

# **COVER SHEET**

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
FOR THE BIG CREEK ALP PROJECTS  
Docket Nos. P-67, 2175, 2085, and 120

Cover Letter  
Pages iii to xiii  
DEIS

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, DC 20426

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

To the Agency or Individual Addressed:

**Reference: Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

Attached is the draft environmental impact statement (draft EIS) for the Big Creek Projects (Big Creek Nos. 2A, 8, and Eastwood, Project No. 67; Big Creek Nos. 1 and 2, Project No. 2175; Mammoth Pool, Project No. 2085; and Big Creek No. 3, Project No. 120), located in Fresno and Madera counties, California.

This draft EIS document documents the view of governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, affected Indian tribes, the public, the license applicant, and Commission staff. It contains staff evaluations on the applicant's proposal and the alternatives for relicensing the Big Creek Projects.

You are invited to file comments on this draft EIS. Any comments, conclusions, or recommendations that draw upon studies, reports, or other working papers should be supported by appropriate documentation. Your comments will be considered in the staff's preparation of the final EIS.

Comments should be filed with Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street N.E., Washington, DC 20426. All comments must be filed within 45 days of the date in the Federal Register and should reference Project Nos. 67, 120, 2085, and 2175. Comments may be filed electronically via the Internet in lieu of papers. The Commission strongly encourages electronic filings. See 18 CFR 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and instructions at <http://www.ferc.gov> under the eLibrary link.

Before the Commission makes a licensing decision, it will take into account all concerns relevant to the public interest. The draft EIS will be part of the record from which the Commission will make its decision. The draft EIS was sent to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and made available to the public on or about September 12, 2008.

Copies of the draft EIS are available for review in the Commission's Public Reference Branch, Room 2A, located at 888 First Street, N.E., Washington DC 20426. The draft EIS also may be viewed on the Internet at [www.ferc.gov/ferris.htm](http://www.ferc.gov/ferris.htm). Please call (202) 502-8222 for assistance.

Attachment: Draft Environmental Impact Statement

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## COVER SHEET

- a. Title: Relicensing the Big Creek Projects in California, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) Project Nos. 67, 120, 2085, and 2175.
- b. Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- c. Lead Agency: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- d. Abstract: The Big Creek Project Nos. 2A, 8, and Eastwood (FERC No. 67) is located in Fresno County, California. The project affects 2,388.80 acres of federal lands administered by the Sierra National Forest.
- The Big Creek Nos. 1 and 2 Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2175) is located in Fresno County, California, within the Sierra National Forest. The project affects 2,017.78 acres of federal land administered by the Sierra National Forest.
- The Mammoth Pool Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2085) is located in Fresno and Madera counties, California and affects 2,029.68 acres of federal land administered by the Sierra National Forest.
- The Big Creek No. 3 Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 120) is located in Fresno and Madera counties, California. The project occupies 433.52 acres of federal land administered by the Sierra National Forest.
- SCE proposes to relicense the Projects in accordance with a comprehensive Settlement Agreement that was developed under the Commission's alternative licensing procedures. The Settlement Agreement contains 23 proposed license articles containing various protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures.
- The staff's recommendation is to relicense the Projects as proposed, with certain modifications, and additional measures recommended by the agencies.
- e. Contact: 

<b>Environmental Staff</b>	<b>Staff Counsel</b>
James Fargo	Merril F. Hathway
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

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- f. Transmittal: This draft environmental impact statement prepared by the Commission's staff on the hydroelectric license applications filed by Southern California Edison for the existing Big Creek Projects (FERC Nos. 67, 120, 2085, and 2175) is being made available to the public on or about September 12, 2008, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, amended (Pub. L. 91-190. 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347, January 1, 1970, as amended by Pub. L. 94-52, July 3, 1975, Pub. L. 94-83, August 9, 1975, and Pub. L. 97-258, §4(b), September 13, 1982).

## FOREWORD

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission), pursuant to the Federal Power Act (FPA)<sup>2</sup> and the U.S. Department of Energy Organization Act<sup>3</sup> is authorized to issue licenses for up to 50 years for the construction and operation of non-federal hydroelectric development subject to its jurisdiction, on the necessary conditions:

That the project...shall be such as in the judgment of the Commission will be best adapted to a comprehensive plan for improving or developing a waterway or waterways for the use or benefit of interstate or foreign commerce, for the improvement and utilization of water-power development, for the adequate protection, mitigation, and enhancement of fish and wildlife (including related spawning grounds and habitat), and for other beneficial public uses, including irrigation, flood control, water supply, and recreational and other purposes referred to in section 4(e)...<sup>4</sup>

The Commission may require such other conditions not inconsistent with the FPA as may be found necessary to provide for the various public interests to be served by the project.<sup>5</sup> Compliance with such conditions during the licensing period is required. The Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure allow any person objecting to a licensee's compliance or noncompliance with such conditions to file a complaint noting the basis for such objection for the Commission's consideration.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>16 U.S.C. §791(a)-825r, as amended by the Electric Consumers Protection Act of 1986, Public Law 99-495 (1986), the Energy Policy Act of 1992, Public Law 102-486 (1992), and the Energy Policy Act of 2005, Pub. Law 109-58 (2005).

<sup>3</sup>Public Law 95-91, 91 Stat. 556 (1977).

<sup>4</sup>16 U.S.C. §803(a).

<sup>5</sup>16 U.S.C. §803(g).

<sup>6</sup>18 C.F.R. §385.206 (1987).

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