



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PRELIMINARY MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Date of this Notice: October 2, 2007

Lead Agency: City and County of San Francisco, Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, California 94103

Agency Contact Person: Jamie Dean **Telephone:** (415) 575-9028

Project Title: 2005.0883E – Hetch Hetchy Communication System Upgrade Project

Project Sponsor: San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
1145 Market Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, California 94103

Agency Contact Person: Antonia Fairbanks **Telephone:** (415) 554-3238

Project Address: Tuolumne and Stanislaus Counties (on City and County of San Francisco extraterritorial lands under the terms of the Raker Act)

Assessor’s Block and Lot: Not Applicable

City and County: Unincorporated lands, Stanislaus and Tuolumne counties

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Project Description: Hetch Hetchy Water & Power (HHW&P), a subsidiary of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), in cooperation with both the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS), is proposing a communications system upgrade and replacement project. The communications system is used for the operation of HHW&P’s water supply and electric utility system, which includes facilities in the upper Tuolumne River watershed of Yosemite National Park and the Stanislaus National Forest in the Sierra Nevada. The purpose of the proposed project is to: 1) vacate the 2 Gigahertz (GHz) band currently being used, per Federal Communications Commission requirements; 2) replace and upgrade the aging communications system with an improved system; 3) provide the video and radio bandwidth to allow for future installation of voice radio systems, which could expand system coverage in the O’Shaughnessy, Cherry Lake, and Lake Eleanor areas beyond existing coverage; and 4) provide the foundation infrastructure for housing NPS and USFS communications equipment associated with their individual communications systems. Twenty-nine of the 32 proposed sites would be located at existing facilities, while three would be new sites: Cherry Tower Site, Burnout Ridge, and Poopenaut Pass. Cherry Tower Site is located on land within Stanislaus National Forest and managed by HHW&P under terms of the Raker Act. Burnout Ridge is located within Stanislaus National Forest and would require a Forest Plan Amendment and Special Use Permit. The Poopenaut Pass site is located within Yosemite National Park and would require issuance of a right of way permit from the NPS. If approved, construction and installation of the communication system upgrade would likely begin in September 2008.

Building Permit Application Number(s): Not Applicable

THIS PROJECT COULD NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT. This finding is based upon the criteria of the Guidelines of the State Secretary for Resources, Sections 15064 (Determining Significant Effects), 15065 (Mandatory Findings of Significance), and 15070 (Decision to Prepare a Negative or Mitigated Negative Declaration), and the following reasons as documented in the Initial Evaluation (Initial Study) for the project, which is attached. Mitigation measures are included in this project to avoid potentially significant effects: See Section 4.0.

cc: Antonia Fairbanks, Environmental Project Manager, SFPUC
Distribution List