

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

**Lead Agency:** Department of Water Resources

**Project Title:** California Aqueduct MP 81.00R PG&E Utility Power Pole Treatment

**Project Location City & County:** Merced County

**Project Location – Specific:** Work will occur in Reach 3 of the California Aqueduct (Aqueduct). The worksite is on the right (R) side of the Aqueduct in the DWR right of way (ROW) at Aqueduct milepost (MP) 81.00R. It is about 1.2 miles northwest of the intersection of the Aqueduct and Mervel Avenue (latitude/longitude: 36.984062 -120.886214).

**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:** PG&E requests encroachment permission to maintain an existing utility pole located in the DWR ROW. Maintenance of the pole includes testing the wooden pole for damage and treating it against future decay. PG&E's contractor will perform the following work:

A two-foot-deep hole will be excavated by hand in an approximate one-foot radius around the pole to expose the pole's base. Then, a battery-powered drill will be used to make three 7/8-inch diameter holes into the pole's base to test the wood for damage. If damaged wood is found, up to fifteen, 9/16-inch diameter holes will be drilled along the length of the pole to determine the amount of damage. If the pole is not considered to be structurally sound it will be reported to PG&E for further assessment.

If the pole is in good condition, 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 three inches above the ground surface to about 20 inches below the ground surface. A paper-based backing will be applied over the preservative to help the pole absorb the paste and prevent the paste from leaching into the soil. The backing will cover a point from about four 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.

Utility pole treatments are needed to ensure the integrity of the PG&E power lines. 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: 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 involves maintaining an existing PG&E utility pole located in the DWR ROW. There will be no expansion of existing or former use. The work will occur in areas with 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 15301 (Existing Facilities) 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:** 11/25/2024 **Title:** Planner Scheduler/UC Supv.

- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant