

State of California
Natural Resources Agency / Department of Conservation
GEOLOGIC ENERGY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

California Environmental Quality Act Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Conservation
715 P Street, MS 1803
Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact: CEQA@conservation.ca.gov

Project Title: 720189_45200001_PGE_UGS

Project Applicant: Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)

Project Location: San Joaquin, McDonald Island Gas; 25/02N/04E/MD; 37.99505083, -121.47901694

Project Description: To meet current CalGEM requirements and remediate an integrity issue, PG&E (the operator) proposes to rework an existing gas storage well. PG&E plans to rework existing well to comply with CalGEM inspection and construction requirements. The project involves retrieving existing components, performing integrity surveys, and installing new equipment, including a production liner and tubing string. The necessary equipment includes a workover rig, mud pumps, blowout prevention equipment, and tanks, all of which will be operated within the current facility footprint without any new construction or expansion of facilities. The project is scheduled to take place from March to November 2025, and the well will remain gas storage well with no change in existing use.

The proposed project consists of the California Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) approving one permit for Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) to rework the well listed below, in the McDonald Island Gas Oil Field.

API #	Well Name
0407720211	Whiskey Slough 5-W

Exempt Status: As the Lead Agency, CalGEM has determined that the proposed project is exempt from full environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to the specified exemptions marked in the section below. CalGEM further finds that the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact to the environment, or that any of the exceptions to the application of the exemptions apply (14 CCR § 15300.2).

Exemption Type		Statute (PRC)	Regulation (14 CCR)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Statutory Exemption:			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Project (<i>pre-CEQA approval on April 5, 1973</i>)	21169	15261 (b)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ministerial	21080 (b)(1)	15268	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Declared Emergency	21080 (b)(3)	15269 (a)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Projects	21080 (b)(4)	15269 (b) or (c)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Categorical Exemption:	21084		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class 1: Existing Facilities		15301	1684.1
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class 2: Replacement or Reconstruction		15302	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Class 3: New Construction/Conversion of Small Structures		15303	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land		15304	1684.2
	<input type="checkbox"/> Class 7: Protection of Natural Resources		15307	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Class 8: Protection of the Environment		15308	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Class 11: Accessory Structures		15311	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Class 21: Enforcement Actions to revoke a permit		15321	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Class 30: Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate, or Eliminate a Release (Actual or Threat) of Hazardous Substances (Waste or Material)		15330	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Class 33: Small Habitat Restoration Projects		15333	
<input type="checkbox"/>	General Exemption (“common sense”)		15061 (b)(3)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not a “Project” subject to CEQA		15378 (b)(2)	
<p>CEQA Exceptions to the Exemptions (14 CCR § 15300.2): where project is located (e.g., sensitive environment); Cumulative Impact; Significant Effect due to Unusual Circumstances; Scenic Highways; Hazardous Waste Sites; Historical Resources.</p>				

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The basis for CalGEM's determination that the project is exempt from the requirements of CEQA is provided in the brief explanation below.

Class 1, Existing Facilities (14 CCR §§ 15301, 1684.1): Class 1 applies to the "operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration" of existing facilities involving "negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing previously" (§ 1684.1) [.] The project involves the maintenance of the existing gas storage well associated with the UGS project (45200001) and does not include modifications or changes to the existing use. The proposed rework will meet current CalGEM requirements and remediate an integrity issue with the Whiskey Slough 5-W well. The proposed project activities involve retrieving components, conducting integrity surveys, and installing new equipment, including a production liner and tubing string, as result of the well will remain gas storage well with no change in existing use.

Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction (14 CCR § 15302): Class 2 applies because the rework of the wells could be considered "replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity [.] To meet current CalGEM requirements and remediate an integrity issue, PG&E (the operator) proposes to rework an existing gas storage well. PG&E will rework well to meet CalGEM standards, involving component retrieval, integrity surveys, and new equipment installation using a workover rig. The rework will occur on an existing well pad, and no new permanent facilities will be constructed.

Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land (14 CCR §§ 15304, 1684.2): Class 4 exemption applies. The proposed project would be conducted entirely on an existing pad with enough space to contain all equipment. The proposed project is located within an existing active gas field. Therefore, the proposed project "consists of rework proposed activities that result in only minor alterations with negligible or no permanent effects to the existing condition of the land, water, air, and/or vegetation [.] The proposed activities and temporary equipment will be contained within the existing well pad. The rework would not expand the existing facility nor require the construction of any new permanent facilities.

Exceptions to Exemptions: CalGEM further finds that there are no exceptions to the application of the categorical exemptions (PRC § 21084; 14 CCR § 15300.2) referenced above. For example, there is no substantial evidence that there are any "unusual circumstances" associated with the proposed project that create a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment, and that there are no significant "cumulative impacts" resulting from successive projects of the same type in the same place. Therefore, reliance on the exemptions is appropriate.

