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## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## PCWA Takes Strong Stand on Preserving Water Flows

*AUBURN* -- As varied interests debate water flows through the Pacific Gas and Electric Company's Drum-Spaulding Hydroelectric Project, the Placer County Water Agency is working to ensure that Placer County water supplies are not reduced.

PCWA receives up to 125,400 acre-feet of water from the Yuba and Bear rivers each year via PG&E water systems and uses this water to supply most of its customers in the central and western portions of Placer County.

"This water supply can't be replaced; we can't afford to lose any of it," the agency's Director of Strategic Affairs Einar Maisch said Thursday (Aug. 2) in a presentation to the PCWA Board of Directors.

Maisch said PCWA has been intimately involved in PG&E's ongoing six-year effort to obtain a new federal license for the Drum-Spaulding Project and that staff believed that agreements-in-principle had been reached on important water flow issues.

He said, however, that recent July 31 filings by state and federal resource agencies indicate that they are backing away from earlier positions.

Maisch and Resource Planning Administrator Andy Fecko listed several issues of concern, including limitations on flows in the Bear River, adequate flows in back-to-back dry years, a mandatory "block flow" increase of 2500 acre-feet on the South Yuba River, higher flows for anadromous fish, revised seasonal flows into Folsom Reservoir, and uncertainty of flows in Auburn Ravine.

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All of these changes, if implemented, could result in water supply losses of 20,000 acre-feet or more to PCWA and seriously impair the agency's ability to supply customers in Placer County, Fecko said.

Similar filings were made on NID's Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Project, which serves customers in both Placer and Nevada Counties. The NID Board of Directors will be considering the impact to its customers at its Board meeting on August 8. PCWA is committed to doing what it can to protect all sources of water that benefit the people of Placer County.

"The shame of this is that the parties had negotiated significant environmental enhancements to the Yuba and Bear River watersheds, without significant impacts to customers," Breninger said. "These new conditions just released on Tuesday provide very little additional environmental benefit but will be devastating to existing residents and businesses."

The Board of Directors authorized staff to continue coordinating with PG&E and NID in negotiations with involved agencies and interest groups, but also to prepare and file alternative terms and conditions if needed, and to file for an administrative hearing to compel changes if the issues cannot be resolved.

Maisch said the process will likely be expensive, costing up to \$500,000, if all steps are necessary. Directors will discuss budgeting at a later date.

The water supply protection effort is in addition to PCWA's ongoing relicensing program for its Middle Fork American River Hydroelectric Project. The agency has invested seven years and \$37 million in the Middle Fork relicensing.