

Notice of Exemption

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To:
Office of Planning and Research
U.S. Mail:
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From:
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710

Street Address:
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Project Title: California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2020-041-04 for PG&E In-line Inspection Investigative Digs Project (ITP)

Project Location: The Project is located along Gas Line 301A west of the City of Hollister, San Benito County, California. The Project encompasses five work sites including a residential area and undeveloped annual grassland habitat. The five work sites are located at the following coordinates: Site #1 (36.86199353°, -121.37655396°), Site #5 (36.88035132°, -121.49342124°), Site #5C (36.84761054°, -121.59691897°), Site #5D (36.84705797°, -121.59962263°), and Site #7 (36.84343705°, -121.60610768°).

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has issued a California Endangered Species Act (CESA; Fish and Game Code, § 2050 et seq.) Incidental Take Permit, No. 2081-2020-041-04, to permit Pacific Gas & Electric Company to incidentally take California tiger salamander which is designated as a threatened species under CESA. (Fish & G. Code § 2050 et seq.; see Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 670.5, subd. (b)(3)(G)).

The ITP authorizes take of California tiger salamander (Covered Species) for activities associated with the PG&E In-line Inspection Investigative Digs Project (Investigative Digs Project) which is necessary to address anomalies identified along Gas Line 301A, which is urgently required for health and human safety. The Investigative Digs Project includes the excavation of five Work Sites along Gas Line 301A to investigate anomalies (i.e. corrosion, dents, or other abnormalities that may compromise the integrity of the pipe) identified during prior in-line inspection of the pipeline. At each Work Site, one bell hole will be excavated to expose the pipe along with up to two sniff holes to facilitate repair of anomalies. In addition to the Work Sites, the Investigative Digs Project will require overland access through annual grassland habitat. Following investigation and repair activities, site restoration will occur. Site restoration will include grading to pre-project contours and conditions and revegetation through application of a seed mix and native topsoil. The Investigative Digs Project is expected to cause the temporary loss of 2.18 acre of habitat for the Covered Species.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

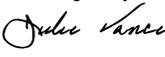
Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: Pacific Gas & Electric Company, Craig Geldard, 6111 Bollinger Canyon Rd., 3rd floor (3120D)

Exempt Status:

- Statutory Exemption. California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269, subdivision (c); Public Resources Code Sec. 21080, subdivision (b)(4)
 Categorical Exemption.

Reasons why project is exempt: See Attachment

CDFW Contact Person: Kristie Stein (Environmental Scientist), Kristie.Stein@wildlife.ca.gov

DocuSigned by:

Signature: FA83F09FE08945A...

Date: 12/21/2021

Julie A. Vance,
Regional Manager, Central Region

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Attachment to Notice of Exemption

California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2020-041-04 In-Line Inspection Investigative Digs Project

Approval of this Project is subject to the statutory exemption for “Specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency” (Emergency Project; Pub. Resources Code, §21080, subd. (b)(4)) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Pub. Resources Code, §21000 et seq.). “Emergency” is defined as “A sudden, unexpected occurrence, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services” (Pub. Resources Code, §21060.3).

The Project is necessary to repair anomalies along Gas Pipeline 301A. On November 10, 2021, PG&E provided the following information, *“In 2019, PG&E performed an in-line inspection of gas transmission Line 301A. This inspection identified four (4) deformations that require repair within a scheduled time frame. It is imperative that PG&E repair these deformations. Left un-repaired, the deformations may grow in service to and lead to pipeline failure which could result in a hazardous release of gas.”* The Project constitutes an emergency measure which is required for immediate health and human safety.

The Project includes the excavation of five Work Sites along Gas Line 301A to investigate anomalies (i.e., corrosion, dents, or other abnormalities that may compromise the integrity of the pipe) identified during prior in-line inspection of the pipeline. At each Work Site, one bell hole will be excavated to expose the pipe along with up to two sniff holes to facilitate repair of anomalies. In addition to the Work Sites, the Project will require overland access through annual grassland habitat. Following investigation and repair activities, site restoration will occur. Site restoration will include grading to pre-project contours and conditions and revegetation through application of a seed mix and native topsoil. The Project is expected to cause the temporary loss of 2.18 acre of habitat for the Covered Species.

Impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated through the implementation of measures required by Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2020-041-04. Measures include:
1) Monthly Compliance Reports; 2) establishment of avoidance zones; 3) worker education; 4) burrow/crevice excavation; and 5) permanent habitat protection through the purchase of California tiger salamander upland habitat credits at the CDFW-approved Sparling Ranch Conservation Bank.