

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 87743 AUG 23 1977

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 from Applicant's Kern Power
Plant facility to Applicant's
Bakersfield 230/12-kv Substation.

Application No. 56995
(Filed January 11, 1977)

(Electric)

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 will require the construction and operation by applicant of a double circuit 230 kv transmission line tap from 1/2 mile north of applicant's Kern power plant to applicant's Bakersfield 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 Commission staff requested PG&E to correct or amend the EDS.

The EDS and Comments were independently evaluated and analyzed by the Commission staff and were incorporated into the Staff Initial Study Report. On June 3, 1977, the staff mailed the Negative Declaration along with the Staff Initial Study Report to various state and local agencies.

Notice to the public of completion of the Negative Declaration was published in the Bakersfield Californian on June 8, and June 15, 1977.

No adverse comments were received from any agencies during the review process of the Negative Declaration. Accordingly, the presiding officer (Examiner) determined that no substantial environmental issues were raised and that no public hearings need to be held.

The Negative Declaration of Examiner D. B. Steger was issued on May 31, 1977. No exceptions to the Negative Declaration were filed.

Project Description

The proposed project is comprised of construction and operation of a double-circuit 230 kv transmission line in Kern County and City of Bakersfield. The proposed route is approximately 6.8 miles in length and runs east and then south from Kern Power Plant to Bakersfield substation. The new 230 kv supply to Bakersfield Substation would be provided by purchasing and reconstructing 5.5 miles of the existing Southern California Edison (SCE) 230 kv line along its present alignment from 1/2 mile north of Kern Power Plant easterly to Kern Oil Junction. Extending southerly from Kern Oil Junction, 1.3 miles of PG&E's two double circuit 70 kv transmission lines will be removed and replaced with a double circuit 230 kv line. The new line will be connected to a proposed three-bank 230 kv substation. The existing Bakersfield Substation will be reconstructed and expanded to accommodate the related appurtenances.

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The initial 5.5 mile segment of the line from 1/2 mile north of Kern Power Plant to Kern Oil Junction will be supported on 26 lattice steel towers ranging from 120 to 170 feet in height. The initial segment of the line will occupy an existing 100-foot wide right-of-way. The remaining 1.3 mile section of the line leaving Kern Oil Junction will use approximately 10 tubular steel poles which will range in height from 70 to 150 feet in height.

This section of the line leaving Kern Oil Junction will utilize an existing 140-foot wide right-of-way.

Need for the Project

The City of Bakersfield and its environs is supplied by 12 kv from 8 substations. In 1976, the summer peak load was 437.1 megawatts (MW).

Studies indicate that the projected 1980 summer peak load is 556.7 MW. This would exceed the theoretical substation loading limit of 525.5 MW by 31.2 MW.

Modification at Bakersfield Substation will be required in the form of expansion to convert Bakersfield Substation from 70 - 12 kv to 230/12 kv. Approximately 3 acres of additional land will be needed to accomplish the reconstruction of the existing Bakersfield distribution substation. Completion of the entire transmission line project including Bakersfield Substation expansion is required by June 1, 1980, to provide transmission of the output of Kern Power Plant and will contribute to the future safety, health, comfort and convenience of the public.

Alternatives to the Project

In the selection of the preferred route for the proposed transmission line, several alternatives were considered. Alternatives were considered for the alignment of the proposed route, and for the design of project facilities. In addition, the no action alternative with regard to the overall project was addressed.

A. Alternate Routes

The proposed Kern to Bakersfield Substation tap transmission line has been addressed throughout the application and the Environmental Data Statement as being sited in an existing right-of-way. The selection of an established right-of-way for location of additions to existing transmission facilities is recommended when considering the potential environmental effects of transmission systems. Alternative overhead routes were considered between Kern Power Plant and Bakersfield Substation. Such routes would require right-of-way through existing industrial and residential development causing considerable environmental disruption and degradation.

B. Overhead versus Underground ✓

The possibility of undergrounding the transmission line has been considered. The visual impact would be negligible. ✓

4. Land Use - The proposed project will have minimum land use impacts since it is within land designated for transmission line routing on local general plans. The right-of-way is presently being utilized as a transmission line corridor. The proposed project conforms with the regional and local general plans which designate land use along the proposed alignment.

5. Air Traffic - The proposed transmission line will not interfere with air traffic since the towers will not extend into the designated clear air space.

6. Cultural Resources - There will be no impact to archaeological, paleontological or historical resources as a result of the project. No historical or paleontological resources occur in the areas to be physically affected by the project.

7. Noise and Air Quality - There will be a minor impact on noise and air quality (construction dust) during the construction phase of the project.

8. Radio and Television Interference - There will be no adverse electric static effects or deterioration of radio or television reception due to the installation of the proposed project.

9. Aesthetics

a. Initial 5.5 mile segment: The proposed transmission line will replace an existing similar type of transmission structure presently owned by SCE which PG&E is purchasing. The existing SCE transmission line is visible from nearby roadways, industrial and agricultural areas. The proposed lattice towers will be an average of 50 feet higher than existing tower structures in the first section of the line. The increased height of towers will create a moderate negative visual impact to the landscape. The proposed transmission line is replacing the existing SCE transmission line which already produced a primarily negative visual impact on the landscape.

b. Final 1.3 mile segment: The proposed line will replace two Pacific Gas and Electric Company double circuit 70 kv tower lines to the terminus at the existing Bakersfield Substation. This corridor of the transmission line traverses a developed area including a hospital, golf course, residences and shopping centers. The proposed slender tubular tower line replacing the existing lattice towers will enhance the visual quality of this sensitive section of the route. It is anticipated that aesthetic improvement in this segment of the transmission line would outweigh the moderate visual impact created in the first section of the corridor.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures will include proper design of tower footings to provide erosion control, and allowing the use of right-of-way for secondary uses such as agriculture, grazing and similar activities by others.

No mitigation is necessary for construction vehicle noises since that is controlled by the California Vehicle Code, and the use of construction vehicles will be temporary.

Conclusions

1. Completion of the transmission line project will provide for transmission of the output of Kern Power Plant and will contribute to the present and future safety, health, comfort and convenience of the public.

2. The consequences of not implementing the proposed transmission line would be great in both the short and long-term effects on the PG&E service territory, and would deprive the customers in the PG&E service territory of the benefits of the power which could be generated at the Kern Power Plant.

3. Adverse impacts associated with the project are mostly short-term and the trade-offs do not involve significant commitment of resources. The moderate adverse visual impact created in the initial segment of the line (5.5 mile) will be outweighed by aesthetic improvement created by slender tubular towers in the final section of the transmission line. ✓

In conformance with General Order No. 131-A, the construction and operation of Kern to Bakersfield Substation 230 kv transmission line and substation:

- a. Is 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.

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

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

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 cancelled 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 Negative Declaration has been completed and adopted by this Commission in compliance with CEQA and the Guidelines and that it has reviewed and considered the information contained in the staff's Initial Study.

Based on the foregoing the Commission concludes that the Kern Power Plant to Bakersfield Substation 230 kv transmission line 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 a 230 kv transmission line together with related appurtenances from applicant's Kern Power Plant Facility to applicant's Bakersfield Substation as proposed in this proceeding.

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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 23rd day of AUGUST, 1977.

Robert Bateman
President
William Lyons
Raymond L. Johnson
Charles D. Howell
Walter D. Davis
Commissioners

APPENDIX A
NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

TO: Secretary for Resources
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: (Lead Agency) California
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
350 McALLISTER STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102
(Tel: (415) 557-1574)

County Clerk
County of _____

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code

Project Title Kern - Bakersfield 230-kv Transmission Line and Substation	
State Clearinghouse Number (If submitted to State Clearinghouse) No	
Contact Person	Telephone Number (415) 557-1249
Project Location Kern County and City of Bakersfield, California	
Project Description Application by Pacific Gas and Electric Company to California Public Utilities Commission to Construct a 230-kv Transmission Line from Applicant's Kern Power Plant to Applicant's Substation	

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

Title

Date