

Decision No. 84830

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of Steenland Company, Inc.,  
for authority to deviate from rules re  
mandatory undergrounding of electric and  
telephone lines in Big Springs Ranchos  
No. 3 Residential Subdivision.

Application No. 55692  
(Filed May 15, 1975)

O P I N I O N

Steenland Co., Inc., requests permission for Pacific Power & Light Company (PP&L) to deviate from its Rule No. 15.1, and for Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company (PT&T) to deviate from its Rule No. 15.1, so as to provide overhead electrical and telephone service to its 160-acre Big Springs Ranchos, Unit No. 3, Subdivision, a development which is located near Granada in Siskiyou County.

The above-mentioned rules provide that, in exceptional circumstances, when the application of the undergrounding rules 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.

The majority of the 49 lots of said subdivision are 2.50 acres or larger in size and the smallest lot is 1.28 acres. Present regulations prohibit further subdivision and allow only one single-family dwelling per lot. Two adjacent subdivisions are being served with overhead utility extensions, and there are no scenic highways, either designated or proposed, in the area.

A substantial portion of the development is covered with lava cap outcrops; therefore, an underground system to serve the lots would require extensive blasting. The local water agency, the Big Springs Irrigation District, objects to any blasting, alleging that blasting would cause damage to their ditches and other hydraulic structures in the area.

The electric utility (PP&L) is of the opinion that, in view of the extensive blasting, if any allowed, the underground system would be unreasonably expensive. Siskiyou County's Board of Supervisors has passed a resolution stating that they do not object to the installation of the overhead distribution system in the development.

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.

Findings

1. The application of the mandatory undergrounding requirements of Rule 15.1 of both PP&L and PT&T to this subdivision is unwarranted.
2. Significant numbers of overhead lines exist in areas adjacent to the subdivision.
3. An underground distribution system would require blasting at a prohibitive cost.
4. Blasting is not allowed in the area because of a concern for the facilities of Big Springs Irrigation District, the local water agency.
5. PP&L and PT&T should be authorized to deviate from the mandatory undergrounding requirement of their Rule 15.1, so as to provide overhead electric and telephone service to the Big Springs Ranchos, Unit No. 3, 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

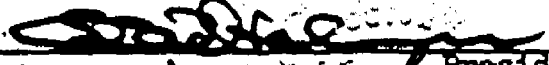
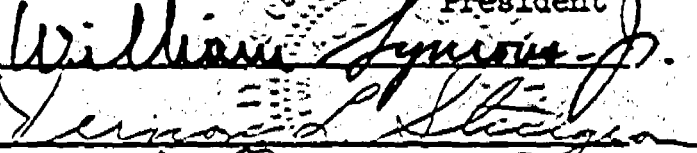
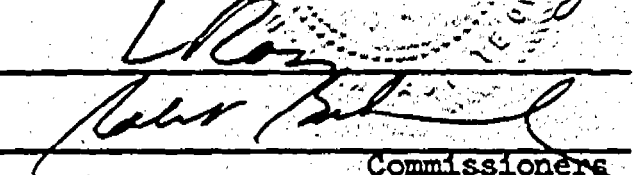
IT IS ORDERED that:

1. PP&L is authorized to deviate from the mandatory undergrounding requirement of its electric line extension (Rule 15.1) of its tariff in providing electric service to the Big Springs Ranchos, Unit No. 3, Subdivision.

2. PT&T is authorized to deviate from the mandatory undergrounding requirement of its telephone line extension (Rule 15.1) of its tariff in providing telephone service to the Big Springs Ranchos, Unit No. 3, Subdivision.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 26th day of AUGUST, 1975.

  
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President  
  
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Commissioners