

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ENERGY DIVISION

**RESOLUTION E-3553
JULY 23, 1998**

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION E-3553 PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY (PG&E) SEEKS AUTHORITY TO DEVIATE FROM THE PROVISIONS OF PUBLIC UTILITIES CODE SECTION 320. PG&E SEEKS AUTHORITY TO INSTALL A RECLOSER IN THE MONTE RIO AREA OF SONOMA COUNTY. AUTHORITY IS GRANTED.

BY LETTER DATED OCTOBER 28, 1997.

SUMMARY

1. Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) requests authority to upgrade an existing 12 kilovolt (kv) distribution pole line circuit in the Monte Rio area of Sonoma County adjacent to Highway 116.
2. Monitoring indicates that outages occur frequently on this circuit. As part of the project to upgrade the circuit, it is necessary to install a recloser on an existing pole. A recloser is designed to detect and clear momentary faults and to isolate line sections on which persistent faults have developed.
3. The existing pole is within a portion of California State Highway 04-SON-116, a designated State Scenic Highway. The installation of the recloser falls under Public Utilities (PU) Code Section 320, which requires that all future electric facilities within 1,000 feet of a scenic highway be undergrounded. Commission Decision 80864 dated December 16, 1972, implemented P.U. Code Sec. 320.
4. We agree with PG&E that one recloser on one existing pole will not significantly impact the scenic corridor. Therefore, PG&E is granted authority to place the recloser on the 12 Kv pole within the scenic corridor.

BACKGROUND

1. PG&E filed this letter because Public Utilities Code Section 320 prohibits what appears to be the best practice in this case, which is to install a recloser on an existing 12kV distribution pole in the Monte Rio area of Sonoma County (Scenic Highway 116).
2. The cost of the recloser is \$1,000.
3. A meeting in PG&E's Santa Rosa office was held on March 24, 1998 between representatives of the Energy Division and representatives of PG&E to determine the necessity of placing the recloser in the scenic corridor and at that particular site.
4. A recloser is designed to detect and clear momentary faults to isolate line sections on which persistent faults have developed.
5. PG&E stated that installing a recloser on the existing pole will not significantly impact the scenic corridor.
6. The recloser is approximately two feet by three feet in size.
7. A significant portion of the scenic highway is crossed with overhead electric, telephone and cable television line.
8. Highway 116 was, in part, examined by the Commission representatives to determine if there were any tree trimming violations of Rule 35 of General Order 95.

NOTICE

1. Notice was placed in the Commission's Daily Calendar on October 30, 1997.

PROTESTS

1. No protests were received for this PG&E Advice Letter.

DISCUSSION

1. The recloser would be placed on an existing PG&E pole. There would be no need for further installation of an overhead span.

2. The recloser could not be installed at another site away from the scenic highway because the connected lines would not serve all of the customers that need this protective service .
3. After lengthy discussion with PG&E representatives at the site, Energy Division representatives agreed that the chosen site for the recloser was the best possible site.
4. The entire scenic highway, with the exception of the interior of a few small towns adjacent to the highway, is connected by an overhead electrical line distribution system. Pacific Gas and Electric Company is the owner of that system and the serving utility.
5. PG&E reports that most of the overhead system on Highway 116 was originally built in 1952 before the effective date of P.U. Code Section 320 (1972).
6. After examining the site of the pole and the surrounding area, the Energy Division personnel agree with PG&E that the location for the recloser is optimum and would not adversely affect the scenic qualities nor produce significantly negative visibility in the scenic corridor because it is relatively small in size.
7. The request to place the recloser at that site adjacent to Highway 116 is reasonable and should be adopted by this Commission.

July 23, 1998

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. Pacific Gas and Electric Company's advice letter, filed October 30, 1997, requesting Commission authority to install a recloser on a distribution line pole in the Monte Rio area of Sonoma County adjacent to Scenic Highway 116 is reasonable and is herein adopted.
2. This Resolution is effective today.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was duly introduced, passed, and adopted at a conference of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California held on July 23, 1998, the following Commissioners voting favorably thereon:



WESLEY M. FRANKLIN
Executive Director

RICHARD A. BILAS
President
P. GREGORY CONLON
JESSIE J. KNIGHT, JR.
HENRY M. DUQUE
JOSIAH L. NEEPER
Commissioners