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80 FERC ¶ 2,251
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Southern California Edison Company) Project No. 1388-011

ORDER AMENDING LICENSE

(Issued September 18, 1997)

On June 6, 1997, Southern California Edison (SCE), licensee for the Lee Vining Project, FERC No. 1388, filed an application to amend its license. 1/ The project is located on Lee Vining Creek in Mono County, California. In the filing, SCE proposes to remove the spillway radial gates at Rhinedollar Dam.

BACKGROUND

The Lee Vining Project consists of three lakes: Saddlebag, Tioga, and Ellery (also known as Rhinedollar Lake). Both Saddlebag and Tioga lakes drain into Ellery Lake, which is the intake and regulating reservoir for the project's powerhouse. The Ellery Lake is impounded by the 437-foot-long by 17-foot-high rockfill Rhinedollar Dam. At the left abutment of the dam there is a 36-foot-long by 5-foot-deep concrete side channel spillway with three radial gates. Each gate is 12 feet wide by 4 feet high. The dam's crest elevation is 9,497.53 feet, and the spillway's crest elevation is 9,492.53 feet. With the gates closed, the normal maximum reservoir elevation is 9,496.53 feet.

With the radial gates, SCE has the flexibility to store water when needed. However, SCE has not stored water behind the radial gates for the past 13 years.

THE AMENDMENT

In its amendment application, SCE proposes to remove the radial gates from the spillway. Removal of the gates would reduce the normal maximum elevation of the pool to 9,492.53 feet, which is the spillway crest elevation. However, since these gates have not been utilized for the past 13 years, their removal would be insignificant to project operations. Removal of the gates would eliminate the cost of their maintenance.

1/ 78 FERC ¶ 61,110 (1997).

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CONSULTATION

SCE consulted with the resource agencies before filing its amendment request. The California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Forest Service (FS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife provided comments. The FS primary concern, if the proposed work is planned for the summer months, is for the SCE to coordinate the proposed work as safely and as least disruptive as possible to the fishing and recreating public. The FS prefers that the proposed work be conducted during weekday periods when the public utilizes the area less.

DISCUSSION

By removing the radial spillway gates at the Rhinedollar Dam, the authorized normal maximum reservoir elevation would decrease from 9,496.53 feet to 9,492.53 feet, which is the spillway's crest elevation. The normal maximum surface area will decrease from 66 acres to 61 acres, and the usable storage capacity will decrease from 749 acre-feet to 490 acre-feet.

For the past 13 years, SCE has operated Ellery Lake without using the gates, where the normal maximum reservoir elevation did not exceed the spillway crest elevation of 9,492.53 feet. Therefore, decreasing the authorized normal maximum elevation by 4 feet to 9,492.53 feet would not have any impact on current project operation.

The gates are restricted to the full open position during periods of potential storm activity (August 1 through April 30). Removal of the gates would not affect the water level of Ellery Lake as it has been for the last 13 years. Thus, the aquatic environment of Ellery Lake would be maintained at status quo. Further, the availability and location of fish habitat and wetlands would not be impacted by removal of the radial gates.

To mitigate any impacts to fishing and recreation, SCE should follow the FS suggestions as indicated in their letter dated March 20, 1997. The FS suggests that SCE: (1) coordinate the proposed work as safely and as least disruptive as possible to the fishing and recreating public; (2) do the proposed work during weekday periods when the public utilizes the area less; (3) designate the work area as "closed" during all periods of construction, and avoid damage to forest resources and facilities; and (4) inform the FS of the schedule for removal of the radial gates. We are addressing these suggestions in ordering paragraph (H).

The amendment application includes revised exhibit F-3 drawing, which shows Rhinedollar Dam after the removal of the radial gates. This drawing contains a typographical error on cross-section A-A. The referenced elevation of 9,297.53 feet should read 9,497.53 feet. We are requiring the correction of this typographical error in ordering paragraph (D). Furthermore, this correction should be made prior to the filing of the aperture card that is required by ordering paragraph (F).

This order approves the amendment of license to remove the spillway radial gates. Before start of construction, the licensee must provide plans and specifications on the gates removal activities to the Commission's San Francisco Regional Office for review. We are including this requirement in ordering paragraph (G).

The Director orders:

(A) The amendment of license to remove the spillway radial gates at the Rhinedollar Dam, of the Lee Vining Creek Project, FERC No. 1388, is amended as provided in this order.

(B) Subparagraph (2) of ordering paragraph (B) of the license is revised to read as follows:

(2) The project works consisting of: (a) the existing 45-foot-high, 600-foot-long, redwood faced, rockfill Saddlebag Dam, impounding 317-acre Saddlebag Lake; (b) the existing 27-foot-high, 270-foot-long, redwood faced, rockfill Tioga Dam, impounding 73-acre Tioga Lake; (c) the existing 19-foot-high, 50-foot-long, constant radius concrete arch Tioga auxiliary dam; (d) the existing 17-foot-high, 437-foot-long rockfill Rhinedollar Dam, impounding 61-acre Rhinedollar Lake (Ellery Lake), and adjoining the dam at the left abutment a 36-foot-long by 5-foot-deep concrete side channel spillway with a crest elevation of 9,492.53 feet; (e) the existing concrete intake structure at Rhinedollar Dam; (f) the existing 2,452-foot-long, 48-inch-diameter pipeline; (g) the existing 3,680-foot-long, 42-inch to 28-inch-diameter steel penstock; (h) the existing Poole Powerhouse containing one turbine rated at 17,910 hp with a hydraulic capacity of 105 cfs, connected to a generator with a rated capacity of 11,250 kilowatts (kW); (i) the existing 6.4-mile-long, 115-kV transmission line from the Poole Powerhouse to the Lee Vining Substation; and (j) appurtenant structures.

(C) The project works generally described above are more specifically described in revised Exhibit A, sections A.1 through A.4, filed on June 6, 1997, and revised on September 4, 1997, describing the project electrical and mechanical facilities of the project. This exhibit A is approved and made a part of the license, superseding the old exhibit A of the license.

(D) The revised exhibit F drawing that was filed on June 6, 1997, contains a typographical error on cross-section A-A. The referenced elevation of 9,297.53 feet should read 9,497.53 feet. This drawing is approved with the corrected referenced elevation and made a part of the license.

| Drawing | FERC No. | Showing | Superseding |
|---------|----------|-----------------|-------------|
| F-3 | 1388-17 | Rhinedollar dam | 1388-13 |

(E) The superseded exhibit is deleted from the license.

(F) Within 90 days of the date of issuance of this order, the licensee shall file four original aperture cards of the approved drawing with the corrected elevation mentioned in ordering paragraph (D). All aperture cards should be reproduced on silver or gelatin 35 mm microfilm. All microfilm should be mounted on a Type D (3 1/4" x 7 3/8") aperture card.

Prior to microfilming, the FERC Drawing Number (1388-17) shall be shown in the margin below the title block of the approved drawing. After mounting, the FERC Drawing Number should be typed in the upper right corner of each aperture card. Additionally, the Project Number, FERC exhibit (i.e., F-3), Drawing Title, and date of this order should be typed in the upper left corner of each aperture card. See Figure 1.

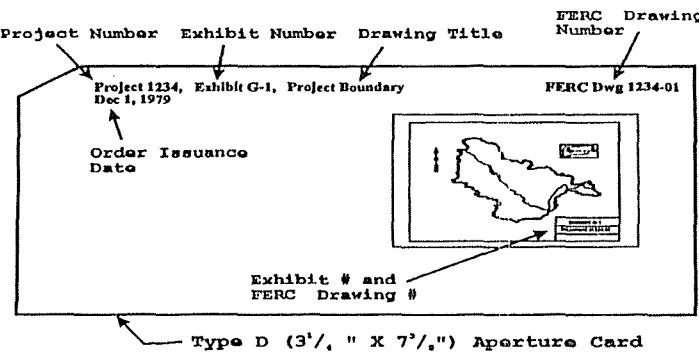


Figure 1. Sample Aperture Card Format

Two aperture cards should be filed with the Secretary of the Commission. One aperture card should be filed with the Commission's San Francisco Regional Office. The remaining aperture card should be filed with the Bureau of Land Management's California State Office.^{2/}

(G) At least 60 days prior to the start of construction, the licensee must submit one copy to the Commission's Regional Director and two copies to the Commission (one of these shall be a courtesy copy to the Director, Division of Dam Safety and Inspections), of the final plans and specifications for the removal of the spillway gates. The Commission may require changes in the plans and specifications to assure a safe and adequate project.

^{2/} The Bureau of Land Management's California State Office is located at the following address:

State Director
California State Office
Branch of Adjudication and Records (CA-943.5)
Federal Building, Room E-2845
Attn: FERC withdrawal Recordation
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825-1889

(H) To mitigate any impacts to fishing and recreation and to avoid damages to forest resources and facilities, the licensee shall: (1) coordinate the proposed work as safely and as least disruptive as possible to the fishing and recreating public; (2) undertake the proposed work during periods when the public utilizes the area less; (3) designate the work area as "closed" during all periods of construction, and avoid damage to forest resources and facilities; and (4) inform the FS of the schedule for removal of the radial gates.

(I) This order constitutes final agency action. Requests for rehearing by the Commission may be filed within 30 days of the date of issuance of this order, pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 385.713.

6/16/81 ADL/jm

Kevin P. Madden
Acting Director
Office of Hydropower Licensing