

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION  
Washington, D. C. 20426

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OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

PKWD-20-038

Project No. 2244-045 – Washington  
Packwood Lake Project  
Energy Northwest

June 03, 2020

VIA FERC Service

Mr. Scott Urban  
O&M/Professional Services Manager  
Energy Northwest  
P.O. Box 968, MD 1030  
Richland, WA 99352-0968

Subject: Notification of Anticipated Lake Elevation Deviation – U.S. Forest Service  
Condition 4

Dear Mr. Urban:

We received your letter filed on April 23, 2020, notifying the Commission of an anticipated temporary modification in the lake elevation requirements under U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) condition 4 for the Packwood Lake Hydroelectric Project No. 2244.<sup>1</sup> We also received your letter filed on April 30, 2020, notifying the Commission that, since the hydrologic conditions and inflows to the project had changed, the anticipated deviation from the required lake elevation was no longer going to occur.

License Requirements

Forest Service condition 4 requires you to maintain a minimum Packwood Lake elevation of 2,856.5 feet mean sea level (MSL) between May 1 and September 15 of each year. The goal of the lake elevation is to ensure tributary stream connectivity with Packwood Lake for spawning adult rainbow trout and fry out-migration from Packwood Lake tributaries into Packwood Lake, to provide stable water levels for wetland and amphibian productivity, to keep recreational activity on the west shore of Packwood Lake

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<sup>1</sup> *Energy Northwest*, 165 FERC ¶ 62,031 (2018).

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at a minimum, and to maintain Packwood Lake elevations that reflect the natural hydrology.

Article 401(c) of the project license requires you to notify the Commission of planned and unplanned deviations from the license requirements. You are required to notify the Commission prior to temporarily modifying the project operations allowed under certain conditions, if possible, or in the event of an emergency, as soon as possible, but no later than 10 days after each such incident. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Washington DFW), the Washington Department of Ecology (Washington DOE), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) must also be notified prior to implementing any modifications to the conditions specified under Article 401(c).

### Summary of Filings

In your April 23, 2020 filing, you state that the required lake elevation starting May 1 may not be met due to the slow snowpack melt and the low spring rainfall. You also note that, although a full plant shutdown would help accelerate the lake refill, you are currently unable to fully shut down the plant because a fish salvage effort cannot be conducted at this time. You explain that the travel and safety restrictions in place under the current COVID-19 pandemic preclude you from performing a fish salvage effort.

According to your April 30, 2020 filing, the project area received significantly more rainfall than previously forecasted, and rising temperatures increased the melting of the snowpack. Consequently, inflows to the project have increased considerably and the lake elevation is now above 2,858.0 feet MSL, which meets the minimum elevation requirement starting May 1. You, therefore, request that the Commission disregard your notification of an anticipated lake elevation deviation filed on April 23, 2020.

Your April 23, 2020 and April 30, 2020 filings indicate that you provided a courtesy copy of each filing to the Resource Agencies Committee.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Resource Agencies Committee includes, but is not limited to, representatives from the Washington DOE, the Washington DFW, the FWS, the Forest Service, the NMFS, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, the Yakama Nation, the licensee, and consulting biologists.

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Conclusion

Based on our review of the information provided, we understand that the anticipated lake elevation deviation did not occur on May 1. Instead, the change in hydrologic conditions and the increase in project inflows that occurred at the end of April allowed the lake to refill and meet the minimum elevation requirement starting May 1.

Thank you for providing the notification and follow-up regarding the anticipated temporary modification in the lake elevation requirements. If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact Linda Stewart at (202) 502-8184 or [linda.stewart@ferc.gov](mailto:linda.stewart@ferc.gov).

Sincerely,

Kelly Houff  
Chief, Engineering Resources Branch  
Division of Hydropower Administration  
and Compliance

cc: VIA FERC Service

Mr. Ken Williams  
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