

A. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

This Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) has been prepared by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to inform the public and to meet the needs of local, State, and Federal permitting agencies to consider the Los Banos-Gates 500 kV Transmission Project (Path 15). The general project area is illustrated in Figure A-1. A Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) Application was filed by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E or “the Applicant”) on April 13, 2001 by Application (A.) 01-04-012. This SEIR updates a Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) prepared in 1988 for the Los Banos-Gates Transmission Project. This SEIR, when final, plus the 1988 EIS/EIR, will become the EIR for the project proposed by PG&E. The project proposed by PG&E (the “Proposed Project”) is described briefly below and in detail in Part B of this EIR. This SEIR does not make a recommendation regarding the approval or denial of the Proposed Project; it is purely informational in content.

This SEIR evaluates and presents the environmental impacts that are expected to result from construction and operation of PG&E’s Proposed Project, and identifies mitigation measures that, if implemented, could avoid or minimize the significant environmental impacts identified. In accordance with CEQA requirements, this SEIR also identifies alternatives to the Proposed Project that could avoid or minimize significant environmental impacts associated with the project as proposed by PG&E: the Eastern Corridor Alternative, four alternatives to segments of the Western Corridor, and the No Project Alternative. The SEIR then evaluates the environmental impacts associated with these alternatives. Based on this environmental impact assessment, this SEIR identifies the Environmentally Superior Alternative as required by CEQA.

A.1 HISTORY AND OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROJECT

A.1.1 WHAT IS PATH 15?

The existing Path 15 consists of a series of high-capacity transmission lines that connect customers in Northern and Southern California. These lines are located in the southern portion of the PG&E service area and form part of the Pacific AC Intertie, which links the Pacific Northwest and Oregon to Southern California. For California, Path 15 has been operated as a means of importing energy from the north to Southern California during the winter and exporting energy from the south into Northern California during the summer. The existing components of the existing Path 15 are the following transmission lines, as illustrated in Figure A-2:

- Los Banos-Gates 500 kV
- Los Banos-Midway 500 kV
- Gates-Panoche #1 230 kV
- Gates-Panoche #2 230 kV
- Gates-Gregg 230 kV
- Gates-McCall 230 kV

Figure A-1

Regional Map

[See link on webpage]

Figure A-2

Existing Path 15 Transmission Line System

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Figure A-2

Existing Path 15 Transmission Line System

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The Proposed Project (also termed the “Western Corridor”) would add a second Los Banos-Gates 500 kV transmission line to the Path 15 components listed above. Construction of the Proposed Project would involve installation of 84 miles of new 500 kV transmission line between PG&E’s Los Banos and Gates Substations in the San Joaquin Valley. The Proposed Project also includes other electric system improvements, which all together would result in an increase in the rating¹ of Path 15 from 3,900 MW to 5,400 MW.

A.1.2 THE ORIGINAL EIS/EIR

The environmental review process for the Los Banos-Gates Transmission Project (or Path 15) began in March 1985 with the proposed California-Oregon Transmission Project² (COTP). The U.S. Department of Energy’s Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) was the Lead Agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Transmission Agency of Northern California (TANC) was the CEQA lead agency.

In order to evaluate the COTP, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/EIR) and a Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (FEIS/EIR) were prepared in November of 1986 and January of 1988, respectively. The EIS/EIR addressed three independent projects: COTP, Los Banos-Gates Transmission Project, and Pacific Northwest Reinforcement Project. A Supplement to the Draft EIS/EIR was released in June 1987, which addressed only COTP. The Los Banos-Gates Transmission Project was included in the underlying EIS/EIR because preliminary engineering studies conducted for the COTP identified a need for upgrades or improvements to PG&E’s transmission system south of Tesla Substation in order for PG&E to meet its transmission obligations under the COTP Memorandum of Understanding. The Los Banos-Gates Transmission Project was proposed to meet this obligation. Since the need for the Los Banos-Gates Transmission Project stemmed from the COTP, it was subject to the same environmental regulatory requirements under NEPA and CEQA with the same lead agencies.

By the time the Final EIS/EIR was issued, PG&E had refined its transmission studies and determined that the Los Banos-Gates Project would not be needed in order for it to meet its contractual obligations resulting from construction of the COTP. The Final EIS/EIR states:

PGandE has since studied the Los Banos-Gates power flow requirements and believes it can meet its commitments under the MOU to provide firm bi-directional transmission without constructing Los Banos-Gates at this time.

In 1990, subsequent to the preparation of the EIS/EIR, three utilities submitted CPCN applications to the CPUC to authorize their participation in the COTP (including the Los Banos-Gates Transmission Project): PG&E (Application No. 90-08-066), Southern California Edison Company (Application No. 90-08-067), and San Diego Gas & Electric Company (Application No. 90-09-001). Those applications

¹ Rating complies with Western Systems Coordinating Council (WSCC)’s double line outage criterion for loss of the two 500 kV lines south of Los Banos.

² The 350-mile 500 kV COTP was constructed, and is now operated and maintained by WAPA.

were consolidated in one proceeding and in Decision (D.) 91-04-071, the CPUC denied CPCN Authorization for the COTP. The Decision concluded that:

The Applicants failed to demonstrate that the project will be cost effective under the economic and resources assumptions provided in the record of this proceeding. In these same circumstances we are not convinced that there will be sufficient power available in the Pacific Northwest over the life of the project to support investor-owned utility participation and assure the financial integrity of the project...On the records in this case, the applications are denied since the Applicants failed to meet the burden of proof with respect to Section 701.1 of the Public Utilities Code...

A.1.3 CEQA PROCESS

On March 29, 2001, CPUC President Lynch issued an Assigned Commissioner's Ruling regarding Path 15 Transmission Restraints in Investigation I.00-11-001³. The Ruling noted that the portion of PG&E's electric transmission system known as "Path 15" had been identified as a system constraint, which had significantly contributed, and is expected to continue to contribute, to reliability problems. The Ruling directed PG&E to file an Application for a CPCN no later than April 13, 2001, for authority to upgrade "Path 15" between the Los Banos and Gates Substations.

PG&E submitted its application (A.01-04-012) and Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA)⁴ on April 13, 2001. The CPUC issued a Notice of Preparation for a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) on July 11, 2001. Generally, CEQA Guidelines §15162(2) requires either a Subsequent or a Supplemental EIR must be prepared if

Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken...due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant impacts.

As the lead CEQA agency for A.01-04-012, the CPUC decided that updating of the environmental setting information would be required in order to adequately evaluate project impacts today. The original Final EIS/EIR was completed in 1988 and the environmental information on which the impact assessment was based was gathered in or before 1986. In addition, revision of mitigation measures in accordance with today's standards would be necessary to ensure that feasible mitigation measures are included to mitigate significant impacts. However, the CPUC determined that a supplemental rather than subsequent EIR is appropriate in A.01-04-012. The decision to prepare a Supplemental EIR was based on CEQA Guidelines §15163(a) which states that a Supplemental EIR should be prepared if "only minor additions or changes would be necessary to make the previous EIR adequately apply to the project in the changed situation." Because the project itself is essentially identical to that proposed in 1986 and the circumstances and analysis indicate that relatively minor additions and changes are

³ Order instituting investigation into implementation of AB 970 regarding the identification of electric transmission and distribution constraints, actions to resolve those constraints, and related matters affecting the reliability of electric supply.

⁴ The PEA attached to the CPCN Application consisted essentially of the 1986/1988 Draft and Final EIS/EIR documents. The only updated environmental information provided was biological surveys from the spring of 2001.

necessary to update the prior analysis, the Supplemental EIR was determined to be the appropriate form for CEQA compliance.

A.1.4 NEPA PROCESS

A NEPA process has been conducted by WAPA as the designated federal lead agency. If PG&E is authorized to construct a project, compliance with NEPA will be required in order for PG&E to receive permits to cross Federal land of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. In accordance with direction by the U.S. Secretary of Energy, WAPA is pursuing other options for relieving Path 15 congestion, which may also require NEPA compliance.

In Chapter 7 of President Bush's Energy Policy issued May 17, 2001, the following statement addressed Path 15:

“Recommendations: The NEPD Group recommends that the President direct the Secretary of Energy to authorize the Western Area Power Administration to explore relieving the “Path 15” bottleneck through transmission expansion financed by nonfederal contributions.”

As a result, on May 28, 2001, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham directed WAPA to determine whether outside parties were interested in helping to finance and co-own the transmission line, and to prepare technical feasibility and environmental studies for the Proposed Project. On June 13, 2001, WAPA issued a Request for Statements of Interest to identify all entities interested in participating in the financing and co-ownership of Path 15 system additions. Statements of Interest were due to WAPA by July 13, 2001, and WAPA is currently evaluating the 13 proposals received.

WAPA issued a Supplement Analysis⁵ to the original EIS/EIR on August 24, 2001 and requested formal comments by September 18, 2001. The document concluded that, while there were some changes in the project area since completion of the 1988 EIS, there were not any substantial changes to the significant environmental impacts identified in the 1988 EIS, and no new significant impacts were identified. Therefore, WAPA determined that a Supplemental EIS was not required. While WAPA states that a Supplement Analysis does not require public involvement, public meetings were held on August 27th and 28th in the project area. A public comment period extended to September 18, 2001.

WAPA will provide recommendations regarding the project to the Secretary of Energy, who is expected to announce a decision and publish a Record of Decision in September or October 2001.

⁵ WAPA prepared a “Supplement Analysis” as a means of evaluating whether any new significant impacts would result from the Path 15 project. New impacts would have required preparation of a Supplemental EIS. The Supplement Analysis is the equivalent of a CEQA Addendum, and does not require circulation or consideration of public comments.

A.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the Los Banos-Gates 500 kV Transmission Project is to decrease transmission congestion on Path 15. Reduced transmission congestion is intended to benefit both electric reliability and the economics of power transmission within the State, as described in the following sections.

A.2.1 PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

In its Application to the CPUC (A.02-04-012), PG&E states the following regarding project purpose:

The purpose of the Project is to install a new 500 kV transmission line between PG&E's existing Los Banos Substation and its existing Gates Substation in order to decrease congestion on "Path 15..." According to studies performed by the California Independent System Operator ("ISO"), installing this new line would improve system reliability by reducing or eliminating the need for load interruptions in Northern California due to constraints on Path 15, reduce overall energy supply costs to consumers in the ISO grid, primarily in Northern California, and unify the California energy market by allowing increased power transfers between Northern and Southern California.

Historically, although constraints on Path 15 have resulted in higher generating costs to customers in Northern California, these constraints have occurred mainly during off-peak periods. During such periods, it has been necessary to operate higher-cost generation in Northern California and to import higher-cost power from the Northwest to meet energy demands in Northern California. Access to lower-cost generating resources in the south has been limited due to the Path 15 transfer limits. Because these constraints occurred mainly during off-peak periods, high-cost upgrades to Path 15 such as the Los Banos-Gates 500 kV line were not seen by stakeholders or regulators as cost-effective solutions. (See, e.g., CPUC Dec. No. 91-04-071 (April 24, 1991).)

However, starting in mid-2000, congestion on this path began to occur much more frequently due to limited generation availability in Northern California. In August 2000, ISO issued a report highlighting the need for expansion of the electric infrastructure at Path 15, among other transmission paths and areas, in order to drive down the costs of wholesale electricity in the State.

Path 15 problems escalated further in January 2001 as a shortage of generation in Northern California forced the ISO to institute rotating outages of firm customer load on two days (January 17 and January 18) and non-firm customer load on eight days.⁶ In the PG&E service area, as much as 1300 MW of load (1000 MW of firm load and 300 MW of non-firm load) was interrupted because Path 15 could not transfer the necessary energy reserves from Southern California. The Los Banos-Gates 500 kV Transmission Project would help to alleviate these current constraints on the system, allowing greater transfer of power in a south-to-north direction when necessary within the ISO grid.

A.2.2 OBJECTIVES OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

As with the entirety of this SEIR, the information in this section regarding project need is provided solely for the information of decision-makers and the public. The focus of this SEIR is to assess the potential environmental impacts of PG&E's Proposed Project and this SEIR does not provide conclusions about the need for the Proposed Project nor its compliance with California Independent System Operator (CAISO) or FERC standards. The issue of need will be addressed by the CPUC in the formal proceeding to determine whether to grant PG&E a CPCN to construct and operate the

⁶ "Firm load" is generally defined as load that cannot be interrupted except for a force majeure or to meet the WSCC and North American Electric Reliability Council reliability criteria. "Non-firm load" load is load that can be interrupted to prevent loss of firm load.

Proposed Project. The evaluation of need for the project does not affect the comparison of alternatives or identification of the Environmentally Superior Alternative, but all alternatives considered herein satisfy the project objectives. Comparison of alternatives is presented in Section E of this SEIR.

In its Application (A.01-04-012), PG&E states the following regarding project need:

... the ISO studies to date indicate that there will be insufficient electrical resources to supply winter peak load in the North of Path 15 (“NP 15”) zone in the years 2002, 2005 and 2008, and that congestion on Path 15 resulted in up to \$221.7 million of additional costs in the three energy markets that establish the price of service load in the ISO-controlled grid between September 1, 1999 and December 31, 2000. The latter study also indicates that the cost of Path 15 congestion has been increasing dramatically, and that congestion costs over the last four months analyzed were over three times the costs in the preceding twelve months.

The cost of upgrading Path 15 to provide between 1000 and 1500 MW of additional capability is estimated to be \$250 to \$300 million, which is the equivalent of \$50 to \$60 million per year at a 20% annual charge rate. Since the ISO studies indicate a potential annual savings of well over \$50 to \$60 million in congestion costs alone, these studies suggest that public convenience and necessity require construction of the Project. Additionally, the Project would address certain reliability issues in Northern California, reduce the overall costs to consumers in the ISO-controlled grid, and result in a more unified California energy market.

The need for Path 15 is related to the path’s ability to transmit electricity. Under certain generation and load patterns, the energy flow on the path can exceed the lines’ ability to reliably transfer energy. The current maximum south to north path rating of Path 15 is 3,750 MW⁷. When overloads (also known as transmission congestion) occur, it becomes necessary to adjust loads and/or generation on each side of the path to relieve the overload. While there have been occasions when the path has been constrained in the north to south direction, it has been the south to north (S-N) transfers that have resulted in the majority of constraints. The constraint imposed by Path 15 on the system has resulted in both economic and reliability concerns. Each of these issues is addressed below.

A.2.2.1 Economic Concerns

Historically, transmission constraints along Path 15 have occurred during off-peak periods when generation surplus in Southern California was being delivered either into Northern California or through the north into the Pacific Northwest as repayment for energy received during on-peak times. During times when the path was constrained in the S-N direction, higher-cost generation in the north was operated with lower-cost generation in the south being reduced, thus decreasing the levels of energy moving from south to north. However, because these constraints occurred predominantly during off-peak periods, the relatively high cost of upgrading Path 15 was not deemed to be cost-effective.

Commencing in mid-2000, congestion on the path began to occur much more frequently due to (a) limited generation in the north and (b) the relative costs between northern and southern generation.

⁷ This is the WSCC double contingency under the “N minus 2” criteria, which is defined so as to prevent system damage should the two 500 kV lines south of Los Banos fail unexpectedly.

The CAISO issued a report entitled “Path 15 Upgrade Cost Analysis Study” dated February 2001. In this report the CAISO analyzed the potential savings associated with upgrading Path 15 and generally found the upgrade to be economic. This study was based on historic transactions and power prices that existed during the September 1999 to December 2000 time frame. However, during this time frame, the structure of the California electric system has been described by many, including the CAISO and FERC, as being “dysfunctional.” The extent to which the levels of transmission congestion that occurred during this period would have occurred given a more properly functioning market is unknown. The CAISO, at the direction of the FERC, is in the process of redesigning its congestion management systems.

One factor suggested as contributing to the recent increases in Path 15 congestion is the withholding of generation. Withholding of generation in the north would result in the need for increased generation imports from the south, resulting in increased loading of Path 15. Another factor leading to the conclusions in the CAISO report was the relative cost of generation between the northern zone and the southern zone. Electric markets from 1999 to early 2001 were not representative of what they are expected to be in the future, so the pricing used in the report may not represent that which will be in place in the future. The CAISO recognized these problems and is in the process of conducting an economic study that is designed to estimate the cost savings associated with upgrading the transfer capability of Path 15 assuming more reasonable market performance parameters. This ISO assessment study was released on September 25, 2001; its summary regarding the economic justification for upgrading Path 15 is as follows.

The CA ISO considers that a \$300 million project to add 1500 MW of transfer capability at Path 15 is economically justified to reduce the risk of high prices associated primarily with the exercise of market power by strategically located generation and the existence of drought hydro conditions but also other factors such as the risk of a low level of new generation development in Northern California. An examination of historical Congestion costs and studies undertaken by the CA ISO show that 1) between September 1, 1999 and December 31, 2000, Congestion on Path 15 cost California electricity consumers up to \$221.7 million; and 2) using reasonable assumptions, the \$300 million cost of upgrading Path 15 could potentially be recovered in within one drought year, plus three normal years. Further, upgrading Path 15 is consistent with a broader strategy to put into place a robust high-voltage transmission system that supports cost-effective and reliable electric service in California and a broader and deeper regional electricity market.

A.2.2.2 Reliability Concerns

Over the past few years, Path 15 overloads have occurred more often and have resulted in significant events in the operation of the CAISO system. The CAISO reported 227 instances of Path 15 overloads in the south to north direction between January 1998 and January 2001. Of these, 51 overloads exceeded 10 minutes in duration. More importantly, on January 17 and 18, 2001, it was necessary for the CAISO to exercise 500 MW and 1,000 MW, respectively, of rotating blackouts in Northern California in order to relieve overloading on the path. In addition, there have been a number of Stage 2 emergencies during which non-firm load was interrupted in Northern California as a result of a need to unload Path 15.

The need for the load dropping during January of 2001 resulted from the simultaneous occurrence of two problems:

- The lack of water in the Pacific Northwest resulted in a reduction in the amount of energy (from hydroelectric generation) delivered into the Northern California area.
- The reduction in hydroelectric power came at the same time as an unusually large number of generating units in Northern California were out of service (it is not clear if the unavailability of any of these units was a result of withholding or if all of the units were in fact unavailable for service due to physical constraints).

The probability of these factors reoccurring concurrently is mainly a function of (a) the levels of new generation that has been and will be constructed in Northern California, and (b) the ability of the CAISO (and FERC) to institute ongoing procedures that will eliminate future withholding of generation. The reliability issues associated with Path 15 may be resolved through the construction of additional transmission capacity, as is proposed, as well as the construction of new generation north of Path 15. To the extent that new generation is installed and flawed market operations are corrected, the problems associated with Path 15 could revert to a relatively small number of hours during off-peak periods, as was the case before mid-2000. The trade off between new generation and new transmission must be judged based on a balanced approach considering overall system needs. Upgrading Path 15's transfer capability will allow for increased flexibility in generation dispatch, improved operating economics between Northern and Southern California as well as increased reliability of this key path. The magnitude of the economic benefits associated with the Path 15 upgrade needs to be carefully weighed in reaching an overall decision regarding the need for this project.

A.3 AGENCY USE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Pursuant to Article XII of the Constitution of the State of California, the CPUC is charged with the regulation of investor-owned public utilities, including PG&E. The CPUC is the "lead" State agency for CEQA compliance in evaluation of the CPCN for PG&E's proposed Los Banos-Gates 500 kV Transmission Project, and has overseen the preparation of this Supplemental EIR. This Supplemental EIR will be used by the CPUC, in conjunction with the existing EIS/EIR and other information developed in the CPUC's formal record, to act on PG&E's application for a CPCN for construction and operation of the Proposed Project. Under CEQA requirements, the CPUC will determine the adequacy of the Final Supplemental EIR and, if adequate, will certify the document as complying with CEQA.

Several other "responsible" state agencies will rely on information in this SEIR to inform them in their decision over issuance of specific permits related to project construction or operation. In addition to the CPUC, it is expected that state agencies such as the Department of Transportation, Department of Fish and Game, Regional Water Quality Control Board and Office of Historic Preservation may be involved in reviewing and/or approving the Proposed Project. On the Federal level, agencies with potential reviewing and/or permitting authority include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. No local discretionary (e.g., use) permits are required, since the CPUC has preemptive jurisdiction over the construction, maintenance and operation of PG&E facilities in California. PG&E would still have to obtain all ministerial building and encroachment permits from local jurisdictions, and the CPUC's General Order

131-D requires PG&E to comply with local building, design and safety standards to the greatest degree feasible so as to minimize project conflicts with local conditions. The CPUC’s authority does not preempt special districts, such as the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District, other state agencies or the federal government.

Table A.3-1 lists the Federal, State, and local permits and authorization that may be required for the Proposed Project.

Table A.3-1 Permits Required

Agency	Permits	Jurisdiction/Purpose
FEDERAL AGENCIES		
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	Right-of-Way Grant	Easements on BLM lands
Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)	License or Easement	Easements on BOR lands
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Permit	Dredge/fill within federal waters/wetlands
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Section 7 Consultation (through Bureau of Land Management's permit process)	Threatened and Endangered Species Biological Opinion
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	Section 106 of the NHPA Review (through Bureau of Land Management's permit process)	Cultural Resource Management Plan (if appropriate)
Federal Aviation Administration	Construction/Alteration	Objects affecting navigable airspace proposal
Secretary of Interior/Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	Designation, Survey, Determination of Effect	Characterization of properties that qualify to meet National Register criteria
STATE AGENCIES		
California Public Utilities Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity • Compliance with General Order 131-D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit to construct and operate the transmission line • Compliance with safety requirements
California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG)	Endangered Species Consultation (through CEQA review process) and Streambed Alteration Agreement	Alter the bed, channel, or bank of any stream
Department of Transportation (CALTRANS)	Utility Encroachment Permit	Encroachment of any state transportation facility
State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO)	Cultural Resource Clearance	Investigation in project location including access roads
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	Satisfy Waste Discharge Requirements and section 401 Water Quality Certification (or waiver thereof)	Waste discharge in a diffused manner (i.e., erosion and effects on groundwater quality) and certification that the project is consistent with state water quality standards
San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District (SJVUAPCD)	Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate	Air emission reduction and monitoring
LOCAL AGENCIES		
Merced County	Land Leveling Permit	Grading of new roads during construction
Merced County	Encroachment Permit	Construction work occurring within a county right-of-way
Merced County	Transportation Permit	Construction vehicles with oversized loads
Fresno County	Grading Permit	Grading on private property Fresno County Grading Ordinance Section 7001
Fresno County	Transportation Permit	Construction vehicles with oversized loads

A.4 READER'S GUIDE TO THIS SEIR

A.4.1 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

This Supplemental EIR relies on the 1986/1988 Draft and Final EIS/EIR, which is supplemented by this document. A copy of this SEIR is available for public review during normal business hours at the CPUC's Central Files (505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco) and in libraries in the project area (see list in Section F).

A.4.2 ORGANIZATION OF THIS EIR

This EIR is organized as follows:

Executive Summary: A summary description of the Proposed Project, the alternatives, their respective environmental impacts and the Environmentally Superior Alternative. The Executive Summary also summarizes project need and public involvement.

Impact Summary Tables: A tabulation of the impacts and mitigation measures for the Proposed Project and alternatives.

Part A (Introduction/Overview): A discussion of the history, briefly describing the proposed Los Banos-Gates Transmission Project, purpose and need for the project, and outlining the public agency use of the EIR.

Part B (Description of Proposed Project and Alternatives): Detailed descriptions of the proposed Los Banos-Gates 500 kV Transmission Project, the alternatives evaluation process, description of alternatives considered but eliminated from further analysis and the rationale therefore, and description of the No Project Alternative.

Part C (Environmental Analysis): An introduction describes the general approach to impact analysis and the CPUC's approach to mitigation monitoring. This is followed by 11 separate issue area analyses, A comprehensive analysis and assessment of impacts and mitigation measures for the Proposed Project and alternatives, including the No Project Alternative. This Part is divided into main sections for each environmental issue area (e.g., Air Quality, Biological Resources, Geology and Soils) that contain the environmental settings and impacts of the Proposed Project and each alternative. At the end of each issue area analysis, a Mitigation Monitoring Plan is provided for the specific mitigation measures presented therein.

Part D (Other CEQA Considerations): A discussion of growth-inducing impacts, irreversible environmental changes, and cumulative impacts.

Part E (Comparison of Alternatives): Based on the impact analysis contained in Section C, this section presents a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of the Proposed Project and alternatives. The CEQA Environmentally Superior Alternative is identified in this section.

Part F (Public Involvement): A brief description of the public participation program for this SEIR.

Appendix 1: List of Preparers

Appendix 2: Glossary and Acronyms

Appendix 3: Distribution of SEIR

Appendix 4: Air Quality Data

Appendix 5: Biological Resources

Appendix 6: Cultural Resources