

## **SFPUC Unanimously Approves Calaveras Dam Replacement, the Largest Infrastructure Project in the \$4.6B Hetch Hetchy WSIP**

*Final Environmental Impact Report certified after seven years; Environmental and Construction stakeholders applaud planning effort and scheduled work to improve Bay Area water supply in Alameda Creek habitat*

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Yesterday, immediately after the City's Planning Commission certified the project's final environmental impact report (EIR), the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) unanimously approved the Calaveras Dam Replacement Project. The project will replace the existing seismically-unsafe Calaveras Dam with a 210-foot high new earth and rock-fill dam directly adjacent to the existing structure. The new dam will restore the water storage levels of the Calaveras Reservoir upwards of 31 billion gallons of water—almost half of the total Hetch Hetchy water system storage capacity in the Bay Area. Since 2001, the dam has operated at 30% of capacity due to seismic concerns. The \$434 million Calaveras Dam project is part of SFPUC's \$4.6 billion regional Water System Improvement Program (WSIP) to upgrade aging pipelines, tunnels and reservoirs in the Hetch Hetchy regional water system.

"The environmental review process required nearly seven years of collaboration with the environmental community and regulatory agencies," said SFPUC General Manager Ed Harrington. "This inclusive effort resulted in a superior project that increases the seismic reliability and drought protection of the Hetch Hetchy water system, creates Bay Area construction jobs, and improves the environmental conditions for wildlife in Alameda Creek."

The SFPUC Calaveras Dam Replacement project includes additional scheduled water releases, new fish passage projects, and improved watershed management monitoring. These projects are designed to assist in the restoration of steelhead trout in Alameda Creek and enhance the environment for native species like Yellow Legged and Red Legged Frogs. At the Planning Commission and SFPUC meetings, local environmental stewards offered testimony in support for the revised Calaveras Dam Replacement Project.

"The project will significantly advance the restoration of steelhead trout to Alameda Creek through water releases, constraints on water diversions, fish passage projects and other habitat improvements," said Jeff Miller, Director of the Alameda Creek Alliance. "San Francisco should be commended for moving toward more sustainable watershed management."

Tuolumne Trust Director Peter Drekmeier said, "We are impressed by all of SFPUC's efforts to mitigate potential environmental impacts. The flow

releases, dam operations, studies and monitoring for steelhead restoration are very good.”

**Project Goes Out to Bid; Local Jobs Created**

The new reservoir project will be advertised on January 31 with a construction cost estimated at between \$250-300 million. Construction is anticipated to begin this summer and will require more than 814 thousand craft hours by laborers and basic crafts workers.

“This project is an example of how our State and the Federal government can reinvigorate our economy and invest in the restoration of our deteriorating public infrastructure across the country,” said Bob Alvarado, Executive Officer of the Northern California Carpenters Regional Council. “Carpenters and other crafts workers throughout the region are eager to get to work on this 4-year construction project.”