



**California Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region
Bob Anderson, Chairman**



Linda S. Adams
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

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**Arnold
Schwarzenegger**
Governor

August 6, 2008

In the Matter of

Water Quality Certification

for the

**PG&E - FRESHWATER SLOUGH GAS PIPELINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT
WDID NO. 1B04018WNHU**

APPLICANT: Pacific Gas and Electric Company
RECEIVING WATER: Freshwater Slough and adjacent wetlands
HYDROLOGIC UNIT: Eureka Plains Hydrologic Unit No. 110.00
COUNTY: Humboldt
FILE NAME: PG&E - Freshwater Slough Gas Pipeline Replacement

BY THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

1. On February 26, 2004, 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 replacing a section of natural gas pipeline that is exposed on the north bank of Freshwater Slough in Eureka. The Regional Water Board provided public notice of the application pursuant to title 23, California Code of Regulations, section 3858 on July 12, 2004 and issued certification on August 3, 2004. In August 2005, during the horizontal directional drilling activities, a "frac-out" occurred and the drilling activities were put on hold while the applicant reviewed alternatives. The certification expired on October 15, 2005.
2. On April 21, 2008, the applicant submitted a request for an extension of the certification and additional information including a revised Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Fluid Release Contingency Plan. The current project differs from the previously approved project; the entry and exit bore pits will be moved from their original location, and the depth of the HDD boring will be increased from 55 feet to 85 feet. The depth of the boring will be increased to reduce the risk of another frac-out. In order to increase the depth of the boring, the bore pits will be moved farther away from the slough, approximately 150 feet from their previous locations. The Regional Water Board provided public notice of this application pursuant to title 23, California Code of Regulations, section 3858 on July 14, 2008, and posted information describing the project on the Regional Water Board's website. We did not receive any public comments on this project.

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3. The project involves replacing a 1,350 foot section of 8-inch diameter high pressure natural gas transmission pipeline (Line137B). Approximately 970 feet of 8-inch pipeline will be installed beneath the Freshwater Slough using the HDD method. The remaining 380 feet will be installed in an excavated trench on the north side of the slough.
4. The project will result in temporary impacts to seasonal wetlands which are also referred to as diked former tidelands, farmed wetlands, and grazed seasonal wetlands. Impacts associated with temporary access routes, equipment staging, and excavation activities will result in up to 3 acres of temporary impacts to seasonal wetlands. The project is not expected to result in any permanent impacts to wetlands or other waters of the state.
5. The applicant has prepared and submitted a Wetland Mitigation Plan for the project. Wetland mitigation consists of onsite, in-kind restoration of all disturbed wetland areas. Noncompensatory mitigation includes implementation of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control. Compensatory mitigation is not required.
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. The applicant has also applied for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game.
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 15302 – replacement or reconstruction, pursuant to CEQA.
8. This discharge is also regulated under State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2003-0017-DWQ, "General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dredge and Fill Discharges That Have Received State Water Quality Certification," which requires compliance with all conditions of this water quality certification.

Receiving Water: Freshwater Slough and adjacent wetlands in the Eureka Plain Hydrologic Unit No. 110.00

Filled or Excavated Area: Area Temporarily Impacted: 3 acres of seasonal wetlands
Area Permanently Impacted: None

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

Dredge Volume: None

Latitude/Longitude: 40.79637 N/124.12135 W

Accordingly, based on its independent review of the record, the Regional Water Board certifies that the Freshwater Slough Gas Pipeline Replacement Project (WDID No.1B04018WNHU), 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. 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.
5. 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.
6. All activities and BMPs shall be implemented according to the submitted application and the conditions in this certification.
7. A copy of this Order and the application documents 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.
8. The Applicant shall implement the March 26, 2008, Wetland Mitigation Plan.
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 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. All project work shall be conducted as described in this Order and 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.
13. 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.
14. The Applicant shall provide Regional Water Board staff access to the project site to document compliance with this certification.
15. 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 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.
16. 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.

17. 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).
18. The authorization of this certification for any dredge and fill activities expires on August 6, 2013. 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.

Catherine Kuhlman
Executive Officer

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Original to: Ms. Patricia Sanchez, 245 Market Street, Room 1054C, Mail Code N10A,
San Francisco, CA 94105

Copies to: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, District Engineer, 601 Startare Drive,
Box 14, Eureka, CA 95501
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1455 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1398