

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS SPDEA

On July 15, 2005, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), a political subdivision of the State of California, filed its Application for New License (License Application) for SMUD's sole hydropower asset—the Upper American River Project (UARP)—with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Volume 2A of the License Application included SMUD's Applicant-prepared Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment (PDEA) to satisfy the requirements for an Environmental Assessment (EA) and an eventual Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et. seq.), as well as the regulations implementing NEPA of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission).

In the PDEA, SMUD evaluated the developmental (energy) and non-developmental (environmental) consequences of three alternative approaches to operating the UARP: SMUD's Proposed Action (UARP with the Iowa Hill Development), the UARP-only Alternative, and the No Action Alternative. As noted in the PDEA (License Application, p. 4-17), other alternatives were not examined because neither the Plenary Group nor the Settlement Negotiations Group of SMUD's FERC-approved Alternative Licensing Process (ALP) had reached settlement or released an alternative for analysis by SMUD in the License Application.

On November 1, 2005, several agencies and stakeholders filed the "Agency Alternative" with FERC for FERC's consideration in preparing the EIS for the UARP.¹ SMUD offers this Applicant-prepared Supplemental Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment (SPDEA) to provide FERC with a comprehensive examination of the Agency Alternative for use in developing the EIS. In the PDEA (License Application, p. 7-1 to 7-5), SMUD compared baseline conditions (the No Action Alternative) with the Proposed Action and the UARP-only Alternative. This SPDEA compares the Agency Alternative with baseline conditions and the Proposed Action. At this writing, SMUD, the agencies, and the nongovernmental organization stakeholders continue to seek comprehensive settlement through the FERC Alternative Dispute Resolution process.

¹ Signatories to the filing were: USDA Forest Service, USDI National Park Service, USDI Bureau of Land Management, USDI Fish and Wildlife Service, California State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Fish and Game, California State Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of the River, California Outdoors, American River Recreation Association and Camp Lotus, American Whitewater, Chris Shutes, and Hilde Schweitzer.