

# Pipeline will help guarantee Bay Area water supply after quake

*Project will cut through Fremont and Newark streets*

**Matthew Artz, Bay Area News Group, 3-19-10**

FREMONT — Work officially began Thursday on a 21-mile pipeline project designed to safeguard much of the Bay Area's water supply.

During the next two years, crews will trench through seven miles of vacant land and city streets in Fremont and Newark, welding together steel pipes, 6 feet in diameter, that will carry water from the Hetch Hetchy reservoir in the Sierra to Bay Area homes and businesses. At the same time, crews will tunnel the pipeline 5 miles across the Bay and 9 miles along the Peninsula.

The \$332 million project is designed to keep Hetch Hetchy water flowing even after a major earthquake.

"Hetch Hetchy water is the supporting lifeline for many of our Bay Area cities and local economies," San Francisco Public Utilities Commission General Manager Ed Harrington said at Thursday's groundbreaking in Fremont.

It should take about two years to lay the pipeline underground and about five years to lay it under the Bay, water officials said.

After the project is completed, the commission will make repairs to the four existing pipelines — the two most recent of which were built in 1935.

The project is the first phase of a voter-approved \$4.6 billion program to improve the Bay Area's aging water delivery system.

The system includes four Bay pipelines, all of which traverse Fremont. Two pipelines travel south into Santa Clara County, and the other two go through Newark and across the Bay.

In a few months, work also will begin on the new Irvington Tunnel that will carry Hetch Hetchy water from Sunol into Fremont and to the pipelines.

Although much of the pipeline will be built on a vacant land that had been set aside for the project, work crews will have to dig trenches into two dozen mostly residential streets in Fremont and Newark.

The trenches, which are the fastest method for laying the pipeline, will be covered with plates during the evening and filled within a few days, said Joe Ortiz, who is managing the project.

To avoid major traffic hassles, crews will take extra time to dig tunnels under major roads. They include Fremont Boulevard, Driscoll Road, Stevenson Boulevard and Blacow Road in Fremont, and Central Avenue and Cherry Street in Newark.

A portion of Paseo Padre Parkway near Grimmer Boulevard will have to be cut open, however, because it is too close to the Hayward Fault to tunnel the pipeline below the road, Ortiz said.

Roadwork will begin at Driscoll Boulevard and Durillo Drive and progress southwest through Fremont and Newark. A complete construction schedule should be available in a few weeks, Ortiz said.