

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 84735

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of Maybe Investments for authority to deviate from rules re mandatory undergrounding of electric lines in Maybe Subdivision.

Application No. 55684
(Filed May 9, 1975)

O P I N I O N

Maybe Investments requests permission for Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative (Plumas-Sierra) to deviate from its Rule No. 15.C.1.(b), so as to provide overhead electrical service to its 27-acre Maybe Subdivision, a development which is located approximately 3½ miles west of Portola on Highway 70 in Plumas County.

The above-mentioned rule provides that, in exceptional circumstances, when the application of the undergrounding rule appears impractical or unjust, the utility or the developer may refer the matter to the Public Utilities Commission for special ruling or for approval of mutually agreed upon special conditions prior to commencing construction.

Lots of the subdivision are approximately 2.25 acres in size with the smallest being 2.01 acres. Present zoning prohibits further subdivision and allows only one single-family dwelling per lot. An existing overhead transmission line which runs through the back of the lots is completely screened from Highway 70 by large trees. Lot 1 is 11.24 acres in size and could be further subdivided. Applicant has no plan at present to further subdivide this lot.

A complete underground system to serve the subdivision would not only be costly but would cause environmental damage because of the extensive digging required, with the possible damage to the adjacent trees. The estimated cost of underground service is \$13,000. The estimated cost of an overhead system is \$5,840.

The utility is of the opinion that the subdivision could be best served by underbuilding the distribution lines beneath the existing pole-supported transmission line and by undergrounding the extensions and services to the individual houses. This will result in the least disturbance to the local environment and will allow for a distribution system which will not be visible from adjacent Highway 70, a highway under consideration for being designated a scenic route.

Lot 1 will require new poles for the distribution system, and, in view of the considerable distance between the lot and Highway 70, there appears to be no objection to these poles. However, any further subdivision of lot 1 resulting in lots less than three acres in size should be served only with underground extensions.

There are no other utilities planned, as there will be individual wells and septic tanks for water and sewerage systems. Also, there is no natural gas service in that area.

Plumas County has no formal position with respect to the distribution facilities; however, it does support the position of the utility by recommending the underbuilt facilities underneath the existing transmission line.

Findings

1. The application of the mandatory undergrounding requirements of Rule 15.C.1.(b) of Plumas-Sierra's tariff to this subdivision is unwarranted.

2. A need exists to keep overhead distribution lines away from Highway 70 because it is under consideration for designation as a scenic highway.

3. Plumas-Sierra's proposal to underbuild the distribution system below the existing transmission line and to underground individual extensions to Lots 2 through 8 is fair and reasonable.

4. Lot 1 should be served overhead; however, this service should be conditioned on no future subdivision of that lot into parcels less than the three acres.

5. Plumas-Sierra should be authorized to deviate from the mandatory undergrounding requirements of its Rule 15.C.1.(b) to provide overhead electric service to the Maybe Subdivision.

6. With reasonable certainty, the overhead line extensions involved in this proceeding will not have a significant effect on the environment.

7. A public hearing is not required.

We conclude that the application should be granted as provided in the order which follows.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative is authorized to deviate from the mandatory undergrounding requirement of its electric line extension Rule 15.C.1.(b) of its tariff in providing electric service to the 27-acre Maybe Subdivision.

2. Service to Lots 2 through 8 shall be extended by underbuilding the distribution facilities below the existing transmission line and by underground extensions to the individual lots.

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3. Service to Lot 1 shall be extended overhead on condition that no future subdivisions of Lot 1 to parcels less than three acres in size shall be made.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 5th day of AUGUST, 1975.

President
William J. ...
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...
Commissioners

Commissioner D. W. Holmes, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.