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El Dorado Water Agency

Press Release

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EL DORADO COUNTY WATER AGENCY MOVES FORWARD ON YEAR-LONG STUDY TO EXPAND HYDRO-ELECTRIC CAPACITY, REVENUES

(SHINGLE SPRINGS, June 10, 2009)— El Dorado County Water Agency (EDCWA) and El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) have begun the final phase of a year-long study that has been looking at six projects to expand hydroelectric capacity as well as increase revenues in the county. It is expected that the final report will be released at the end of this month.

Applications for bonds and other funding for the projects have tight deadlines, "One as soon as August 4," said Tracey Eden-Bishop, a water resources engineer for EDCWA. She and members of the Agency's consulting team, EN2 Resources, Inc., met with the board of directors of the El Dorado Water & Power Authority recently — and, on Tuesday, the board of the Georgetown Divide Public Utilities District (GDPUD) — to present hydroelectric development options.

EN2 Resources and an advisory panel that included staff from EDCWA, EID and GDPUD, and retired EID General Manager Harry Dunlop, reviewed more than 100 development options. Ultimately, the panel narrowed the field to six "immediately implementable" projects that would have the best chance of winning approval and funding, as well as meeting state-mandated renewable energy goals.

In addition, the project team recommended one "technology demonstration project" — the installation of a hydrokinetic turbine generator in the El Dorado Canal, which would be built and maintained at no cost to EID — as well as four projects that require "re-operation evaluation" to see if they would be economically viable, and seven projects that are being recommended for detailed feasibility studies.

"The projects we could implement immediately are viable principally because of the new Feed-In Tariff, or FIT, program that Pacific Gas & Electric has created," said Bill Hetland, General Manager for EDCWA. That program would guarantee the rates PG&E would pay for the generated power for up to 20 years, he added.

Besides the FIT program, the various agency staffs are investigating funding options and considering filing an application for low-interest Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (CREBs) or Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds (QCEBs), which are contained within federal economic stimulus packages.

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