



California Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region
John W. Corbett, Chairman



Linda S. Adams
*Secretary for
Environmental Protection*

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**Arnold
Schwarzenegger**
Governor

October 2, 2007

In the Matter of

Water Quality Certification

for the

**PG&E – HUMBOLDT-HARRIS 115KV TRANSMISSION LINE RECONDUCTORING
PROJECT
WDID NO. 1B07116WNHU**

APPLICANT: Pacific Gas and Electric Company
RECEIVING WATER: Wetlands adjacent to Ryan Slough
HYDROLOGIC UNIT: Eureka Plain Hydrologic Unit No. 110.00
COUNTY: Humboldt
FILE NAME: PG&E – Humboldt-Harris 115kv Transmission Line
Reconductoring Project

BY THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

1. On July 31, 2007, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (Applicant) filed an application for water quality certification (certification) under section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1341) with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (Regional Water Board) for activities related to replacement of power poles and the conductor (transmission line) between PG&E's Humboldt and Harris substations located east of Eureka. The Regional Water Board provided public notice of the application pursuant to title 23, California Code of Regulations, section 3858 on August 30, 2007, and posted information describing the project on the Regional Water Board's website. We did not receive any public comments on this project.
2. The purpose of the pole and conductor replacement project is to maintain and improve the reliability of the existing transmission line and reduce the number of power outages in the Eureka area. The majority of the 25 power poles in the project area will be replaced in upland areas from paved roads and unimproved dirt roads using PG&E line trucks. The poles are typically 60 feet tall, and the 24 inch diameter bases are buried 8 feet deep. Where a line truck cannot perform the pole replacement from a road, the poles will be set with a helicopter after the pole holes are dug by crews using hand operated tools. The existing decayed poles will be cut at ground level and hauled to a land fill.

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3. Three of the poles (poles 0/10, 0/12, and 0/13) that will be replaced are located in jurisdictional wetlands that are currently used as horse pasture. Crewpersons will access these poles on foot and hand dig the holes for the new poles next to the old poles. The new poles will be installed by helicopter. After the new conductor is strung on the new poles, the old poles will be cut off at ground level then cut into pieces so they can be carried away by hand. Hand tools will be used to remove approximately one additional foot of the old poles below the ground level and the surface will be restored to offset the area of permanent impact from the new poles. Soil excavated from the new holes will be stored on plastic and then used to pack around the new poles and into the one foot deep holes created by removing the old poles below the ground surface.
4. The project will result in 9.3 square feet (0.0002 acre) of permanent impacts to jurisdictional wetlands that are currently used as horse pasture. Compensatory mitigation for this project involves restoring the same amount of wetland area by removing the existing poles below the surface and restoring the surface with onsite soils. Noncompensatory mitigation for this project includes implementation during the dry season and the use of Best Management Practices for erosion control.
5. A Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish & Game is not required for this project.
6. The Applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit Number 12, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404.
7. The Regional Water Board, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption, section 15301 – existing facilities, pursuant to CEQA.

Receiving Water: Wetlands adjacent to Ryan Slough in the Eureka Plain
Hydrologic Unit No. 110.00

Filled or Excavated Area: Area Temporarily Impacted: 30 square feet
Area Permanently Impacted: 9.3 square feet (0.0002 acre)
of wetland currently used as horse pasture

Total Linear Impacts: Length Temporarily Impacted: none
Length Permanently Impacted: none

Dredge Volume: none

Latitude/Longitude: 40.78232 N/124.12111 W

Accordingly, based on its independent review of the record, the Regional Water Board certifies that the Humboldt-Harris 115kv Transmission Line Reconductoring Project (WDID No. 1B07116WNHU), as described in the application, will comply with sections 301, 302, 303, 306 and 307 of the Clean Water Act, and with applicable provisions of state law, provided that the Applicant complies with the following terms and conditions:

1. This certification action is subject to modification or revocation upon administrative or judicial review, including review and amendment pursuant to Water Code section 13330 and title 23, California Code of Regulations, section 3867.
2. This certification action is not intended and shall not be construed to apply to any discharge from any activity involving a hydroelectric facility requiring a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license or an amendment to a FERC license unless the pertinent certification application was filed pursuant to title 23, California Code of Regulations, section 3855, subdivision (b) and the application specifically identified that a FERC license or amendment to a FERC license for a hydroelectric facility was being sought.
3. This certification is conditioned upon total payment of any fee required under title 23, California Code of Regulations, section 2200, and owed by the Applicant.
4. The Regional Water Board shall be notified prior to the commencement of ground disturbing activities, with details regarding the construction schedule, in order to allow staff to be present onsite during construction, and to answer any public inquiries that may arise regarding the project.
5. A copy of this Order and the application submitted by the Applicant for this certification shall be provided to all contractors and subcontractors conducting the work, and shall be in their possession at the work site.
6. All project work shall be conducted as described in this Order and in the application submitted by the Applicant. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that their contractor(s) are knowledgeable of the authorized project activities, BMPs, avoidance measures and mitigation measures contained in the application submitted by the Applicant. If the Regional Water Board is not notified of a significant alteration to the project, it will be considered a violation of this Order, and the Applicant may be subject to Regional Water Board enforcement actions.
7. BMPs for erosion, sediment and turbidity control shall be implemented and in place at commencement of, during and after any ground clearing activities or any other project activities that could result in erosion or sediment discharges to surface water.
8. No debris, soil, silt, sand, bark, slash, sawdust, rubbish, cement or concrete washings, oil or petroleum products, or other organic or earthen material from any construction or associated activity of whatever nature, other than that authorized by this Order, shall be allowed to enter into or be placed where it may be washed by rainfall into waters of the State. When operations are completed, any excess material or debris shall be removed from the work area. No rubbish shall be deposited within 150 feet of the high water mark of any stream.
9. If, at any time, an unauthorized discharge to surface water (including wetlands, rivers or streams) occurs, or any water quality problem arises, the associated project activities shall cease immediately until adequate BMPs are implemented. The

Regional Water Board shall be notified promptly and in no case more than 24 hours after the unauthorized discharge or water quality problem arises.

10. Disturbance of wetlands and disturbance or removal of vegetation shall not exceed the minimum necessary to complete the project.
11. Prior to implementing any change to the project that may have a significant or material effect on the findings, conclusions, or conditions of this Order, the Applicant shall obtain the written approval of the Regional Water Board Executive Officer.
12. The Regional Water Board may add to or modify the conditions of this Order, as appropriate, to implement any new or revised water quality standards and implementation plans adopted and approved pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act or Section 303 of the Clean Water Act.
13. The Applicant shall provide Regional Water Board staff access to the project site to document compliance with this certification.
14. In the event of any violation or threatened violation of the conditions of this certification, the violation or threatened violation shall be subject to any remedies, penalties, process or sanctions as provided for under applicable State or federal law. For the purposes of section 401(d) of the Clean Water Act, the applicability of any State law authorizing remedies, penalties, process or sanctions for the violation or threatened violation constitutes a limitation necessary to assure compliance with the water quality standards and other pertinent requirements incorporated into this certification. In response to a suspected violation of any condition of this certification, the Regional Water Board may require the holder of any federal permit or license subject to this certification to furnish, under penalty of perjury, any technical or monitoring reports the Regional Water Board deems appropriate, provided that the burden, including costs, of the reports shall bear a reasonable relationship to the need for the reports and the benefits to be obtained from the reports. In response to any violation of the conditions of this certification, the Regional Water Board may add to or modify the conditions of this certification as appropriate to ensure compliance.
15. In the event of any change in control of ownership of land presently owned or controlled by the Applicant, the Applicant shall notify the successor-in-interest of the existence of this Order by letter and shall forward a copy of the letter to the Regional Water Board at the above address.

To discharge dredged or fill material under this Order, the successor-in-interest must send to the Regional Water Board Executive Officer a written request for transfer of the Order. The request must contain the requesting entity's full legal name, the state of incorporation if a corporation, and the address and telephone number of the person(s) responsible for contact with the Regional Water Board. The request must also describe any changes to the project proposed by the successor-in-interest or

confirm that the successor-in-interest intends to implement the project as described in this Order.

16. Except as may be modified by any preceding conditions, all certification actions are contingent on: a) the discharge being limited to and all proposed mitigation being completed in strict compliance with the Applicant's project description, and b) compliance with all applicable requirements of the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan).

17. The authorization of this certification for any dredge and fill activities expires on October 2, 2012. Conditions and monitoring requirements outlined in this certification are not subject to the expiration date outlined above, and remain in full effect and are enforceable.

If you have any questions or comments please call Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801.

Robert R. Klamt
Interim Executive Officer

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Original to: Mr. Brandon Liddell, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, 245 Market Street, Mail Code N10A, San Francisco, CA 94105

Copies to: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, District Engineer, P.O. Box 4863, Eureka, CA 95502

Ms. Jane Hicks, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Functions, 1455 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1398