PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

DRAFT
Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pacific Gas & Electric Company's Cressey-Gallo 115 kV Power Line Project Application No. A.11-11-020

Lead Agency: California Public Utilities Commission
Energy Division
505 Van Ness Avenue, 4th Floor
San Francisco, California 94102

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1. Mitigated Negative Declaration

1.1 Project Information

Project: Cressey-Gallo 115 kV Power Line Project
Merced, California

Proponent: Pacific Gas and Electric Company
77 Beale Street
San Francisco, California 94105
(800) 743-5000

1.2 Background and Description of Project

Pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) General Order 131-D, Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) has filed an application (A.11-11-020) with the CPUC for a Permit to Construct for the Cressey-Gallo 115 kilovolt (kV) Power Line Project ("Proposed Project"). The application was filed on November 30, 2011 and includes the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA), prepared by PG&E pursuant to the CPUC's Rules of Practice and Procedure Rule 2.4 (CEQA Compliance). The Proposed Project includes a new, approximately 14.4-mile-long, single-circuit power line to interconnect the Cressey and Gallo Substations. As part of the project, upgrades to Cressey Substation would be required and the Gallo Substation would be expanded to accommodate the new line and switchgear. The project is located in the San Joaquin Valley in Merced County near the City of Livingston, California. PG&E has stated that the proj-

ect is necessary to improve transmission system reliability for customers in north-central Merced County, California. Construction would begin as early as April 2013 to meet an in-service date of January 2014, depending on CPUC approval. In accordance with the CPUC's General Order 131-D, approval of this project must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Pursuant to CEQA, the CPUC must prepare an Initial Study (IS) for the Proposed Project to determine if any significant adverse effects on the environment would result from project implementation. The IS utilizes the significance criteria outlined in Appendix G of the CEQA *Guidelines*. If the IS for the project indicates that a significant adverse impact that could not be mitigated to a less than significant level could occur, the CPUC would be required to prepare an Environmental Impact Report.

According to Article 6 (Negative Declaration Process) and Section 15070 (Decision to Prepare a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration) of the CEQA *Guidelines*, a public agency shall prepare or have prepared a proposed negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration for a project subject to CEQA when:

(a) The initial study shows that there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, or

(b) The initial study identifies potentially significant effects, but:

(1) Revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by the applicant before a proposed mitigated negative declaration and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur, and

(2) There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment.

Based on the analysis in the Initial Study, it has been determined that all project-related environmental impacts could be reduced to a less than significant level with the incorporation of feasible mitigation measures. Therefore, adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) will satisfy the requirements of CEQA. The mitigation measures included in this MND are designed to reduce or eliminate the potentially significant environmental impacts described in the Initial Study. Where a measure described in this document has been previously incorporated into the project, either as a specific project design feature or as an Applicant-Proposed Measure, this is noted in the discussion. Mitigation measures are structured in accordance with the criteria in Section 15370 of the CEQA *Guidelines*.

1.3 Required Approvals

PG&E would obtain permits for the project, as needed, from federal, State and local agencies. Table 1-1 lists permits and approvals that may be required for project construction.

Table 1-1. Permits and Approvals Necessary for the Proposed Project

Permit, Approval, or Exemption	Purpose	Regulation Agency
Federal		
Section 404 Nationwide Permit	Work in "Waters of the United States," including wetlands.	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Section 7 consultation (through federal review process)	Potential impacts to federally-listed species or critical habitat.	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries

Table 1-1. Permits and Approvals Necessary for the Proposed Project

Permit, Approval, or Exemption	Purpose	Regulation Agency
State		
Permit to Construct (General Order No. 131-D)	Construction, modification, or alteration of power line facilities.	California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
Section 401 Water Quality Certification	Consistency with state water quality standards.	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region V (RWQCB)
1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement	Work that affects the bed or bank of a stream or lake.	California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)
Standard Encroachment Permit	For use of California State highways for other than normal transportation purposes, including construction activities completed within the ROW.	California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Storm Water Permit	Construction activities disturbing 1 acre or more of soil must submit a Notice of Intent to comply with the terms of the general permit.	State Water Resources Control Board
Local		
Air Pollution Control District Permit	For conducting activities which may result in air pollution.	San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD)
Encroachment Permit	For the use of local roads for purposes other than normal transportation.	County of Merced
Tree Removal Permit	For the removal of trees.	County of Merced

1.4 Environmental Determination

Based upon an Initial Study, it is determined that the Proposed Project WOULD NOT HAVE a significant effect on the environment with the incorporation of the proposed Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) and mitigation measures (attached). The Initial Study is available for review at the CPUC, 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, California 94102 and at the Livingston Branch Library, 1212 Main Street, Livingston, CA 95334.

Billie C Blanchard

Billie Blanchard
Project Manager

2/27/2013
Date

1.5 Applicant Proposed Measures and Mitigation Measures

Pursuant to the Public Resources Code and the State CEQA Guidelines, the Initial Study was prepared by the CPUC to identify the potential environmental effects resulting from Proposed Project implementation, and to evaluate the level of significance of these effects. The Initial Study relies on information in Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) PEA filed on November 30, 2011, PG&E's responses to data requests, project site reconnaissance by the CPUC environmental team in August 2011 and February 2012, and other environmental analyses.

PG&E's PEA identified measures to address potentially significant impacts — the Applicant-Proposed Measures (APMs) — and these APMs are considered to be part of the description of the Proposed Project and are listed in Table 4-6 of the Initial Study. Based on the Initial Study analysis, additional mitigation measures are identified for adoption to ensure that impacts of the Proposed Project would be less than significant. The additional mitigation measures supplement the APMs. PG&E has agreed to implement all of the additional recommended mitigation measures as part of the Proposed Project.

A draft Mitigation Monitoring Plan located in Section 6 of this document has been prepared to ensure that the APMs and mitigation measures presented below are properly implemented. The plan describes specific actions required to implement each APM and mitigation measure, including information on timing of implementation and monitoring requirements. Following project approval, the CPUC would prepare and implement a Mitigation Monitoring Compliance and Reporting Program to ensure compliance with mitigation measures approved in the Final IS/MND.

Implementation of the following mitigation measures would avoid potentially significant impacts identified in the Initial Study or reduce them to less than significant levels.

Mitigation Measures for Impacts to Existing Visual Character

MM V-1 **Treat New Galvanized Steel, including New Light-Duty Steel Poles and New Tubular Steel Poles, to Blend with the Sky.** Prior to installation, PG&E shall treat new galvanized steel structures, including light-duty steel poles and tubular steel poles with a permanent surface treatment designed to render steel with a light gray color in the short-term and a light gray color and dulled non-reflective patina in the long-term.

MM V-2 **Install Slimmer Light Gray Tubular Steel Pole Treated with CrysCoat (or equal) and Vegetative Screening at Mercedes Avenue Crossing.** At the 90-degree turn and crossing of Mercedes Avenue, the base of the tubular steel pole installed by PG&E shall be 27-inches or smaller in diameter with appropriate taper, with a permanent surface treatment designed to render steel with a light gray color and a dulled non-reflective patina in the short-term and the long-term (CrysCoat or equal).

Additionally, PG&E shall offer to the owner and/or tenant of 1925 Mercedes Avenue additional vegetative screening, if desired, between the residence and the new pole at that location, consistent with feasibility and engineering requirements. Plant materials selected for screening shall be acclimated to the environment of the project area.

PG&E shall submit an engineering sketch of the pole, and report landowner requests and PG&E's responses to the CPUC prior to the start of construction.

Mitigation Measure for Active Agricultural Operations

MM AG-1a **Coordinate with landowners, farmers, and ranchers regarding construction activities**. Coordination shall include the following:

Advance Notice. Prior to and during construction, the Applicant shall give at least 30 days advance notice of the start of construction-related activities. Notification shall be provided by mailing notices to all properties within 300 feet of the project route. The announcement shall:

- Describe where and when construction is planned; and
- Provide contact information for a point of contact for complaints related to construction activities.

Prior to commencing ground disturbing activities, the Applicant shall submit a copy of the template used for the notification letter and a list of the landowners notified.

As specified in APM LU-1, the Applicant shall "work with farmers and ranchers to schedule project work, to the extent feasible, around their harvest and planting periods in order to minimize disruptions to agricultural operations. Access across active fields shall be negotiated with the farmer and/or landowner in advance of any construction activities. In areas containing permanent crops (i.e., grape vines, orchard crops, etc.) that must be removed to gain access to pole sites for construction purposes, the Applicant shall provide compensation to the farmer and/or landowner in accordance with PG&E's Project Damage Assessment and Resolution Program" [APM LU-1].

Reporting of Complaints. The Applicant shall document all complaints and strategies for resolving complaints in regular reporting to the CPUC.

Mitigation Measures for Construction-Phase Air Quality

MM A-1 **Minimize Fugitive Dust near Sensitive Receptors** (Proposed to supplement APM AQ-1 "Minimize Fugitive Dust"). The following dust control measures shall be implemented for locations near (within 1,000 feet) of residences or other sensitive receptors in conjunction with the measures in APM AQ-1 (SJVACPD, 2002b):

- Limit area subject to excavation, grading, and other construction activity at any one time.
- Increased dust suppression or watering frequency shall be applied whenever wind speeds exceed 20 miles per hour (mph) and visible dust emissions occur.

MM A-2 **Facilitate Carpooling to Construction Sites** (Proposed to supplement APM AQ-2 "Minimize Construction Exhaust Emissions"). To minimize GHG and criteria pollutant emissions during construction, PG&E shall identify a central place to meet, such as a substation, staging area, or a service center in the project vicinity and encourage construction workers to carpool to the work site to the extent feasible. The ability to develop an effective carpool program for the Proposed Project shall depend on the proximity of carpool facilities to the work site, the geographical commute departure points of construction workers, and the extent to which carpooling shall not adversely affect worker arrival time and the project's construction schedule. Crew transportation to the project site is addressed in Section 5.16, Transportation and Traffic.

MM A-3 **Reduce Toxic Diesel Particulate Matter** (Proposed to supplement APM AQ-2 "Minimize Construction Exhaust Emissions")**.** The following measures shall be implemented during construction to reduce toxic diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions:

- On- and off-road equipment shall be subject to the following restrictions:
  - Alternative-fueled equipment shall be used when reasonably available.
- Signs shall be posted at substation delivery locations to remind delivery vehicle operators of the 5-minute idling restriction identified in Section 2449(d)(3) of CARB's In-Use Off-Road Diesel regulation: http://www.arb.ca.gov/regact/2007/ordiesl07/frooal.pdf.

Mitigation Measures for Special-Status Plant and Animal Species and Wetlands

MM B-1 **Conduct reconnaissance level Biological Resources Surveys for proposed construction staging areas not previously surveyed.** Areas which have been evaluated using database tools (i.e., CNDDB) although not included in the detailed analysis in the IS/MND may be identified as construction staging areas through additional, reconnaissance surveys. Before any construction or staging activities in areas that have not previously been surveyed for the Proposed Project, qualified biologist(s) (a botanist, a wildlife specialist, and/or a wetland specialist approved by the CPUC) shall conduct a thorough reconnaissance survey including an assessment of the site for sensitive species, their habitat, and wetlands or regulated waters.

Survey results shall be documented in a technical report that will address the occurrence of any sensitive habitats, wetlands or regulated waters, and special-status wildlife and plant species that are observed in the proposed construction area. The report may build on the analysis in the earlier biological report for the project (GANDA, 2011 and 2012) and in the IS/MND. The report shall be submitted to and approved by the CPUC before any construction and staging activities occur in these areas.

If survey results indicate that wetlands, sensitive habitats or special-status species will be affected in locations that were not previously surveyed, additional consultation with Army Corps of Engineers, CDFG and/or USFWS shall be required. Work within the new construction or staging area will not begin until agency consultation is completed. All project mitigation measures shall apply to these areas, and larger exclusion areas may be required based on resource agency consultation.

MM B-2 **Develop and implement environmental awareness training.** This measure incorporates and supplements portions of APM BIO-1. As stated in APM BIO-1, environmental awareness training shall be conducted for on-site construction personnel prior to the start of construction activities. The training shall:

- Explain measures to prevent impacts on nesting birds and special-status species with potential to occur in the project area.
- Include a description of these special-status species and their habitat needs, and an explanation of the status of these species and their protection under the federal ESA, CESA, and other statutes. Provide a brochure with color photos and/or illustrations of sensitive species, descriptions of these species, and a discussion of project measures related to these species.

The environmental compliance supervisor shall be provided with:

- Project resource maps showing seasonal ponded areas, valley elderberry shrubs, active nests, and any special-status species identified during the biological surveys of the project site and the pre-construction surveys. Maps shall show all relevant buffer areas. Maps shall be updated as needed to show locations of any newly identified nesting birds or special-status species.

Per APM BIO-1, a copy of the training and training materials shall be provided to the CPUC at least 30 days prior to the start of construction. Training logs and sign-in sheets shall be provided to CPUC staff within 7 days of training being presented. As needed, in-field training shall be provided to new on-site construction personnel by the environ-

mental compliance supervisor or a qualified individual who shall be identified by the PG&E's biologist, or initial training shall be recorded and replayed for new personnel.

MM B-3 **Protect seasonal ponded areas and other water features.** Construction activities shall be designed to minimize disturbance of wetlands (including seasonal ponded areas) and regulated water in the project area to the extent feasible.

Avoidance Measures. Construction activities shall not take place within any potential wetland or regulated water except as provided below. All seasonal ponded areas, wetlands or regulated water identified during the biological surveys will be identified on maps of the project site, which will be provided to the environmental compliance supervisor. Exclusion fencing or flagging will be installed 10 feet out side of the regular high-water line of any wetland or regulated water located adjacent to a construction site and no construction will be allowed within the fenced exclusion area.

Wetlands. If potential wetlands or regulated water cannot be completely avoided:

- A wetland delineation shall be conducted by a qualified biologist approved by CPUC. The wetland delineation shall be verified by United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) prior to ground disturbance. In lieu of preparing a wetland delineation, a preliminary jurisdiction determination can be completed by the Army Corps of Engineers and permitting can be initiated as appropriate.
- An assessment of areas that may meet the definition of wetlands or jurisdictional waters according to CDFG and USFWS shall be conducted by a qualified biologist approved by CPUC.
- No USACE, CDFG, or Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) jurisdictional waters shall be impacted before obtaining permits from the respective agency.

If vernal pools with occupied or suitable habitat for state or federally listed species are identified during preconstruction surveys in areas that may be affected by construction activities, additional consultation with CDFG/USFWS shall be required and larger exclusion areas may be necessary.

Irrigation Canals. A qualified biologist approved by the CPUC shall determine appropriate buffer distances/setbacks and/or other protective measures (e.g., erosion control best management practices such as those included in APM WQ-1) to be implemented to minimize the impacts of project construction activities on at-grade irrigation canals. All plans related to work within 10 feet of irrigation canals shall be evaluated by the qualified biologist to determine if the canal is subject to jurisdiction. If it is determined that the CDFG has jurisdiction and the project may result in direct impacts to a stream subject to CDFG jurisdiction, a Streambed Alteration Agreement may be required.

MM B-4 **Minimize noxious weeds.** Precautions shall be taken to minimize the introduction of any invasive weeds. Construction equipment shall be clean before it arrives at work areas in the project corridor. Any landscaping involving vegetation other than trees and/or shrubs shall consist of native seed mix or other ecologically appropriate, non-invasive, plants. Only weed-free straw or mulch shall be used.

MM B-5 **Protect valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat.** Prior to construction activities in any areas with potential valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat, a qualified biologist (approved by the CPUC) shall survey for elderberry plants within 25 feet of areas of

potential ground disturbance. The qualified biologist shall flag and fence buffer zones at least 20 feet wide surrounding the drip line of each potential valley elderberry longhorn beetle host plant (any elderberry shrub with at least one stem with a diameter of one inch or greater). Flagging and fencing shall be monitored during the duration of construction by a qualified biological monitor (approved by CPUC). The biological monitor shall have the authority to stop work or implement alternative practices (as determined in consultation with USFWS as appropriate) if mature elderberry shrubs are likely to be impacted by construction activities.

MM B-6 **Identify and relocate special-status amphibians and reptiles.** A qualified biologist (approved by CPUC) shall conduct preconstruction surveys for western spadefoot toad, Blainville's horned lizard, and western pond turtle no more than 7 days prior to construction in suitable habitats within the project work areas.

If individuals of these species are found near any proposed construction areas, impacts to individuals and their habitat shall be avoided to the extent feasible. If occupied habitat can be avoided, an exclusion zone shall be established around the habitat and temporary plastic fencing shall be installed around the buffer area. If avoidance is not possible and the species is determined to be present in work areas, the biologist possessing a CDFG Scientific Collecting permit shall capture individuals prior to construction activities and relocate them to nearby, suitable habitat out of harm's way.

As necessary, exclusion fencing shall be installed to prevent special-status amphibians and reptiles from re-entering the work area. For the duration of work in these areas the biologist shall conduct at least weekly follow-up visits to monitor effectiveness and take appropriate corrective action if protection measures are not adequate.

MM B-7 **Avoid impacts on nesting birds.** If construction activities occur during the avian nesting season (February 1 through September 15), a preconstruction survey for nesting birds shall be conducted by a qualified wildlife biologist (approved by the CPUC) within 7 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing construction or vegetation trimming or removal activities in any new work area. If there is no work in an area for 7 days, it will be considered a new work area if construction or vegetation trimming or removal begins again.

No additional measures will be implemented if active nests are more than the following distances from the nearest work site: (a) 500 feet for raptors, or (b) 250 feet for passerine birds. Buffers shall not apply to construction-related traffic using existing roads that is not limited to project-specific use (i.e., county roads, highways, farm roads, etc.).

All references in this mitigation measure to wildlife biologists refer to qualified biologists approved by the CPUC; these biologists may be PG&E employees or subcontractors. References to independent avian biologists refer to qualified avian biologists approved by the CPUC who report directly to CPUC.

Buffer reduction. The specified buffer sizes for birds may be reduced on a case-by-case basis if, based on compelling biological or ecological reasoning (e.g. the biology of the bird species, concealment of the nest site by topography, land use type, vegetation, and level of project activity) and as determined by a qualified wildlife biologist that implementation of a specified smaller buffer distance will still avoid project-related "take" (as defined by Fish and Game Code Section 86). Requests to reduce standard buffers must

be submitted to the independent avian biologist(s) to be reviewed in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). Requests to reduce buffers must include: the species, location, size and expected duration of proposed buffer reduction, reason for the buffer reduction, the name and contact information of the qualified wildlife biologist(s) who request the buffer reduction and will conduct subsequent monitoring. The independent avian biologist shall respond to PG&E's request for a buffer reduction within 24 hours.

Non-special status species found building nests within the standard buffer zone *after specific project activities begin*, shall be assumed tolerant of that specific project activity and such nests will be protected by the maximum buffer practicable (as determined by the qualified biologist). However, these nests shall be monitored on a daily basis by a qualified biologist until the qualified biologist has determined that the young have fledged, are no longer dependent upon parental care, or construction ends within the buffer zone (whichever occurs first). If the qualified biologist determines that the nesting bird(s) are not tolerant of project activity, the standard buffer shall be implemented. As appropriate, exclusion techniques may be used for any construction equipment that is left unattended for more than 24 hours to reduce the possibility of birds nesting in the construction equipment.

If nesting birds show signs of distress within a reduced buffer zone and that stress appears to be related to construction activities, the qualified wildlife biologist shall reinstate the recommended buffers. The recommended buffers may only be reduced again following the same process as identified above after the qualified biologist has determined that the nesting birds are no longer exhibiting signs of stress.

Monitoring and reporting. All nests with a reduced buffer shall be monitored on a daily basis by a qualified wildlife biologist until the biologist has determined that the young have fledged, are no longer dependent upon parental care, or construction ends within the reduced buffer (whichever occurs first). A monthly written report shall be submitted to CDFG and CPUC. Monthly reports shall include: all of the information included in buffer reduction requests in addition to duration of buffer reduction, and outcomes for nests, eggs, young and adults during construction within a reduced buffer. No reporting will be required if construction activities do not occur within a reduced buffer during any calendar month. A final report shall be submitted to CDFG and CPUC at the end of each nesting season summarizing all monitoring results and outcomes for the duration of project construction.

Burrowing owl. A qualified wildlife biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys for burrowing owls within construction right-of-way and publicly accessible lands following the Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines developed by The California Burrowing Owl Consortium (1993) where PG&E has access rights. If any ground disturbing activities are planned during the burrowing owl nesting season (approximately February 1 through August 31), avoidance measures shall include a no construction buffer zone of a minimum distance of 656 feet. If occupied burrows are closer than those distances to the nearest work site, the specified buffer size may be reduced on a case-by-case basis using the process outlined above for other nesting birds. Buffers may only be reduced after approval by the independent avian biologist. Reporting shall also follow the process outlined above for other nesting birds. If the nesting owls show signs of distress within a reduced buffer zone, and that stress appears to be related to con-

struction activities, the qualified wildlife biologist shall reinstate the recommended buffers. The recommended buffers will only be reduced again after the qualified biologist has determined that the nesting owls are no longer exhibiting signs of stress and has submitted a buffer reduction request following the same process as identified above. Reporting regarding reduction of buffers will be documented in a written report and will follow the procedure described above.

Listed and fully protected species. A qualified wildlife biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys for listed and fully protected species within 500 feet of work areas (within construction right-of-way and publicly accessible lands where PG&E has access rights) within 7 days of the start of construction. If any construction activities are planned during the nesting season (approximately February 1 through August 31), avoidance measures shall include a no construction buffer zone of a minimum distance of 500 feet for raptors or 250 feet for passerine birds. If occupied nests are closer than these distances to the nearest work site, consultation with CPUC and CDFW (and USFWS as appropriate) shall be required to discuss how to implement the project and species avoidance measures to avoid "take".

California Avian Species of Special Concern. A qualified wildlife biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys for California Avian Species of Special Concern within construction right-of-way and publicly accessible lands where PG&E has access rights. If any construction activities are planned during the nesting season (approximately February 1 through August 31), the avoidance measures for nesting birds detailed above will be implemented.

MM B-8 **Avoid impacts to roosting western red bat**. Prior to start of construction, a survey for roosting bats or maternity roosts shall be performed by a qualified biologist (approved by CPUC) within seven (7) days of the construction start date for all proposed work areas adjacent to appropriate roosting habitat and accessible from public or project areas during the appropriate time of day to maximize detectability. Western red bat roost and maternity roost habitat in the project area is mature riparian woodland, mature orchards, and mature ornamental trees. The survey shall include the work areas and any publicly accessible roosts within 250 feet of a work area. If an active roost is found within 100 feet of a work area, or if a maternity roost is found within 250 feet of a work area, the limits of the work area will be clearly marked and a qualified biological monitor shall be provided and shall remain on-site during construction activities within the vicinity of the roost or maternity roost. The biologist will ensure that construction activities to do not encroach upon the 100 foot buffer around an active roost or 250 foot buffer around a maternity colony site.

All references in this mitigation measure to biologists or biological monitors refer to qualified biologists approved by the CPUC; these biologists may be PG&E employees or contractors. References to independent biologists refer to qualified biologists approved by the CPUC who report directly to the CPUC.

Requests to reduce buffers or to exclude bats must be submitted to an independent biologist to be reviewed in coordination with California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). An independent biologist shall respond to requests to reduce buffers within 24 hours and shall respond to requests to exclude bats within 5 days. Requests to reduce buffers or exclude bats must include: location, size of buffer and expected duration of

proposed buffer reduction, reason for the buffer reduction or exclusion, the proposed exclusion plan, and the name and contact information of the qualified biologist(s) who request the buffer reduction or exclusion plan and will conduct subsequent monitoring.

In addition, proposed exclusion plans shall describe all construction work that has the potential to affect bats, identify measures to be implemented to exclude bats from the work areas, and describe the features incorporated to minimize potential effects. The plan may include the following:

- If fall/winter hibernacula cannot be avoided, humane techniques may be implemented to passively vacate bats from roosts. Methods to passively evict bats from tree roosts may include incrementally trimming limbs to alter the air flow and temperature around the roost feature where slight changes to the surrounding environment of roost features encourage bats to vacate roost features on their own. Any trees with nesting birds would be subject to Mitigation Measure B-7.
- If a roost is lost, PG&E shall consult with the CDFW to see if additional compensation for loss of habitat is required. Required compensation may include planting new trees to provide roost habitat, as appropriate to ensure that adequate roost sites are available in the project vicinity, as determined by CDFW.

Trees containing maternity roosts shall not be removed during the breeding season (March 1 through August 31) to avoid disturbing females with young that cannot fly. No trees containing maternity roosts may be removed until the qualified biologist determines that breeding is complete and young are flying.

If buffer reductions are requested and approved, a monthly report shall be submitted to CPUC and CDFG with all of the information in the buffer reduction requests, monitoring results, effects on bats, bat exclusion activities, and bat behavior following implementation of the exclusion plan. Reports shall be submitted for the duration of construction activities within buffer areas.

Mitigation Measure for Known Cultural Resources

MM C-1 **Conduct Preconstruction Cultural Resources Surveys for Areas Not Previously Surveyed.** Before any construction or staging activities occur in areas that have not previously been surveyed for the project, a qualified cultural resources specialist, approved by the CPUC, shall conduct an intensive pedestrian survey for archaeological and built-environment resources.

If any resources are identified during preconstruction surveys the preferred strategy shall be avoidance or preservation in place. If the resource cannot be avoided, it shall be evaluated by the CPUC-approved qualified cultural resources specialist to determine if it is a historical resource as defined by CEQA Guidelines (Section 15064.5). All resources identified shall be documented on California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) cultural resource records (Form DPR 523) and filed at the Cultural and Historic Resource Information System (CHRIS).

If the resource is determined to be a historical resource, the cultural resource specialist shall consult with CPUC staff regarding methods to ensure that substantial adverse change to the significance of the resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b) would be minimized. Other methods to be considered shall include evalua-

tion, collection, recordation, and analysis of any significant cultural materials in accordance with a Cultural Resources Management Plan prepared by the CPUC-approved qualified cultural resource specialist. The methods and results of evaluation or data recovery work at an archaeological or historic find shall be documented in a professional level technical report to be filed with CHRIS. Work may commence upon completion of treatment, as approved by the CPUC.

MM C-2 **Avoid Known Historical Resources.** Known historical resources shall be avoided during construction. The portions of historical resources that cross into or are immediately adjacent to the project area (i.e., within 25 feet) shall be marked with visible flagging tape to create a 10-foot buffer around the site. The construction crews shall be instructed that no vehicle access, travel, equipment staging, storage, or other construction-related work shall occur outside the flagged areas to ensure that known historic resources are not inadvertently damaged during implementation of the project.

Mitigation Measures for Land Use and Planning

MM L-1 **Re-route the proposed transmission to avoid dividing a parcel.** PG&E shall reroute the proposed Cressey-Gallo transmission line route north of Arena Way after the crossing of the existing irrigation canal to follow the eastern property line of parcel 140-190-051, as shown in Figure 5.10-2. PG&E shall coordinate with the property owner and use techniques such as strain poles, to reduce interference with the farming operation consistent with feasibility and engineering requirements. PG&E shall submit an engineering sketch or other construction plan for the re-route demonstrating compliance with this measure to the CPUC for review prior to the start of construction of this section of the project.

Mitigation Measures for Construction Noise

MM N-1 **PG&E Construction Hours.** PG&E shall limit grading, scraping, hole augering and pole installation to daylight hours. Exceptions for work outside of these hours shall be allowed for project safety or to take advantage of the limited times when the power line can be taken out of service. If nighttime work is needed because of clearance restrictions on the power line, PG&E shall take appropriate measures to minimize disturbance to local residents through APM NO-5 to inform them of the work schedule and probable inconveniences.

1.6 Findings

The Initial Study was prepared to identify the potential effects on the environment from the construction of the Cressey-Gallo 115 kV power line and to evaluate the significance of these effects. Based on the Initial Study and the Findings listed below, the Lead Agency (CPUC) has determined that the Proposed Project would not have a significant effect on the environment.

- With the implementation of the above APMs and mitigation measures, the Proposed Project would not significantly degrade the quality of the environment.
- With the implementation of the above mitigation measures, both short-term and long-term environmental effects associated with the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

- When impacts associated with implementing the Proposed Project are considered cumulatively, the incremental contribution of the project-related impacts are insignificant.
- Based on the Initial Study, there is no evidence that implementing the Proposed Project would have any adverse impacts on people.

Billie G Blanchard

Billie Blanchard
Project Manager

2/27/2013

Date

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