

Notice of Exemption

Fee Exempt per Government Code Section 6103

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Department of Water Resources
San Luis Field Division, 31770 Gonzaga Rd
Gustine, CA 95322

Lead Agency: California Department of Water Resources

Project Title: California Aqueduct Reaches 2B, 3, 4, and 5 PG&E Utility Power Pole Maintenance

Project Location City & County: Stanislaus, Merced, and Fresno Counties

Project Location – Specific: Work will occur in portions of Reach 2B, 3, 4 and 5 of the California Aqueduct (Aqueduct). All work locations will be in the Department of Water Resources (DWR) right of way, along an existing PG&E service line on the left (L) and right (R) sides of the Aqueduct. MP 51.20 is the northern end of Reach 2B and is where Orestimba Road intersects the Aqueduct, in Stanislaus County. MP 143.23, the southernmost end of Reach 5, is approximately 0.14 miles southeast of the intersection of State Route 145 and the Aqueduct, in Fresno County.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: PG&E needs to maintain existing utility poles located in the DWR Aqueduct right of way. Maintenance of the poles includes testing for structural integrity and treating against future decay. PG&E's contractor will perform the following work at each pole:

First, a 20-inch radius area will be excavated around the base of the pole; the excavation will be at least 20 inches deep and will be dug by hand. Once the area is excavated, the structural integrity of the pole will be tested by using a battery-powered drill to make up to three 7/8-inch diameter holes into the base of the pole. If the integrity of the wood from any of these drilled holes is questionable, then up to fifteen 9/16-inch diameter holes will be made along the length of the pole to determine the amount of damage. Any poles not considered to be structurally sound will be reported to PG&E for further assessment.

If the pole is considered structurally sound, it will be treated with a chemical product that protects against wood decay and insect attack. To prevent potential chemical spills and leaks, the product will be applied into the 7/8-inch holes from calibrated containers with a squirt tip applicator. After the holes have been filled with the chemical product, a wood preservative paste will be brushed onto the pole from a point about 3 inches above the ground surface and down to about 20 inches below the ground surface. A paper-based backing will be applied over the preservative to aid in absorption of the paste into the pole and to prevent the paste from leaching into the soil. This backing will extend from a point about 4 inches above the ground surface to about 20 inches below the ground surface.

Once the pole has been treated, the drill holes will be sealed using plastic plugs and the excavated area will be backfilled and compacted. PG&E will benefit from this work.

Exempt/Suspend Status:

- ☐ Ministerial (§21080[b][1]; 15268)
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Proclamation of a State of Emergency Due to Drought)
- ☐ Emergency Project (Public Resources Code §21080[b][4]; California Code of Regulations §15269[c])
- ☒ Categorical Exemption: 15301 - (Existing Facilities) and 15305(b) – (Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations—Issuance of minor encroachment permits).
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions:

Reasons Why Project Is Exempt: Work consists of maintaining existing PG&E power poles in the DWR right of way. Work will occur in areas with an average slope of less than 20 percent and no changes in land use or density will occur. The project will not expand existing use. DWR will issue an encroachment permit for completion of this work. Categorical Exemption 15301 (Existing Facilities) and 15305 (b) (Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations – Issuance of Minor Encroachment Permits) apply.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Water Resources

Contact Person: Cody Nelson

Telephone: (209) 827-5190

Signature: Cody Nelson **Date:** 5/16/2024 **Title:** Planner/Scheduler/UC Supv.

☒ Signed by Lead Agency

☐ Signed by Applicant