



Sonoma County Water Agency PRESS RELEASE

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Preliminary Permits Approved for Feasibility Study of Sonoma Coast Hydrokinetic Energy Project

(Santa Rosa, CA) The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) announced this month that the Commission has granted three preliminary permits for investigation of wave energy projects off the Sonoma Coast. In April, 2009 FERC accepted three project applications submitted by the Sonoma County Water Agency that cover offshore areas deemed to have significant potential for wave energy production. Terms of the preliminary permits allow the Sonoma County Water Agency to study the feasibility of developing 2 to 5 megawatts (MW) of wave power at each location and to assess the potential for expansion to over 40 MW at each of the three sites.

The preliminary permits are issued only to allow the permit holder to conduct investigations and secure the necessary data to determine the feasibility of the proposed project and to prepare a license application; it grants no land-disturbing or other property rights. The preliminary permits expire after three years, unless an extension is sought by SCWA. SCWA estimates that about \$1.75 million in grant funding and SCWA funds will be required to complete the feasibility studies.

“We will continue to work with the many community organizations and the public on the next steps of this important project,” said SCWA Director Efren Carrillo. “The feasibility studies will identify the opportunities for furthering our goal of providing carbon free water by 2015.”

SCWA initiated wave energy studies in 2007 as a part of its program to procure all of its electric power from renewable sources. SCWA has a plan to produce “Carbon Free Water”, that is, water produced and delivered to customers with no greenhouse gas emissions.

The locations selected for the permit applications include three ten- to fifteen-square mile areas along the coast north of the Russian River Estuary, each extending from one half mile to about 3 miles offshore (see attached map). SCWA worked with a coalition of interest groups to select these locations based on their avoidance of Marine Life Protection Areas, known fishing and crabbing areas, and other sensitive areas. Approval of the permit application would give SCWA the priority to file a license application for development of the wave energy resources in these areas during the permit term.

“Fishermen have a significant interest in the development of renewable energy as a source of replacement power allowing removal of antiquated hydroelectric dams and, more importantly, to reduce carbon emissions to the atmosphere that ultimately result in

ocean acidification,” said Zeke Grader, executive director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations. “The studies that will be conducted under this permit should help determine if there are any sites offshore suitable for wave energy projects that will not interfere with fishing, create navigation hazards, or cause environmental harm.”

FERC issued a public notice accepting the application for filing and soliciting comments, motions to intervene, and competing applications on April 3, 2009. For more information, visit www.sonomacountywater.org.

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Sonoma County Water Agency provides water supply, flood protection and sanitation services for portions of Sonoma and Marin counties. Visit us on the Web at www.sonomacountywater.org.