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Project No. 137-203—California
Mokelumne River Project
Pacific Gas and Electric Company

July 17, 2020

VIA FERC Service

Mr. Jan Nimick
Vice President, Power Generation
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
245 Market Street
Mail Code: N11E
San Francisco, CA 94177

Subject: Hazardous Substance Incident

Dear Mr. Nimick:

This is in response to your hazardous substance release notification letter, filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) on April 3, 2020 for the Mokelumne River Project No. 137. License Article 19 requires that you take reasonable measures to prevent any form of water or air pollution. Further, U.S. Forest Service Section 4(e) Condition No. 38 and your approved Hazardous Substances Plan require that you maintain a cache of spill cleanup equipment and to inform the Forest Service immediately of the nature, time, date, location, and action taken for any spill affecting National Forest System lands.

You report that on March 3, 2020, a PG&E vehicle traveling on a dirt road between East Panther Creek and Tiger Canal left the road and rolled down an embankment, before landing on the vehicle’s roof in East Panther Creek. Staff responding to the incident noted diesel fuel in the water from a tank in the truck bed and responded by placing oil absorbent pads and booms around and downstream of the vehicle. You subsequently notified the National Response Center, California Office of Emergency Services, Amador County, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) of the incident.
Subsequently on the following day (March 4, 2020), you performed additional cleanup activities and installed additional containment booms. On March 5, 2020, you removed some vegetation and trees to facilitate extraction of the vehicle, which was accomplished on the same day. You report that you continued to perform cleanup activities and replaced containment booms as necessary through March 29, 2020. Your review of environmental impacts from the incident noted that there were some adverse impacts to riparian vegetation due to vehicle extraction activities. Although you did not report any adverse effects to fishery resources, you hypothesize that any adverse impacts in the watershed were likely short-term and would be mitigated by CDFW’s fish stocking efforts in the area. You also state that the incident was unlikely to adversely affect foothill yellow-legged frog due to the location and timing of the incident. In response to the incident, you have restricted vehicle access at the site and are evaluating the long-term use of dirt roads and fuel tanks in the area.

Review of the incident indicates that the hazardous substance release was not directly related to project operations or facilities. Further, you took appropriate action to respond to the incident by initiating cleanup efforts and coordinating with the resource agencies and emergency response entities. Although there appears to be adverse effects to vegetation, water quality, and aquatic resources, your prompt response likely limited the magnitude of these impacts. As a reminder, Forest Service Condition No. 38 requires that you inform the Forest Service immediately of the nature, time, date, location, and action taken for any spill affecting National Forest System lands. While the incident appears to have occurred outside of National Forest System lands, the downstream portion of Panther Creek is located within Forest System lands and may have been affected by the incident. Please ensure that you notify the Forest Service of any similar future incidents that could affect the lands within its jurisdiction. Otherwise, no additional action is required as it relates to this event.

Thank you for your report. If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact Mr. John Aedo at (415) 369-3335 or at john.aedo@ferc.gov.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. LoVullo
Chief, Aquatic Resources Branch
Division of Hydropower Administration and Compliance