

DOCKETED

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Memorandum

Date: September 23, 2016
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To: Janea A. Scott, Commissioner and Presiding Member
Karen Douglas, Commissioner and Associate Member

From: California Energy Commission – Shawn Pittard
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Subject: PUENTE POWER PROJECT STATUS CONFERENCE STATEMENT

In accordance with the Notice of Committee Status Conference issued on September 9, 2016, staff is filing this status conference statement.

Project Activities

The public comment period for the Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA) closed on September 15, 2016. Staff received approximately 1,000 pages of comments from applicant, intervenors, agencies, and the public. Staff is reviewing those comments now.

In response to comments received regarding Environmental Justice issues, staff is preparing a separate Environmental Justice section for inclusion in its Final Staff Assessment (FSA).

Project Schedule

Staff is in consultation with the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (Air District) regarding the publication date for its Final Determination of Compliance (FDOC). Originally, staff anticipated the FDOC would be filed by the close of the PSA public comment period on September 15, 2016. On September 16, the Air District indicated to staff that they planned on filing the FDOC within two to four weeks. Representatives of the Air District are planning to attend the committee conference and provide a report on their progress.

In response to the California Coastal Commission's 30413(d) report, applicant stated it will eliminate the wastewater discharge outfall to the ocean. Applicant has not yet filed a supplement to its application detailing the specifics of the elimination of the outfall structure. These changes to the project will require additional analysis by staff. Depending on the scope of the design change, its potential impacts, and alternative discharge methods, staff may need to issue Data Requests to revise its analysis. At present, staff does not know how many technical sections the design change will impact or the extent of agency coordination the review will require.

During the review of the Puente Power Project application, staff was in contact with Dan Blankenship, biologist with the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW). Staff's coordination with CDFW included a visit to the proposed project site on May 18, 2015. Recently, staff was notified that Mr. Blankenship was replaced by Dr. Jamie Jackson. On September 16, 2016, Dr. Jackson expressed an interest in filing comments on the PSA. Staff is facilitating her participation. Staff's biologist will meet Dr. Jackson at the

proposed project site September 28. Dr. Jackson has committed to filing comments by October 10, 2016.

Staff continues to recommend holding an FSA workshop approximately two weeks after its publication to highlight the changes from the PSA to the FSA to assist review by the parties, agencies, and the public.

Summary

For staff to complete its FSA, it must first receive three outstanding documents: the FDOC, the applicant's design changes pertaining to the outfall, and CDFW's comments. In addition, staff will need time to review and respond to comments on its PSA by the committee—at the upcoming conference—and those already filed by the applicant, intervenors, agencies, and the public. Staff suggests it file a status report with the committee when the necessary documents are received and the scope of the analysis is understood.