

**DRAFT**  
**MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

**SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY**  
**PICO SUBSTATION PROJECT**

*Prepared for:*

**CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

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**February 1999**

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# SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 SUMMARY OF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On December 17, 1998, San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) filed Application NO. 98-12-023 pursuant to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Order No. 131-D requesting authority for a permit to construct the Pico Substation project. SDG&E is proposing to construct and operate the Pico Substation Project. The Pico Substation Project would be located in southern Orange County, near the City of San Clemente on the south side of Avenida Pico in the Talega Valley Specific Plan within the Rolling Hills development project. The proposed substation at ultimate configuration is planned to be 120 MVA with four 30 MVA transformers and sixteen 12 kV (kilovolt) circuits. A 10- to 12-foot high wall will enclose the substation area (approximately 340 feet by 230 feet) and landscaping will be established from the beginning of the project (see *Section 2, Project Description*, for further details).

San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) is a public utility corporation engaged principally in the business of providing electric service to a portion of Orange County, California, and electric and gas service to San Diego County, California. In providing electrical power sources to the City of San Clemente and southern Orange County, SDG&E currently operates two distribution substations. A recent SDG&E area planning study indicates that additional electrical system capacity is required to serve new development in San Clemente and Forster Ranch and future development in the Talega Valley area. In addition, the proposed substation is required to eliminate low primary voltage on San Mateo Circuit 331, which serves the Rancho San Clemente Industrial Park.

The objective of the proposed Pico Substation is to provide additional electricity to meet expected load growth and prevent potential outages or disruption of service to existing and new SDG&E customers in the San Clemente area.

## 1.2 AUTHORITY TO PREPARE A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is the lead CEQA agency responsible for authorizing the construction of the Pico Substation Project.

Based on the findings of the Initial Study/Environmental Evaluation (see *Section 4, Initial Study/Environmental Checklist* and *Section 5, Discussion of Environmental Impacts*) prepared for this project, the CPUC has made the determination that a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is the appropriate environmental document to be prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As provided for by CEQA §21064.5, an MND may be prepared for a project subject to CEQA when an Initial Study has identified potentially significant effects on the environment but revisions in the project have been made where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur.

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This draft MND has been prepared in conformance with §15070, subsection (a), of the State CEQA Guidelines. The purpose of the MND and the Initial Study/Environmental Evaluation is to determine the potential significant impacts associated with the proposed Pico Substation Project and incorporate mitigation measures into the project design as necessary to reduce or eliminate the significant or potentially significant effects of the project (see *Section 3, Proposed Finding of No Significant Effect, and Mitigation and Monitoring Measures* included in the *Project to Avoid or Reduce Potentially Significant Effects*).

### **1.3 OTHER AGENCIES THAT MAY USE THE NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION**

This MND is intended to be used by responsible and trustee agencies that may have review authority over the project. SDG&E will obtain all permits as required by law. Based on the analysis in *Sections 4 and 5* of this document, other permits by responsible agencies with jurisdiction over the proposed project include Regional Water Quality Control Board Natural Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for stormwater discharge, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game for impacts to endangered species pursuant to the U.S. Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act.

### **1.4 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS**

In accordance with CEQA, a good faith effort has been made during the preparation of this MND to contact affected agencies, organizations and persons who may have an interest in this project. This MND has been distributed to the following individuals and organizations:

- Federal Aviation Administration
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Department of Transportation
- California Department of Health Services
- California Energy Commission
- California State Water Resources Control Board
- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- California State Air Resources Control Board
- County of Orange Air Pollution Control District
- California Resources Agency
- City of San Clemente
- Native American Heritage Commission
- County of Orange Environmental Project Planning Services
- Talega Valley Associates

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- Transportation Corridor Agencies
- Federal Highway Administration

The CPUC will also be providing a notice of availability to property owners within 300 feet of the project and will also be publishing this notice in the local newspaper, in accordance with the CPUC Rule 17.1 of the rules of Practice and Procedures. This document is also being made available on the CPUC's website at the following address: <http://ww/cpuc.ca.gov>.

In reviewing the MND and Initial Study/Environmental Evaluation, affected public agencies and the interested public should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project are proposed to be avoided or mitigated.

Comments may be made on the MND in writing before the end of the comment period. A 30-day review and comment period from \_\_\_\_\_ 1999 to \_\_\_\_\_ 1999 has been established, in accordance with §15105(a) of the CEQA guidelines. Following the close of the public comment period, the CPUC will consider this MND and comments thereto in determining whether to approve the proposed project. Written comments on the MND should be sent to the following address by 5:00 PM.

California Public Utilities Commission  
Energy Division, Analysis Branch  
505 Van Ness Avenue, Room 4007  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
*Attention: Beth Shipley*

## SECTION 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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### 2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located within Parcel 26 of the Talega Town Center and Business Park within the Rolling Hills development project in the southwestern portion of Orange County adjacent to the northwest boundary of the City of San Clemente. The Talega Town Center and Business Park is bounded on the north by Avenida Pico and the developing residential portion of Rolling Hills, south by proposed open space and the Pacific Golf Club located within Rancho San Clemente, west by the southernmost portion of the Champion Hills development, and east by the Forster Ranch development and the proposed Foothill Transportation Corridor-South. The project site is located within unincorporated Orange County south of Avenida Pico on the future Vitrina Street. *Figure 1* shows the regional location of the project, *Figure 2* shows the project site location on the USGS topographic map, and *Figure 3* provides an aerial photograph of the project site and vicinity.

The 2.33-acre project site is located on an irregularly shaped and rough-graded site. As shown on *Figure 3*, the site is immediately located south of the future Vitrina Street and north