

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 88516 FEB 22 1978

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of ELLEN E. LAULE to
deviate from mandatory requirements
for underground utilities extension
for Lot 19, Tract 447, Tulare County,
California

Application No. 57440
(Filed July 12, 1977)

O P I N I O N

Applicant, Ellen E. Laule, seeks authority to deviate from undergrounding requirements of Southern California Edison Company's (SCE) Rule 15, and The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company's (PT&T) Rule 15, for Lot 19, Tract 447, Tulare County, California, located near the community of Springville.

The lot is the northerly end lot in a subdivision of 19 lots ranging in size from less than 1/2 acre to 3.6 acres. The easterly border of the tract, including the applicant's lot is the centerline of the Tule River, with the normal high water line encroaching onto the lots. In addition, the north fork of the Tule River crosses Lot 19 near Balch Park Road. As a result, underground service would have to cross the north fork for a distance of approximately 100 feet.

Lot 19 is the largest lot at 3.6 acres, substantially larger than the other 18 lots. The Final Map for this tract was recorded in June, 1966, prior to SCE and PT&T's undergrounding rules, and prior to Tulare County's undergrounding requirements.

Staff investigation finds that to date no service has been furnished in Tract No. 447, however, overhead service exists immediately adjacent in the neighboring tract. An overhead distribution line passes the tract and applicant's lot on the west side of Balch Park Road, approximately 250 feet to the west.

The riverbed is subject to shifting and erosion, which can cause an underground conduit to become exposed, creating a substantial maintenance problem, as General Order No. 128 requires underground conduit to have a minimum of 18 inches cover. Therefore, the staff finds that undergrounding in this instance is unsound engineering practice.

Attached to the application are letters from the County of Tulare, PT&T and SCE stating positions regarding undergrounding versus overhead service. Tulare County states that overhead service is appropriate since any aesthetic gain from undergrounding would be overshadowed by existing overhead facilities in close proximity. PT&T feels that overhead service is appropriate considering both the high initial cost and expected maintenance costs of underground service, due to soil consisting of large boulders, granite, and river sand, and considering the periodic flooding experienced from the Tule River. SCE also states that overhead service is more practical due to the river bottom area subject to periodic flooding, soil conditions, and adjacent overhead service as well as cost.

The application should be approved due to the unusual circumstances existing relative to serving applicant. As a result overhead service is the only feasible choice considering maintenance and reliability of service.

Findings

1. Tract 447 is located in the County of Tulare near the community of Springville.
2. The Final Map of Tract 447 was recorded in June, 1966, prior to Tulare County's undergrounding requirements and prior to SCE and PT&T's undergrounding rules.
3. To date no utility service has been rendered to Tract 447.
4. Immediately adjacent to the tract and the applicant's lot overhead service exists, and the overhead distribution line parallels the westerly border of Tract 447, on the west side of Balch Park Road.

5. The north fork of the Tule River crosses Lot 19 near Balch Park Road and necessitates crossing the river by utility service.

6. Undergrounding service to Lot 19 would cause a substantial maintenance problem, and is unsound engineering practice.

7. Soil consists of large boulders, granite, and river sand.

8. Tulare County states that overhead service to Lot 19 is appropriate due to the proximity of existing overhead facilities.

9. Both PT&T and SCE prefer overhead service to Lot 19 due to the necessity of crossing the north fork of the Tule River, the periodic flooding, adverse soil conditions, and adjacent existing overhead service.

10. The request for deviation should be approved for Tract 447, Lot 19, but not for the other lots in the tract as the conditions justifying the deviation for Lot 19 do not necessarily exist for the other 18 lots.

Conclusions

1. A public hearing is not required.
2. The application should be approved as provided in the order which follows.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Southern California Edison Company is authorized to deviate from the mandatory undergrounding requirements of its electric line extension rule of its tariff in Lot 19, Tract 447, Tulare County.

2. The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company is authorized to deviate from the mandatory undergrounding requirements of its telephone line extension rule of its tariff in Lot 19, Tract 447, Tulare County.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 22nd day of FEBRUARY, 1978-

President

Vernon L. Strayer

Charles D. Howell

Paul T. DeWitt
Commissioners

Commissioner Robert Batinovich, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.

Commissioner William Symons, Jr., being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.