Statement of the Southern California Water Committee
Before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Given on October 30, 2001
By Geoffrey Vanden Heuvel, Secretary

RE: FERC Project No. 2100, Oroville Hydropower Facilities

My name is Geoffrey Vanden Heuvel and I am presenting testimony regarding the re-licensing of the Oroville Hydropower Facilities on behalf of the Southern California Water Committee. The Southern California Water Committee is a non-profit, non-partisan educational organization dedicated to ensuring that California has sufficient water supplies to support a strong economy and growing population. The SCWC is a powerful voice for Southern California because it reflects a broad consensus on water issues. The Committee is composed of leaders from business, government, agriculture and water agencies in Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino, Imperial, Riverside, Ventura and Kern Counties. For example, our members include UNOCAL, Anheuser-Busch, Pacific Telesis Group, Proctor & Gamble Co., Ralph's/Food 4 Less, The Gas Company, Sunkist Growers, Hines Nurseries, the Building Industry Association of Southern California and over 40 cities and their city councils. Water is our sole interest. We are an independent advocate for Southern California's water interests. As an organization, we have been actively engaged in the CalFed Bay-Delta Program and the 4.4 Plan for the Colorado River. Strong leadership and the collective expertise of our members allow the Water Committee to contribute ample resources and viable strategies towards resolving these statewide efforts.

Southern California has undergone a dramatic shift over the past decade in how our water supplies are managed. Our large urban areas are essentially getting by on the same amounts of water they used 10 years ago, despite sizeable population increases. We are able to do that in part thanks to extraordinary levels of water conservation and water recycling. We are a national leader in water use efficiency. We have also seen increased regional efforts to maximize local water resources so that we can be assured of having necessary water supplies in the inevitable dry years.

Nonetheless, the region's water future is not completely assured. We face challenges in meeting the requirement to reduce our dependence on the Colorado River. The State Water Project's supply reliability is in part contingent on continued progress in implementing the CalFed solution.
Overall planning efforts to meet our expected future water needs are predicated in part on certain levels of water supply reliability from the State Water Project. Project water is important not only to meet immediate supplemental supply needs but also to allow us to meet water quality goals by blending with Colorado River supplies.

Southern California has already lost significant water supplies under the Bay-Delta Accord and other regulatory actions. We have not seen any of the new supplies promised under the CalFed program. We cannot afford to further reduce the amount of supplemental water necessary to support Southern California's economy and population.

Our goal for the re-licensing of the Oroville Hydropower facilities is to maintain the level of benefits we receive from the water stored at the reservoir, and to continue to use Project-generated power to help offset the cost of that water. Southern California has invested billions of dollars in the State Water Project, including the Oroville facilities. That is an investment we need to protect.