

DOCKETED

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*Comment Received From: Becky Steinbruner
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Seahawk BESS Applicant Mischaracterizes College Lake Adjacent to Project Site

Dear CEC Staff,

Throughout the Seahawk BESS project application materials TN#270249 (filed 5/27/2026), the adjacent College Lake is characterized as a "seasonal lake". Some examples of this are found on page 86, 91, 92 and 97, to name just a few citations.

On page 97, the applicant erroneously claims:

"College Lake, a seasonal lake that is typically drained each spring, is within approximately 500 feet of the project site boundary;"

While this was true in the past, it is no longer factual because of the College Lake Integrated Resources Management Project (SPN-2005-29650) within the boundaries of the Pajaro Water Management Agency.

"Project Site Description: College Lake is a seasonal lake that forms in a topographic depression along the Zayante-Vergeles Fault zone. College Lake receives inflows from several tributaries (including Green Valley, Casserly, and Hughes Creeks) and drains into Salsipuedes Creek, which is a tributary to the Pajaro River. Salsipuedes Creek receives an average of 4,700 acre feet per year of surface water inflow from the College Lake watershed. The College Lake watershed consists of approximately 11,000 acres of range, rural residential, and crop lands. The confluence of Salsipuedes Creek and Corralitos Creek is approximately 2,000 feet downstream of College Lake. At times during the wet season, the flow direction in the reach of Salsipuedes Creek between College Lake and the creek's confluence with Corralitos Creek can reverse.

Project Description: The project would include the demolition of an existing weir structure and pump station; the construction and operation of a new weir and intake pump station and water treatment plant; installation of a 5.5-mile long pipeline to convey water from College Lake to agricultural users along PV Water's Coastal Distribution System; and maintenance of sediment, vegetation, and debris within the College Lake Basin in the City of Watsonville and unincorporated Santa Cruz County, California.

Basic Project Purpose: The project is intended to develop College Lake into a water supply and storage resource that would help to balance the Pajaro Valley groundwater basin, prevent further seawater intrusion, and meet water supply needs in PV's service area.

Overall Project Purpose: The overall project purpose serves as the basis for the Section 404(b)(1) alternatives analysis and is determined by further defining the basic project

purpose in a manner that more specifically describes the applicant's goals for the project while allowing a reasonable range of alternatives to be analyzed. The overall project purpose is to upgrade the existing weir structure and pump station, construct a water treatment plant and install a 5.5-mile long pipeline to convey water from College Lake to agricultural users along Pajaro Valley Water's Coastal Distribution System. However, if the project would not require the discharge of fill into more than 0.5 acre of other waters, an alternatives analysis would not be required."

Therefore, the Applicant must cure and correct all characterizations of College Lake that are referenced in any and all project application documents submitted.

Sincerely,
Becky Steinbruner