



## COUNTY OF LAKE

### Board of Supervisors

Courthouse - 255 North Forbes Street  
Lakeport, California 95453  
Telephone (707) 263-2368  
Fax (707) 263-2207

**HELEN OWEN** – District 1 Supervisor  
**BRUNO SABATIER** – District 2 Supervisor  
**EDDIE CRANDELL** – District 3 Supervisor  
**BRAD RASMUSSEN** – District 4 Supervisor  
**JESSICA PYSKA** – District 5 Supervisor

February 25, 2025

Secretary of Energy – Chris Wright  
Secretary of the Interior – Doug Burgum  
Secretary of Agriculture – Brooke Rollins  
Secretary of Defense – Pete Hegseth  
United States Attorney General – Pamela Bondi  
Secretary of Homeland Security – Kristi Noem  
Secretary of Commerce – Howard Lutnick

### **Re: FERC Proceeding P-77 Proposed Scott Dam Decommissioning in the State of California**

Honorable Secretaries, Attorney General Bondi, and Agency Staff,

The Board of Supervisors representing Lake County in the state of California has grave concern destroying and draining Lake Pillsbury, an 80,000 acre-foot lake in Northern California, would constitute an expensive and irresponsible gamble with regional water supply in an area that has repeatedly been threatened by catastrophic wildfire events. We ask your collective support in ensuring the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and your Federal Agencies take seriously the potential for profound human consequences.

Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), a California Public Utility, expects to file a plan to Decommission Scott Dam, a part of the Potter Valley Project, in July 2025 (*two Draft Applications have already been circulated*). Scott Dam has been operated for over 100 years; located on the Eel River, whose headwaters are in Lake County, the dam forms Lake Pillsbury. The Eel River eventually flows into the Pacific Ocean. Estimated costs of removing this dam, including early figures for mitigation and restoration, could exceed \$500 million.

Lake Pillsbury is a destination for hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, and more. It also holds water storage that helps to keep the Eel River from running dry every year, especially during drought years. The Potter Valley Project allows for water diversion further down the Eel River and into the Russian River basin to provide water for agricultural use and drinking water for about 600,000 people in Northern California. The water storage has also been utilized to fight fires in the wilderness surrounding it, Mendocino National Forest. Two of the three largest wildfires in the state of California occurred in the areas surrounding Lake Pillsbury, each within the past decade: the August Complex (1,032,648 acres, 2020) and the Mendocino Complex (459,123 acres, 2018). The August Complex was lightning-caused.

Decommissioning of the dam would put regional agriculture, fire protection, water availability, and our tourism economy at great risk. Concepts in Executive Orders signed by President Donald J Trump argue for prioritizing such human needs; we believe FERC would be going against those Orders if they approved Decommissioning of Scott Dam without a degree of investment in mitigation measures PG&E is unlikely to engage in unless compelled to by FERC and other regulatory entities.

On January 24, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14181: “Emergency Measures To Provide Water Resources in California and Improve Disaster Response in Certain Areas.” In this Executive Order, President Trump requests that the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce, “immediately take actions to override existing activities that unduly burden efforts to maximize water deliveries.” By approving Decommissioning of Scott Dam, FERC would “unduly burden” many communities that rely on Lake Pillsbury, minimizing water deliveries to our farmers and other end users, including water flows in fire hydrants.

The Executive Order continues by highlighting the need to, “deliver more water and produce additional hydropower, including by increasing storage and conveyance....to high-need communities.” While this statement is specific to a Central Valley Project, we see the parallels in the current needs of Southern California to the constant needs of Lake County and Northern California where large and devastating wildfires have affected our communities for the past 10 years. Lake County, alone, has endured more than 10 devastating wildfires in that timeframe, with many receiving State and Federal Emergency Declarations. Reducing our water storage is not what California needs, and it is not what Lake County needs at all, especially in the surrounding areas of Lake Pillsbury.

Furthermore, on January 20, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14156: “Declaring a National Energy Emergency.” In this Executive Order, President Trump requests increases to our supply of energy, stating our “generation capacity of the United States are all far too inadequate to meet our Nation’s needs.” While the Executive Order is specific to developing and creating new facilities to provide the nation’s energy, FERC will be reviewing PG&E’s plan for Decommissioning of the Potter Valley Project’s Scott Dam, which has the potential to generate at least 9.4 megawatts of energy. The Executive Order, in Section 7, speaks to “the Department of Defense’s ability to acquire and transport the energy needed to protect the homeland....with a focus on such vulnerabilities within the Northeast and West Coast regions of the United States.”

PG&E does not want to continue operating Scott Dam. However, if FERC approves the plan to decommission the dam under Project 77, it would appear FERC would be acting against the President’s Executive Orders. If FERC cannot convince or compel PG&E to continue operation of the dam, there will be devastating impacts to our infrastructure, economy, and public safety. There are other alternatives previously not given due consideration at the Federal level that could still be explored.

We are keenly aware of the effects this upcoming FERC decision will have on Lake County, and hope you will see the importance of ensuring Scott Dam does not recklessly come down, as is the political hope and desire of many in the State of California.

Secure water supply and protection of people and private property from catastrophic wildfires are matters of great national consequence and priority. Thank you for joining Lake County, and fulfilling the intent of President Trump’s Executive Orders, in opposing hurried and irresponsible Decommissioning of Scott Dam.

Sincerely,

---

Eddie “EJ” Crandell, Chair  
Lake County Board of Supervisors