

Decision No. 86723

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the matter of the Application of
PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY for
a certificate of public convenience
and necessity under General Order
No. 131 for a 230-kv transmission
line tap from Applicant's Kern Power
Plant Line to Applicant's Stockdale
Substation and Addition
(Electric)

Application No. 55783
(Filed July 2, 1975)

Malcolm E. Furbush and Kermit R. Kubitz
Attorneys at Law, for Applicant
Janice E. Kerr, Attorney at Law, and
Russell W. Copeland for the Commission staff

O P I N I O N

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) seeks an order of the Commission granting it a certificate that present and future public convenience and necessity require the construction and operation of a 230 kv transmission line tap from its Kern Power Plant Line to its Stockdale Substation and substation addition.

EIR Process and Public Hearings

In compliance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Guidelines and Rule 17.1 of the California Public Utilities Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, PG&E filed with the application as a separate exhibit an Environmental Data Statement (EDS). Copies of the EDS were submitted to other state and public agencies having expertise in various environmental areas involved in the project. Where necessary the staff requested PG&E to correct or amend the EDS.

The EDS and comments thereon were independently evaluated and analyzed by the Commission staff and were incorporated into the Draft EIR.

On June 21, 1976 the staff mailed the Draft EIR along with the Notice of Completion to various state and local agencies. The Office of Planning and Research, State of California Clearinghouse, acknowledged receipt of the Draft EIR and assigned State Clearinghouse No. 76062949 to the project.

Notice to the public of completion of the Draft EIR was published in the Bakersfield Californian on June 25 and July 2, 1976.

No adverse comments were received from any agencies during the review process of the Draft EIR. Accordingly, the presiding officer determined that no substantial environmental issues were raised and that no public hearings need be held.

The Final EIR of Examiner R. C. Moeck was issued on September 8, 1976. No exceptions to the Final EIR were filed.

Project Description

The proposed project consists of two 230 kv transmission line circuits on double circuit lattice steel towers ranging in height from 110 to 150 feet with span lengths varying from 800 to 1,200 feet. Each circuit will have a summer normal capacity of 317 megavolt amperes (MVA) and will be conductored with 61 strand nonspecular aluminum conductors with a diameter of approximately 1.2 inches. The towers will be of sufficient strength to add a second conductor per phase (bundled) at some latter date which will double the capacity without structural modifications.

The proposed route is approximately 6.2 miles in length and runs south and then east from Kern Power Plant to Stockdale Substation. The route will parallel 70 kv and/or 115 kv lines in its entirety.

Modifications at Stockdale Substation will be required in the form of an expansion to convert the existing 115 kv capacity to 230/21/12 kv. Approximately three acres of additional space will be needed to accomplish this.

Alternatives to the Project

No apparent viable alternative routes exist. The right-of-way is presently owned by PG&E and is occupied by existing transmission lines of similar construction to the proposed project. Selection of another route would disrupt land use and greatly add to visual impact.

The alternative of undergrounding while minimizing the visual impact of the proposed project would be substantially more expensive than the proposed project. The possible use of tubular (aesthetic) towers in lieu of lattice-type towers would not only be visually inconsistent with the existing corridor structures but would also be more expensive.

Because the proposed project avoids the detrimental aspects of the alternatives its use is recommended.

Need for the Project

The City of Bakersfield and its environs is supplied at 12 kv from eight substations. In 1975 the summer peak load was 398 MW.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company studies indicate that the 1977 summer peak load, including adjustments for transfer, will be about 461.2 MW. This would exceed the theoretical substation loading limit of 440.8 MW by 20.4 MW. Furthermore, the City of Bakersfield and the Kern County planning staffs have indicated that the city is expected to continue expansion to the southwest, which is in the vicinity of Stockdale Substation.

The 115 kv double circuit tower lines serving Stockdale will be fully loaded with forecasted 1976 summer loads. In addition the five 230/115 kv transformer banks at Kern Power Plant will be fully loaded by summer 1976 and will be overloaded by the summer of 1977.

The proposed project is required in order to eliminate these transmission and distribution deficiencies, and to provide reliable power from Kern Power Plant to Stockdale Substation.

Environmental Matters

A comprehensive record on environmental matters has been developed in this proceeding through preparation of the Draft EIR and consultation with public agencies, all of which are elements in the EIR process culminating in the preparation and issuance of the Final EIR.

The next section of this decision includes, pursuant to Rule 17.1 of our rules, an extensive series of findings based on the Final EIR's coverage through incorporation of the Draft EIR of (a) the environmental impact of the proposed action, (b) any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the proposal is implemented, (c) mitigation measures proposed to minimize the impact including energy conservation measures, (d) alternatives to the proposed action, (e) the relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, (f) any irreversible environmental changes which would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented, (g) the growth-inducing impact of the action, and (h) plans for future development.

The Commission has carefully considered the evidence on environmental matters, as contained in the Final EIR, and makes the following Findings pursuant to Rule 17.1 (j)(3) of its Rules of Practice and Procedure.

Findings

1. The proposed project is required to meet the projected 1977 summer electrical peak demand for the Bakersfield area.

2. The proposed project will have minimum land use impacts since it is within land designated for transmission line routing on local general plans and the right-of-way has already been obtained.

3. The proposed project will have some negative impact on visual quality as seen from various streets, residences and the State College along the route, but the screening effect of the existing parallel towers will tend to minimize this impact.

4. The proposed project will have little effect on wildlife since only a small percentage of vegetation within the right-of-way will be removed by the towers. The expansion of the existing substation will also have little effect on wildlife since no clearing is anticipated because the expansion area is without vegetation cover. Access roads already are established for the existing route.

5. There will be no adverse electrostatic effects or deterioration of radio or television reception due to the installation of the proposed project.

6. There will be a minor impact on noise and air quality (construction dust) during the construction phase of the project.

7. Mitigating measures during construction of the project include use of existing roads to provide access to the project (no new construction roads are anticipated), the limiting of field offices and containment of these offices on existing rights-of-way, and the use of water trucks to keep down construction dust.

8. Energy conservation mitigating measures include sizing conductors consistent with efficient use of materials and cost, use of lowest indoor and outdoor illumination consistent with safety, use of sufficient insulation designs for control buildings, use of efficient substation equipment and the use of automated features to minimize the number of personnel required to maintain the project.

9. The visual impact of the transmission line will be mitigated by positioning the towers opposite existing towers wherever practicable. Visual impact caused by the substation expansion will be mitigated by landscaping and rustic fencing around the substation site when the expansion has been completed.

10. The impact of not constructing this project would be continuing decreases in reliability as the loads on the existing lines are increased because of the growth of electric demand in the Bakersfield area.

11. The short-term uses of man's environment consist mainly of adverse visual effects and a slight reduction in land use available for wildlife. In this case, the extent of natural vegetation and animal life displaced by new tower sites will be negligible.

12. Long-term productivity will be enhanced by supplying electric service reliability to PG&E's system in the Bakersfield area.

13. The irretrievable loss consists of energy consumed in construction of the project and possible minor loss of wildlife due to the removal of habitat during construction. After the lines have served their useful lives, towers and lines could be removed and the right-of-way would eventually return to its natural state.

14. Future population growth induced by an adequate supply of energy can only occur if other factors, such as local economic conditions, land-use changes, transportation and the policy of local governing bodies are also present and conducive to growth.

15. Future plans related to this project include installing a third 75 MVA 230/21 kv transformer at Stockdale substation, bundling the circuit and extending the line to Magunden substation.

16. In summary, the project should not, on balance, have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

- a. The new 220 kv line will be parallel and adjacent to existing transmission lines.
- b. Existing service roads will be used for construction access.
- c. Alternatives to the proposed project would cause either more visual impacts or be excessive in costs.
- d. The project will not interfere with existing use of land in proximity to its location.
- e. The steps to be taken to mitigate any deleterious consequences as described in the Final EIR are adequate.

17. In conformance with General Order No. 131-A, the construction and operation of the Kern-Stockdale 230 kv transmission line and substation addition is, (a) reasonably required to meet area demands for present and/or future reliable and economic electric service and (b) will not produce an unreasonable burden on natural resources, aesthetics of the area in which the proposed facilities are to be located, community values, public health and safety, air and water quality in the vicinity, or parks, recreational and scenic areas, or historic sites and buildings, or archaeological sites.

18. The project will help maintain reliable electric service from a system serving Bakersfield; its benefits should thus outweigh any possible minor environmental impact; its planned construction and operation is an economic, efficient, and appropriate way of meeting projected loads and maintaining reliable service.

19. Present and future public convenience and necessity require the construction and operation of this transmission line project.

Applicant is placed on notice that operative rights, as such, do not constitute a class of property which may be capitalized or used as an element of value in rate fixing for any amount of money in excess of that originally paid to the State as the consideration for the grant of such rights. Aside from their purely permissive aspect, such rights extend to the holder a full or partial monopoly of a class of business. This monopoly feature may be modified or canceled at any time by the State, which is not in any respect limited as to the number of rights which may be given.

The action taken herein is not to be considered as indicative of amounts to be included in future proceedings for the purpose of determining just and reasonable rates.

The Notice of Determination for the project is attached as Appendix A to this decision, and the Commission certifies that the Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA and the Guidelines and that it has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR.

Based on the foregoing findings, the Commission concludes that the Kern-Stockdale 230 kv transmission line and substation addition should be authorized in the manner set forth in the following order.


O R D E R

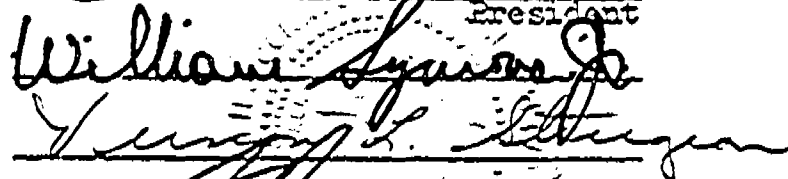
IT IS ORDERED that a certificate of public convenience and necessity is granted to Pacific Gas and Electric Company to construct and operate Kern-Stockdale 230 kv transmission line and substation addition, together with related appurtenances, as proposed by Pacific Gas and Electric Company in this proceeding.

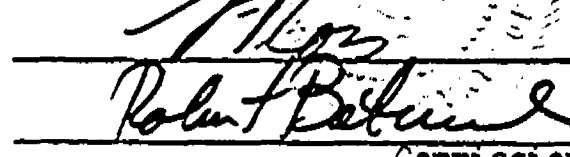
The Executive Director of the Commission is directed to file a Notice of Determination for the project, with contents as set forth in Appendix A to this decision, with the Secretary for Resources.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 7th day of DECEMBER, 1976.



President




Commissioners

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

TO: ☒ Secretary for Resources
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1311
Sacramento, California 95811

FROM: (Lead Agency)

California Public Utilities Comm.
350 McAllister Street
San Francisco, California 94102

☐ County Clerk
County of _____

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21103 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code

Project Title

Kern-Stockdale 230 kv Transmission Line and Substation Addition

State Clearinghouse Number (if submitted to State Clearinghouse)

76062949

Contact Person

R. C. Moeck

Telephone Number

(415) 557-0442

Project Location

Project Description. In the matter of the Application of PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY for a certificate of public convenience and necessity under General Order No. 131 for a 230 kv transmission line tap from Applicant's Kern Power Plant line to Applicant's Stockdale Substation and Addition. (Electric)

This is to advise that the California Public Utilities Commission
(Lead Agency)

has made the following determinations regarding the above described project:

1. The project has been ☒ approved by the Lead Agency.
☐ disapproved
2. The project ☐ will have a significant effect on the environment.
☒ will not
3. ☒ An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
- ☐ A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. A copy of the Negative Declaration is attached.

Date Received for Filing

Signature William A. Johnson

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE