The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will host a pair of public scoping meetings on May 11 in relation to the Modesto and Turlock irrigation districts’ relicensing efforts for the Don Pedro Project.

The morning meeting is planned to begin at 9 a.m. and will take place at the California State University, Stanislaus University Student Union Event Center in Turlock, located at 801 W. Monte Vista Ave.

The evening meeting is set to start at 7 p.m. and will take place at Modesto’s DoubleTree Hotel, Ballroom 3, located at 1150 Ninth St.

The purpose of these meetings, which are sponsored and facilitated by FERC, is to identify relevant issues of public interest involving the Don Pedro Project in relation to the National Environmental Policy Act. As co-relicensing applicants, MID and TID will have staff members present. It is expected that District representatives will briefly describe the Don Pedro Project and will be available before and after the formal part of the meeting for questions and answers.

Comments on the proposed project may be submitted in written form or communicated verbally during the course of the scoping meeting. The scoping meetings are recorded by a stenographer and become part of the formal record of the FERC proceeding on the project.

Information gathered at these scoping meetings may also help the Districts develop environmental protection measures to present in its environmental resource reports filed with FERC in its Final License Application. This information will also provide FERC staff with the resources needed to publish a more complete environmental impact document for public review.

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People in the region are passionate about the Don Pedro Project. And why wouldn’t they be?

The project’s reservoir and dam provide flood protection for many area residents. Some water from Don Pedro eventually makes its way to Modesto Reservoir, where it is eventually treated and purified to become drinking water for many Modesto residents. Much of the water from Don Pedro is used by growers to irrigate crops that help feed and employ many in the region, state and nation. There are recreation opportunities aplenty. And let’s not forget the power plant that provides clean, efficient and affordable energy powering thousands of homes and businesses within the MID and TID service areas.

Simply put, the Don Pedro dam, reservoir and powerhouse offer a collection of benefits that will continue to be of great value to the people of the Central Valley and beyond.

That value was always part of the vision of the project’s forefathers. But to know the story of the project, it’s best to know the story of the districts and the people that were antecedents to the project.

Formed in 1887, the Modesto and Turlock irrigation districts are the oldest irrigation districts in California, and are among the oldest in the nation. They were created by a vote of the people in accordance with the laws of the State of California to provide water for agricultural purposes in their respective irrigation service areas which today total approximately 200,000 acres of trees, vines, row and forage crops.

Soon after formation, the Districts acquired a water diversion site on the Tuolumne River located downstream of the Don Pedro site along with “pre-1914” water rights; the Districts have added other water rights to these over time. An original Don Pedro Reservoir with approximately 290,400 acre-feet of storage and its associated Powerhouse were brought online in 1923 to improve water availability for the long growing season of the Central Valley and to bring electrification to a portion of this rural area. The Districts have been providing retail electric service to the communities’ farms, homes, municipalities, business and industry since that time. Today, the Districts serve approximately 200,000 electric customers in a 1,000-square mile area.

The Tuolumne River has a long history of water planning. Concern
Relicensing of the Don Pedro Project follows the Integrated Licensing Process as designated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The Modesto and Turlock irrigation districts took the first step in this several-year process by filing a Notice of Intent (NOI) and a Pre-Application Document (PAD) in February 2011.

The next formal step is FERC's scoping of the issues to be considered in the relicensing of the project. On May 11, FERC will hold two scoping meetings to obtain public input.

Filings throughout the process will be made available to the public on the project relicensing website located at www.donpedro-relicensing.com. Certain information may be restricted from publication on the relicensing website in accordance with FERC's regulations protecting Critical Energy Infrastructure Information (CEII) or in cases where the document contains sensitive information.

The PAD contains a synopsis of the known information relevant to the relicensing of the Don Pedro Project. It includes a detailed description of the project, an explanation of the relicensing process and the schedule to be followed as well as pertinent information related to Project operations, engineering, water resources, environmental resources, recreation, cultural resources, and socioeconomics. The information in the Pre-Application Document allows FERC and interested parties to identify data gaps and needs for additional information which will form the basis for study requests to acquire the information needed in developing the new license.

Transcription of the text from the image:

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Upcoming Meeting

May 11, 2011
FERC Scoping Meetings in Turlock and Modesto. More info inside.

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