

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	06-AFC-07C
Project Title:	Humboldt Bay Generating Station - Compliance
TN #:	212946
Document Title:	Notice of Determination
Description:	Petition to Amend Humboldt Bay Generating Station (06-AFC-7C)
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Organization:	California Energy Commission
Submitter Role:	Commission Staff
Submission Date:	8/25/2016 1:11:31 PM
Docketed Date:	8/25/2016

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

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**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
PETITION TO AMEND
HUMBOLDT BAY GENERATING STATION
(06-AFC-7C)**

On May 20, 2016, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) filed a petition with the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) requesting to amend the Final Decision (Decision) for the Humboldt Bay Generating Station (HBGS). The modifications proposed in the petition would relocate the existing natural gas meter on the HBGS site to a different area within the site.

The 163-megawatt facility was certified by the Energy Commission in its Decision on September 24, 2008, and began commercial operation on October 1, 2012. The facility is located in the city of Eureka, in Humboldt County, California.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED MODIFICATION

PG&E seeks approval to amend the Commission Decision to:

- Relocate the existing natural gas meter to a different location on the HBGS site;
- Install a new pipeline connection from a new first point of interconnection with the natural gas line that feeds the HBGS facility (Line 189);
- Install above and below ground pipe for the meter; and
- Remove the original 32-foot diameter pipeline connection from Line 189

To ensure the safety of its gas transmission system, PG&E's natural gas department (not under Energy Commission jurisdiction) has implemented a comprehensive in-line inspection program to detect defects such as corrosion, dents, metal loss, and cracks in its pipelines. The inspection is done by running an in-line inspection tool, also known as a smart pig, through the line to identify and record potential pipe defects or abnormalities. The main natural gas line that supplies the HBGS is PG&E's gas line number 189.

The requested modifications will allow PG&E gas department to install their smart pig receiver and return lines that allow gas piping inspection for line 189. The Energy Commission's webpage for this facility, <http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/humboldt/index.html> has a link to the amendment petition on the right side of the webpage in the box labeled "Compliance Proceeding." Click on the "Documents for this Proceeding (Docket Log)" option.

ENERGY COMMISSION STAFF REVIEW AND DETERMINATION

Staff determined that no laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards (LORS) applicable to proposed modifications to the project have changed since the Decision was published in September, 2008. Staff's conclusions in each technical area are summarized in **Table 1**, below.

Table 1
Summary of Conclusions for Each Technical Area

TECHNICAL AREAS REVIEWED	STAFF RESPONSE			Revised Conditions of Certification Recommended
	Technical Area Not Affected	No Significant Environmental Impact or LORS Inconsistency*	Process As Amendment	
Air Quality		X		
Biological Resources		X		
Cultural Resources		X		
Facility Design	X			
Hazardous Materials Management		X		
Land Use		X		
Noise and Vibration	X			
Geological Resources		X		
Paleontological Resources		X		
Public Health	X			
Socioeconomics		X		
Soil and Water Resources		X		
Traffic and Transportation		X		
Transmission Line Safety and Nuisance	X			
Transmission System Engineering	X			
Visual Resources		X		
Waste Management		X		
Worker Safety and Fire Protection		X		
Compliance	X			

*The proposed modifications will not have a significant effect on the environment, and the modifications will not result in a change in or deletion of a condition adopted by the Energy Commission in the Decision, or make changes that would cause project noncompliance with any applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, or standards (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 20, § 1769 (a)(2).)

Energy Commission staff reviewed the petition for potential environmental effects and consistency with applicable LORS. Staff has determined that the technical or environmental areas of Facility Design, Noise and Vibration, Public Health, Transmission Line Safety and Nuisance, Transmission System Engineering, and Compliance are not affected by the proposed changes.

For the technical areas of Air Quality, Cultural, Geological, Paleontological, Socioeconomics, Soil, Water, Traffic and Transportation, Visual Resources, Waste Management, and Worker Safety and Fire Protection, staff has determined the amended project would continue to comply with applicable LORS and no changes are needed to any conditions of certification to ensure impacts would be less than significant. Staff notes the following for these technical areas:

- **Air Quality**- Staff concludes that the proposed amendment will not result in new impacts or exacerbate impacts addressed in the Decision. Existing Air Quality conditions of certification will be sufficient to reduce impacts from the proposed amendment to less than significant.
- **Biological Resources**- Construction of the proposed modifications would occur close to the border of wetlands, and there could be the possibility of wildlife venturing into the construction zone. Implementation of the previously approved Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for all construction workers (**BIO-5**), installation of temporary fencing and wildlife escape ramps (**BIO-11**), and ensuring on-call availability of the Designated Biologist (**BIO-2**) would ensure impacts to biological resources would be less than significant.
- **Cultural Resources**- Staff has determined that the proposed modifications are not likely to create significant historical resources impacts in the areas where construction is proposed. Those undertakings which will involve ground disturbance at depths where native Horizon A soils may be encountered will require monitoring per **CUL-6**. The project owner has proposed that "a Cultural Resources Monitor (CRM) will be present during excavation of native soil. (PG&E 2016; p 3). Staff concurs that the approved Cultural Resources Specialist (CRS) or CRM shall be present during excavation in these areas. The project owner has also proposed that the WEAP training be provided to the construction workers prior to commencing work. The WEAP training would need to meet the requirements of **CUL-5**.

Compliance with Conditions of Certification **CUL-1** through **CUL-7** and **CUL-11** would ensure that the PTA would have no significant impact on historical resources. **CUL-1** requires the names and resumes of the CRS and CRM be submitted to the Compliance Project Manager (CPM) for approval.

- **Geological Resources**- Based on staff's review, the proposed project modification would not have a significant environmental impact on geologic resources that were not originally analyzed by the Energy Commission when it approved the project in 2008. Protection of public health and safety from geologic hazards would also be ensured. This determination is based on the recommendation that:

Trenching activities would be conducted in a manner that conforms to the current California Building Standards Codes, as specified in mitigation measure **GEN-5** proposed in the Decision.

Additionally, the facility modification would not have an impact on the facility's ability to comply with existing conditions of certification, applicable laws, ordinances, regulations or standards.
- **Paleontological Resources**- Based on staff's review, the proposed project would have no environmental impacts on paleontological resources that were not originally analyzed by the Energy Commission when it approved the project in 2008, and public health and safety would be ensured. Additionally, the facility modification would not have an impact on the facility's ability to comply with existing conditions of certification, applicable laws, ordinances, regulations or standards.
- **Soil and Water Resources**- Based on the information provided by the project owner, staff concludes the proposed modifications would not require a change or deletion of a condition adopted by the Energy Commission in its Decision. Staff also concludes that the proposed modifications would be in compliance with applicable Soil and Water Resources LORS with the implementation of Conditions of Certification **SOIL&WATER- 1, -2, -3, and -6**.
- **Traffic and Transportation**- The additional trips generated by the estimated six to eight workers over a one-month period, and transportation of construction materials for the project modification would be negligible and would not cause significant impacts to traffic level of service or transportation infrastructure. Traffic and transportation system impacts would remain less than significant with continued implementation of the conditions of certification set forth in the Decision.
- **Visual Resources**- The new meter and above ground piping would not produce a significant impact to visual resources from offsite public views. Existing landscaping would screen the low height of the proposed equipment modification from viewers along Highway 101, the nearest public vantage point to the project. Visual resource impacts would remain less than significant with continued implementation of the conditions of certification set forth in the Decision.

- **Waste Management**- Staff concludes that the proposed amendment will not result in new impacts or exacerbate impacts addressed in the Decision. Existing Waste Management conditions of certification will be sufficient to reduce impacts from the proposed amendment to a less than significant level.
- **Hazardous Materials**- The relocation of the gas meter, installation of gas pipe bypass around the gas meter, and the installation of underground gas piping would not have a significant effect on power plant hazardous materials.
- **Land Use**- The proposed relocation of the gas meter and installation of the new pipeline connection would comply with the design standards specified in the Humboldt County Zoning Ordinance, as required by Condition of Certification **LAND-1**.
- **Socioeconomics**- Staff concludes that the proposed amendment would have a less than significant socioeconomic impact as the associated activities would require a minimal workforce for one month.
- **Worker Safety and Fire Protection**- The relocation of the gas meter, installation of a gas pipe bypass around the gas meter, and the installation of underground gas piping would not have a significant effect on power plant worker safety and Fire Protection.

The **Environmental Justice Population Figure** shows 2010 census blocks in the six-mile radius of the HBGS with a minority population greater than or equal to 50 percent. The population in these census blocks represents an EJ population based on race and ethnicity as defined in the Council on Environmental Quality's *Environmental Justice: Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act*.

Based on the American Community Survey (ACS) data in the **Environmental Justice Population Table**, staff concluded that when compared with the below-poverty-level population in Humboldt County, the city of Eureka has a higher percent of people living below the poverty level, and thus are considered an EJ population based on poverty as defined in *Environmental Justice: Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act*.

**Environmental Justice Population Table-
 Poverty Data within the Project Area**

	Total Population	Population Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level (%)
	Estimate*	Estimate	Estimate
GEOGRAPHIES IN A SIX-MILE RADIUS			
Eureka	26,287 ±256	6,186 ±782	23.50 ±2.9
Eureka CCD	48,168 +/-906	9,527 +/-914	19.80 +/-1.9
REFERENCE GEOGRAPHY			
Humboldt County	131,318 +/-426	27,325 +/-1,541	20.80 +/-1.2

Notes: Population for whom poverty is determined. Staff's analysis of the 2010 – 2014 estimates returned coefficient of variation values less than 15, indicating the data is reliable.

Impacts would be less than significant with the project's continued compliance with existing conditions of certification. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant for any population in the project's six-mile radius, including the EJ population represented in **Environmental Justice Population Figure and Environmental Justice Population Table**

California Code of Regulations, title 20, section 1769(a)(2) states, "[w]here staff determines that there is no possibility that the modifications may have a significant effect on the environment, and if the modifications will not result in a change or deletion of a condition adopted by the commission in the final decision or make changes that would cause the project not to comply with any applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, or standards, no commission approval is required...."

Pursuant to that section, staff has determined that approval by the full Commission is not required for this petition and the proposed modifications meet the criteria for approval at the staff level because:

- The modifications will not have any significant effect on the environment;
- Existing conditions of certification are sufficient to cover the proposed modifications without changes to, or deletions of, any conditions of certification; and
- The project as modified will maintain full compliance with applicable LORS.

This Notice of Determination has been mailed to the Energy Commission's facility mail list of interested parties and property owners adjacent to the facility site. It has also been e-mailed to the facility listserv. The listserv is an automated Energy Commission e-mail system by which information about this facility is e-mailed to parties who have subscribed. To subscribe, go to the Energy Commission's webpage for this facility, cited above, scroll down the right side of the project's webpage to the box labeled "Subscribe," and provide the requested contact information.

Any person may file an objection to staff's determination within 14 days of the date of this Notice on the grounds that the project modification does not meet the criteria set forth in Title 20, California Code of Regulations, section 1769(a)(2). Absent any relevant objections, the amendment petition will be approved 14 days after this Notice is docketed. To use the Energy Commission's electronic commenting feature to object to staff's determination, go to the Energy Commission's webpage for this facility, cited above, click on the "Submit e-Comment" link, and follow the instructions in the on-line form. Be sure to include the facility name in your comments. Once submitted, the Energy Commission Dockets Unit reviews and approves your comments, and you will receive an e-mail with a link to them.

Written comments may also be mailed or hand-delivered to:

California Energy Commission
Dockets Unit, MS-4
Docket No. 11-AFC-1C
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

All comments and materials filed with and approved by the Dockets Unit will be added to the facility Docket Log and be publicly accessible on the Energy Commission's webpage for the facility.

If you have questions about this Notice, please contact Bruce Boyer, Compliance Project Manager, at (916) 653-7181, or by fax to (916) 654-3882, or via e-mail at bruce.boyer@energy.ca.gov.

For information on participating in the Energy Commission's review of the petition, please call the Public Adviser at (800) 822-6228 (toll-free in California) or send your e-mail to publicadviser@energy.ca.gov. News media inquiries should be directed to the Energy Commission Media Office at (916) 654-4989, or by e-mail to mediaoffice@energy.ca.gov.

Date: 8/25/16



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