

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR HYDROPOWER LICENSE**

Lake Elsinore Advanced Pumped Storage Project
FERC Project No. 11858

California

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Office of Energy Projects
Division of Hydropower Licensing
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Cleveland National Forest
San Diego, CA

January 2007

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FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20426

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

TO THE PARTY ADDRESSED:

Attached is the final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Lake Elsinore Advanced Pumped Storage (LEAPS) Project, located primarily on Lake Elsinore and San Juan Creek, in the city of Lake Elsinore, Riverside County, with transmission lines extending into San Diego and Orange counties, California.

This final EIS documents the view of governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, affected Indian tribes, the public, the license applicant, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) staff and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) staff. It contains evaluations on Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District and Nevada Hydro Company, Inc.'s (the co-applicants') proposal and the staff alternative for licensing the LEAPS Project.

The Commission and the USFS have agreed to participate as cooperating agencies in the preparation of this EIS for the LEAPS Project. The Commission will use the EIS to determine whether, and under what conditions, to issue an original hydropower license for the project. The USFS will use the EIS to base its finding under Section 4(e) of the Federal Power Act and to decide whether to issue any necessary special use authorizations.

Before the Commission makes a licensing decision, it will take into account all concerns relevant to the public interest. The final EIS will be part of the record from which the Commission will make its decision. The final EIS was sent to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and made available to the public on or before (on or before January 31, 2007).

Copies of the final 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 final EIS also may be viewed on the Internet at www.ferc.gov under the eLibrary link. Please call (202) 502-8822 for assistance.

Attachment: Final Environmental Impact Statement

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COVER SHEET

- a. Title: Licensing the proposed Lake Elsinore Advanced Pumped Storage (LEAPS) Project in the city of Lake Elsinore, Riverside County, California, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission or FERC) Project No. 11858.
- b. Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement
- c. Lead Agency: FERC with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) as a cooperating agency
- d. Abstract: The Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (Elsinore Valley MWD) and Nevada Hydro Company, Inc. (Nevada Hydro) filed an application for an original license for the construction and operation of its proposed Lake Elsinore Advanced Pumped Storage (LEAPS) Project, which would be located primarily on Lake Elsinore and San Juan Creek, in the city of Lake Elsinore, Riverside County, with transmission lines extending into San Diego and Orange counties, California. The USFS is reviewing an application for a special use permit for constructing the Talega-Escondido/Valley-Serrano 500-kilovolt transmission interconnection, including transmission lines associated with the LEAPS Project, as a transmission line only project.
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- f. Transmittal: This final environmental impact statement jointly prepared by the Commission's and USFS' staff on the hydroelectric license application filed by the Elsinore Valley MWD and Nevada Hydro for the proposed LEAPS Project (FERC Project No. 11858) is being made available to the public on or before January 31, 2007, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969¹

¹ 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).

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FOREWORD

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission), pursuant to the Federal Power Act (FPA)² and the U.S. Department of Energy Organization Act³ 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)...⁴

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.⁵ 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.⁶

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

³ Public Law 95-91, 91 Stat. 556 (1977).

⁴ 16 U.S.C. §803(a).

⁵ 16 U.S.C. §803(g).

⁶ 18 C.F.R. §385.206 (1987).