information relevant to rural residents and fire prevention.

On April 23, 2014 the Water Agency sponsored ten “Drought Drive-Up” locations in coordination with the Partnership. Over 5,100 free drought tool kits were distributed, which included: (1) water efficient faucet aerators; (2) toilet dye tab tests; (3) shower timers; (4) shower buckets; (5) low-flow showerheads; and (6) conservation tip cards. All participants in the “Drought Drive-Up” were also entered in a drawing to win a free high-efficiency toilet or high-efficiency washing machine.

The Partnership’s outreach efforts have improved water-use efficiencies in the region and the Water Agency remains committed to ensuring that our water supply is reliable. The Partners remain members in good standing with the California Urban Water Conservation Council (CUWCC) and implement the CUWCC’s Best Management Practices (BMPs) for water conservation.

On July 15, 2014, the State Water Board adopted Resolution No. 2014-0038 that implemented an emergency regulation for statewide urban water conservation. All of the Water Agency’s primary water customers implemented their water shortage contingency plans to the level of mandatory restrictions on outdoor irrigation and submitted monthly monitoring reports. Figure 4 highlights the reduction in regional water demands achieved in 2014 on a per capita basis by the Partnership compared to previous years back to 2000.

In response to the March 17, 2015 State Water Board Resolution 2015-0013, the Partners have initiated a plan to adopt a regional watering limitation across the Water Agency’s service area. In addition, discussions with the Sonoma County Tourism Bureau have been scheduled. The Water Agency plans to work with the Tourism Bureau to ensure all hospitality venues are aware of the hotel linen/towel requirement included in the State Water Board’s emergency regulations.

An initiative that was started last year to only serve water upon request in restaurants has been continued in our local service area. The Partnership has an online form available for restaurants to request table tents, static cling stickers and standard stickers promoting “Water available upon request.” The Partnership distributed over 500 table tents in the last year.

The Partnership’s new campaign will build on the prior year’s slogan of “There’s a Drought on. Turn the Water off.” To recognize the significant water reductions in our region, the new campaign will be “There’s never enough to waste. Turn the Water off.” Our initial campaign launch will focus on limiting irrigation to appropriate hours, locally appropriate/sustainable landscapes, eliminating runoff, and limiting shower times. These ads will be part of our multi-media campaign which includes print, web, banners, and event outreach.

In light of the Governor's Executive Order B-29-15 issued on April 1, 2015, the Partnership is expediting the campaign launch and awaiting further direction from the State Water Board on implementing the mandate. The Partners and the Water Agency will comply with all the mandates required to get the state through this drought year, including extensive reporting.

To promote water savings that extend beyond the Water Agency's service area, the Water Agency has spearheaded the Sonoma-Mendocino Immediate Drought Relief Project (Project), a demand reduction program that includes many entities in the Upper Russian River, in areas that have lacked aggressive water conservation programs in the past. The Project has been awarded over \$1 million of Prop 84 Drought funding to ensure long-term water savings to the following participating agencies: 12th District Agricultural Agency (Redwood Empire Fairgrounds), Airport-Larkfield-Wikiup Sanitation Zone, Belmont Terrace Mutual Water Company, City of Cloverdale, City of Healdsburg, City of Ukiah, County of Sonoma - Department of Transportation and Public Works, City of Fort Bragg, Geyserville Sanitation Zone, Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District, Occidental County Sanitation District, Redwood Valley County Water District, Russian River County Sanitation District, Sea Ranch Sanitation Zone, Sonoma County Water Agency, and Sweetwater Springs Water District.

On June 2, 2014, the CA Department of Water Resources (DWR) released an expedited 2014 Integrated Regional Water Management Drought Grant Solicitation seeking projects that would provide immediate, measurable water savings. The Water Agency submitted a grant proposal for the Sonoma-Mendocino Immediate Drought Relief Project, which was recommended for \$1.05 million in grant funds. The participating agencies and Water Agency have committed to provide \$630,000 in local matching funds, raising the possible total funding to \$1.68 million. DWR anticipates approving grant awards for this drought program in June 2015.

Since November 2014, approximately 200 toilets have been installed through the Project, despite the lag in State funding. The Project has the potential to increase regional water use efficiency and drought resilience in the region for years to come. The Project will reduce demands for water from Lake Mendocino and local groundwater supplies. The participating agencies have the option of offering one or both of the following water-saving programs to their customers:

- 1) High-Efficiency Fixture Direct-Install Program, which will retrofit up to two inefficient toilets per customer with new high-efficiency toilets. During the installation appointment, the Water Agency-hired plumber will also replace inefficient showerheads and aerators with free, water-efficient models and perform a leak check at the water meter. For commercial properties, in addition to toilets, inefficient urinals will be retrofitted with 0.125 gallon per flush high-efficiency urinals; and

- 2) Cash for Grass Turf Rebate Program, which will offer a \$0.50/sq. ft. rebate for converting high-water-use turf to low-water-use plant material (up to max of 500 sq. ft or \$250 per customer).

The Water Agency has managed a Direct Install program in its service area for five years. The Water Agency has already established the needed program elements (agreements with local plumbers, billings procedures, etc.) that will be utilized for this new program.

Through the Project, participating agencies will be set up to transition into self-managed ongoing conservation programs. The High-Efficiency Fixture Direct-Install Program reduces base demands addressing approximately 75% of the total indoor residential water use (showers: 20%, faucets: 18%, toilets: 20%, leaks: 18%) by improving fixture efficiency and identifying leaks. The Cash for Grass program addresses 50% of the total water use by homes and directly reduces peak water demands.

6.0 SPECIAL TERMS

6.1 Diversion Forecast Reporting

Last summer, the contractors of the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control & Water Conservation Improvement District (District) provided diversion forecasts to the Water Agency to improve coordination of changes in Lake Mendocino storage releases with changes in diversions from the Upper Russian River. The diversion forecast reporting was a requirement of the August 25, 2014 State Water Board Order approving a Temporary Urgency Change Petition filed by the District on August 8, 2014. These diversion forecast reports provided the Water Agency with a 72-hour forecast of diversions, which improved information for the river operations decision-making process. The Water Agency used the information submitted to issue daily diversion forecast reports each morning for the various reaches of the Upper Russian River. An improved understanding of the river flow variations allowed the Water Agency operators to assess the situational conditions and respond appropriately. The Water Agency requests that the State Water Board direct the Water Agency to ask the District to provide the Water Agency with similar diversion forecasts for all of its contractors' water uses during the upcoming irrigation season.

6.2 Water Conservation

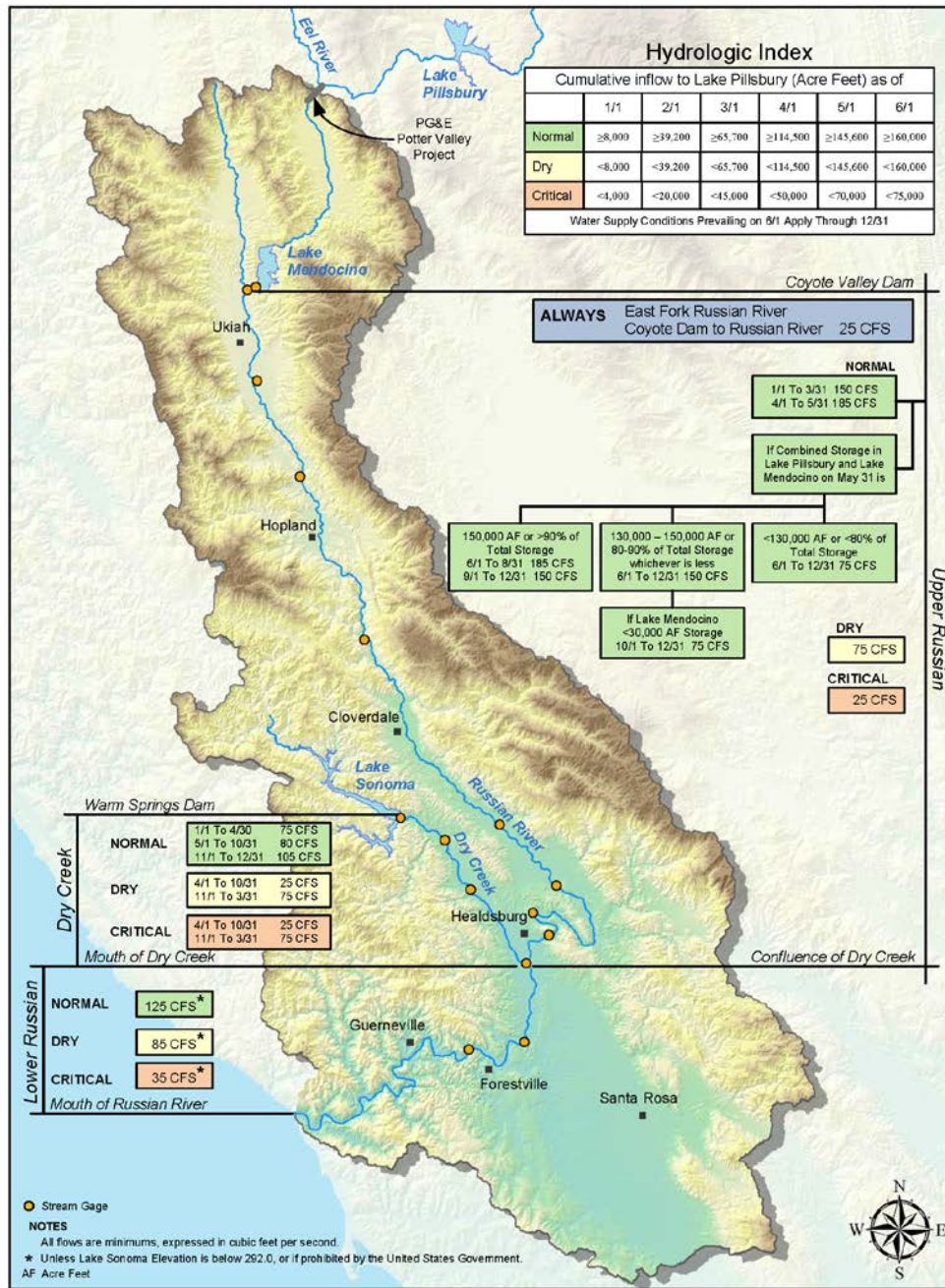
The State Water Board has proposed a regulatory framework for implementation of the required 25 percent potable urban water savings called for in the Governor's April 1, 2015 Executive Order. The Water Agency and its customers will comply with the State Water

Board regulations that will implement the Executive Order. Consequently, the Water Agency requests that no additional conservation or conservation reporting requirements be included in the terms in the order on this Petition.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The Water Agency is submitting this Temporary Urgency Change Petition to address the dry conditions that have persisted since January 2013. Under these conditions, and given the uncertainty of regional precipitation over the next several months, the Water Agency requests that the State Water Board issue an order reducing the applicable minimum instream flow requirements for the Upper Russian River and Lower Russian River to preserve storage in Lake Mendocino and to prevent the development of more severe storage conditions.

Figures



Russian River Basin

Figure 1 – State Water Resources Control Board Decision 1610 Minimum In-Stream Flow Requirements by Reach

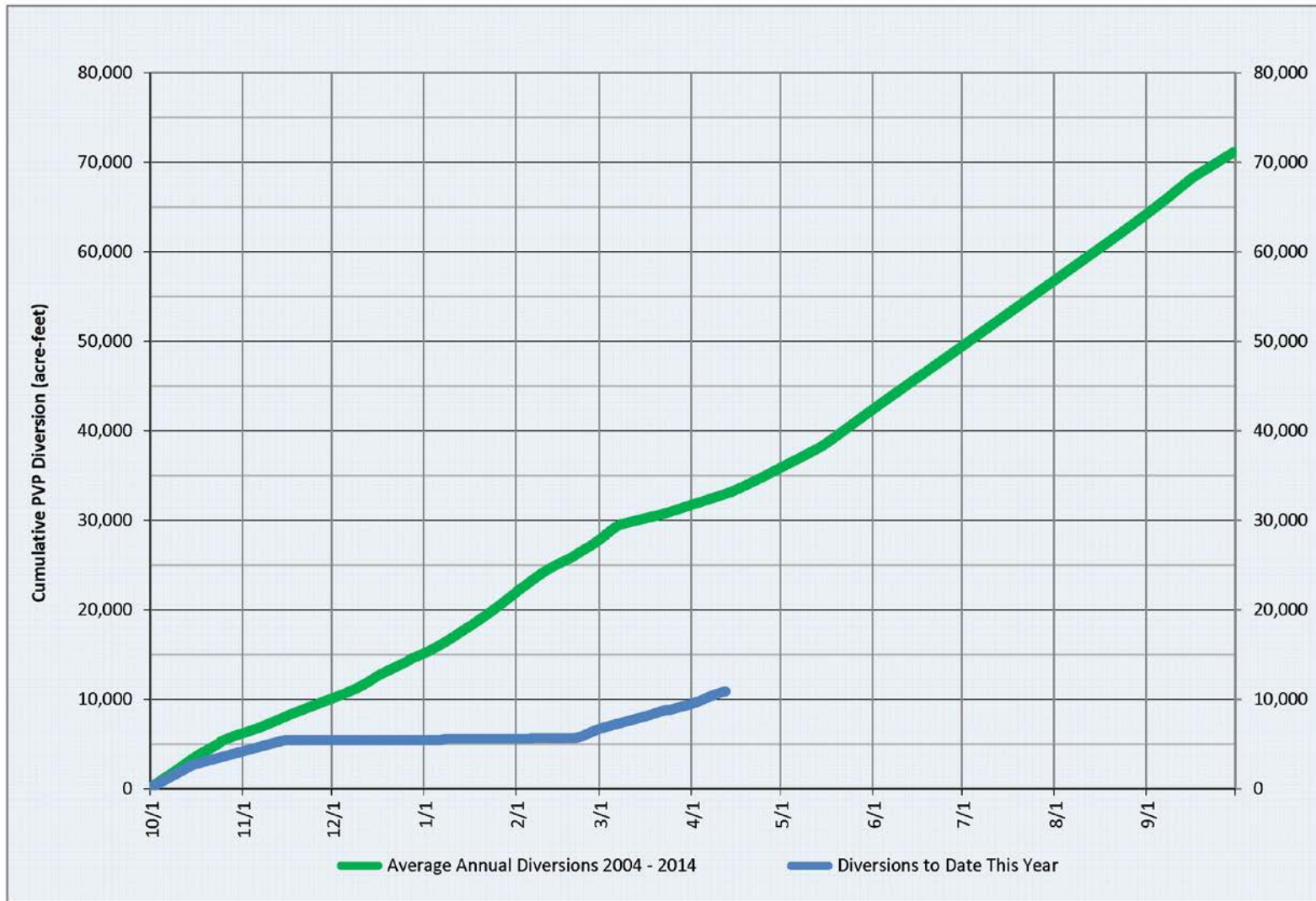


Figure 2 – Cumulative Annual Diversions through the Potter Valley Project

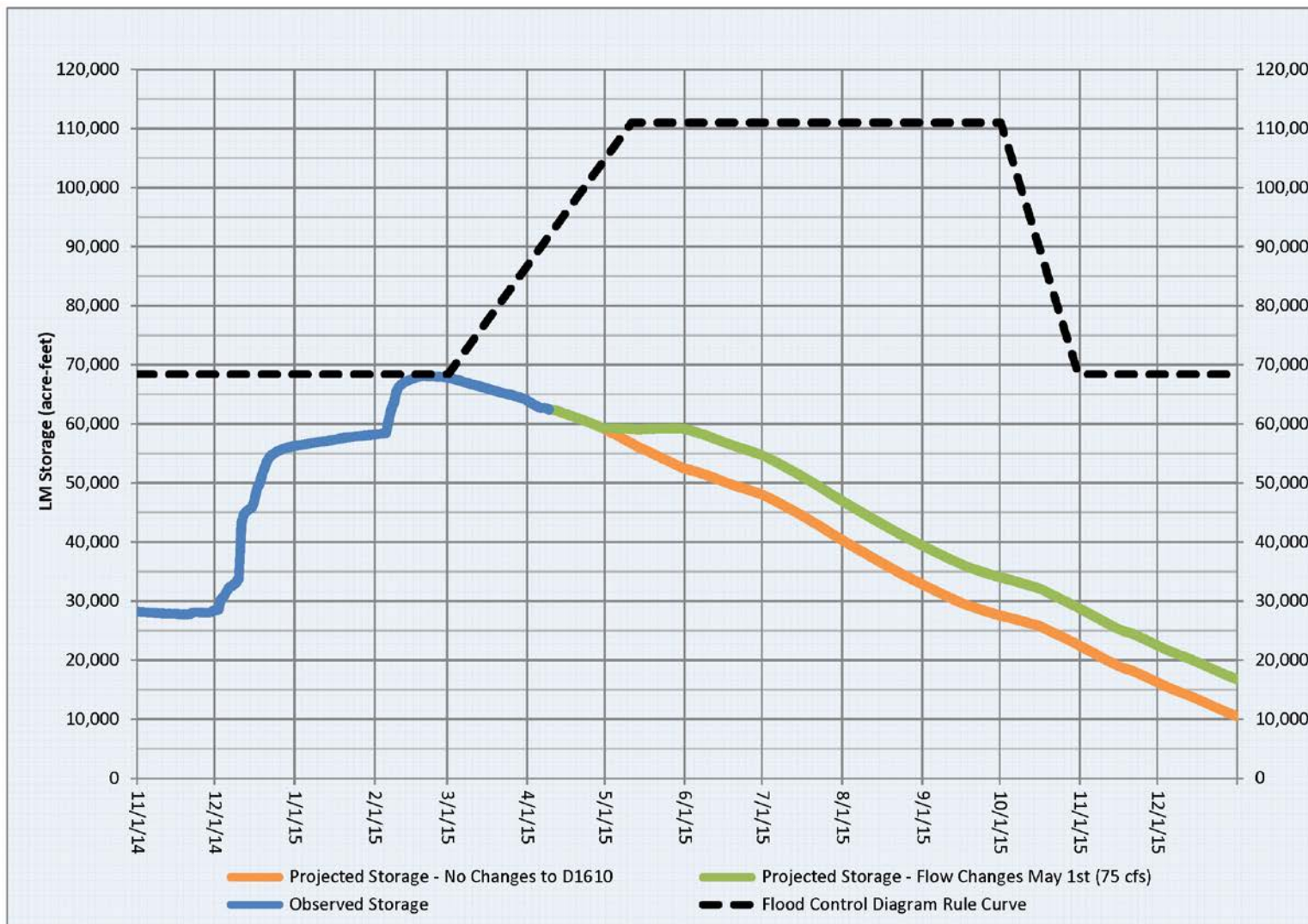


Figure 3 – Observed and Projected 2015 Lake Mendocino Storage Levels

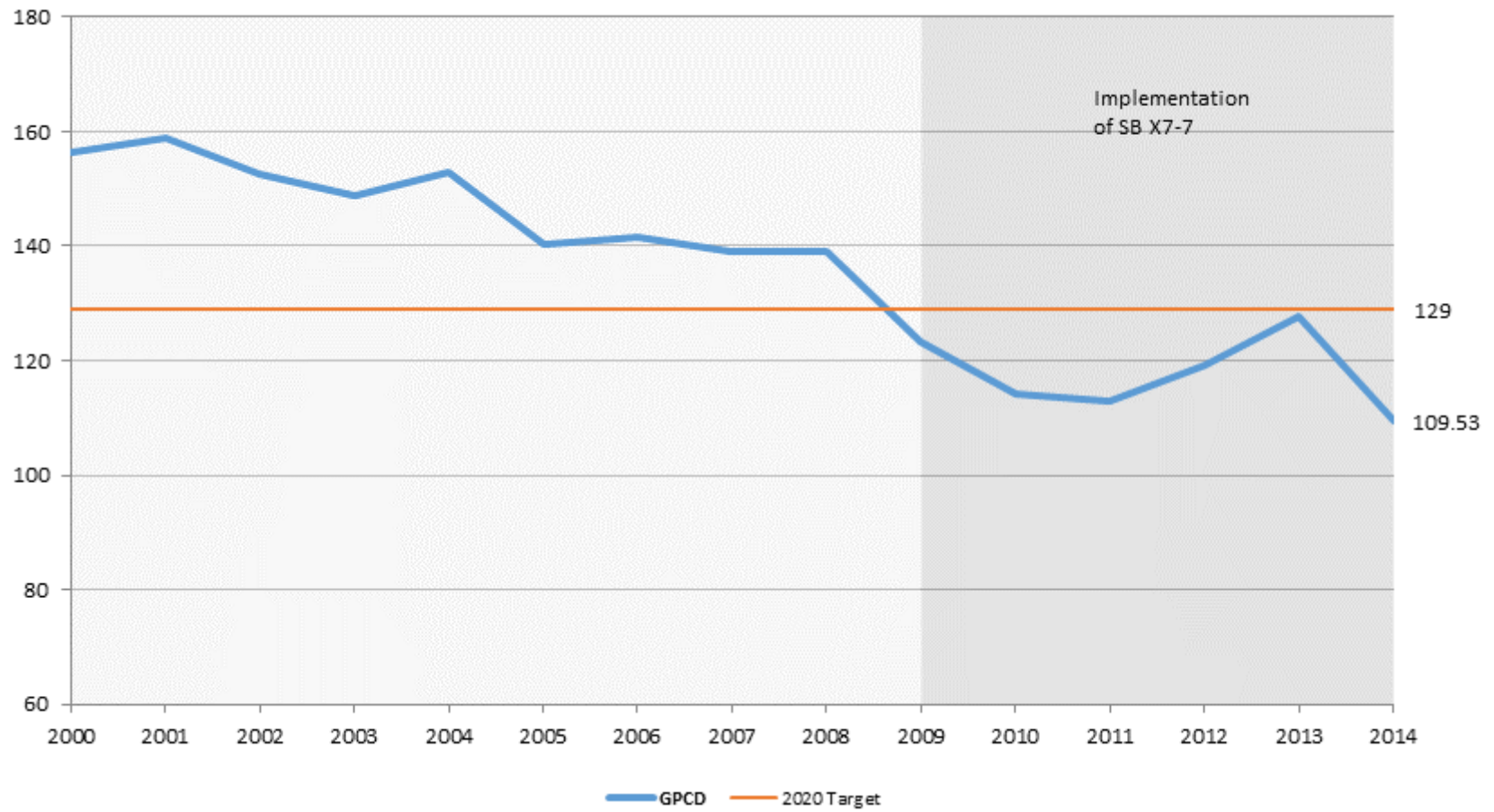


Figure 4 – Regional Per Capita Water Demands from 2000 - 2014

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION FOR PETITIONS

This form is required for all petitions.

Before the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) can approve a petition, the State Water Board must consider the information contained in an environmental document prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This form is not a CEQA document. If a CEQA document has not yet been prepared, a determination must be made of who is responsible for its preparation. As the petitioner, you are responsible for all costs associated with the environmental evaluation and preparation of the required CEQA documents. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and submit any studies that have been conducted regarding the environmental evaluation of your project. If you need more space to completely answer the questions, please number and attach additional sheets.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED CHANGES OR WORK REMAINING TO BE COMPLETED

For a petition for change, provide a description of the proposed changes to your project including, but not limited to, type of construction activity, structures existing or to be built, area to be graded or excavated, increase in water diversion and use (up to the amount authorized by the permit), changes in land use, and project operational changes, including changes in how the water will be used. For a petition for extension of time, provide a description of what work has been completed and what remains to be done. Include in your description any of the above elements that will occur during the requested extension period.

See Attachment 1 'Description of April 2015 Temporary Urgency Change Petition Request' for a summary of the requested changes.

Insert the attachment number here, if applicable:

1

Coordination with Regional Water Quality Control Board

For change petitions only, you must request consultation with the Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding the potential effects of your proposed change on water quality and other instream beneficial uses. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 794.) In order to determine the appropriate office for consultation, see: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterboards_map.shtml. Provide the date you submitted your request for consultation here, then provide the following information.

Date of Request

4/20/2015

Will your project, during construction or operation, (1) generate waste or wastewater containing such things as sewage, industrial chemicals, metals, or agricultural chemicals, or (2) cause erosion, turbidity or sedimentation?

Yes No

Will a waste discharge permit be required for the project?

Yes No

If necessary, provide additional information below:

Request for consultation with Matt St. John, the Executive Director of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, was made on Monday, April 20, 2015 regarding the filing of this petition. The correspondence requested a meeting with Regional Board staff during the week of April 20-24, 2015.

Insert the attachment number here, if applicable:

Local Permits

For temporary transfers only, you must contact the board of supervisors for the county(ies) both for where you currently store or use water and where you propose to transfer the water. (Wat. Code § 1726.) Provide the date you submitted your request for consultation here.

Date of Contact

For change petitions only, you should contact your local planning or public works department and provide the information below.

Person Contacted: Date of Contact:

Department: Phone Number:

County Zoning Designation:

Are any county permits required for your project? If yes, indicate type below. Yes No

Grading Permit Use Permit Watercourse Obstruction Permit

Change of Zoning General Plan Change Other (explain below)

If applicable, have you obtained any of the permits listed above? If yes, provide copies. Yes No

If necessary, provide additional information below:

Insert the attachment number here, if applicable:

Federal and State Permits

Check any additional agencies that may require permits or other approvals for your project:

- Regional Water Quality Control Board Department of Fish and Game
- Dept of Water Resources, Division of Safety of Dams California Coastal Commission
- State Reclamation Board U.S. Army Corps of Engineers U.S. Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Natural Resources Conservation Service

Have you obtained any of the permits listed above? If yes, provide copies. Yes No

For each agency from which a permit is required, provide the following information:

Agency	Permit Type	Person(s) Contacted	Contact Date	Phone Number

If necessary, provide additional information below:

Consultations with NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (Robert Cooley, Lisa Van Atta, and Joseph Dillon) and CA Department of Fish & Wildlife (Eric Larson and Scott Wilson) on filing of this petition occurred in a joint meeting held on Friday April 17, 2015 at the Water Agency's Administration Building in Santa Rosa.

Insert the attachment number here, if applicable:

Construction or Grading Activity

Does the project involve any construction or grading-related activity that has significantly altered or would significantly alter the bed, bank or riparian habitat of any stream or lake? Yes No

If necessary, provide additional information below:

Insert the attachment number here, if applicable:

Archeology

- Has an archeological report been prepared for this project? If yes, provide a copy. Yes No
- Will another public agency be preparing an archeological report? Yes No
- Do you know of any archeological or historic sites in the area? If yes, explain below. Yes No

If necessary, provide additional information below:

Insert the attachment number here, if applicable:

Photographs

For all petitions other than time extensions, attach complete sets of color photographs, clearly dated and labeled, showing the vegetation that exists at the following three locations:

- Along the stream channel immediately downstream from each point of diversion
- Along the stream channel immediately upstream from each point of diversion
- At the place where water subject to this water right will be used

Maps

For all petitions other than time extensions, attach maps labeled in accordance with the regulations showing all applicable features, both present and proposed, including but not limited to: point of diversion, point of rediversion, distribution of storage reservoirs, point of discharge of treated wastewater, place of use, and location of instream flow dedication reach. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, §§ 715 et seq., 794.)

Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 794, petitions for change submitted without maps may not be accepted.

All Water Right Holders Must Sign This Form:

I (we) hereby certify that the statements I (we) have furnished above and in the attachments are complete to the best of my (our) ability and that the facts, statements, and information presented are true and correct to the best of my (our) knowledge. Dated at .

Pamela Joane
Water Right Holder or Authorized Agent Signature

Water Right Holder or Authorized Agent Signature

NOTE:

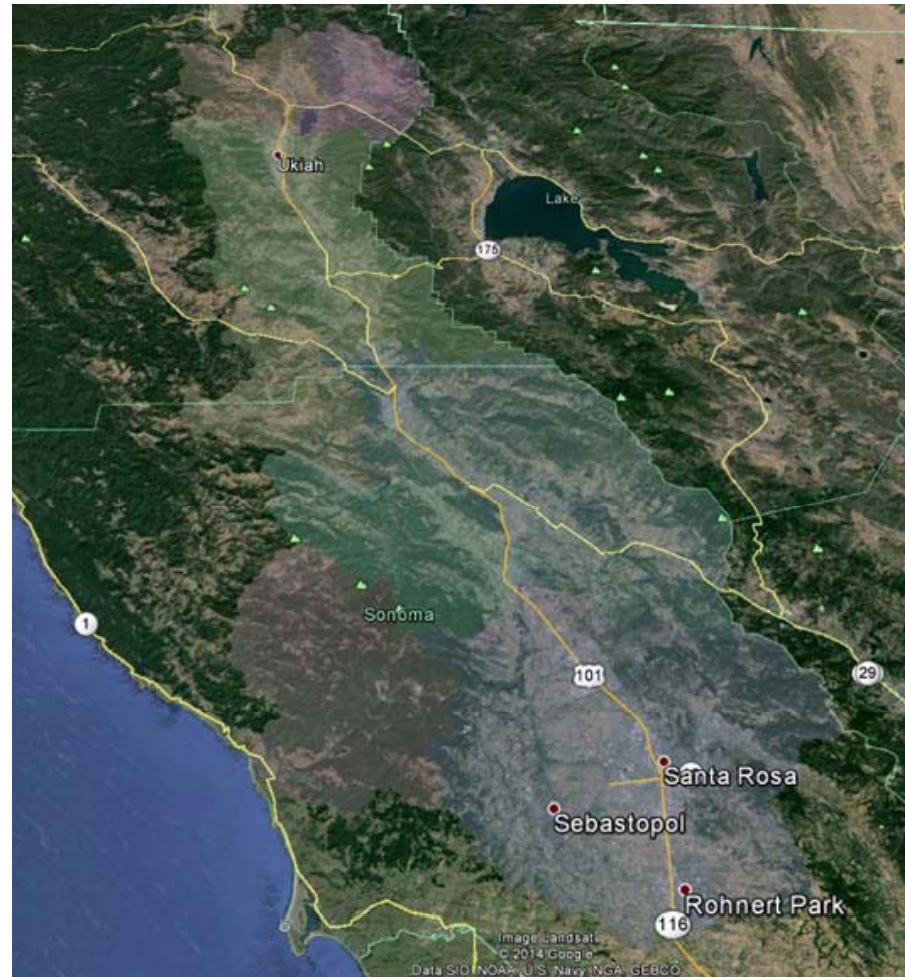
- Petitions for Change may not be accepted unless you include proof that a copy of the petition was served on the Department of Fish and Game. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 794.)
- Petitions for Temporary Transfer may not be accepted unless you include proof that a copy of the petition was served on the Department of Fish and Game and the board of supervisors for the county(ies) where you currently store or use water and the county(ies) where you propose to transfer the water. (Wat. Code § 1726.)

Sonoma County Water Agency Photographs in Vicinity of Main Diversion Facilities at Wohler and Mirabel Park

Russian River Between at Mirabel Park on July 25, 2014



Russian River Watershed



NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: X Office of Planning & Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Sonoma County Water Agency
404 Aviation Boulevard
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

X County Clerk
County of Sonoma
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

X County Clerk
County of Mendocino
Ukiah, CA 95482

Project Title: Petition Requesting Approval of a Temporary Urgency Change in Water Right Permits 12947A, 12949, 12950 and 16596 in Mendocino and Sonoma counties

Project Location-Specific: The proposed action would occur in Mendocino and Sonoma counties at Lake Mendocino, in the Upper Russian River from Coyote Valley Dam/Lake Mendocino to the confluence with Dry Creek, and in the Lower Russian River from its confluence with Dry Creek to the Pacific Ocean. Figure 1 shows the streamflow requirements for the Russian River system. Communities and cities along the Russian River include Ukiah, Hopland, Cloverdale, Geyserville, Healdsburg, Forestville, Mirabel Park, Rio Nido, Guerneville, Monte Rio, Duncans Mills, and Jenner.

Project Location – City: N/A **Project Location – County:** Mendocino and Sonoma

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project: Sonoma County Water Agency (Water Agency) is filing a temporary urgency change petition requesting that the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) make the following changes in the minimum instream flow requirements for the Russian River mainstem that are specified in SWRCB Decision 1610 and the Water Agency's water right permits for a period of 180 days from May 1, 2015 until October 27, 2015: (1) reduce the required minimum instream flow in the Russian River from the confluence of the East and West Forks to the river's confluence with Dry Creek from 185 cubic-feet per second (cfs) to 75 cfs from May 1 to October 27; and (2) reduce required minimum instream flow in the Russian River from its confluence with Dry Creek to the Pacific Ocean from 125 cfs to 85 cfs from May 1 to October 27.

To improve its efforts in optimally managing flows in the Russian River, the Water Agency is also requesting that the minimum instream flow requirements be specified as 5-day running averages of average daily stream flow measurements, with the conditions that instantaneous flows on the Upper Russian River are not less than 65 cfs and on the Lower Russian River are not less than 75 cfs. This implementation of minimum instream flow requirements will allow the Water Agency to reduce the operational buffers needed to manage stream flows, thereby conserving more water in Lake Mendocino. Higher Lake Mendocino storage levels in the fall will benefit migrating Chinook salmon and improve carryover storage volumes to meet Upper Russian River demands into 2016 if dry conditions persist.

An urgent need for the requested flow changes exist because Lake Mendocino storage levels are very low for this time of year. The Water Agency projects that water storage in Lake Mendocino could decline to below 30,000 acre-feet (AF) by October 1, 2015, unless the requested temporary urgency changes are approved. Water supplies sufficient to support survival of listed Russian River salmonid fisheries, agricultural and municipal use, and recreation are at risk. Without the proposed changes, the Water Agency would need to release additional stored water from Lake Mendocino, which would significantly deplete storage and result in very limited water supplies for water users in Mendocino County and northern Sonoma County (above the confluence with Dry Creek) during the fall, which would cause serious impacts to human health and welfare, and reduce water supplies needed for fishery protection

and stable flows in the upper Russian River during the fall, when spawning state and federally listed fish species are most sensitive to flow and water temperatures. Furthermore, if Water Year 2016 is a dry year, carryover storage in Lake Mendocino from 2015 will be crucial for the continued recovery of the Russian River salmonid fishery and water supply reliability through 2016.

An urgent need exists for the proposed changes for the Lower Russian River because the Water Agency would violate the Incidental Take Statement in the Russian River Biological Opinion issued by NMFS on September 24, 2008, unless the requested temporary urgency change is approved. Furthermore, NMFS concluded in the Biological Opinion that minimum instream flows lower than those required by Decision 1610 may result in flows into the estuary that improve opportunities to maintain a freshwater lagoon while preventing flooding of adjacent properties.

The Water Agency predicts that, without the proposed change, Lake Mendocino would be drawn down to storage levels that would jeopardize the Water Agency's ability to release water to the Russian River. Under this condition, water supplies for domestic and municipal uses of Russian River water would be severely impaired. The purpose of this order is, in part, to prevent Lake Mendocino storage from dropping below 30,000 AF. The Water Agency's forecasts indicate that Lake Mendocino storage will drop below 30,000 AF by October 1 unless the Temporary Urgency Change Petition is approved.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: State Water Resources Control Board - Division of Water Rights

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Sonoma County Water Agency

Exempt Status: (check one)

	Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268)	
	Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))	
X	Emergency Project (Sec.21080 (b)(4); 15269(b)(c)):	Section 21080(b)(4): Specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency
X	Categorical Exemption. State type and section number:	State CEQA Guidelines 15307: Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources State CEQA Guidelines 15308: Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment State CEQA Guidelines 15301(i): Existing Facilities
	Statutory Exemptions. State code number:	

Reasons why project is exempt: The proposed action is statutorily exempt under CEQA Statute 21080(b)(4) and categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under the State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15307, 15308, and 15301(i).

A. Actions to Prevent or Mitigate an Emergency

California Public Resources Code, Division 13, Section 21080(b)(4) provides that specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency are exempt from CEQA. The Water Agency's forecasts indicate that Lake Mendocino storage will drop below 30,000 AF by October 1, 2015, unless the Temporary Urgency Change Petition is approved. Water supplies sufficient to support survival of listed Russian River salmonid fisheries, agricultural and municipal use, and recreation are threatened. Without the proposed change, the Water Agency would need to release additional stored water from Lake Mendocino to meet Decision 1610 minimum instream flow requirements, which would result in the significant depletion and potential elimination of water supplies for water users in Mendocino County and northern Sonoma County (above the confluence with Dry Creek), which would cause serious impacts to

human health and welfare, and which would reduce water supplies needed for fishery protection and stable flows in the Upper Russian River for the fall migration and spawning of listed salmon species. Water supplies for domestic and municipal uses of Russian River water would be severely impaired. The purpose of this proposed action is, in part, to prevent Lake Mendocino storage from dropping below 30,000 AF, which would otherwise occur in the absence of the SWRCB approving the requested changes. Furthermore, if the upcoming Water Year 2016 is a dry year, carryover storage in Lake Mendocino will be crucial for the continued recovery of the Russian River salmonid fishery and for water supply reliability through 2016.

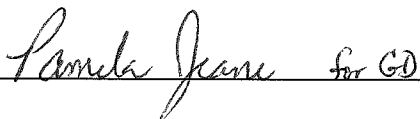
B. Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources and the Environment

CEQA Guidelines Sections 15307 and 15308 provide that actions taken by regulatory agencies to assure the maintenance, restoration or enhancement of a natural resource and the environment are categorically exempt. The proposed change in Russian River instream flow requirements would conserve water in Lake Mendocino to benefit the migration and spawning of adult Chinook salmon in the fall.

C. Existing Facilities

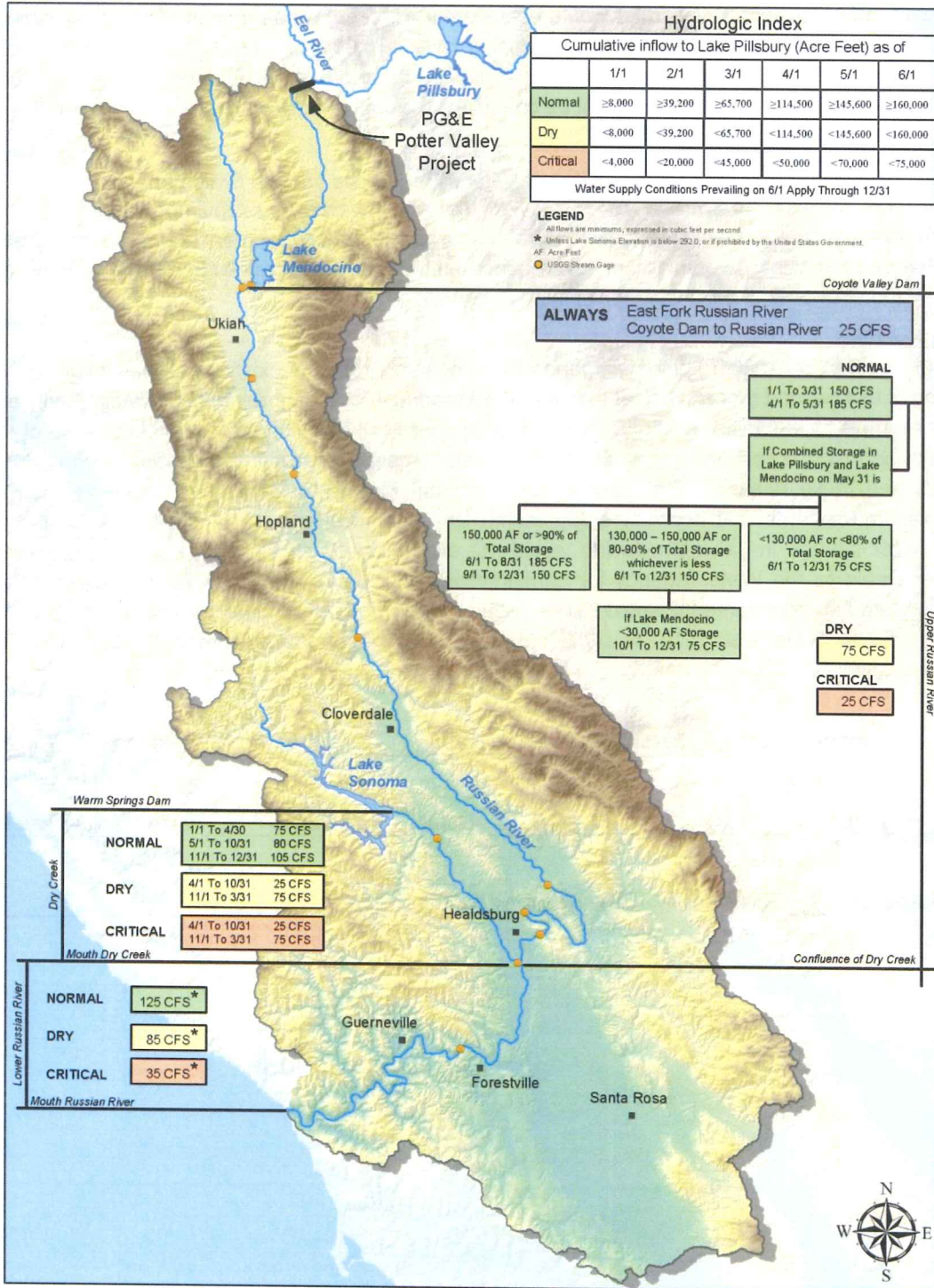
CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(i) provides, generally, that the operation of existing facilities involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination is categorically exempt from CEQA. The examples in subdivision (i) of Section 15301(i) specifically provide that the maintenance of streamflows to protect fish and wildlife resources is exempt. The Water Agency's request to change minimum instream flow requirements and make releases from Lake Mendocino from May to October 2015 under the same minimum instream flow requirements that normally apply during Dry or Critical hydrologic conditions for the purpose of conserving water storage in Lake Mendocino would not expand the Water Agency's use or increase the water diversions available to the Water Agency for consumptive purposes. The proposed change in Russian River minimum instream flow requirements would still be within the existing operational parameters for Lake Mendocino established by SWRCB Decision 1610. In addition, the proposal would maintain streamflows specifically to protect listed salmonid species.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Jessica Martini-Lamb Area Code/Telephone: 707-547-1903

Signature:  for GD Date: 04/21/2015 Title: General Manager

Lead Agency Applicant Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

State Water Resources Control Board Decision 1610



Russian River Basin
Streamflow Requirements

Figure 1. Project location for Petition Requesting Approval of a Temporary Urgency Change in Water Right Permits 12947A, 12949, 12950, and 16596 in Mendocino and Sonoma counties.