

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: Dept. of Water Resources
San Luis Field Division
31770 Gonzaga Road
Gustine, CA 95322

Lead Agency: California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

Project Title: Reach 3A PG&E San Luis Reservoir Power Pole Maintenance

Project Location City & County: Merced County

Project Location – Specific: Work will occur at seven sites within the Department of Water Resources (DWR) right of way, along an existing PG&E service line on the west side of the San Luis Reservoir near Dinosaur Point (Figure 1). The seven sites are within the San Luis Reservoir Wildlife Area. All the sites are approximately 21 miles west of Los Banos along Highway 152 within the Pacheco Pass.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: PG&E requests encroachment permission to maintain seven existing utility poles located in the DWR right of way. The seven sites are located within Merced County. Maintenance of the poles includes testing for structural integrity and treating against future decay. The following work will occur at each pole:

First, a 12-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 pole in DWR's 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: DWR as Responsible Agency

Contact Person: Cody Nelson

Telephone: (209) 827-5190

Signature: Cody Nelson **Date:** 12/7/2023 **Title:** Planner/Scheduler/UC Supv.

- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant