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**ORIGINAL**

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of PacifiCorp, dba )  
 Pacific Power & Light Company, for )  
 exemption from Rule 91.3-A of )  
 General Order No. 95, use of pole )  
 steps. )

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Application 87-10-035  
(Filed October 28, 1987)

OPINION

Summary

This ex parte order finds that the request of PacifiCorp, doing business as Pacific Power & Light Company (PP&L), for exemption from the requirements of Rule 91.3-A of General Order (GO) 95 for installing pole steps, except where they are expressly requested by a communication utility or other joint user, is reasonable. All telephone and cable television companies doing business in PP&L's service territory were contacted by letter requesting comments on the application. Only one response was received, indicating no objection to the request. No party requested hearings. PP&L's request is granted.

Filing

Applicant PP&L requests Commission authorization for exemption from Rule 91.3-A of GO 95, which requires that pole steps be installed on poles used for overhead electric service, that have vertical runs or risers attached to the surface of the poles. PP&L requests authority to not install pole steps unless expressly requested by a communication utility or other joint user of its poles. In the application PP&L states that it believes the pole step requirement to be a costly and generally unnecessary burden, since access to communication terminals and cables now is usually either by ladder or bucket-equipped trucks. PP&L further states that newer terminals are located on the ground near the base of the

pole, and most switching is now done at the central office rather than at the pole.

In addition, PP&L alleges a number of disadvantages to the existence or use of pole steps.

- The pole steps are not safe in many instances due to corrosion, especially in coastal areas subject to salt air.
- Rusted pole steps accelerate the decay of poles as they allow more moisture to enter the pole.
- Linemen generally prefer to not rely on pole steps, rather will use climbers when ascending poles.
- Pole steps are a hazard if a lineman should fall on them.
- Pole steps contribute to the hazards of unauthorized climbing of poles by the public.

Commission Advisory and Compliance Division (CACD) Review

The application was reviewed by the Service and Safety Branch of the CACD. Russell Copeland, Chief of the Service and Safety Branch, sent a letter with a copy of PP&L's application to all telephone and cable television operators in PP&L's California service territory requesting comments on the application. Only one reply was received, from Citizens Utilities Company of California, which did not object to PP&L's application.

Discussion

Since the Commission received no objections to the application and no requests for hearing, this matter is being handled ex parte.

The request by PP&L is to eliminate the need to install pole steps that may never be used, that may require additional maintenance, that may corrode and become a safety hazard, and that may shorten pole life in some instances. We note that only one

PP&L's request. This appears to support PP&L's contention that joint pole users prefer to use means other than pole steps, such as ladders, bucket-equipped trucks, or climbers when ascending poles.

In those instances where pole steps are not desired by any joint user, exemption from Rule 91.3 of GO 95 will reduce PP&L's construction and maintenance costs. Any joint user who desires pole steps may retain that requirement by so requesting from PP&L.

We conclude that pole steps are not generally necessary except in those instances where requested by joint users.

The request by PP&L is reasonable and fulfills the need of joint users who request pole steps.

We will approve the application as filed.

#### Findings of Fact

1. Rule 91.3 of GO 95 requires pole steps to be provided, with certain exceptions, if vertical runs or risers are attached to the surface of poles used for overhead electric service.

2. PP&L requests exemption from the requirement for pole steps except when pole steps are expressly requested by a joint user of the pole.

3. Installation of pole steps increases the initial cost of the pole, may increase maintenance costs and reduce pole life.

4. The current need to climb poles by joint users is not as great as in the past.

5. Pole steps are not as widely used for climbing poles now as in the past.

6. Only one response to CACD's letter requesting comments on the application was received, and it indicated no opposition to the request.

7. No request for hearing was received.

Conclusions of Law

1. No hearings is required in this matter, which may be handled ex parte.
2. The request by PP&L is reasonable and should be granted.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Application 87-10-035, requesting exemption for Pacific Power & Light Company (PP&L) from the provision of Rule 91.3 of General Order 95 requiring the installation of pole steps, except when expressly requested by a communication utility or other joint user, is granted.

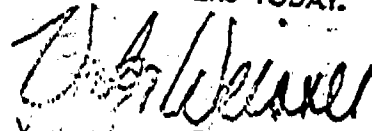
2. PP&L shall notify all communication utilities and other joint users in its service territory that in the future, pole steps will not be installed unless they expressly request them.

This order becomes effective 30 days from today.

Dated AUG 10 1988, at San Francisco, California.

STANLEY W. HULETT  
President  
DONALD VIAL  
FREDERICK R. DUDA  
G. MITCHELL WILK  
JOHN B. O'HANIAN  
Commissioners

I CERTIFY THAT THIS DECISION  
WAS APPROVED BY THE ABOVE  
COMMISSIONERS TODAY.

  
Vito Weissert, Executive Director