

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION HOBART SUBSTATION

FINAL MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION



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**Sierra Pacific Power Company (SPPCo.'s) Application
No. 03-12-023, Hobart Substation Rebuild Project**

INTRODUCTION

On December 19, 2003, Sierra Pacific filed Application No. 03-12-023 pursuant to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Order No. 131-D requesting authority for a Permit to Construct and Operate the Hobart Substation Rebuild Project. Sierra Pacific is requesting authority to expand, upgrade, and replace the existing Hobart Substation with newer and more reliable electrical equipment in order to provide standard three-phase electrical service to an existing customer in the Hobart Mills area. Under the Commission's General Order 131-D, approval of this project must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act.

Pursuant to CEQA, the CPUC must prepare an "Initial Study" for discretionary projects such as the proposed project to determine whether the project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment. If an Initial Study prepared for a project indicates that such an impact could occur, the CPUC would be required to prepare and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). If the Initial Study does not reveal substantial evidence of such an effect, or if the potential effect can be reduced to a level of insignificance through project revisions, a Negative Declaration can be adopted (Section 21080; CEQA Public Resources Code).

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is the third type of document that could be prepared based on an Initial Study. The statute provides that MNDs are used "when the initial study has identified potentially significant effects on the environment, but (1) revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by, the applicant before the proposed negative declaration and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where no significant effect on the environment would occur, and (2) there is no substantial evidence in light of the whole record before the public agency that the project, as revised, may have a significant effect on the environment" (Section 21064.5; CEQA Public Resources Code).

Based on the assessment of the Draft MND/Initial Study (MND/IS) prepared for the Hobart Substation Rebuild Project, this Final MND has been prepared. This document, along with the Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan contained in Section B, constitute the Final MND.

PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, a good faith effort was made during the preparation of the IS/MND to contact affected agencies, organizations and persons who may have an interest in this project. The distribution list was provided in APPENDIX D of the Draft IS/MND.

In accordance with Section 15105(b) of the CEQA guidelines, this document was circulated to the public during the month of July for review and comment. The 30-day comment period extended from July 6 through August 5, 2004. No public or agency comments were received during the comment period.

FINAL MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The existing Hobart Substation was built in the early 1960s and currently serves approximately 40 customers in the Hobart Mills area. The purpose of the Proposed Project would be to upgrade the existing substation with modern electrical equipment and provide standard three-phase electrical service to an existing customer in the Hobart Mills area. The installation of new electrical equipment would reconfigure the substation from two-phase to three-phase service and increase overall substation capacity from 666 kilovolt amperes (kVA) to 5,000 kVA. In addition, the existing 12.5 kilovolt (kV) distribution line would increase in voltage to 14.4 kV.

The Proposed Project would also include the installation of an eight-foot chain link fence around the substation area, an earthen clay berm within the fenced area to contain any potential spills that may occur as a result of equipment failure, installation of concrete footings for the new electrical equipment, and the placement of gravel within the fenced area. Finally, the substation access road would be widened, regraded, and graveled to provide for improved safety and all-weather access.

PURPOSE AND NEED

An existing customer in the Hobart Mills area has requested approximately 500 to 1000 kVA of service, a portion of which must be three-phase load. The substation's existing transformers and regulators are inadequate to meet these requirements. The project does not propose to extend services from the substation to any new users, but instead will enable the substation to deliver the amount of load required by an existing customer for existing and future uses conditionally approved by Nevada County. However, service to existing customers utilizing the distribution line in the Hobart Mills area will also be improved as a result of the proposed project. The customer currently operates a rock crushing facility, but has received a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) that allows reestablishment of topsoil processing operations and construction and operation of a proposed concrete batch plant. Nevada County approved the CUP in 2001 with an expiration date of July 2004. No plans have been submitted to the County for approval, but the CUP was extended through July 2006. Nevada County approved a Mitigated Negative Declaration when it issued the CUP, which incorporated mitigation measures that would reduce the impact of the proposed construction and expanded operations to less than significant. A copy of the Nevada County CUP incorporating mitigations for the expansion and increased operations is available in Appendix B of the Draft IS/MND. Existing equipment at the substation consists of two single-phase 333 kVA 60/12.5 kV transformers, connected in an open wye configuration on the 12.5 kV side, resulting in a total capacity of 666 kVA. The existing voltage regulators are rated at 50 amperes and can regulate a maximum of 720 kVA. This type of distribution system is not capable of providing service to three-phase loads.

Sierra Pacific Power has proposed rebuilding the existing substation with a larger transformer and new voltage regulators. The estimated cost of the project is approximately \$200,000. A new substation capacity of 5,000 kVA, three-phase, would be obtained via the proposed substation improvements and would allow Sierra Pacific Power to:

- (1) Meet the new service requirements of its customers.
- (2) Accommodate future load growth within the area served from this substation; and
- (3) Make use of standard equipment, especially the transformer, which can be supplied and "backed up" by spare transformers within the system.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The Initial Study was prepared to identify the potential effects on the environment from the construction and operation of the proposed project and to evaluate the significance of these effects. The Initial Study was based on information presented in Sierra Pacific's PEA filed on December 19, 2003, site inspections by the CPUC environmental team, and other environmental analyses of the project. Within the PEA, measures addressing potentially significant impacts were proposed by the Applicant (Applicant Proposed Measures), and have been incorporated into the project description. Additional Mitigation Measures are recommended as a result of the Initial Study's analysis, and Sierra Pacific has agreed to implement these measures as well. Where Applicant Proposed Measures and Mitigation Measures are similar in intent, the more stringent measure is to be implemented.

Based on the results of the Initial Study/Checklist and Discussion (see Section 4 of the IS/MND), the CPUC finds that the Hobart Substation Rebuild project would be mitigable to less than significant effects and would not have a significant adverse effect on the environment. While potentially significant effects have been identified, mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project to ensure that these effects remain at less than significant levels. Although the Hobart Substation Rebuild project may allow an existing electric customer to expand its operations, Nevada County issued a CUP and MND for the proposed expansion, incorporating mitigations to reduce the impacts to less than significant. The CUP incorporating mitigation measures for the proposed expansion is available at Appendix B of the Draft IS/MND. Implementation of the mitigation measures proposed in this document and those conditioned in the Nevada County CUP would avoid all potential impacts or reduce them to less than significant levels.

Paul Clanton

8-23-04

Kevin Coughlan, Program Manager
Energy Division, California Public Utilities Commission

Date

by Paul Clanton
Director, Energy Division

MITIGATION IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PLAN

MITIGATION IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PLAN

Sierra Pacific Power Company (SPPCo.) is requesting authority to expand, upgrade, and replace the existing Hobart substation with newer and more reliable electrical equipment in order to provide standard three-phase electrical service to an existing customer in the Hobart Mills area. Under the Commission's General Order 131-D, approval of this project must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act. The installation of new electrical equipment would reconfigure the substation from two-phase to three-phase service and increase overall substation capacity from 666 kilovolt amperes (kVA) to 5,000 kVA. In addition, the existing 12.5 kilovolt (kV) distribution line would increase in voltage to 14.4 kV.

An Initial Study was prepared to assess the potential effects on the environment from various components of the proposed project. The Initial Study was prepared based on information in the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA), a project site visit, and supplemental research. The majority of the proposed project's impacts would occur during project construction, as a result of disturbance caused by construction activity. Within SPPCo.'s Application, Applicant Proposed Measures addressing potentially significant impacts were proposed to reduce potentially adverse impacts related to project construction.

The purpose of this Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan is to ensure that the Applicant Proposed Measures, as well as the Agency Recommended Mitigation Measures that SPPCo. has agreed to, are adequately implemented. This plan includes specific action to be taken to implement each measure, information on monitoring requirements, and the timing of implementation. This plan includes:

- The Agency Recommended Mitigation Measures, which SPPCo must implement as part of the proposed project, followed by the Applicant Proposed Measures that SPPCo has made part of the proposed project and is responsible for implementing;
- The actions required to implement these measures;
- Monitoring requirements; and
- Timing of implementation for each measure.

Construction field monitoring shall be carried out by a CPUC -designated environmental monitor to ensure that the mitigation measures are implemented. In all instances where non-compliance occurs, the CPUC's designated environmental monitor shall issue a warning to the construction foreman and SPPCo's project manager. Continued non-compliance shall be reported to the CPUC's designated project manager. Any decisions to halt work due to non-compliance shall be made by the CPUC. The CPUC's designated environmental monitor shall keep a record of any incidents of non-compliance with mitigation measures. Copies of these documents shall be supplied to SPPCo and the CPUC.

MITIGATION IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PLAN

MITIGATION MONITORING TABLE

Impact	Mitigation Measure	Enforcement / Monitoring	Timing / Implementation
Agency Recommended Measures			
<i>Air Quality</i>			
<p>Construction activities such as excavation and grading operations, construction vehicle traffic and wind blowing over exposed earth would generate exhaust emissions and fugitive particulate matter emissions that would affect local and regional air quality.</p>	<p>MM AQ-1: Place dust control mitigation requirements in all construction contracts. All construction contracts will require the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All construction activities shall be subject to the requirements of the Northern Sierra AQMD’s Regulation 2, Rule 226 regarding dust control. • Alternatives to open burning of vegetative material on the project site shall be used unless deemed infeasible by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District. Suitable alternatives are chipping, mulching, or conversion to biomass fuel. • Contractors shall be responsible for ensuring that adequate dust control measures are implemented in a timely manner during all phases of project development and construction. • All material excavated, stockpiled, or graded shall be sufficiently watered, treated, or covered to prevent fugitive dust from leaving the property boundaries and causing a public nuisance or violation of an ambient air standard. Watering should occur at least twice daily, with complete site coverage. • All areas (including unpaved roads) with vehicle traffic shall be watered or have a dust palliative applied as necessary for stabilization of dust emissions. 	<p>Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District, California Public Utilities Commission</p>	<p>As a condition of project approval, and implemented during site disturbance activities.</p>

MITIGATION IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PLAN

Impact	Mitigation Measure	Enforcement / Monitoring	Timing / Implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All on-site vehicle traffic shall be limited to a speed of 15 mph on unpaved roads. • All land clearing, grading, earth moving or excavation activities shall be suspended as necessary to prevent excessive windblown dust when winds are expected to exceed 20 mph. • All material transported off-site shall be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent public nuisance. • Re-establish ground cover on the site through seeding and watering in accordance with the local grading ordinance. • Properly maintain all mobile and stationary equipment. 		
Cultural Resources			
Archaeological investigations for the project did not identify any unique archaeological resources. There is a possibility, however, of unanticipated and accidental archaeological discoveries during ground-disturbing project-related activities. Any unanticipated and accidental archaeological discoveries during project implementation have the potential to affect unique archaeological resources. This is considered a potentially significant impact unless mitigated.	MM CR-1: If any prehistoric or historic artifacts, or other indications of archaeological resources are found once project construction is underway, all work in the immediate vicinity must stop and the County shall be immediately notified. An archaeologist meeting the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in prehistoric or historical archaeology, as appropriate, shall be retained to evaluate the finds and recommend appropriate mitigation measures for the inadvertently discovered cultural resources.	Nevada County Planning Department, California Public Utilities Commission.	As a condition of project approval, and implemented during site disturbance activities.
A pedestrian surface survey of the project APE and other research did not identify any evidence of paleontological resources. However, there is a possibility of unanticipated and accidental paleontological discoveries during ground-	MM CR-2: If any paleontological resources (i.e., fossils) are found once project construction is underway, all work in the immediate vicinity must stop and the County shall be immediately notified. A qualified paleontologist shall be retained to	Nevada County Planning Department, California Public Utilities Commission.	As a condition of project approval, and implemented during site disturbance activities.

MITIGATION IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PLAN

Impact	Mitigation Measure	Enforcement / Monitoring	Timing / Implementation
disturbing project-related activities. Unanticipated and accidental paleontological discoveries during project implementation have the potential to affect significant paleontological resources. Implementation of the Proposed Project could result in potential damage or destruction of undiscovered paleontological resources. This is considered a potentially significant impact unless mitigated.	evaluate the finds and recommend appropriate mitigation measures for the inadvertently discovered paleontological resources.		
Archaeological investigations for the project did not identify any human remains or evidence to suggest that human remains may be present within the project APE. There is a possibility, however, of the unanticipated and accidental discovery of human remains during ground-disturbing project-related activities. This is considered a potentially significant impact unless mitigated.	MM CR-3: If human remains are discovered, all work must stop in the immediate vicinity of the find, and the County Coroner must be notified, according to Section 7050.5 of California's Health and Safety Code. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, and the procedures outlined in Section 15064.5(d) and (e) shall be followed.	Nevada County Planning Department, California Public Utilities Commission.	As a condition of project approval, and implemented during site disturbance activities.
Hydrology and Water Quality			
The construction of the project would require grading and compacting of the substation footprint. In addition, the existing bladed access road would be widened to 12 feet and surfaced with gravel. The entire substation would be covered by gravel and oil containment would be provided in the form of clay berms. The clay berms would be compacted to 90% percent in order to contain oil and facilitate clean-up in the event of a leak or spill. Foundations would be poured for new transformers, electrical equipment, and to secure fence posts. Following these activities, new oil filled electrical equipment would be installed and the current oil-filled substation equipment would be removed.	MM WQ-1: SPPCo. shall implement the Spill Prevention and Recovery Program as approved by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Permit 6T-003-004-30, see Appendix C) Elements of the plan limit the storage of hazardous materials, fuels and oils and fueling station for construction materials to no closer than 200 feet of any water feature. On site vehicles shall be monitored for leaks and all leaks shall be cleaned up in accordance to existing laws. Other elements of the plan include secondary containment for bulk storage units in excess of 55 gallons, and placement of 2 Spill Kits on site at all times for immediate containment and cleanup.	Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Public Utilities Commission.	As a condition of project approval, and implemented during construction activities.

MITIGATION IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PLAN

Impact	Mitigation Measure	Enforcement / Monitoring	Timing / Implementation
<p>The oil used in the equipment is a non-toxic mineral oil.</p> <p>Stormwater pollutants may be present during various times during construction, including concrete waste, curing compounds, wastewater from construction vehicle washing, water from dewatering activities, hydraulic oil/fluids, gasoline, diesel, antifreeze and coolants, erosion related sedimentation, PCB- contaminated dielectric fluid, and non PCB- contaminated dielectric fluid. Release of these pollutants into the existing offsite waterways could result in a significant impact to water quality.</p>			
<p>The construction of the project would require grading and compacting of the substation footprint. In addition, the existing bladed access road would be widened to 12 feet and surfaced with gravel. The entire substation would be covered by gravel and oil containment would be provided in the form of clay berms. Since little impervious coverage would result from the project, the surface runoff rate will remain virtually unchanged and stormwaters would be retained and percolated on site</p> <p>Sedimentation of receiving waters could occur during grading and construction. Storm events could result in erosion and sedimentation of receiving water bodies. This impact is potentially significant</p>	<p>Implementation of the Spill Prevention and Recovery Program as noted in MM WQ-1 above would reduce construction related water quality effects to a less than significant level.</p>	<p>Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Public Utilities Commission.</p>	<p>As a condition of project approval, and implemented during site disturbance activities.</p>

MITIGATION IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PLAN

Impact	Mitigation Measure	Enforcement / Monitoring	Timing / Implementation
Applicant Recommended Measures			
<i>Hazards and Hazardous Materials</i>			
Construction activities could increase the potential for wildfire hazards in the project area.	<i>Fire Prevention Measures:</i> As part of best management practices, the areas in which construction occurs shall be cleared of vegetation prior to construction activity. All construction areas shall be equipped with adequate fire suppression devices such as extinguishers and shovels, and all equipment shall be maintained to prevent accidental sparks. Construction safety precautions shall be listed and included in contract specifications. Trees and vegetation within the project area shall be removed the area shall be kept clear during regular operation of the facility to reduce the possibility of fire hazards. A 30-foot area around the substation shall also be kept clear in accordance with substation safety regulations.	Nevada County Planning Department, California Public Utilities Commission	As a condition of project approval, and implemented during site disturbance activities
<i>Cultural Resources</i>			
Construction activities could impact unknown cultural resources in the project area.	<i>Discovery of Buried Cultural Resources:</i> In the unlikely event that buried cultural resources are discovered during the course of project activities, construction operations shall immediately stop within 200 feet of the find and the Applicant shall consult with the appropriate local, state, or federal entities and a qualified archaeologist to determine whether the resource requires further study. Cultural resources could consist of, but not be limited to, artifacts of stone, bone, wood, shell, or other materials, or features, including hearths, structural remains, or dumps. <i>Discovery of Human Burials:</i> If human burials are encountered, all work in the area will stop	Nevada County Planning Department, California Public Utilities Commission	As a condition of project approval, and implemented during site disturbance activities

MITIGATION IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PLAN

Impact	Mitigation Measure	Enforcement / Monitoring	Timing / Implementation
	<p>immediately and the Nevada County Coroner's office shall be notified within 48 hours. If the remains are determined to be Native American in origin, both the Native American Heritage Commission and any identified descendants must be notified by the coroner and recommendations for treatment solicited (CEQA Section 15064.5; Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5; Public Resources Code Section 5097.94 and 5097.98).</p>		