

**Eel-Russian Project Authority
Round Valley Indian Tribes
County of Sonoma
Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission
Sonoma County Water Agency**

Response to UNWON Blog (12/5/25), “NO DAMS, NO WATER: Round Valley Indian Tribes attorney says Two-Basin Solution water diversions to Sonoma and Mendocino ‘will stop’”

Summary: Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) made a business decision to retire the Potter Valley Project, which it owns and has operated for power. It concluded that the project is no longer a cost-effective power supply for its customers. Although PG&E and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) solicited entities to take over the project, none stepped forward to assume the costs and risks of ownership. As a result, PG&E must decommission the project, as the only remaining lawful choice under the Federal Power Act. Regional partners are pursuing the New Eel-Russian Facility to protect Eel River and Russian River fisheries and continue the water supply diversion into the Russian Basin, concurrent with PG&E’s decommissioning.

UNWON published statements without the full context of a presentation given to the Round Valley Indian Tribes and relied on selected excerpts that resulted in misinformation. This response corrects the blog post’s inaccuracies and offers clarifying information.

Claim: “Diversions must stop if salmon decline for any reason ... Round Valley can end diversions every five years.”

This is not what the Water Diversion Agreement says. There is no automatic termination of Eel River diversions through the New Eel-Russian Facility tied to decline of salmon in the Eel River, nor does the agreement give Round Valley Indian Tribes unilateral authority to terminate diversions. Rather, the five-year review cycle is a standard science-based assessment of habitat conditions, water quality, and fish passage to determine whether water diversion operations are performing as expected. If concerns arise, the remedy is adaptive management and potential adjustment to diversion timing through a shared, multi-party process that includes state and federal agencies. Dispute resolution is structured and collaborative, and performance reviews do not nullify the investment or halt operations. The purpose of the framework is to protect fisheries while maintaining a reliable, long-term diversion.

Claim: “No dams, no water. Diversions will stop.”

The Two-Basin Solution does not stop diversions; it provides a contractually binding way for them to continue, preventing the complete loss of the diversion.

Claim: “The Two-Basin Solution is checkmate. The end of Potter Valley.”

The Two-Basin Solution, as implemented through the Water Diversion Agreement, specifically provides for continued diversions into the Russian River and the work that Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission is doing will bring additional storage online to benefit Potter Valley and the greater Russian River watershed.

Claims: “Communities will not receive summer water at all ... Diversions only in winter, and only in good rain years.”

The shift to seasonal diversion is intended to prevent harm to fisheries, but it does not eliminate summer water. Diversions are not limited to winter under the Water Diversion Agreement; instead, the agreement’s diversion criteria ensure diversions occur when flows are sufficient for fish passage. Extensive modeling shows average annual diversion volumes sent to storage of about 30,000 acre-feet with water available for diversion in most year types. With the construction of additional storage infrastructure, greater volumes of Eel River water could be successfully stored, allowing storage beyond 30,000 acre-feet per year on average.

Claim: “Round Valley lacks connection to the Upper Eel basin.”

The proximity of the Round Valley Indian Tribes’ Reservation lands to Scott Dam is not a relevant factor. Round Valley Indian Tribes have a time immemorial presence in the Eel River basin and have relied on the Eel River and its fishery for subsistence, cultural, recreational and economic purposes since time began.

Claim: “Counties must raise \$25 million or diversions stop in 30 years.”

The \$25 million fundraising target is part of a broader Eel River restoration commitment made by all the parties to the Water Diversion Agreement collectively, not just the counties. The first \$9 million of the \$25 million goal has already been committed. If the target is not fully met, the Water Diversion Agreement allows the parties to adjust terms or negotiate extensions, it does not end diversions after 30 years.

Claim: “The Two-Basin Solution ends Potter Valley agriculture.”

The Two-Basin Solution is the only way irrigated agriculture will survive in Potter Valley. Technical analysis shows that with the New Eel-Russian Facility and the water available because of the Water Diversion Agreement, plus additional local storage, conjunctive groundwater use, efficiency projects and system improvements, Potter Valley agriculture will remain viable.

For more information visit eelrussianauthority.org.