

3.0 PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

3.0 PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

The CPUC finds that the Hobart Substation Rebuild project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment based on the results of the Initial Study/Checklist and Discussion (see Section 4). 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. An MND for the Hobart Substation Rebuild is therefore proposed to satisfy the requirements of CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, Sections 210000 et. seq. and Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, Sections 15000 et. seq.). The following supports this conclusion:

Aesthetics: There are no designated scenic vistas near the proposed site and it is not within view of a state designated scenic highway. The project would replace an existing substation with a new, modified substation. The substation would be larger but would retain similar visual qualities to the existing site. The graveled substation area within the chain-link fence would be approximately five times as large as the existing substation footprint. There are no long-term visual impacts associated with the project. See *Section 4.1, Aesthetics*, for further discussion.

Agricultural Resources: The project site is not located on prime or unique/important farmland, is not located within an agricultural preserve, and will not result in the conversion of farmland. Therefore, the project would not affect agricultural resources. See *Section 4.2, Agricultural Resources*, for further discussion.

Air Quality: Project operation will not generate air emissions. However, because eastern Nevada County is classified "Non-Attainment" for PM₁₀, fugitive dust and construction emissions would exceed identified significance thresholds and would therefore be considered potentially significant. Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project to reduce short-term construction effects associated with exhaust emissions and fugitive dust as required by the Northern Sierra AQMD. See *Section 4.3, Air Quality*, for further discussion.

Biological Resources: The Proposed Project would remove three softwood trees and clear a 4,500 square foot area consisting of mainly Mountain sagebrush and bitterbrush. The trees were evaluated for the presence of nesting raptors and do not support nests. While Mountain sagebrush and bitterbrush are among the main foraging plants for the *Loyalton-Truckee Deer Herd* that seasonally migrate in the area, larger stands of bitterbrush, mahala mat, sagebrush and greenleaf manzanita are found in a nearby seasonal drainage approximately 100 meters (328 feet) south of the site. The drainage also serves as a minor migration corridor for the mule deer. No wildlife species are expected to be displaced as a result of the project. In addition, the project area does not appear to support special status plant or wildlife species or the specific micro-habitat to support such species. See *Section 4.4, Biological Resources*, for further discussion.

Cultural Resources: Archaeological investigations (i.e., a records search and pedestrian surface survey) for the proposed Hobart Substation Expansion Project did not identify any cultural resources (e.g., prehistoric sites, historic sites, or isolated artifacts) within the project Area of Potential Effects (APE). Nearly the entire project APE is previously disturbed by construction of the existing substation and access roads in the area. Regardless, it is always possible to inadvertently uncover cultural resources during ground disturbing project activity. Therefore, if any cultural resources or human remains are uncovered during ground disturbing project activity

3.0 PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

all activity will cease in proximity to the discovery and a qualified archaeologist will be retained to determine the significance of the discovery and/or the County Coroner will be contacted. See *Section 4.5, Cultural Resources*, for further discussion.

Geology and Soils: No geologic hazards would occur with project implementation. See *Section 4.6, Geology and Soils*, for further discussion.

Hazards: The Proposed Project is not anticipated to generate hazardous materials; therefore, no significant impacts due to public hazards would occur. See *Section 4.7, Hazards*, for further discussion.

Hydrology and Water Quality: Measures are incorporated into the project that would reduce project effects associated with potential discharge of sediments and runoff to less than significant. See *Section 4.8, Hydrology and Water Quality*, for further discussion.

Land Use: The Nevada County Planning Commission has approved the Hobart Substation Conditional Use Permit and found the project to be consistent with the applicable site development standards contained in the Development Code. The Board of Supervisors has made a recommendation that the State Board of Forestry approve the immediate rezone from TPZ to Public. Due to the small project footprint, remote location, surrounding vegetation, and lack of onsite timber production, the project is considered consistent with the Nevada County General Plan and Development Code. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant impact to existing and planned land use. Additionally, measures have been incorporated into the project design to reduce visual impacts to a less than significant level. See *Section 4.9, Land Use*, for further discussion.

Mineral Resources: The Proposed Project would not require long-term natural resource use. See *Section 4.10, Mineral Resources*, for further discussion of environmental impacts.

Noise: Impacts resulting from both construction and operation noise were determined to be less than significant as they would comply with the Nevada County Noise Ordinance. See *Section 4.11, Noise*, for further discussion.

Population and Housing: The Proposed Project would not generate additional population; therefore, the approval of the project would have a less than significant effect on human population and housing. See *Section 4.12, Population and Housing*, for further discussion.

Public Services: The Proposed Project would not generate a demand for public services; therefore, no impact to public services would occur. See *Section 4.13, Public Services*, for further discussion.

Recreation: There are no parks or other public recreational facilities on the project site. Therefore, the project would not affect recreational opportunities. See *Section 4.14, Recreation*, for further discussion.

Transportation and Traffic: The project site is located within the "rural regions" designation in the Nevada County General Plan, for which LOS "C" is designated as acceptable Old Highway 89, Dog Valley Road, Old Reno Road, and Hobart Mills Road currently operate at a LOS "A", which is characteristic of the majority of the roadways in the immediate vicinity. While temporary traffic increases would occur during the construction phase as materials and equipment are transported to the site, impacts from construction and operation of the Proposed Project would

3.0 PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

have less than significant impacts on transportation and traffic in the area. See *Section 4.15, Transportation and Circulation*, for further discussion.

Utilities and Service Systems: Operation of the Proposed Project would not result in solid waste generation. Small amounts of solid waste may be generated from construction and maintenance activities. Therefore, the Proposed Project would have less than significant impacts to utilities and service systems. See *Section 4.16, Utilities and Service Systems*, for further discussion.

Cumulative Impacts: As noted in the discussions for each environmental category above, impacts from the Proposed Project are considered to be less than significant or no impact. Measures are incorporated into the project that would reduce impacts associated with air quality, cultural resources, and hydrology and water quality to less than significant levels (see *Section 2.8*, appropriate technical sections, or *Appendix A, Mitigation Monitoring Plan*, for mitigation measures included into the Proposed Project). No long-term significant impacts are associated with the project, and no significant cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of the project.