

May 17, 2001

Subject: **Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process and Basin Planning  
Draft Environmental Study Plan Package**

Dear Agency or Interested Party:

Southern California Edison (SCE) is in the process of relicensing its hydroelectric projects within the Big Creek System (BCS). The relicensing process includes three projects undergoing traditional relicensing and four projects included within the Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process (ALP). The Big Creek ALP is a collaborative effort involving SCE, the resource agencies, and other stakeholders including non-governmental organizations. The Big Creek ALP addresses a wide variety of issues within the watershed associated with the operation and maintenance of SCE hydroelectric projects. Issues associated with the SCE projects undergoing traditional relicensing processes also will be considered within the Basin Planning aspect of the ALP.

The primary goal of the ALP is to achieve a Comprehensive Resource Settlement Agreement (CRSA), serving as the basis for proposed resource protection, mitigation and enhancement conditions for the new Project licenses. The CRSA will help form the framework for Applications for New Licenses for the four ALP Projects, as well as any appropriate License Amendments to the earlier-expiring traditional licenses. To provide a sound foundation for the CRSA, we must understand the BCS and affected resources through scientific studies, which will be performed over the next two years.

As a foundation for the scientific surveys, we have prepared technical study plans in collaboration with a dedicated group of resource agencies and other stakeholders. The Draft Technical Study Plan Package (DTSP) has been written in a consistent format, providing underlying stakeholder goals and management objectives, technical approaches, and literature citations. In preparing each of the plans making up the DTSP, considerable thought has been given to coordination and scheduling needs. The information resulting from the studies described in the DTSP must be credible, consistent, and understandable to provide the basis for the CRSA.

The DTSP is enclosed for your review. Please review this document and forward any comments you may have to Ms. Carla Anthony, at the address shown below by June 16, 2001. Alternatively, you may attend a public meeting, scheduled for June 13, 2001, beginning at 6:00 PM and ending 10:00 PM, at the Piccadilly Inn University, 4961 North Cedar Avenue, Fresno, California and make verbal comments. SCE will consider the comments or recommendations it receives to prepare a final study plan package. The studies themselves are scheduled to begin in Summer 2001.

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Thank you for your cooperation and participation.

Sincerely,

*Jeff McPheeters/CLR*

Enclosures

cc: Distribution List