

## NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION Mokelumne Watershed Routine Maintenance Project

## Project Title: Mokelumne Watershed Routine Maintenance Project

Lead Agency: East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD)

**Project Location:** EBMUD's Mokelumne Watershed (Watershed) property borders and includes Camanche and Pardee Dams and Reservoirs, extending from less than 50 feet (15 m) to about 3 miles (4.8 km) from the high-water surface elevation of Camanche and Pardee Reservoirs. It also includes the lands adjacent to the lower Mokelumne River for approximately one-half mile (0.8 km) below Camanche Dam. Current and recent land use practices in the Mokelumne Watershed include management for water supply, flood control, grazing, aquaculture, hydroelectric power, wastewater treatment, wildland fire prevention and suppression, facility maintenance, residential use, and recreation.

Project Description: The Mokelumne Watershed Routine Maintenance Project (Project) involves the continuation of routine maintenance of the Mokelumne Watershed facilities, roads, and infrastructure at locations within the Watershed property. Many of these activities were previously authorized under Fish and Game Code Section 1602 Lake and Stream Alteration Agreements (LSAAs) with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Given the expiration of the prior LSAA, the EBMUD seeks a new LSAA for the continuation of routine maintenance activities critical to Watershed operations in 1600 jurisdictional areas and that comprise the Project. Permitting the continuation of routine maintenance activities critical to Watershed operations. To permit ongoing environmental stewardship activities that are part of the Project, EBMUD also seeks a Safe Harbor Agreement with CDFW covering effects to foothill yellow-legged frog (Rana boylii), California tiger salamander (Ambystoma californiense), as well as other species that may be listed under the California Endangered Species Act in the near future such as western spadefoot (Spea hammondii) and tricolored blackbird (Agelaius tricolor). Maintenance activities include sediment and debris removal; vegetation management; facilities maintenance; erosion prevention, control, repair, and protection; and environmental stewardship activities. Routine maintenance activities are critical to operations of the Mokelumne Watershed, providing for safe travel throughout the Project area while ensuring natural flows for drainages, flood control infrastructure, dam seepage, monitoring wells and weirs, and other watercourses. The routine maintenance of facilities, roads, and infrastructure is ongoing due to changing conditions resulting from weather events, deterioration of facilities and structures, and normal use.

**Project Objective**: The Project's objective is to maintain the health of the Mokelumne Watershed and the functional and structural integrity of EBMUD-owned Watershed property (e.g., land) and facilities located in Amador, Calaveras, and San Joaquin counties.

Schedule: Key milestones for project implementation are summarized as follows:

•	Complete Environmental Review	October 2021
•	Begin Maintenance Work	April 2022

**Environmental Determination:** Pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, an Initial Study was prepared for the Project. Based on the results of the Initial Study, it was determined that project-related maintenance work could potentially generate environmental impacts to biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, tribal cultural resources, and wildfire. In the long term, maintenance activities would have a beneficial effect by maintaining the functional and structural integrity of EBMUD-owned facilities and would not generate significant impacts. Adherence to EBMUD standard best management practices and implementation of mitigation measures would ensure that the Project would not generate a significant impact on the environment. Based on this assessment, a "Mitigated Negative Declaration" has been prepared.

**Environmental Mitigation**: All impacts will be reduced to Less than Significant levels by implementation of mitigation measures.

Public Comment/Review: The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration is available for review at:

- East Bay Municipal Utility District, 375 11th Street, Oakland, CA 94607
- EBMUD website (<u>https://www.ebmud.com/MokelumneWatershedRMA</u>)

In accordance with Section 15073 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, this Mitigated Negative Declaration is available for public review from August 11, 2021 through September 10, 2021. Written comments on this proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration must be received no later than 4:30 pm on September 10, 2021. Please address comments to East Bay Municipal Utility District, Attn: Michelle Workman, Manager of Fisheries and Wildlife, One Winemaster Way, Suite K2, Lodi CA 95240, or email to michelle.workman@ebmud.com.

1/26/21

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Date

Michael T. Tognolini, Director of Water and Natural Resources