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FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Washington D.C. 20426

Environmental Affairs & Real Estate Division

Office of Energy Projects

Project No. 553-227—Washington
Skagit River Hydroelectric Project
City of Seattle

August 26, 2015

Lynn Best
City of Seattle
700 Fifth Avenue
P.O. Box 34023
Seattle, WA 98104-4023

Subject: Reservoir Level Elevation Deviation – Article 403

Dear Ms. Best:

This letter is in reference to your July 24, 2015 filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) describing a deviation from the required reservoir elevation at the Skagit River Hydroelectric Project, FERC No. 553. Article 403 of the project license¹ requires you to fill Ross Lake as early and as full as possible after April 15 each year, in order to ensure full pool by July 31. This requirement serves to facilitate recreation on Ross Lake on Labor Day weekend. Article 403, in part, specifies that full pool may be subject to adequate runoff.

Your filing anticipates that low snow pack and a dry summer will prevent you from maintaining full pool in Ross Lake by July 31. You report that you were able to achieve full pool by July 11; however, decreased tributary flows have caused the reservoir elevation to drop 0.1 to 0.2 feet per day. You note that, beginning August 1, the required minimum flow decreases, which should enable you to gradually increase the elevation of Ross Lake. Your filing also indicates that you have consulted with the Flow Coordination Committee regarding the lack of water and its impacts on your ability to comply with both the reservoir elevation and minimum flow.

¹ Order Accepting Settlement Agreement, Issuing New License, and Terminating Proceeding. 71 FERC ¶ 61,159 (issued May 16, 1995).

Based on our review of the available information, it appears that the deviation is the result of insufficient water being available to fulfill competing license requirements. You are keeping abreast of the situation and consulting with the Flow Coordination Committee to prioritize water use. For these reasons, we will not consider this deviation a violation of your license; however, it will be made part of the compliance history and be taken into consideration regarding any future similar deviations from the license requirements.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions concerning this letter please contact Alicia Burtner at (202) 502-8038 or alicia.burtner@ferc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. LoVullo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "T".

Thomas LoVullo
Chief, Aquatic Resources Branch
Division of Hydropower Administration
and Compliance