

**DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**

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February 17, 2017

Mr. David E. Capka  
Acting Director, Division of Dam Safety and Inspections  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, NW Routing Code: PJ-13  
Washington, DC 20426

Re: Emergency Repair Board of Consultants for Oroville Dam Spillway (P-2100)

Dear Mr. Capka:

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) appreciates your arrival and initial review of the situation that has unfolded at Oroville Dam starting February 7, 2017. This is in response to your letter dated February 13, 2017 asking DWR to, among other things, create an Independent Board of Consultants (BOC) and a separate independent team to investigate the cause of the main spillway failure and ascertain if the failure mode could occur again. This letter describes our recent progress on both of those fronts.

DWR has selected five qualified experts to serve as members of the BOC:

- Kerry Cato, Ph.D., Engineering Geology; M.S., Engineering Geology; B.S., Geology
- John J. Cassidy, Ph.D., Mechanics and Hydraulics; M.S., Civil Engineering; B.S., Civil Engineering
- Eric Kollgaard, B.S., Civil Engineering
- Faiz Makdisi, Ph.D., Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Engineering; M.A., Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Engineering; B.E., Civil Engineering
- Larry Nuss, M.S. Civil Engineering; B.S., Architectural Engineering

The BOC will immediately engage with DWR and its emergency response partners to review and assess operations, conditions and risk reduction measures associated with the dam and appurtenant structures. The BOC will continue in this role during the repair of the main and emergency spillways.

Second, as you asked, the process to establish an independent forensic review is underway. The U.S. Society of Dams and Association of State Dam Safety Officials will identify an independent team of experts to perform this critical function. Given the immediacy of the current emergency situation and subsequent repairs, we estimate the forensic review will ensue in approximately three months. The forensic review will include an independent assessment of the conditions that led to the incident.

As you know, we face highly dynamic hydrological and engineering challenges in the context of multiple compromised appurtenances. The near-term recovery effort will

involve significant reconstruction on an accelerated time schedule to meet the demands of the 2017-18 flood season and the long-term recovery will require a thorough examination of the spillway failure causes.

As DWR representatives discussed with you this week, this dynamic situation will require BOC and FERC reviews beyond what is normally completed and in a compressed timeline. Expedited FERC and BOC reviews and approvals will be necessary in order to implement the recovery plan and construction necessary to complete a safe structure. Therefore, DWR asks FERC to provide the following assistance:

1. Full-time FERC staff who can provide immediate oversight and approval as plans and specifications are being developed.
2. Federal assistance to streamline or eliminate any permitting that normally would be required for a repair of this magnitude in order to expedite construction and provide a safe structure by the 2017-18 flood season.
3. Constant and immediate oversight of the BOC, which will require rapid input and comments as design and construction unfold.
4. Full-time FERC staff to review and approve construction activities, including any changes necessitated by conditions encountered in the field.
5. As recognized in your letter and as discussed, flexibility, including time requirements associated with meetings and data packages. As outlined in items 1, 3 and 4 above, this unprecedented situation will require immediate BOC reviews and comments in addition to a different approach to typical FERC and BOC meetings and reviews.

We look forward to coordinating with you on these requests and the governance and operational details of the BOC and on all other aspects of this emergency.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (916) 653-7007 or Ted Craddock at (916) 557-4555.

Sincerely,



William A. Croyle  
Acting Director

Document Content(s)

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