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PROPOSED PUENTE POWER PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION FOR REVIEW

On April 15, 2015, NRG Oxnard Energy Center, LLC, submitted an Application for Certification (AFC) to construct and operate the Puente Power Project (P3) on approximately 3 acres of vacant land at the existing 36-acre Mandalay Generating Station (MGS) at 393 North Harbor Boulevard in Oxnard, Ventura County. P3 would replace two aging gas-fired steam-generating units (MGS Units 1 and 2) with a new General Electric (GE) Frame 7HA.01, natural gas-fired, simple cycle combustion turbine generator with a nominal output of 262 megawatts (MW). P3 would use dry cooling technology versus the once-through cooling system that cools MGS Units 1 and 2 with ocean water. If approved, construction of P3 is expected to occur over a 21-month period (from October 2018 through June 2020), with commercial operation estimated in June 2020.

The Energy Commission is responsible for approving or denying all applications to construct and operate thermal power plants in California, 50 MW and greater, and is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Energy Commission examines public health and safety, environmental impacts, and engineering aspects of proposed power plants and all related facilities. Because it is a certified regulatory program, the Energy Commission produces several environmental and decision documents rather than an Environmental Impact Report.

The first step in the review process is data adequacy. Energy Commission staff must determine whether the AFC contains all the information required by state regulations and make a recommendation to the Energy Commission. When the AFC is deemed data adequate, a committee of two commissioners is assigned, and staff will begin the discovery and issue analysis phases. At that time, a detailed examination of the issues will occur. Later steps in the process include: preparation of a Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA); public workshop(s); publication of a Final Staff Assessment (FSA); evidentiary hearing(s) by the committee to consider testimony and input from staff, the applicant, intervenors, government agencies, and the public; and issuance of a committee proposed decision and a final decision by the full Commission.

The Energy Commission welcomes public involvement and in the coming months will be conducting an information meeting and site visit, along with local workshops and hearings on the proposed project where the public and agencies will have the opportunity to participate in the review of P3. A copy of the application for certification as well as other project information can be found on the Energy Commission web site at: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/puente/>. To stay informed about this project and receive notice of upcoming meetings and workshops, please sign up on the project list serve on the web site. The list serve sends out e-mail notifications when documents and notices are posted on the project review website.

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