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Decision No. 90711

AUG 28 1979

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of
SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY for
a Certificate that Present and Future
Public Convenience and Necessity require
or will require the Construction and
Operation of Segments of a single circuit
230-kV transmission line from the
San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station
Switchyard to the Encina Generating
Station Switchyard.

Application No. 58282
(Filed August 8, 1978)

O P I N I O N

San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&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 of segments of a single circuit 230-kV transmission line from San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) to the Encina Generating Station (ENCINA) near Carlsbad.

Project Description

The proposed project consists of a single circuit 230-kV transmission line and is located within an existing transmission line corridor between SONGS and ENCINA. The project's alignment extends south from SONGS through Camp Pendleton and eastern portions of the cities of Oceanside and Carlsbad. South of Carlsbad the alignment turns west and extends to ENCINA.

Approximately 23.3 miles of the project consist of stringing conductors in a vacant position on existing structures. Construction methods that will be employed will consist of a helicopter to string a pulling rope and heavy pulling and tensioning equipment to pull the conductor. Existing access roads will be utilized.

The remaining 0.6 mile of project length is devoted to constructing an estimated six new wooden H-pole structures near the Oceanside Airport and a single steel lattice tower east of Carlsbad. In this area, construction will consist of foundation preparation, tower erection and stringing conductors. Construction equipment consisting of a crane, post hole diggers, concrete trucks, and pulling and tensioning equipment will be used for the various stages of construction. Maximum use of existing access roads and equipment placement areas will be made to minimize grading.

The conductor size is proposed to be 1,033.5 Kcmil with a capacity of 1,030 amps.

Need for the Project

The San Onofre-Encina 230-kV transmission line is needed to transmit power from SONGS Unit 2 and to reliably import power from the intertie with Southern California Edison Company during outage conditions.

On March 8, 1978, SDG&E experienced a system disturbance resulting in approximately 50% service outage. An investigation under the Commission's OII-4 recommended, among other things, that construction of the San Onofre-Encina transmission line be advanced from the planned September 1980 date to the summer of 1979. By doing so the reliability of the whole system would be improved.

Based on demographic information supplied by the Comprehensive Planning Organization and SDG&E's annual peak demands, the staff made an independent evaluation of growth rates in the service area. The staff's evaluation indicated that the area will require a system capability of 3,422 MW in 1983, within one percent of the estimated SDG&E system capability.

Environmental Impact Assessment Process

In compliance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the guidelines for the implementation of CEQA and Rule 17.1 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, SDG&E filed as part of its application a request for issuance of a Negative Declaration. In support of its request, SDG&E submitted with the application, as separate documents, information and studies for Commission staff use in preparing an Initial Study.

The information and studies were analyzed and evaluated by the Commission staff. An Initial Study to determine whether or not an EIR should be prepared was compiled by the staff. On the basis of the Initial Study, the staff concluded that an EIR should be prepared for this project because archaeological information was not complete and an alternative route eliminating a subcorridor had not been investigated.

The staff prepared a Draft EIR for the proposed project after investigating the aforementioned information. The Draft EIR was mailed on April 5, 1979. Owners of property adjacent to the new construction or on which the project might be located were notified. Comments on the Draft EIR were received from the City of Oceanside, the Comprehensive Planning Organization, the Oceanside Airport Company and the Federal Aviation Administration. These comments and staff responses thereto were incorporated into a Final EIR which was issued on June 27, 1979.

No exceptions to the proposed project were received and in accordance with the provisions of Rule 17.1 hearings were not held.

Environmental Matters

A comprehensive record of environmental impacts was developed in the Final EIR, issued June 27, 1979. Construction dust and noise will be generated in the areas where new construction will take place. This will be a temporary impact and not of great consequence because of the limited scope and size of the areas. The proposed project's construction will take place in established rights-of-way and will utilize existing access roads. The project will not have a significant impact on land, biological, air, water and visual resources.

Several sites have been identified as having archaeological value. Most of these sites will not be impacted significantly because they occur on the portion of the project where no new tower construction is required. Three sites are located where new tower construction activities occur. No significant impact to these sites is anticipated because of the proposed mitigation measures by SDG&E.

SDG&E proposes several mitigation measures including maximum use of existing access roads, restricting access to the rights-of-way in specific areas of endangered species' habitat, curtailment of helicopter stringing activities during nesting season and scheduling construction work to avoid peak traffic hours. In addition to the above mitigation measures, SDG&E has prepared a detailed and comprehensive report to identify cultural resources sites within the project area and has taken or will take the following measures to comply with the concerns of the State Office of Historic Preservation:

- A. On foot archaeological/historical reconnaissance within the existing 230-kV transmission line right-of-way.
- B. Contact with the Native American Heritage Council and area representatives for advice and comments.

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- C. Investigation of impact on archaeological sites by existing access roads and implementation of mitigation measures such as site capping or re-routing if impacts occur.
- D. Preparation of a final report of Phase IV (collecting of cultural resources in impacted areas) mitigation measures for review by appropriate agencies and incorporation into the report of specific research questions designed for any additional subsurface testing.
- E. Hand-excavation of test units in areas where cultural resources impacts cannot be avoided.
- F. Monitoring of subsurface work by Native Americans in the vicinity of Native American archaeological sites.
- G. Curation of recovered Native American cultural resources in accordance with Native Americans' desires.

We adopt the above mitigation measures as reasonable and will require that they be implemented.

There will be a minor short-term disturbance to the environment because of the construction phase of this project and a long-term commitment to an expanded use of the existing corridor. Improved reliability and the needed increase in electrical service to the San Diego area resulting from the project will promote health, comfort, safety, convenience and long-term productivity of the area's population. There are no irreversible environmental changes caused by the project.

Alternatives

Routes at locations other than that proposed would leave the existing corridor free of further expansion and impact. However, an alternate route removed from the corridor and placed at another location unoccupied by existing towers would have greater impact. For this reason we will not further consider alternate locations for the proposed project.

Alternate tower designs would visually conflict with existing designs and therefore will not be considered as a reasonable alternative.

The staff investigated the possibility of eliminating an existing 1-mile subcorridor east of the proposed project near Oceanside Airport. This could be accomplished by transferring the subcorridor's single circuit 230-kV line to double-circuited lattice towers used in lieu of single circuit wooden H-pole structures. The double-circuited towers would be higher than the H-pole structures but would be acceptable to FAA. This plan was opposed by the City of Oceanside and the Oceanside Airport Company because air navigation clearances would be reduced by the higher towers. Because of the safety factors involved in reduced navigation clearances we will not adopt this alternative.

The need for this project is greater than the minor or temporary environmental impacts that have been identified. Therefore, the "no project" alternative will not be considered further.

Findings

1. San Diego Gas & Electric Company is a publicly regulated utility engaged in the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity in San Diego County.

2. The proposed project is reasonably required to meet area demands for present and future reliable and economic electric service and to prevent foreseeable overloading.

3. The construction of the proposed project will not produce an unreasonable burden on natural resources, aesthetics of the area in which the proposed facilities are to be located, public health and safety, air and water quality in the vicinity, parks, recreational and scenic areas, or archaeological and historical sites.

4. Land Resources - Minor alterations or physiographic features will result from the project. The disturbances associated with construction will be of short duration while those associated with operation will be negligible.

5. Vegetation and Wildlife - Disturbance to these will occur during construction of the line. No significant permanent adverse impacts on the biological resources of the area will result from the construction and operation of the project.

6. Air, Water and Noise - The proposed transmission line is expected to have no adverse impact on the water, insignificant impact on the air and negligible impact on noise of the area. Audible noise and radio and television interference will increase directly beneath the transmission line. These effects, however, will not be significant outside the right-of-way.

7. Cultural Resources - The possibility of impact to archaeological/historical resources exists within areas of new construction. However, the applicable mitigation measures discussed earlier will be adequate to reasonably prevent a significant impact to these resources.

8. Aesthetics - The proposed project will not have a significant visual impact on the surrounding areas.

9. A public hearing is not necessary.

Conclusions

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

2. 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.

3. 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.

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

5. Based on the foregoing, the Commission concludes that the 230-kV San Onofre-Encina transmission line as proposed by SDG&E should be authorized in the manner set forth in the following order.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. A Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity is granted to San Diego Gas & Electric Company to construct and operate the 230-kV transmission line in San Diego County, California, as proposed in this proceeding.

2. San Diego Gas & Electric Company is directed to carry out the mitigation measures designated on pages 4 and 5 herein.

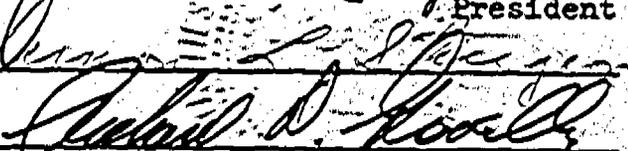
3. San Diego Gas & Electric Company shall file with this Commission a detailed statement of the capital costs of this transmission line project within sixty days following the date the project is put in commercial operation.

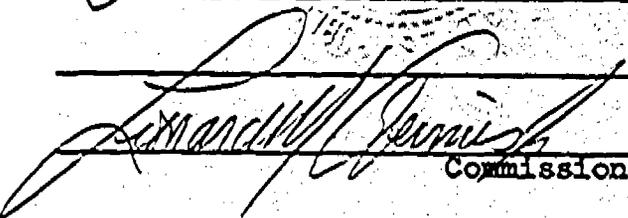
4. The Executive Director of the Commission is directed to file a Notice of Determination for this project, with contents as set forth in Appendix A to this decision, with the Secretary for Resources.

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

Dated AUG 28 1979, at San Francisco, California.



President


Commissioners


Commissioner Claire T. Dedrick, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.

APPENDIX A

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

TO: Secretary for Resources
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1312
Sacramento, California 93814

FROM: California Public
Utilities Commission
350 McAllister Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94102

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

Project Title San Onofre - Encina 230 kV Transmission Line, San Diego Gas &
Electric Company

State Clearinghouse Number (If submitted to State Clearinghouse)
78121189

Contact Person
D. B. Steger

Telephone Number
(415) 557-0442

Project Location

San Diego County, California

Project Description The project consists of 23.9 miles of single circuit,
230 kV transmission from the existing San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station to
Encina Generating Station. Of the 23.9 miles, 0.6 mile is new construction.
The remaining 23.3 miles consists of stringing conductors on existing towers.

This is to advise that the California Public Utilities Commission
as lead agency has made the following determination 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 environ-
ment.
 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 pursu-
ant to the provisions of CEQA. A copy of the Negative
Declaration is attached.

Date Received for Filing

Executive Director

Date