

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

Project Title: California Aqueduct Reach 6 PG&E Utility Power Pole Replacement and Installation

Project Location City & County: Fresno County

Project Location – Specific: The work site is on the left (L) and right (R) sides of Reach 6 of the California Aqueduct (Aqueduct), at milepost (MP) 149.57. The site is approximately 1.67 miles west of the intersection of West Stutz Ave and State Route 269; all work will be in the Department of Water Resources (DWR) right-of-way (ROW).

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: PG&E needs to upgrade its power line with heavier gauge wire and requests encroachment permission to work in the DWR ROW to replace six existing utility power poles (poles) with taller poles, to reconductor existing overhead electrical conductors (OVC), and to install three additional poles in the DWR ROW. The new poles are needed to support the new line and will be installed in an approximately 0.3-miles section along West Stutz Avenue (Figure 1).

To complete the work, the OVC will be detached from the poles and then will be temporarily attached to a mechanical jumper so the power line will remain energized, and power service will continue during work. Once the OVC is removed, holes, approximately 46-inch in diameter and 10 feet deep, will be excavated next to the 6 existing poles and at the locations for the 3 new poles. All the poles installed will be made of wood and will be 20 feet taller than the existing poles were; once the poles are installed, the excavated areas will be backfilled and compacted.

When all nine of the poles are in place, insulated “hot arms” will be installed on the 6 original poles. The OVC will be de-energized, disconnected from the mechanical jumper, and reconducted using 715 aluminum wire onto the crossarms of the nine new poles. When the new OVC wire is in place, the hot arms will be removed, and a winch will be used to take out the 6 old poles. The removed poles will be loaded onto a trailer and will be disposed of offsite. The holes left after the poles are removed will be backfilled and compacted. Once all the poles are installed and the OVC is in place, it will be reenergized. All ground surfaces will be restored to preconstruction conditions, including repaving where necessary. Work is necessary to ensure reliable electric service to PG&E customers. PG&E will benefit from this project.

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: 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land) and 15305(b) (Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations – Issuance of Minor Encroachment Permits)
- Statutory Exemptions:

Reasons Why Project Is Exempt: This work is necessary to ensure PG&E’s existing utility line will provide reliable service into the future. The work will not involve removal of healthy, mature, or scenic trees, will be in areas that have an average slope of less than 20 percent, and will not result in any changes in land use or density. DWR will issue an encroachment permit for this work. Categorical Exemption 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land) and Categorical Exemption 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:** 5/14/2024 **Title:** Planner/Scheduler/UC Supv.

- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant

Figure 1. MP 149.57 PG&E Pole Replacement and Installation Map

