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April 25, 2025

California Energy Commission
Attn: Lisa Worrall, Senior Environmental Planner
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

RE: Comments to the Staff Assessment and Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Darden Clean Energy Project (SCH#2024091023)

Dear Ms. Worrall:

On behalf of Pacific Gas and Electric Company ("PG&E"), please find the following comments on the Staff Assessment and Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR") for the proposed Darden Clean Energy Project ("project"). This comment letter supersedes previous correspondence dated April 21, 2025. As the DEIR correctly indicates, the California Energy Commission ("CEC") does not have approval authority over PG&E's construction and operation of its interconnection facilities, which are under the jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission ("CPUC"). The CEC's DEIR also properly includes an environmental assessment of PG&E's interconnection facilities as part of the direct and reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes resulting from construction of the solar generating and battery storage facility.

## General Comments

### CPUC Permitting and Jurisdiction

As indicated in the DEIR, the project will require a new breaker-and-a-half (BAAH) 500 kV Switching Station ("switchyard"), which will connect to the Los Banos-Midway No. 2 500 kV Transmission Line and become part of the California Independent System Operator ("California ISO") transmission system. This switchyard will be constructed by the project applicant, IP Darden I, LLC and Affiliates, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Intersect Power, LLC ("applicant"), and is intended to be acquired, owned and operated by PG&E upon completion and testing of the switchyard to confirm that it meets required standards. PG&E itself will construct, own and operate a new looped transmission line extension from the existing Los Banos-Midway No. 2 500 kV Transmission Line and various downstream network upgrades as described in the DEIR (the "Downstream Network Upgrades"). The CPUC has jurisdiction over the design, construction, operation and maintenance of utility facilities by regulated utilities.

Because PG&E will not construct the switchyard, PG&E requests a universal change to all sections of the DEIR to delete "PG&E utility" before "switchyard" and replace it with "new BAAH 500 kV" switchyard, consistent with the switchyard's description in the California ISO documents. Moreover, the DEIR should clarify that, because the switchyard is not being constructed by PG&E, PG&E is not responsible for any measures related to construction of the new BAAH 500 kV switchyard.

**DEIR Mitigation Measures versus PG&E Construction Measures**

The applicant will construct the new BAAH 500 kV switchyard and PG&E will construct the components identified as the Downstream Network Upgrades as described in Table 3-3, one of the Components of the Three Alternative Fiber Line Scenarios as described in Table 3-4, and the Los Banos-Midway No. 2 500 kV Transmission Line loop into the new BAAH 500 kV switchyard. While the CEC does not have siting, design or construction authority over PG&E's existing electrical facilities or jurisdiction to impose mitigation measures on PG&E for the facilities it constructs, PG&E will incorporate construction measures into the electric transmission line construction generally consistent with the measures described in the DEIR, as specified more particularly in Attachment A, to avoid or minimize potential impacts associated with project construction.

**Specific Comments**

PG&E respectfully requests that the following be considered to ensure the Staff Assessment and DEIR accurately describe the PG&E components of the larger project. For your convenience, each of the comments reference the relevant section, page, and paragraph of the DEIR.

**1 Executive Summary, Introduction, Page 1-1, Paragraph 3:**

The DCEP includes project components that are outside of the CEC's jurisdiction. These components would be subject to California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) jurisdiction. ~~The components include a Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) utility switchyard that the applicant would construct using PG&E-approved contractors and owned and operated by PG&E. Interconnection of the DCEP into the California Independent System Operator (California ISO) regulated electric grid would require PG&E downstream network upgrades.~~ **These components include construction of the Downstream Network Upgrades as described in Table 3-3, one of the Components of the Three Alternative Fiber Line Scenarios as described in Table 3-4, and the Los Banos-Midway No. 2 500 kV Transmission Line loop into and out of the new BAAH 500 kV switchyard. While the design of the new BAAH 500 kV switchyard is also under CPUC jurisdiction, PG&E will not construct it or be responsible for its construction other than providing information concerning design requirements. The Project applicant is responsible for any mitigation for construction of the new BAAH 500 kV switchyard.** The SA does not analyze the non-jurisdictional components **or the new BAAH 500 kV switchyard design** for conformance with LORS; however, since the~~y~~ **non-jurisdictional components** are a part of the whole of the action for CEQA, staff has analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the non-jurisdictional project components and recommended mitigation measures for adoption **as additional Construction Measures within the jurisdiction of** the licensing authority, as necessary.

**2 Introduction, 2.2 Energy Commission Jurisdiction and the Opt-In Certification Program, Page 2-3, Paragraph 4:**

Interconnection of the DCEP with the California Independent System Operator electrical grid would require the construction and operation of a new **BAAH 500 kV** utility switchyard. Also, network system upgrades were identified by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) as necessary to ensure a reliable connection between the DCEP and the grid. ~~Both the new switchyard, to be owned and operated by PG&E, and~~ The network system upgrades are not within the CEC's licensing authority and are considered "non-jurisdictional." The SA does not analyze these non-jurisdictional components for conformance with LORS; however, since they are a part of the whole of the action for CEQA, staff has analyzed the potential environmental impacts of these non-jurisdictional project components and recommended mitigation measures-

~~that can and should be adopted by the licensing authority~~, as necessary. **PG&E will incorporate the recommended measures in accordance with Attachment A as additional Construction Measures under the jurisdiction of the licensing authority.**

**3 Project Description, Non-Jurisdictional Project Components, Page 3-1:**

**Project Overview**
IP Darden I, LLC and Affiliates1 (applicant), wholly owned subsidiaries of Intersect Power, LLC, propose to construct, operate, and eventually repower or decommission the Darden Clean Energy Project (DCEP or project) on approximately 9,500 acres in western Fresno County. The project would operate seven days a week, 365 days a year, with an up to 35-year2 anticipated lifespan. The primary project components are:

- 1,150 megawatt3 (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) facility (solar facility)
- Up to 4,600 MW-hour battery energy storage system (BESS)
- 34.5-500 kilovolt (kV) grid step-up substation (step-up substation)
- 15-mile 500 kV generation-intertie (gen-tie) line
- ~~Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)-owned~~ **New BAAH** 500 kV utility switchyard along the existing **PG&E** Los Banos-Midway #2 500 kV **Transmission Line** ~~transmission line~~

The applicant had previously proposed an 800 MW green hydrogen facility; however, that component is no longer part of the project (RCI 2024dd).

**Non-Jurisdictional Project Components**
To interconnect the DCEP **and the new BAAH 500 kV switchyard** to the California Independent System Operator (California ISO) managed electric grid, **PG&E will relocate and loop approximately 900 feet of the existing Los Banos-Midway No. 2 500 kV Transmission Line into and out of the new BAAH 500 kV switchyard.** ~~a PG&E-owned and operated 500 kV utility switchyard along the Los Banos-Midway #2 500 kV transmission line would be required, including a 500 kV loop in and out line. The applicant would retain an approved PG&E contractor to build the switchyard per PG&E standards and then the switchyard would be deeded over to PG&E to operate and maintain. In addition to the new PG&E utility switchyard~~ The California ISO identified ~~PG&E~~ **Downstream Network Upgrades** ~~downstream network system upgrades~~ that would **also** be necessary to accommodate power generation from the DCEP. Refer to subsection "3.7, Project Facilities and Design" below for more details.

**3.7 Non-Jurisdictional Project Components, 3.7.3 Construction Methods and Activities, Page 3-37, Paragraph 5:**

At each of the existing structures along the 230 kV electric transmission line route, minor upgrades to the steel attachments may be required to accommodate installation of the OPGW. These upgrades would include ~~only~~ overhead work and **minor foundation work** on the existing tower, such as replacing the good peaks with a pulley to accommodate the OPGW line. The existing static wire would then be used to pull the new OPGW through each structure's pulley. Existing roads or helicopters would be used to provide access to the sites to fashion the attachments needed on each structure.

**4.3 Transmission System Engineering, 4.3.1 Setting, Page 4.3-2, Paragraph 3:**

~~General Order 131-D~~ **General Order-131-E**, Rules for Planning and Construction of Electric Generation, Line, and Substation Facilities in California. This General Order specifies application and noticing requirements for new line construction, including EMF reduction.

**4.4 Worker Safety and Fire Protection, 4.4.2 Impacts, Page 4.4-24:**

**~~PG&E Utility Switchyard~~ New BAAH 500 kV Switchyard and Downstream Network Upgrades**

The project would involve construction of the ~~utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard, which would be **deeded to PG&E after construction and inspection to be operated as a regulated utility facility.** ~~owned and operated by PG&E as a utility.~~ The project owner has stated that equipment used for construction of the utility switchyard may include, but is not limited to: cranes, aerial lift, skid steer loaders, rubber tired loaders, rubber tired dozer, welders, trencher, forklift, bore/drill rig, grader, roller, tractor/loader/backhoe, haul trucks, and utility terrain vehicles (UTVs). Approximately 3-acre-feet of water would be used during construction of the utility switchyard, at an average of 50 to 100 gallons per day (this number is included in the overall 1,100 acre-feet of construction water needed for the project as a whole). Special safety hazards would be present during the use of all the above-mentioned equipment and operations involving cranes would require the employ of certified and Cal OSHA-licensed crane operators with a pre-written Lift Plan.

**4.4 Worker Safety and Fire Protection, PG&E Utility Switchyard and Downstream Network Upgrades, Page 4.4-24 and 4.4-28:**

Page 4.4-24: All the proposed transmission system upgrades associated with the Darden Clean Energy Project would be done by PG&E. Major utilities such as PG&E have extensive experience with the types of workplace activities involved with the proposed upgrades. They also are experienced with regulations applicable to worker protection and have extensive worker safety plans and procedures to protect their employees from workplace hazards. Staff concludes that PG&E would~~, for the most part,~~ conduct the upgrade activities in compliance with all applicable LORS that address occupational safety and health regulations. Staff also concludes that the proposed upgrades would~~, for the most part,~~ not require significant levels of service from the local fire department and would not result in significant impacts on local fire protection services in the project area. Standard PG&E occupational safety and health programs and fire protection measures would be followed. ~~However, the PG&E Standard Construction Practices provided to staff focused on ensuring minimal impacts to biological species on the site and listed only a few standard practices ensuring worker safety and health. These standard practices are also not dated so staff has no way of knowing if PG&E's practices Darden Clean Energy Project Staff Assessment have been updated to included recent Cal OSHA worker safety requirements. In order to ensure that worker safety and health LORS are followed on these non-jurisdictional project elements, and to enhance worker safety, staff is proposing MM WORKER SAFETY-1 and WORKER SAFETY-2.~~

Page 4.4-24: All the proposed transmission system upgrades associated with the Darden Clean Energy Project would be done by PG&E. Major utilities such as PG&E have extensive experience with the types of workplace activities involved with the proposed upgrades. They also are experienced with regulations applicable to worker protection and have extensive worker safety plans and procedures to protect their employees from workplace hazards. Staff concludes that PG&E would~~, for the most part,~~ conduct the upgrade activities in compliance with all applicable LORS that address occupational safety and health regulations. Staff also concludes that the proposed upgrades would~~, for the most part,~~ not require significant levels of service from

the local fire department and would not result in significant impacts on local fire protection services in the project area. Standard PG&E occupational safety and health programs and fire protection measures would be followed. ~~However, the PG&E Standard Construction Practices provided to staff focused on ensuring minimal impacts to biological species on the site and listed only a few standard practices ensuring worker safety and health. These standard practices are also not dated so staff has no way of knowing if PG&E's practices Darden Clean Energy Project Staff Assessment have been updated to included recent Cal OSHA worker safety requirements. In order to ensure that worker safety and health LORS are followed on these non-jurisdictional project elements, and to enhance worker safety, staff is proposing MM WORKER SAFETY-1 and WORKER SAFETY-2.~~

Page 4.4-28: ~~Impacts associated with non-jurisdictional project components require mitigation to reduce impacts to less than significant. Staff recommends the mitigation measures detailed in subsection "4.4.6 Recommended Mitigation Measures" below. The mitigation measures recommended below could and should be implemented by the permitting authority (CPUC) as mitigation measures.~~

PG&E also requests that the CEC strike Section 4.4.6 regarding "Recommended Mitigation Measures" on pages 4.4-35 through 4.4-38. (See Attachment A.)

**4.4 Worker Safety and Fire Protection, 4.4.6 Recommended Mitigation Measures:**
Construction of Downstream Network Upgrades as described in Table 3-3, one of the Components of the Three Alternative Fiber Line Scenarios as described in Table 3-4, and the Los Banos-Midway No. 2 500 kV Transmission Line loop into the new BAAH 500 kV switchyard would include mechanisms intended to protect the public from accidents or failure of project components. The construction of PG&E project components would comply with federal and state regulations and standards. All authorized personnel working on-site during construction would be trained according to OSHA safety standards (OSHA 2015), which are based on applicable federal, state, and local safety regulations. All PG&E employees and contract partners will follow PG&E's utility safety standards, in particular PG&E Injury & Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP), which is required under California law, to eliminate exposure to injury, accidents, or hazards based on unsafe or unhealthy work conditions in the field. All PG&E employees and contract partners will also follow standards for preventing and mitigating fires while performing PG&E work, working on or near facilities located on any forest, brush, or grass-covered lands using equipment, tools, and/or vehicles whose use could result in the ignition of a fire. This includes areas that seem urban or suburban but have vegetation that can aid in the spread of an ignition. Please remove recommended mitigation measures **MM WS-1, MM HAZ-2,** and **MM PH-1** from the "non-jurisdictional" component of the project for downstream network upgrades to be constructed by PG&E, as indicated in Attachment A.

Furthermore, during construction, migration of dust from the construction sites would be limited by control measures set forth by **MM AQ-1, MM BIO-2, and MM BIO-3** for the PG&E project components. Work areas would also be stabilized using best management practices (BMPs) described in storm water pollution prevention plans (SWPPPs) prepared for PG&E project components. Please remove recommended mitigation measure **MM WS-2** from the "non-jurisdictional" component of the project for downstream network upgrades to be constructed by PG&E, as indicated in Attachment A.

**5.1 Air Quality, 5.1.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts, Page 5.1-17:**

**~~PG&E Utility Switchyard~~ <u>New BAAH 500 kV Switchyard</u>**

As shown in **Table 5.1-4** and **Table 5.1-5**, the worst-case unmitigated construction emission rates, under Phase 6, for all criteria pollutants would be below the applicable SJVAPCD thresholds of significance. Therefore, the construction during Phase 6 (construction of the ~~PG&E~~ **New BAAH 500 kV** ~~utility~~ switchyard) would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plans of SJVAPCD. ~~The PG&E Construction Measures for air quality identify measures to reduce fugitive dust during construction. Staff has concluded that these measures are sufficient to further reduce emissions from construction activities. Staff recommends Mitigation Measure (**MM**) **AQ-1**, which includes PG&E Construction Measures for air quality to further reduce construction emissions.~~

**5.1 Air Quality, 5.1.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts, Page 5.1-28:**

~~**PG&E Utility Switchyard**~~ **New BAAH 500 kV Switchyard**

As shown in **Table 5.1-5**, construction of the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard in the 36-month construction scenario would contribute to total NOx and CO emissions that would exceed SJVAPCD annual significance thresholds. As shown in **Table 5.1-4**, in the 18-month construction scenario, construction of the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard would contribute to NOx and CO emissions that would exceed SJVAPCD annual significance thresholds. As shown in **Tables 5.1-11** and **5.1-13**, however, impacts from unmitigated construction emissions, would not exceed the NAAQS or CAAQS for CO under any construction schedule. **Tables 5.1-12** and **5.1-14** show that PM10 and PM2.5 impacts from unmitigated project construction emissions would not exceed SILs levels under any construction schedule.

Therefore, construction of the entire project, including the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard, would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standards. ~~For the PG&E utility switchyard, staff recommends mitigation measure **(MM) AQ-1**, which includes PG&E Construction Measures for air quality to reduce construction emissions, and thus further reduce emissions of criteria pollutants below applicable standards.~~

**5.1 Air Quality, 5.1.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts, Page 5.1-35:**

~~**PG&E Utility Switchyard**~~ **New BAAH 500 kV Switchyard**

The applicant included the construction emission sources for the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard in the ambient air quality impacts analysis for the Darden project. Therefore, the project impacts shown in **Tables 5.1-11** through **Table 5.1-14** include emissions from the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard.

**Tables 5.1-11** through **Table 5.1-14** show that construction of the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. ~~Staff recommends **MM AQ-1,** which requires generalized procedures to reduce construction emissions, and thus further reduce pollutant concentrations from construction activities.~~

**5.2 Biological Resources, 5.2.1 Environmental Setting, Page 5.2-1:**

**Existing Conditions**

The project would be located on approximately 9,500 acres in unincorporated Fresno County, within the San Joaquin Valley. For the purposes of analysis, the project site is defined as all areas subject to permanent and temporary impacts. This includes both jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional components. The jurisdictional components include, the solar facility, battery energy storage system (BESS), step-up substation, ~~and~~ generation-intertie (gen-tie) line, **a new**

**BAAH 500 kV switchyard,** and associated facilities while the non-jurisdictional components include ~~the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) utility switchyard and~~ the PG&E downstream network upgrades. The PG&E downstream network upgrades are not included in the 9,500 acres. The project area can be broadly defined as all areas surrounding the project site that would not be subject to development but would include adjacent habitat outside the site boundaries. The project vicinity includes all areas within 10 miles of the proposed project site and beyond.

The ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard would be located on lands that would be deeded to PG&E upon completion and inspection, to be owned and operated by PG&E as a public utility. The PG&E downstream network upgrades, identified by California Independent System Operator as necessary to accommodate the project, would include three alternative scenarios for fiber line communications (Scenario 1 Fiber Line, Scenario 2 Fiber Line, and Scenario 3 Fiber Line) within existing PG&E electric distribution and transmission line corridors, as well as proposed upgrades at four existing PG&E substations, the Cantua Substation, Los Banos Substation, Midway Substation, and Gates Substation. The Gates Substation and Cantua Substation are located in Fresno County, California, the Los Banos Substation is located in Merced County, California, and the Midway Substation is located in Kern County (RCI 2024cc).

**5.2 Biological Resources, 5.2.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts, Page 5.2-121:**

**~~PG&E Utility Switchyard~~ New BAAH 500 kV Switchyard and Downstream Network Upgrades**

Although the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard is analyzed as part of the project pursuant to CEQA, ultimate licensing authority will fall under the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) **upon transfer**. PG&E would separately comply with CPUC permitting requirements for its interconnection facilities (RCI 2024u). ~~Construction-related impacts for the PG&E utility switchyard would be covered by implementation of the standard PG&E Construction Measures (RCI 2024u).~~ PG&E has indicted that they will implement the applicable PG&E Construction Measures as part of the construction ~~and operation of the PG&E utility switchyard as well as~~ for the downstream network upgrades. These upgrades would include the three alternative scenarios for fiber line communications as well as proposed upgrades at four existing PG&E substations.

The applicant provided a list of standard PG&E Construction Measures to address direct and indirect impacts to special-status plants from construction of the non-jurisdictional components of the project (RCI 2024cc). These measures would be followed by PG&E and its contractors during construction of the ~~PG&E utility switchyard and~~ downstream network upgrades. However, ~~construction of the PG&E switchyard and the~~ construction activities for the facilities and equipment installed as part of the selected alternative fiber line scenario and the upgrades at existing PG&E substations would not be covered under the PG&E San Joaquin Valley Operation and Maintenance Habitat Conservation Plan (O&M HCP) as these do not meet the definition of limited minor new construction in the HCP. (Jones & Stokes Associates, Inc. 2006), as detailed in Data Response Set 6 - Appendix D REV 1 DR TSD-1 BRA Vol 1 (RCI 2024cc).

**5.2 Biological Resources, 5.2.6 Recommended Mitigation Measures:**

Please remove recommended mitigation measures **MM BIO-19** and **MM BIO-20** from the "non-jurisdictional" component of the project for downstream network upgrades to be constructed by PG&E, as they apply only to the switchyard being constructed by the project applicant.

Also, **MM BIO-11** should be consistent with Section 1913 (b) of the Native Plant Protection Act, which provides: (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 1911, ... the removal of endangered or rare native plants from a ... or other right-of-way by the owner of the land or his agent, or the performance by ... privately owned public utility of its obligation to provide service to the public, shall not be restricted by this chapter because of the presence of rare or endangered plants, except as provided in subdivision (c) of this section. Section (c), in turn, states: ... where the owner of land has been notified by the department pursuant to Section 1903.5 that a rare or endangered native plant is growing on such land, the owner shall notify the department at least 10 days in advance of changing the land use to allow for salvage of such plant. The failure by the department to salvage such plant within 10 days of notification shall entitle the owner of the land to proceed without regard to this chapter.

**5.3 Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, 5.3.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts, Page 5.3-12:**

~~**PG&E Utility Switchyard**~~ **New BAAH 500 kV Switchyard**

The ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard's short-term construction GHG emissions would not generate substantial greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, and would not have a significant impact on the environment. Over the 18-month and 36-month scenario durations of construction, total GHG emissions associated with the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** Switchyard would amount to approximately 6,665 MTCO2e and 5,112 MTCO2e, respectively including all equipment and vehicle use, associated with the utility switchyard (RCI 2023ll). Construction vehicles and the supplies of transportation fuels used during construction of the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard are required to comply with the applicable GHG reduction programs for mobile sources and suppliers of transportation fuels. ~~Staff recommends Mitigation Measure (MM) GHG-1, which includes PG&E construction measures for GHG as described in Section 5.3.6 of this analysis, to further reduce GHG emissions from construction.~~ Construction activities of the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard would conform to relevant programs and recommended actions detailed in CARB's Scoping Plan.

**5.3 Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, 5.3.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts, Page 5.3-17:**

~~**PG&E Utility Switchyard**~~ **New BAAH 500 kV Switchyard**

The ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard's short-term construction GHG emissions would not interfere with the state's ability to achieve long-term GHG emissions reduction goals. Construction vehicles and the supplies of transportation fuels used during construction of the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard are required to comply with the applicable GHG reduction programs for mobile sources and suppliers of transportation fuels. Construction activities of the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard would conform to relevant programs and recommended actions detailed in CARB's Scoping Plan. ~~The PG&E Construction Measures for GHGs identify measures to reduce emissions during construction. Staff has concluded that these measures are sufficient to reduce emissions from construction activities. Staff recommends MM GHG-1, which includes PG&E Construction Measures to further reduce construction emissions.~~

**5.4 Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, 5.4.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts, Page 5.4-21:**

~~**PG&E Utility Switchyard**~~ **New BAAH 500 kV Switchyard**

No built environment historical resources were identified within the utility switchyard location. Therefore, no construction impacts to the built environment historical resources would occur as a

result of this project component. The utility switchyard location exhibits moderate to high sensitivity for buried archaeological resources. Historical agricultural activities in the project area have disturbed roughly the first 18 inches below the current ground surface. The applicant's response to Data Request DR PD-10 indicates excavation at the proposed utility switchyard will be 10–22 feet deep. (RCI 2024k, p. 20.) Ground-disturbing activities for the utility switchyard location project component within soils not previously disturbed could result in significant impacts to archaeological resources due to the depth of proposed ground-disturbing activities and location within moderate to high-sensitivity areas.

~~The PG&E Construction Measures for cultural and tribal cultural resources identify professional qualifications for specialists and monitors who will observe project implementation, train the construction workforce in basic identification of historical resources, prepare and implement a monitoring plan, implement stop-work procedures (if required), and reporting to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on all activities. These measures would prevent or reduce impacts on inadvertently found historical resources through early discovery, documentation, and other mitigative actions. Staff has concluded that these measures are sufficient to reduce. Staff recommends Mitigation Measures (MMs) CUL-1 through CUL-3. These measures would form a comprehensive monitoring program for inadvertent discoveries of historical resources during project implementation.~~

**5.4 Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, 5.4.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts, Page 5.4-24:**

~~**PG&E Utility Switchyard**~~ **New BAAH 500 kV Switchyard**

No unique archaeological resources are known to exist within the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard component location. Given the high to moderate sensitivity for buried archaeological resources, however, there is a potential that a previously unidentified unique archaeological resource might be unearthed during construction. The ~~PG&E Construction Measures for cultural and~~ tribal cultural resources identify professional qualifications for specialists and monitors who will observe project implementation, train the construction workforce in basic identification of historical resources, prepare and implement a monitoring plan, **and** implement stop-work procedures (if required)~~, and reporting to the CPUC on all activities~~. measure would prevent or reduce impacts on inadvertently found historical resources through early discovery, documentation, and other mitigative actions. Staff has concluded that these measures are sufficient to reduce impacts. ~~Staff recommends **MMs CUL-1** through **CUL-3**. These measures would form a comprehensive monitoring program for inadvertent discoveries of historical resources during project implementation.~~

**5.4 Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, 5.4.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts, Page 5.4-26:**

~~**PG&E Utility Switchyard**~~ **New BAAH 500 kV Switchyard**

No formal cemeteries or human remains interred outside of formal cemeteries are known to exist within the ~~utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard component location. Given the high to moderate sensitivity for buried archaeological resources, however, there is a potential that a previously unidentified human remains might be unearthed during construction. ~~The PG&E Construction Measure **MM CUL-3** identifies stop-work procedures and reporting requirements to the CPUC in the event human remains are discovered. Staff has concluded that this measure is sufficient to reduce impacts. Staff recommends **MM CUL-3**. This measure would prevent or reduce impacts on inadvertently found human remains through early discovery, documentation, and other mitigative actions.~~

**5.4 Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, 5.4.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts, Page 5.4-28 and Page 5.4-31:**

~~**PG&E Utility Switchyard**~~ **New BAAH 500 kV Switchyard**

To date no tribal cultural resources that are listed or are eligible for listing on the CRHR have been identified within the ~~PG&E utility~~ **new BAAH 500 kV** switchyard. There is a possibility, however, that ground disturbance associated with the proposed project could result in the destruction of buried, as-yet unknown precontact archaeological resources that might qualify as tribal cultural resources. If these resources were to be destroyed, it would be significant impact. The ~~PG&E Construction Measures for cultural and~~ tribal cultural resources identify professional qualifications for specialists and monitors who will observe project implementation, train the construction workforce in basic identification of historical resources, prepare and implement a monitoring plan, **and** implement stop-work procedures (if required)~~, and reporting to the CPUC on all activities~~. measure would prevent or reduce impacts on inadvertently found historical resources through early discovery, documentation, and other mitigative actions. ~~Staff has concluded that these measures are sufficient to reduce impacts. Staff recommends MMs CUL-1 through CUL-3. These measures would form a comprehensive monitoring program for inadvertent discoveries of historical resources during project implementation.~~

**5.4 Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, 5.4.6 Recommended Mitigation Measures:**
The Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources measures within the DEIR are consistent with those supplied by PG&E for all "non-jurisdictional" components of the project to be constructed by PG&E. The measures are feasible and appropriately scaled to work on electric transmission line facilities, including OPGW work. PG&E has no object to these measures, and will incorporate them into the Construction Measures as indicated in Attachment A.

**5.6 Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals, 5.6.6 Recommended Mitigation Measures, Page 5.6-43 to Page 5.6-51:**
The measures for paleontology appear to be scaled to the extensive ground disturbance necessary for the solar farm or the switching station and are not appropriate for transmission line work. Ground disturbance on the transmission line will be focused on limited, isolated locations, and, if work is required to place poles or dig foundations, would require tools and involve a shaft so narrows as to make paleo monitoring pointless. In addition, due to the nature of the work, monitoring rarely would provide sufficient visibility to allow resources, if any were present, to be seen. Finally, unlike the large areal excavations and grading work required for a solar facility or a switchyard, digging for poles or footings creates a narrow shaft in which it would be difficult to safely recover fossils buried more than a few feet deep.

The Geological, Paleontological, and Minerals measures **MM CIVIL-1, MM GEO-1, MM GEO-2, MM GEN-1, MM PAL-1, MM PAL-2, MM PAL-3, MM PAL-4, MM PAL-5, MM PAL-6, MM PAL-7,** and **MM PAL-8** are not appropriate to PG&E's work on this project. **MM CUL-1** provides for worker training in paleontology as well as cultural resources. (See Attachment A.) The project applicant is responsible for measures applicable to the switchyard construction.

**5.12 Solid Wast Management, 5.12.6 Recommended Mitigation Measures, Page 5.12-11:**
Please remove recommended mitigation measure **MM WASTE-1** the "non-jurisdictional" component of the project for downstream network upgrades to be constructed by PG&E, as it applies to construction of the switchyard. (See Attachment A.)

**5.15 Visual Resources, 5.15.6 Recommended Mitigation Measures, Page 5.12-68:**

Please remove recommended mitigation measure **MM VIS-1** from the "non-jurisdictional" component of the project for downstream network upgrades to be constructed by PG&E, as it applies to construction of the switchyard. (See Attachment A.)

We would be happy to discuss these comments further if that would be helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (559) 365-0144 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

*Jameson Saberon*

Jameson Saberon
Senior Land Planner, Environmental Planning and Permitting

Cc:
Jo Lynn Lambert, Counsel for PG&E
Wendy Nettles, PG&E Supervisor, Environmental Management

# ATTACHMENT A

Construction Measure Responsibilities, Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Darden Clean Energy Project (SCH#2024091023)

## SUMMARY

The following document has been prepared to identify construction measure requirements applicable to Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) work activities during construction of the transmission line loop and downstream network upgrades for the Darden Clean Energy Project (Project) and measures applicable to the BAAH 500 kV Switchyard that will be constructed by the Project applicant.

**The DEIR's "non-jurisdictional" recommended mitigation measures identified below are applicable to Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) work activities during PG&E's construction of the transmission line loop and downstream network upgrades. The CPUC will not issue a discretionary approval for construction of these PG&E interconnection facilities, which qualify for an exemption and noticing under General Order 131-E. For this reason, the measures will instead be incorporated into PG&E's Construction Measures with the minor revisions shown below.**

**Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions (MM GHG-1):**

Encourage construction workers to carpool to the job site to the extent feasible. The ability to develop an effective carpool program for the project will depend upon the proximity of carpool facilities to the area, the geographical commute departure points of construction workers, and the extent to which carpooling will not adversely affect worker arrival time and the project's construction schedule.

- Minimize unnecessary construction vehicle idling time for on-road and off-road vehicles. The ability to limit construction vehicle idling time will depend on the sequence of construction activities and when and where vehicles are needed or staged. Certain vehicles, such as large diesel-powered vehicles, have extended warm-up times following start-up that limit their availability for use following startup. Where such diesel-powered vehicles are required for repetitive construction tasks, these vehicles may require more idling time. The project will apply a "common sense" approach to vehicle use, so that idling is reduced as far as possible below the maximum of 5 consecutive minutes allowed by California law; if a vehicle is not required for use immediately or continuously for construction activities, its engine will be shut off. Construction foremen will include briefings to crews on vehicle use as part of preconstruction conferences. Those briefings will include discussion of a "common sense" approach to vehicle use.
- Maintain construction equipment in proper working conditions in accordance with PG&E standards.
- Minimize construction equipment exhaust by using low-emission or electric construction equipment, where feasible. Portable diesel fueled construction equipment with engines 50 horsepower or larger and manufactured in 2000 or later will be registered under the CARB Statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program.
- Minimize welding and cutting by using compression of mechanical applications where practical and within standards.
- Encourage use of natural gas-powered vehicles for passenger cars and light-duty trucks where feasible and available.
- Encourage recycling construction waste where feasible.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-1):**

**Worker Environmental Awareness Training.** A qualified biologist will develop an environmental awareness training program that is specific to the project. All on-site construction personnel will attend the training before they begin work on the project. Training will include a discussion of the construction management practices that are being implemented to protect biological resources as well as the terms and conditions of any project permits.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-2):**

**Standard Construction Practices.** The following standard construction practices will be implemented, ~~as feasible,~~ to reduce the potential for environmental impacts.

- Vehicle parking: vehicles and equipment will be parked on pavement, existing roads, and previously disturbed areas to the

extent practicable.
• Work hours: work will occur only during daylight hours, unless required to occur at night due to line clearances for worker safety.
• Vehicle access: the development of new access and ROW roads will be minimized, and clearing vegetation and blading for temporary vehicle access will be avoided to the extent practicable.
• Speed limit: vehicles will not exceed a speed limit of 15 mph in the ROWs or on unpaved roads within sensitive land-cover types.
• Restoration and erosion control: on completion of any project component, all areas that are significantly disturbed and not necessary for future operations, shall be stabilized to resist erosion, and revegetated and re-contoured if necessary, to promote restoration of the area to pre- disturbance conditions.
Dead or injured listed species: personnel will be required to report any accidental death or injury of a listed species or the finding of any dead or injured listed species to a qualified Biologist. Notification of CDFW and/or USFWS of any accidental death or injury of a listed species shall be done in accordance with standard reporting procedures.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-3):**
**Access.**
• Vehicles and equipment must use pavement, existing roads, and previously disturbed areas to the extent practicable.
• Keep off-road travel, blading, and vegetation clearing to the minimum extent necessary for safe vehicle/equipment access.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-4):**
**Trash.**
• Place all activity and food-related trash in a covered receptacle and remove from the activity area daily.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-5):**
**Refueling.**
• No vehicles or heavy equipment will be refueled within 100 feet of a wetland, stream, or other waterway, or within 250 feet of vernal pools, unless secondary containment is used.
• Vehicles will carry adequately stocked spill kits and staff must be trained in their use.
• The fueling operator must always stay with the fueling operation.
• Do not top off tanks.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-6):**
**Waterways.** Cleared or pruned vegetation, woody debris (including chips), and lose or exposed soil, must be disposed of in a manner to ensure that these materials do not enter surface water or a water feature.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-7):**
**Wildlife Entrapment.** Inspect pipes, culverts and other construction material and equipment for wildlife prior to moving them. **Should wildlife become trapped, a qualified biologist shall remove and relocate the animal to a safe location. Any wildlife encountered during the course of construction shall be allowed to leave the construction area unharmed.**

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-8):**
**Wildlife Sighting.** No wildlife or plant species will be handled or removed from activity areas.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-9):**
**Invasive Species.** Clean all vehicles, equipment, clothing, etc. of material potentially containing noxious weeds/seeds prior to entering and existing work locations. Cleaning can be accomplished by brushing, washing, or blowing with compressed air.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-10):**
**Herbicides.** Herbicides will be applied in a manner to avoid drift, will be stored and transported in a manner to prevent spilling, and will be applied to target species only. Applications must not be made in, immediately prior to, or immediately following rain.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-11):**
**Special-Status Plants.** Prior to the start of ground disturbance activities, a qualified biologist knowledgeable on the identification of rare plant species shall conduct a pre-construction plant survey of areas proposed disturbance and 100-foot buffer (where legally accessible) timed during the appropriate blooming period of the survey season immediately prior to construction to determine if any special-status plant species are present. If special-status plants

are identified on-site, their locations shall be mapped and PG&E shall confer with CDFW or USFWS as required by applicable law **to avoid take ~~of state or federally listed species.~~** or to facilitate salvage or seed collection.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-12):**

**Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard.** If qualified biologists determine work areas are located within suitable habitat for blunt-nosed leopard lizard (BNLL), protocol level surveys for the BNLL shall be conducted in accordance with the 2019 CDFW Approved Survey Methodology for the Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard no more than one year prior to initiation of work activities to determine the potential for occupancy by BNLL. The survey methods applied shall be commensurate with the anticipated level of disturbance to BNLL habitat.

**Within work areas identified as suitable BNLL habitat as described above,** t~~T~~emporary work areas which do not require ground disturbance that would result in habitat modification would follow the protocol "Survey for Disturbances for Maintenance Activities" which requires a total of 8-day**s of BNLL** surveys over the course of the adult active period between April 15 and July 15. A minimum of 3 survey days will be conducted consecutively, with a maximum of 6 survey days completed within any 30-day time period. Fall hatchling surveys will not be required unless conditions or anticipated construction methods change. Examples of work activities include grading existing roads or previously disturbed areas, mowing, overland travel, and equipment staging that does not require improvements to existing conditions (pullsites, landing zones, staging areas).**~~Darden Clean Energy Project Staff Assessment BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES 5.2 233~~**

**Within work areas identified as suitable BNLL habitat as described above,** ~~A~~ a ~~longer~~ **multi-season** survey effort, "Surveys for Disturbances Leading to Habitat Removal," which includes both spring adult surveys and fall hatchling surveys, will be required for ground disturbing activities anticipated to result in **permanent** impacts to BNLL habitat. Examples of work activities include establishment of new roads or structures, conversion of land use, and excavations such as those required for underground infrastructure (trenching or boring of underground fiber). Adult BNLL surveys shall be conducted for 12 days over the course of the 90- day adult optimal survey period (April 15 to July 15), with a maximum of 4 survey days per week and 8 survey days within any 30-day time period. At least one survey session should be conducted for 4 consecutive days. In addition to the 12 days of BNLL surveys required for activities in this category, 5 additional survey days are required during the hatchling optimal survey period, with at least 2 survey days conducted between August 15-30 and at least 2 survey days between September 15-30, for a total of 17 survey days overall within the same survey season/calendar year. ~~If surveys indicate that BNLL and appropriate burrow habitat are absent, the construction areas can be fenced using materials and installing temporary wildlife exclusion fencing in compliance with agency specifications to prevent potential occupancy of BNLL in active construction work areas.~~ If BNLL are found within the survey areas **during surveys or incidental observations, prior to any activities starting or resuming (whichever applies) within 50 feet distance of the detection, in that measures to ensure complete avoidance of any project related impacts to BNLL must be implemented. These measures must at a minimum include installation of appropriate signage, on site monitoring by approved qualified biologists during all ground disturbing activities within 50 feet of the detection, and consultation with the USFWS and the CDFW to develop a BNLL avoidance plan, which must then be implemented.**

~~If surveys indicate that BNLL and appropriate burrow habitat are absent, the construction areas can be fenced using materials and installing temporary wildlife exclusion fencing in compliance with agency specifications to prevent potential occupancy of BNLL in active construction work areas. If BNLL are found within the survey areas, measures to protect the species shall include appropriate signage, monitoring by approved qualified biologists and consultation with the USFWS and the CDFW to develop a BNLL avoidance plan.~~ If burrows are found to be occupied, measures for avoidance and minimization of impact to BNLL shall be written in compliance with recommendations provided during agency consultations and shall contain project specific details. Project actions in areas where BNLL are located shall be restricted to the species' active period (April to early November) to ensure that no aestivating BNLL in burrows are impacted while in their burrows. In conjunction with CDFW or other involved agencies, sensitive areas shall be established and protected with appropriate signage.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-13):**

**San Joaquin Kit Fox, America Badger, Burrowing Owl.**

No less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the start of ground disturbing activities, a qualified biologist knowledgeable in the identification of all special-status wildlife species shall conduct a pre- construction survey of areas proposed for disturbance within work areas and 500-foot buffer (where legally accessible) to determine if any special-status species are present. If, as a result of this pre- construction survey it is determined that Burrowing Owl, American Badger or San Joaquin Kit Fox are present, the following measures shall be implemented:

1. If signs of Burrowing Owl or American Badger are identified on-site, **CDFW shall be notified,** and appropriate buffers shall be established to limit all construction activities. Buffers for burrows shall be as follows:

**Burrowing Owls:**

Location Time of Year Level of Disturbance

Nesting Sites 4/1-8/15 200m (low) 500m (med) 500m (high)

Nesting Sites 8/16-10/15 200m (low) 500m (med) 500m (high)
Nesting Sites 10/16-3/31 50m (low) 100m (med) 500m (high)
These burrowing owl active burrow buffers are drawn from CDFW's 2012 burrowing owl staff report, which specifically provides that activities may occur within them if resource managers allow on the basis of existing vegetation, human development, and land use in the area. ~~If required buffers are infeasible, PG&E shall confer with CDFW to develop a Burrowing Owl and American Badger Exclusion Plan. No relocation or collapsing of burrows or dens will be allowed until the Plan has been reviewed and approved by CDFW. The plan shall be consistent with the recommendations of CDFW's 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation and include, at a minimum:~~
~~a. Confirm by site surveillance that the burrow(s) is empty of burrowing owls and other species preceding burrow scoping;~~
~~b. Type of scope to be used and appropriate timing of scoping to avoid impacts;~~
~~c. Occupancy factors to look for and what shall guide determination of vacancy and excavation timing (one-way doors should be left in place for 48 hours to ensure burrowing owls have left the burrow before excavation, visited twice daily and monitored for evidence that owls are inside and can't escape, i.e., look for sign immediately inside the door).~~
~~d. How the burrow(s) shall be excavated. Excavation using hand tools with refilling to prevent reoccupation is preferable whenever possible (may include using piping to stabilize the burrow to prevent collapsing until the entire burrow has been excavated and it can be determined that no owls reside inside the burrow);~~
2. If signs of **San Joaquin Kit Fox** are identified on-site, appropriate buffers shall be established limiting all construction activities. Buffers include (50 feet) for a potential den, (100) feet for a known den and (500) feet for a natal or pupping den, unless otherwise specified by **USFWS and/or** CDFW. If required buffers are not possible to protect the species, then a confer with CDFW **and USFWS** will be initiated to determine the need for take authorization through the acquisition of an incidental take permit, pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081 subdivision (d) **and appropriate USFWS permit.**

**American Badger/San Joaquin Kit Fox**:
a. Potential or Atypical den—50 feet
b. Known den—100 feet
c. Natal or pupping den—500 feet, unless otherwise specified by CDFW

**San Joaquin Kit Fox:**
In determining whether SJKF activity could occur within these buffers, the biological monitor would take into account the following:
a. Noise level and duration. The noise level and duration of activities would be considered. Loud (e.g. greater than 80 decibels) are sustained (e.g. longer than one hour) activities would be disallowed within the buffer setbacks. Activities with shorter durations and/or lower noise levels may be considered with continual observation of the den by the monitor and work stoppage if the biologist detects evidence of disturbance.
b. Level of disturbance typically experienced in the location of the den prior to construction. Some areas (e.g. existing roads or agricultural areas) have been historically subject to human disturbance and dens near these areas are assumed to be accustomed to those previous levels of disturbance. If construction noise and duration are similar to disturbances that would have occurred in the area prior to construction (e.g. vehicular traffic on an existing road), those activities could continue with ongoing monitoring of the den by a biological monitor.
c. If construction activities have begun within 100-feet of a potential or atypical den that was determined during pre-construction activities to be inactive when construction began and the den becomes active during construction (i.e., becomes a "known" den), then work shall stop and CDFW and/or USFWS should be contacted to avoid take. those activities would be allowed to continue at the same intensity as occurred when the den became active. A biological monitor would maintain continual watch on the den while construction activities are conducted within the buffer describe above.
d. In no case would construction activities, regardless of noise and duration, occur closer than 50-feet from a known or potential/atypical den or 500 feet from a natal/pupping den unless approved by CDFW or USFWS. Evidence that construction activities were causing negative changes in behavior patterns would cause the biologist to disallow those activities inside the buffer.
e. If a the minimum 50 or 500- foot no disturbance buffer cannot be maintained, then consultation with USFWS and/or CDFW is warranted to determine if the work activities can avoid take or if authorization is necessary as described below.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-14):**
Swainson's Hawk. If ground-disturbing activities outside of existing maintenance roads are anticipated to occur during the nesting season for Swainson's hawks (generally March through July), a qualified wildlife biologist will conduct pre-construction surveys within 0.50 miles of such activities that occur within or near suitable breeding habitat for nesting Swainson's hawks. The biologist will also consult with CDFW and species experts to determine if there are any known active Swainson's hawk nests or traditional territories within 0.50 miles of the work areas. If Swainson's hawk nests are identified onsite or within 0.5-miles from work areas, PG&E will confer with CDFW to prepare a Swainson's hawk nesting construction

plan. The purpose of this plan would be to identify what level of monitoring would be required, what types of construction activities can occur and what locations within the project site and what avoidance setbacks need to be established, if any, to minimized impacts to an active Swainson's hawk nest.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-15):**

**Le Conte's Thrasher, Golden Eagle, San Joaquin Antelope Squirrel, Coast Horned Lizard and the Tulare Grasshopper Mouse.** Within 30-days prior to the start of ground disturbance, a pre-construction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist knowledgeable in the identification of all special-status plant and wildlife species identified by the project's CEQA review to have a potential to occur, including Le Conte's thrasher, golden eagle, San Joaquin antelope squirrel **(SJAS)**, coast horned lizard, and the Tulare grasshopper mouse. Surveys need not be conducted for all areas at one time; they may be phased so that surveys occur within 30-days of the portion of the project site that will be disturbed. The location and nature of all special-status species observations resulting from the pre-construction survey shall be documented and any suitable dens and/or burrows that could support fossorial special-status wildlife species will be examined for potential occupancy and documented. Documentation of completed studies shall be
retained and made available to applicable wildlife agency staff on request. Should individuals or active nesting/burrowing sites of the species be present on- site, PG&E shall confer with the appropriate wildlife agency and commence work only once a plan has been established and approved by the applicable agency.

a. A minimum 50-foot no disturbance buffer shall be employed around SJAS burrows. If a minimum 50- foot no disturbance buffer cannot be maintained, then consultation with CDFW is warranted to determine if the work activities can avoid take or if authorization is necessary as described below.

b. If a minimum 50-foot no disturbance buffer for SJAS is not feasible, consultation with CDFW shall occur to discuss how to implement work activities and avoid take. If take cannot be avoided, take authorization
through the acquisition of an incidental take permit, pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081 subdivision (d) will be necessary to comply with CESA.

c. If Tulare grasshopper mouse or coast horned lizard are observed during surveys, a 50-foot no disturbance buffer shall be installed around burrows where these species are present.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-16):**

**Giant Kangaroo Rat and San Joaquin Antelope Squirrel.** In the unanticipated event that giant kangaroo rat are discovered on site, the following procedures shall be implemented: Giant kangaroo rat precincts and
any SJAS burrows that could be occupied by SJAS shall be flagged and a 50- foot-wide buffer around the precincts shall be avoided by construction equipment and ground disturbing activities, if feasible. If a minimum 50-foot no disturbance buffer is not feasible, consultation with CDFW shall occur to discuss how to implement the work activity and avoid take. If take cannot be avoided, take authorization through the acquisition of an ITP, pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081 subdivision (d) will be necessary to comply with CESA.

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-17):**

**Nesting Bird Surveys Prior to Construction**. Wherever possible, clearing and grubbing of vegetation will be completed in the non-breeding season preceding construction. If ground-disturbing activities occur during the nesting bird season (February 1-September 15), a qualified biologist shall conduct pre-activity surveys for active nests no more than thirty days prior to the start of ground disturbance to maximize the probability that nests that could potentially be impacted are detected. Surveys shall cover a sufficient area around the work site to identify nests and determine their status. A sufficient area means any area potentially affected by a project. In addition to direct impacts (i.e. nest destruction), noise, vibration, odors, and movement of workers or equipment could also affect nests. Prior to initiation of construction activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a survey to establish a behavioral baseline of all identified nests and confirm site conditions have not changed **and identify any additional nests.**

**Biological Resources (MM BIO-18):**

**Nesting Bird Monitoring and/or Avoidance Buffers During construction.** Once construction begins, a qualified biologist shall continuously monitor nests to detect behavioral changes resulting from the project. If behavioral changes occur, the work causing that change will cease and CDFW may be consulted if necessary for additional avoidance and minimization measures if work must proceed and behavior does not return to the identified baseline condition. If continuous monitoring of identified nests by a qualified biologist is not feasible, a minimum no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet around active nests of non- listed bird species and a 500-foot no-disturbance buffer around active nests of non-listed raptors shall be implemented. These buffers are advised to remain in place until the breeding season has ended or until a qualified biologist has determined that the birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or parental care for survival. Variance from these no-disturbance buffers is possible when there is a compelling biological or ecological reason to do so, such as when the

construction area would be concealed from a nest site by topography. A qualified biologist shall advise and support any variance from these buffers.

**Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources (MM CUL-1):**

**Worker Awareness Training**. PG&E will provide environmental awareness training on archeological and paleontological resources protection. This training may be administered by the PG&E CRS or a designee as a standalone training or included as part of the overall environmental awareness training as required by the project and will at minimum include: types of cultural resources or fossils that could occur at the project site; types of soils or lithologies in which the cultural resources or fossils could be preserved; procedures that should be followed in the event of a cultural resource, human remain, or fossil discovery; and penalties for disturbing cultural or paleontological resources.

**Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources (MM CUL-2):**

**Flag and Avoid Known Resources.** Sites will be marked with flagging tape, safety fencing, and/or sign designating it as an "environmentally sensitive area" to ensure that PG&E construction crews and heavy equipment will not intrude on these sites during construction. At the discretion of the PG&E CRS, monitoring may be done in lieu of or in addition to flagging. If it is determined that the project cannot avoid impacts on one or more of the sites, then, for those sites that have not been previously evaluated, evaluation for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)/California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) will be conducted. Should the site be found eligible, appropriate measures to reduce the impact to a less-than significant level will be implemented, including but not limited to data recovery, photographic and archival documentation, or other measures as deemed appropriate. If it is determined that sites that have been previously determined to be eligible for inclusion in either the NRHP or CRHR cannot be avoided, measures will be implemented to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level, including but not limited to data recovery, photographic and archival documentation, or other measures as deemed appropriate.

**Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources (MM CUL-3):**

Unanticipated Cultural Resources If unanticipated cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during site preparation or construction activities, work will stop in that area and within 100 feet of the find until CRS or their qualified designee can assess the significance of the find and, if necessary, develop appropriate treatment measures in consultation with PG&E and other appropriate agencies. Work may continue in other portions of the project area with the CRS's approval. PG&E will implement the CRS's or their designee's recommendations for treatment of discovered cultural resources. Human Remains In the unlikely event that human remains or suspected human remains are uncovered during preconstruction testing or during construction, all work within 100 feet of the discovery will be halted and redirected to another location. The find will be secured, and the CRS or designated representative will be contacted immediately to inspect the find and determine whether the remains are human. If the remains are not human, the CRS will determine whether the find is an archaeological deposit and whether the "Unanticipated Cultural Resources" paragraph of this mitigation measure should apply (see previous paragraph). If the remains are human, the cultural resources specialist will immediately implement the applicable provisions in PRC Sections 5097.9 through 5097.996, beginning with the immediate notification to the affected county coroner. The coroner has two working days to examine human remains after being notified. If the coroner determines that the remains are Native American, California Health and Safety Code 7050.5 and PRC Section 5097.98 require that the coroner contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours. The NAHC, as required by PRC Section 5097.98, will determine and notify the Most Likely Descendant.

**Transmission Line Safety and Nuisance (MM TLSN-1):**

PG&E ~~Switchyard and~~ Downstream Network Upgrades belong to non-jurisdictional components: Downstream Transmission facilities are constructed to satisfy CPUC and PG&E construction standards such as G.O 95,128 and 131~~ DE~~. ~~Additionally, PG&E should get approval from the FAA if the downstream transmission structures reach a height of 200 feet or above.~~

## PG&E will also implement the following construction measures for the transmission line loop and downstream network upgrade components that PG&E will construct:

**Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

**Hazardous-Substance Control and Emergency Response**

PG&E will implement its hazardous substance control and emergency response procedures to ensure the safety of the public and site workers during construction. The procedures identify methods and techniques to minimize the exposure of the public and site workers to potentially hazardous materials during all phases of project construction through operation. They address worker training appropriate to the site worker's role in hazardous substance control and emergency response. The

procedures also require implementing appropriate control methods and approved containment and spill-control practices for construction and materials stored on-site. If it is necessary to store chemicals on-site, they will be managed in accordance with all applicable regulations. Material safety data sheets will be maintained and kept available on-site, as applicable.

Project construction will involve soil surface blading/leveling, excavation of up to several feet, and augering to a maximum depth of 35 feet in some areas. In the event that soils suspected of being contaminated (on the basis of visual, olfactory, or other evidence) are removed during site grading activities or excavation activities, the excavated soil will be tested, and if contaminated above hazardous waste levels, will be contained and disposed of at a licensed waste facility. The presence of known or suspected contaminated soil will require testing and investigation procedures to be supervised by a qualified person, as appropriate, to meet state and federal regulations.

All hazardous materials and hazardous wastes will be handled, stored, and disposed of in accordance with all applicable regulations, by personnel qualified to handle hazardous materials. The hazardous substance control and emergency response procedures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Proper disposal of potentially contaminated soils.
- Establishing site-specific buffers for construction vehicles and equipment located near sensitive resources.
- Emergency response and reporting procedures to address hazardous material spills.

Stopping work at that location and contacting the County Fire Department Hazardous Materials Unit immediately if visual contamination or chemical odors are detected. Work will be resumed at this location after any necessary consultation and approval by the Hazardous Materials Unit.

**Worker Environmental Awareness**

The training will include the following components related to hazards and hazardous materials:

- PG&E Health, Safety, and Environmental expectations and management structure.
- Applicable regulations.
- Summary of the hazardous substances and materials that may be handled and/or to which workers may be exposed.
- Summary of the primary workplace hazards to which workers may be exposed.
- Overview of the controls identified in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan

**Employ Noise-Reducing Construction Practices during Temporary Construction Activities**

PG&E will employ standard noise-reducing construction practices such as the following:

- Ensure that all equipment is equipped with mufflers that meet or exceed factory new-equipment standards.
- Locate stationary equipment as far as practical from noise-sensitive receptors.
- Limit unnecessary engine idling.
- Limit all construction activity near sensitive receptors to daytime hours unless required for safety or to comply with line clearance requirements. Minimize noise-related disruption by notifying residents. Should nighttime project construction be necessary because of planned clearance restrictions, affected residents will be notified at least 7 days in advance by mail, personal visit, or door hanger, and informed of the expected work schedule.

**Temporary Traffic Controls**

PG&E will obtain any necessary transportation and encroachment permits from Caltrans and the local jurisdictions, as required, including those related to state route crossings and the transport of oversized loads and certain materials, and will comply with permit requirements designed to prevent excessive congestion or traffic hazards during construction. PG&E will develop road and lane closure or width reduction or traffic diversion plans as required by the encroachment permits. Construction activities that are in or along or that cross local roadways will follow best management practices and local jurisdictional encroachment permit requirements—such as traffic controls in the form of signs, cones, and flaggers—to minimize impacts on traffic and transportation in the project area.

**Air Transit Coordination**

PG&E will implement the following protocols related to helicopter use during construction and air traffic:

- PG&E will comply with all applicable Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations regarding air traffic within 2 miles of the project alignment.
- PG&E's helicopter operator will coordinate all project helicopter operations with local airports before and during project construction.
- Helicopter use and landing zones will be managed to minimize impacts on local residents.

**Coordinate Road Closures with Emergency Service Providers**

At least 24 hours prior to implementing any road or lane closure, PG&E will coordinate with applicable emergency service

providers in the project vicinity. PG&E will provide emergency service providers with information regarding the road or lanes to be closed; the anticipated date, time, and duration of closures; and a contact telephone number.

**Access:**

• Vehicles and equipment must use pavement, existing roads, and previously disturbed areas to the extent practicable.
• Keep off-road travel, blading, and vegetation clearing to the minimum extent necessary for safe vehicle/equipment access.

**Trash**:

Place all activity and food-related trash in a covered receptacle and remove from the activity area daily.

**Refueling:**

• No vehicles or heavy equipment will be refueled within 100 feet of a wetland, stream, or other waterway, or within 250 feet of vernal pools, unless secondary containment is used.
• Vehicles will carry adequately stocked spill kits and staff must be trained in their use.
• The fueling operator must always stay with the fueling operation.
• Do not top off tanks.

**Air Quality:**

**Fugitive Dust Control**

The following actions will be taken, as applicable and feasible, to control fugitive dust during construction. SJVAPCD notifications will be made in accordance with any requirements in effect at the time of construction.
• Applying water to disturbed areas and to storage stockpiles.
• Applying water in sufficient quantities to prevent dust plumes during activities such as clearing & grubbing, backfilling, trenching and other earth moving activities.
• Limit vehicle speed to 15 miles per hour.
• Load haul trucks with a freeboard (space between top of truck and load) of six inches or greater.
• Cover the top of the haul truck load.
• When material are transported off site, all material will be covered or wetted to limit visible dust emissions, and at least 6-inches of freeboard space from the top of the container shall be maintained.
• Clean-up track-out at least daily.
• Minimize unnecessary idling time through application of a “common sense” approach to vehicle use-if a vehicle is not required immediately or continuously for construction activities, its engine will be shut off. Construction foremen will include briefings to crews on vehicles use as part of pre-construction conferences. Those briefings will include discussion of a “common sense” approach to vehicle use.
• Maintain construction equipment in good working order.
• Minimize construction equipment exhaust by using low-emission or electric construction equipment where feasible. Portable diesel fueled construction equipment with engines 50 hp or larger and manufactured in 2000 or later will be registered under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program, or shall meet a minimum US EPA/CARB Tier 1 engine standards.

**Prepare and Implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)**

PG&E will prepare and implement a SWPPP to prevent construction-related erosion and sediments from entering nearby waterways. The SWPPP will include a list of BMPs to be implemented in areas with potential to drain to any water body. BMPs to be part of the project-specific SWPPP may include, but are not limited to, the following control measures.
• Implementing temporary erosion control measures (such as silt fences, staked straw bales/wattles, silt/sediment basins and traps, check dams, geofabric, sandbag dikes, grass buffer strips, high infiltration substrates, grassy swales, and temporary revegetation or other ground cover) to control erosion from disturbed areas.
• Protecting drainage facilities in downstream off-site areas from sediment using appropriate BMPs.
• Protecting the quality of surface water from non-stormwater discharges such as equipment leaks, hazardous materials spills, and discharge of groundwater from dewatering operations.
• Restoring disturbed areas, after project construction is completed, unless otherwise requested by the landowner in agricultural land use areas.

**Stormwater Runoff:**

* Properly handle, store, and use materials to prevent soil contamination or discharge from site.
* Store liquid materials in watertight container with appropriate secondary containment or in a fully enclosed storage shed.
* Barricade or cover storm drains with impervious material during demolition activities that involve liquid pollutants or chemicals.

* Minimize dry pollutants exposure to precipitation.
* Install stabilized entrances and/or implement street sweeping to prevent track out to paved surfaces.
* Cover or barricade drains within reasonable proximity to the work area during concrete work. Provide appropriate washout containment and train personnel to wash equipment and tools into the containment BMP. Re-schedule concrete work if rain is forecast. Use vacuum to collect concrete cuttings or slurry and dispose of properly.
* Portable toilets must be placed at least 50 feet away from water features, have trays to contain spills and minor leaks, stabilizing features to prevent tipping, and serviced regularly.
* Provide waste receptacle (dumpster) adequate in size. Cover all waste containers at end of each day and prior to rain events. Do not allow rinse or wash water (concrete rinse, paint wash, etc.) to contact the ground and/or paved surfaces nor allow rinse or wash water to be directed or dumped into any drain inlet or surface water and properly dispose of all rinse and/or wash water.
* Maintain vehicles and equipment in good working condition. Perform fueling and maintenance activities only in areas fitted with appropriate BMPs. Maintain spill kits on-site in case of spill.

**Employ Noise-Reducing Construction Practices during Temporary Construction Activities:**

PG&E will employ standard noise-reducing construction practices such as the following:

- Ensure that all equipment is equipped with mufflers that meet or exceed factory new-equipment standards.
- Locate stationary equipment as far as practical from noise-sensitive receptors.
- Limit unnecessary engine idling.

Limit all construction activity near sensitive receptors to daytime hours unless required for safety or to comply with line clearance requirements. Minimize noise-related disruption by notifying residents. Should nighttime project construction be necessary because of planned clearance restrictions, affected residents will be notified at least 7 days in advance by mail, personal visit, or door hanger, and informed of the expected work schedule.

**Decommissioning:**

The switching station will become a permanent asset of PG&E's electrical transmission system upon testing and transfer. Any decommissioning plans for the solar project would exclude PG&E-owned facilities. PG&E will be required to decommission the switching station and towers in accordance with local, CPUC, and wildlife agency standards and regulations.

## The DEIR recommended mitigation measures identified below are applicable to the new BAAH 500 kV Switchyard that will be constructed by the Project applicant. The DEIR should clarify that these measures or the existing Conditions of Certification that cover the same issues will be implemented by the Project applicant. These measures will not be implemented by PG&E.

**Worker Safety and Fire Protection (MM WS-1):**

The person with authority shall submit to the CPUC a copy of the Project Construction Health and Safety Program containing the following:

• a Construction Personal Protective Equipment Program;
• a Construction Exposure Monitoring Program;
• a Construction Injury and Illness Prevention Program;
• a Construction Emergency Action Plan that fulfills the requirements of California Public Utilities Code 761.3 section (g);
• a Helicopter Code of Safe Practices that incorporates all provisions of tit. 8, §§ 1901-1909 and specially includes an added limitation of operations to be conducted only during day light hours, a landing zone dust control plan, a traffic control plan for areas where the loads would be deposited and near any public road or highway, includes requirements for a Designated Biologist(s) to monitor and avoid avian impacts, and complies with FAA Regulations 14 CFR Part 91 (General Operating and Flight Rules) and Part 133 (Rotorcraft External-Load Operations);
• an Emergency Response Plan; and
• a Construction Fire Prevention Plan that includes methods of access for emergency responders through locked gates.

The Construction Health and Safety Program shall be submitted to the FCFPD for review and comment prior to submittal to the permitting authority for approval.

**Worker Safety and Fire Protection (MM WS-2):**

The person with authority shall develop and implement a worker VF Prevention and Response Plan that includes an enhanced Dust Control Plan containing the following requirements:

1. The main access roads through the facility will be either paved or stabilized using soil binders, or equivalent methods, to

provide a stabilized surface that is similar for the purposes of dust control to paving, that may or may not include a crushed rock (gravel or similar material with fines removed) top layer, prior to initiating construction, and delivery areas for operations materials (chemicals, replacement parts, etc.) will be paved or treated prior to taking initial deliveries.
2. All unpaved construction roads and unpaved operation and maintenance site roads, as they are being constructed, shall be stabilized with a non-toxic soil stabilizer or soil weighting agent that can be determined to be as efficient as or more efficient for fugitive dust control than CARB approved soil stabilizers, and that shall not increase any other environmental impacts, including loss of vegetation to areas beyond where the soil stabilizers are being applied for dust control. All other disturbed areas in the project and linear construction sites shall be watered as frequently as necessary during grading; and after active construction activities shall be stabilized with a non-toxic soil stabilizer or soil weighting agent, or alternative approved soil stabilizing methods, in order to comply with the dust mitigation objectives of COC AQ-SC4. The frequency of watering can be reduced or eliminated during periods of precipitation.
3. No vehicle shall exceed 10 miles per hour on unpaved areas within the construction site, with the exception that vehicles may travel up to 25 miles per hour on stabilized unpaved roads as long as such speeds do not create visible dust emissions.
4. Visible speed limit signs shall be posted at the construction site entrances.
5. All construction equipment vehicle tires shall be inspected and washed as necessary to be cleaned free of dirt prior to entering paved roadways.
6. Gravel ramps of at least 20 feet in length must be provided at the tire washing/cleaning station.
7. All unpaved exits from the construction site shall be graveled or treated to prevent track-out to public roadways.
8. All construction vehicles shall enter the construction site through the treated entrance roadways, unless an alternative route has been submitted to and approved by the permitting authority.
9. Construction areas adjacent to any paved roadway below the grade of the surrounding construction area or otherwise directly impacted by sediment from site drainage shall be provided with sandbags or other equivalently effective measures to prevent run-off to roadways, or other similar run-off control measures as specified in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), only when such SWPPP measures are necessary so that this condition does not conflict with the requirements of the SWPPP.
10.All paved roads within the construction site shall be swept daily or as needed (less during periods of precipitation) on days when construction activity occurs to prevent the accumulation of dirt and debris.
11.At least the first 500 feet of any paved public roadway exiting the construction site or exiting other unpaved roads enroute from the construction site or construction staging areas shall be swept as needed (less during periods of precipitation) on days when construction activity occurs or on any other day when dirt or runoff resulting from the construction site activities is visible on the public paved roadways.
12.All soil storage piles and disturbed areas that remain inactive for longer than 10 days shall be covered or shall be treated with appropriate dust suppressant compounds.
13.All vehicles that are used to transport solid bulk material on public roadways and that have potential to cause visible emissions shall be provided with a cover, or the materials shall be sufficiently wetted and loaded onto the trucks in a manner to provide at least two feet of freeboard.
14.Wind erosion control techniques (such as windbreaks, water, chemical dust suppressants, and/or vegetation) shall be used on all construction areas that may be disturbed. Any windbreaks installed to comply with this condition shall remain in place until the soil is stabilized or permanently covered with vegetation.
15.Site worker use of dust masks (NIOSH N-95 or better) whenever visible dust is present.
16.Implementation of enhanced dust control methods (increased frequency of watering, use of dust suppression chemicals, etc. immediately whenever visible dust comes from or onto the site. Should enhanced dust control methods fail to control dust, the on-site person with authority or designate shall direct a temporary shutdown of the activity causing the emissions. The activity shall not restart until the on-site person with authority or designate is satisfied that appropriate additional mitigation or other site conditions have changed so that visual dust plumes will not result upon restarting the shutdown source.
17.Specific training on VF as per Labor Code Section 6109 which requires that employers of workers in high-incidence counties (Fresno County is included) shall provide effective awareness training on VF to all employees before work begins and annually by that date thereafter.
18.Medical referral protocol.
19.Reporting of medically diagnosed cases to the California Department of Public Health, Cal OSHA, and the permitting authority.

**Air Quality (MM AQ-1):**

Fugitive Dust Control.

- Applying water to disturbed areas and to storage stockpiles.
- Limit vehicle speed to 15 miles per hour.
- Load haul trucks with a freeboard (space between top of truck and load) of six inches or greater.

• Cover the top of the haul truck load.
• When material are transported off site, all material will be covered or wetted to limit visible dust emissions, and at least 6-inches of freeboard space from the top of the container shall be maintained.
• Clean-up track-out at least daily.
• Minimize unnecessary idling time through application of a "common sense" approach to vehicle use-if a vehicle is not required immediately or continuously for construction activities, its engine will be shut off. Construction foremen will include briefings to crews on vehicles use as part of pre-construction conferences. Those briefings will include discussion of a "common sense" approach to vehicle use.
• Maintain construction equipment in good working order.
• Minimize construction equipment exhaust by using low-emission or electric construction equipment where feasible. Portable diesel fueled construction equipment with engines 50 hp or larger and manufactured in 2000 or later will be registered under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program or shall meet a minimum US EPA/CARB Tier 1 engine standards.

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM CIVIL-1):**
Under the responsible charge of an appropriate registered California professional, the project owner shall prepare and submit the following to the ~~CPUC~~ CEC **prior to the construction of the switchyard**:
1. Design of the proposed drainage structures and the grading plan;
2. An erosion and sedimentation control plan;
3. A construction storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP);
4. Soils, geotechnical, or foundation investigations reports required by the 2022 CBC; and
5. Design plans, calculations, and other supporting documentation to mitigate the risks of geologic and seismic hazards on people and project structures to less than significant.

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM GEO-1):**
As described in the CBC (2022) Section 1803.1 and Fresno County Code of Ordinances Title 17 (2024), or their successors, the project owner shall complete a preliminary soil report. The report shall specifically include laboratory test data, associated geotechnical engineering analyses, and a thorough discussion of seismicity, liquefaction, dynamic compaction, compressible soils, corrosive soils, and ground rupture due to faulting. The report must also include recommendations for ground improvement and foundation systems necessary to mitigate these potential geologic hazards, if present. As described CBC (2022) Sections 1803.2 to 1803.5, the project owner shall complete geotechnical investigations if investigative conditions exist for questionable soils, expansive soils, shallow groundwater, deep foundations, rock strata, excavations near foundations, compacted fill material, controlled lowstrength material, alternate setback and clearance, and Seismic Design Categories C through F. In accordance with the California Business and Professions Code and CBC (2022) Section 1803.1, the preliminary soils report and other geotechnical investigations must be prepared under the responsible charge of, and signed by, appropriate qualified California licensed individuals. As described in Section 1803.7 of the California Building Code (CBC 2022), or its successor in effect at the time construction of the project commences, the project owner shall complete a geohazards report. The geohazard report shall identify geologic and seismic conditions that may require mitigation. An appropriate qualified California-certified licensed engineering geologist, in consultation with a California registered geotechnical engineer, shall prepare, sign, and seal the geohazards report.

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM GEO-2):**
As described in the CBC (2022) Sections 1803.2 to 1803.5, the project owner shall complete geotechnical investigations if investigative conditions exist for questionable soils, expansive soils, shallow groundwater, deep foundations,rock strata, excavations near foundations, compacted fill material, controlled lowstrength material, alternate setback and clearance, and Seismic Design Categories C through F. In accordance with the California Business and Professions Code and CBC (2022) Section 1803.1, the geotechnical investigations must be prepared under the responsible charge of, and signed by, appropriate qualified California licensed individuals.

As described in Section 1803.7 of the California Building Code (CBC 2022), or its successor in effect at the time construction of the project commences, the project owner shall complete a geohazards report. The geohazard report shall identify geologic and seismic conditions that may require mitigation. An appropriate qualified California-certified licensed engineering geologist, in consultation with a California registered geotechnical engineer shall prepare, the geohazards portion of the geotechnical report.

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM GEO-3):**
Standard PG&E Construction Measures recommend the following actions to minimize and mitigate construction in soft or

loose soils (RCI 2024cc). Where soft or loose soils are encountered during project construction, several actions are available, feasible and can be implemented to avoid, accommodate, replace, or improve such soils. Depending on site-specific conditions and permit requirements, one or more of these actions may be implemented to eliminate impacts from soft or loose soils (RCI 2024cc):

- Locating construction facilities and operations away from areas of soft and loose soil.
- Over-excavating soft or loose soils and replacing them with engineered backfill materials.
- Increasing the density and strength of soft or loose soils through mechanical vibration and/or compaction.
- Installing material, such as aggregate rock, steel plates, or timber mats, over access roads.
- Treating soft or loose soils in place with binding or cementing. (RCI 2024cc)

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM GEN-1):**

The project owner shall design, construct, and inspect the project in accordance with the 2022 California Building Standards Code (CBSC 2022) which encompasses the California Building Code (CBC), California Building Standards Administrative Code, California Electrical Code, California Mechanical Code, California Plumbing Code, California Energy Code, California Fire Code, California Code for Building Conservation, California Reference Standards Code, and all other engineering LORS applicable to civil and structural aspects of the project in effect at the time initial design plans are submitted to the CPUC for review and approval. The CBSC in effect is the edition that has been adopted by the California Building Standards Commission and published at least 180 days previously). The project owner shall ensure that all the provisions of the above applicable codes are enforced during the construction, addition, alteration, moving (onsite), demolition, repair, or maintenance of the completed facility.

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM PAL-1):**

The project owner shall provide the CPUC with the resume, qualifications, and contact information of its PRS for review and approval. The PRS's resume shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the CPUC the appropriate education and experience to accomplish the required paleontological resource tasks. The PRS's resume shall also include the names and phone numbers of references that can be contacted to verify information. As determined by the CPUC, the PRS shall meet the minimum qualifications for a Qualified Professional Paleontologist as defined in the Standard Procedures for the Assessment and Mitigation of Adverse Impacts to Paleontological Resources by SVP (SVP 2010).

The qualifications of the PRS shall include the following:

1. Institutional affiliations, appropriate credentials, and college degree (M.S., Ph.D., or equivalent).
2. Ability to recognize and collect fossils in the field.
3. Local geological and biostratigraphic expertise.
4. Proficiency in identifying vertebrate and invertebrate fossils.
5. At least three years of paleontological resource mitigation and field experience in California and at least one year of experience leading paleontological resource mitigation and field activities.

The project owner shall ensure that the PRS obtains qualified paleontological resource monitors (PRMs) to monitor as he or she deems necessary on the project. PRMs shall have the equivalent of the following qualifications:

1. B.S. or B.A. degree in geology or paleontology and a minimum of one year of relevant paleontological resource monitoring experience in California; or
2. A.S. or A.A. in geology, paleontology, or biology and a minimum of four years of relevant paleontological resource monitoring experience in California; or
3. Enrollment in upper division classes pursuing a bachelor's degree or a more advanced degree in the field of geology or paleontology and a minimum of three years of relevant paleontological resource monitoring experience in California.

If the approved PRS is replaced prior to completion of project mitigation and submittal of the PRR, the project owner shall obtain CPUC approval for the replacement PRS. The project owner shall keep resumes on file for the qualified PRSs and PRMs.

The PRM's resume shall include the names and contact information of references. If a PRM is replaced, the resume of the replacement PRM shall also be provided to the CPUC for review and approval.

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM PAL-2):**

The project owner shall provide to the PRS and the CPUC, for approval, maps and drawings showing the footprint of the power plant, construction laydown areas, and all related facilities. Maps shall identify all areas of the project where ground disturbance is anticipated. If the PRS requests enlargements or strip maps for linear facility routes, the project owner shall provide copies to the PRS and CPUC. The site grading plan and the plan and profile drawings for the utility lines would be

acceptable for this purpose. The plan drawings must show the location, depth, and extent of all ground disturbances and be at a scale between 1 inch = 40 feet (1:480) and 1 inch = 100 feet (1:1,200). If the footprint of the project or its linear facilities change, the project owner shall provide maps and drawings reflecting those changes to the PRS and CPUC.

If construction of the project proceeds in phases, maps and drawings may be submitted prior to the start of each phase. A letter identifying the proposed schedule of each project phase shall be provided to the PRS and CPUC. Before work commences on affected phases, the Project owner shall notify the PRS and CPUC of any construction phase scheduling changes. At a minimum, the project owner shall ensure that the PRS or PRM consults weekly with the project superintendent and construction field manager to confirm area(s) to be worked the following week, until ground disturbance is completed.

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM PAL-3):**

The project owner shall ensure that the PRS prepares a PRMMP and submits it to the CPUC for review and approval. Approval of the PRMMP by the CPUC shall occur prior to any ground disturbance. The PRMMP shall function as the formal guide for monitoring, collecting, sampling, and reporting activities, and may be modified with CPUC approval. The PRMMP shall be used as the basis of discussion when on-site decisions or changes are proposed. Copies of the PRMMP shall include all updates and reside with the PRS, each PRM, the project's on-site manager, and the CPUC. The PRMMP shall be developed in accordance with the guidelines of the SVP (SVP 2010) and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Procedures for and assurance that those procedures would be followed in the performance and sequence of project-related tasks, such as any literature searches, pre-construction surveys, worker environmental training, field work, flagging or staking, construction monitoring, mapping and data recovery, fossil preparation and collection, identification and inventory, preparation of final reports, and transmittal of materials for curation.
2. Identification of the person(s) expected to assist with each of the tasks required by the PRMMP and these COCs.
3. A thorough discussion of the geologic units expected to be encountered, the location and depth of the units relative to the project when known, and the known sensitivity of those units based on the occurrence of fossils either in that unit or in correlative units.
4. An explanation of why sampling is needed, a description of the sampling methodology, and how much sampling is expected to take place and in which geologic units. This should include descriptions of the sampling procedures that shall be used for fine-grained and coarse-grained units.
5. A discussion of the locations where monitoring of project construction activities is deemed necessary, and a proposed plan for monitoring and sampling at these locations.
6. A discussion of procedures to be followed: (a) in the event of a significant fossil discovery, (b) stopping construction, (c) resuming construction, and how notifications shall be performed.
7. A discussion of equipment and supplies necessary for collection of fossil materials and any specialized equipment needed to prepare, remove, load, transport, and analyze large-sized fossils or extensive fossil deposits.
8. Procedures to inventory, prepare, and deliver fossil materials for curation in a retrievable storage collection at a public repository or museum that meet the SVP's standards and requirements for the curation of paleontological resources.
9. Identification of the institution that has agreed to receive data and fossil materials collected, requirements or specifications for materials delivered for curation and how they shall be met, and the name and phone number of the contact person at the institution.
10. A copy of the paleontological resources COCs.
11. A copy of the daily monitoring log form.

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM PAL-4):**

Prior to ground disturbance the project owner and the PRS shall prepare a CPUC-approved WEAP. The WEAP shall address the possibility of encountering paleontological resources in the field, the sensitivity and importance of these resources, and legal obligations to preserve and protect those resources. The purpose of the WEAP is to train project workers to recognize palaeontologic resources and identify procedures they must follow to ensure there are no impacts to sensitive palaeontologic resources.

The WEAP shall include:

1. A discussion of applicable laws and penalties under the law.
2. Good quality photographs or physical examples of fossils expected to be found in units of high palaeontologic sensitivity at, or near, the project site.
3. Information that the PRS and PRM have the authority to stop or redirect construction in the event of a discovery or unanticipated impact to a paleontological resource.
4. Instruction that employees are to stop or redirect work in the vicinity of a find and to contact their supervisor and the PRS or PRM.
5. An informational brochure that identifies reporting procedures in the event of a discovery.

6. A WEAP certification of completion form signed by each worker indicating that they have received the training.
7. A sticker that shall be placed on hard hats indicating that environmental training has been completed.

The project owner shall submit the training script and, if the project owner is planning to use a video for training, a copy of the training video, with the set of reporting procedures for workers to follow that shall be used to present the WEAP and qualify workers to conduct ground disturbing activities that could impact paleontological resources.

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM PAL-5):**

No worker shall excavate or perform any ground disturbance activity prior to receiving CPUC-approved WEAP training by the PRS, unless specifically approved by the CPUC. Prior to project ground disturbance, the following workers shall be WEAP trained by the PRS in-person: project managers, construction supervisors, foremen, and all general workers involved with or who operate ground-disturbing equipment or tools. Following the start of ground disturbing activities and after the initial WEAP training conducted prior to ground disturbance, a CPUC- approved video or inperson training may be used for new employees. If a video is used a qualified trainer shall be present to monitor training and respond to questions. The training program may be combined with other training programs prepared for cultural and biological resources, hazardous materials, or other areas of interest or concern. A WEAP certification of completion form shall be used to document who has received the required training.

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM PAL-6):**

The project owner shall ensure that the PRS and PRM(s) monitor, consistent with the PRMMP, all construction-related grading and excavation in areas where potential fossil-bearing materials have been identified, both at the site and along any constructed linear facilities associated with the project. If the PRS determines full-time monitoring is not necessary in locations that were identified as potentially fossil bearing in the PRMMP, the project owner shall notify and seek the concurrence with the CPUC. The project owner shall ensure that the PRS and PRM(s) have the authority to stop or redirect construction if paleontological resources are encountered. The project owner shall ensure that there is no interference with monitoring activities unless directed by the PRS. Monitoring activities shall be conducted as follows:

- Any change of monitoring from the accepted schedule in the PRMMP shall be proposed in a letter or email from the PRS and the project owner to the CPUC prior to the change in monitoring and be included in the MCR. The letter or email shall include the justification for the change in monitoring and be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval.
- The project owner shall ensure that the PRM(s) keep a daily monitoring log of paleontological resource activities; copies of these logs shall be submitted with the MCR. The name and contact information of PRM(s) and PRS who were making field observations shall be included in the daily log. The PRS may informally discuss paleontological resource monitoring and mitigation activities with the CPUC at any time.
- The project owner shall ensure that the PRS notifies the CPUC within 24 hours of the occurrence of any incidents of non-compliance with any paleontological resources COCs. The PRS shall recommend corrective action to resolve the issues or achieve compliance with the COCs.
- For any significant paleontological resources encountered, either the project owner or the PRS shall notify the CPUC within 24 hours. If the resources are encountered on a weekend or holiday, notification shall occur on the morning of the next business day. In the event construction has been stopped because of a paleontological find, such notification shall be provided as soon as practical, but not later than 24 hours after a stop work order has been issued.
- For excavations planned in material that is classified as having a moderate to high paleontological sensitivity prior to construction additional precautions may be required. Should excavation methods be proposed that would preclude effective monitoring and examination of paleontological resources encountered during excavation, appropriate mitigation involving education of the public about the lost resources shall be proposed in the PRMMP.
- The project owner shall ensure that the PRS prepares a summary of monitoring and other paleontological activities to be included in each MCR. The summary shall include the name(s) of the PRS or PRM(s) active during the month, general descriptions of training and monitored construction activities, and general locations of excavations, grading, and other activities. A section of the report shall include the geologic units or subunits encountered, descriptions of samplings within each unit, and a list of identified fossils.
- Negative findings, when no fossils are identified, shall also be reported. A final section of the report shall address any issues or concerns about the project relating to palaeontologic monitoring, including any incidents of noncompliance or any changes to the monitoring plan that have been approved by the CPUC. If no monitoring took place during the month, the report shall include an explanation in the summary as to why monitoring was not conducted.

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM PAL-7):**

The project owner shall ensure preparation of a PRR by the designated PRS. The PRR shall be prepared following completion of ground-disturbing activities. The PRR shall include an analysis of the collected fossil materials and related information and

shall be submitted to the CPUC for approval. The report shall include, but not be limited to, a description and inventory of recovered fossil materials, a map showing the location of paleontological resources encountered and the PRS's description of sensitivity and significance of those resources, and notes regarding if and how the fossil material was curated in accordance with MM PAL-3. Any portions of this report that involve any independent judgment or analysis of the earth's crust, and the rocks and other materials which compose it, must be done by or under the responsible charge of a California licensed Professional Geologist

**Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals (MM PAL-8):**

The project owner, through the designated PRS, shall ensure that all components of the PRMMP are adequately performed, including collection of fossil material, preparation of fossil material for analysis, analysis of fossils, identification and inventory of fossils, preparation of fossils for curation, and delivery for curation of all significant paleontological resource materials encountered and collected during project construction. The project owner shall pay all curation fees charged by the museum for fossil material collected and
curated as a result of paleontological mitigation. The project owner shall also provide the curator with documentation showing the project owner irrevocably and unconditionally donates, gives, and assigns permanent, absolute, and unconditional ownership of the fossil material.

**Hazards, Hazardous Materials/Waste, and Wildfire (MM HAZ-1):**

Prior to construction, a Hazardous Materials Management Plan shall be prepared, which shall be implemented during construction to prevent the release of hazardous materials and hazardous waste. The plan shall include the following requirements and procedures:

1. Training requirements for construction workers in appropriate work practices, including spill prevention and response measures. Additional training requirements for those performing excavation activities shall be required and shall include training on types of contamination and contaminants (e.g., petroleum hydrocarbons, asbestos, lead based paint and hazardous materials [as defined by the California Health and Safety Code (HSC)]) and identifying potentially hazardous contamination (e.g., stained or discolored soil and odor).
2. Contain all hazardous materials at work sites and properly handle, store, or dispose of all such materials.

a. Hazardous materials shall be stored on pallets within fenced and secured areas and protected from exposure to weather and further contamination.

b. Fuels and lubricants shall be stored only at designated staging areas.

3. Maintain hazardous material spill kits with appropriate materials for small spills at all active work sites and staging areas. Thoroughly clean up all spills as soon as they occur.
4. Store sorbent and barrier materials at all construction staging areas, including staging areas used during activities for decommissioning. Sorbent and barrier materials will be used to contain runoff from contaminated areas and from accidental releases of oil or other potentially hazardous materials.
5. Perform all routine equipment maintenance at a shop or at the staging area and recover and dispose of wastes in an appropriate manner.
6. Monitor and remove vehicles used for construction-related activities with chronic or continuous leaks from use and complete repairs before returning them to operation.
7. Store shovels and drums at the staging areas. If small quantities of soil become contaminated, use shovels to collect the soil and store in properly labeled drums before proper offsite disposal. Large quantities of contaminated soil may be collected using heavy equipment and stored in drums or other suitable containers prior to disposal. Should contamination occur adjacent to staging areas because of runoff, shovels and/or heavy equipment shall be used to collect the contaminated material. Only trained construction workers shall handle hazardous, and potentially hazardous, materials.
8. Transporting, shipping, and disposal procedures for hazardous waste.
9. Procedures for notifying PG&E and agency personnel in the event of the discovery of contaminated soil and/or groundwater. Contact information for federal, regional, and local agencies, the PG&E's environmental coordinator(s) responsible for the cleanup of contaminated soil or groundwater, and licensed disposal facilities and haulers.

**Hazards, Hazardous Materials/Waste, and Wildfire (MM HAZ-2):**

Prior to construction, the Construction and O&M Fire Protection and Prevention Programs shall be prepared. The program specifications are provided below:

Construction Fire Protection and Prevention Program. In accordance with 8 CCR, § 1920, a Fire Protection and Prevention Program shall be developed and implemented during Project construction. The Construction Fire Protection and Prevention Program shall include the following elements:

- A list of applicable standards and publications
- A map showing the project site, including layout, ingress, egress, drainage and grading, potential ignition sources during

various phases of construction, and evacuation areas and/or muster locations
• A description of fire protections that would be implemented during construction activities, including water systems, gaseous agent systems, and fire extinguishers
• A description of detection and alarm systems that would be implemented during construction activities
• A list of all major fire hazards
• An outline of procedures to control accumulation of flammable and combustible waste materials
• An outline of procedures for regular maintenance of safeguards installed on heat-producing equipment to prevent or control sources of ignition or fires
• Identification of Project personnel responsible for the control of fuel source hazards O&M Fire Protection and Prevention Program. A Fire Protection and Prevention Program shall be developed and implemented during Project O&M activities. The O&M Fire Prevention Program shall include the following elements:
• A list of applicable standards and publications
• A map showing the Project site, facilities, ingress, egress, potential ignition sources, and evacuation areas and/or muster locations• A description of fire protections that would be implemented during O&M activities, including permanent water systems, gaseous agent systems, and fire extinguishers
• A description of detection and alarm systems that would be implemented during O&M activities
• A list of all major fire hazards
• An outline of procedures to control accumulation of flammable and combustible waste materials
• An outline of procedures for regular maintenance of safeguards installed on heat-producing equipment to prevent or control sources of ignition or fires
• Identification of project personnel responsible for the control of fuel source hazards
• An outline of procedures to respond to wildland and grass fires within the project vicinity or project site.

**Public Health (MM PH-1):**

Minimize Personnel and Public Exposure to Valley Fever. Prior to site preparation, grading activities, or ground disturbance, the Applicant shall preparea Fugitive Dust Control Plan for the Project. The Fugitive Dust Control Plan shall include the following at a minimum:
a. Equipment, vehicles, and other items shall be cleaned thoroughly of dust before they are moved off-site to other work locations.
b. Wherever possible, grading and trenching work shall be phased so that earthmoving equipment works well ahead or downwind of workers on the ground.
c. The area immediately behind grading or trenching equipment shall be sprayed with water before ground workers move into the area.
d. If a water truck runs out of water before dust is dampened sufficiently, ground workers exposed to dust are to leave the area until a full truck resumes water spraying.
e. All heavy-duty earth-moving vehicles shall be closed-cab and equipped with a High Efficiency Particulate Arrestance (HEPA) filtered air system.
f. N95 respirators shall be provided to onsite workers for the duration of the construction period.
g. Workers shall receive training to recognize the symptoms of Valley Fever and shall be instructed to promptly report suspected symptoms of work-related Valley Fever to a supervisor. Evidence of training shall be provided to the Fresno County Planning and Community Development Department within 24 hours of the training session.
h. A Valley Fever informational handout shall be provided to all on-site construction personnel. The handout shall provide, at a minimum, information regarding the symptoms, health effects, preventative measures, and treatment.

**Solid Waste Management (MM WASTE-1):**

The project owner shall prepare a Construction Waste Management Plan and an Operation Waste Management Plan for all wastes generated during construction and operation of the facility, respectively, and shall submit both plans to the CPUC for review and approval. The plans shall contain, at a minimum, the following:
• A description of all waste streams, including projections of frequency, amounts generated and hazard classifications; and
• Methods of managing each waste, including treatment methods and companies contracted with for treatment services, waste testing methods to assure correct classification, methods of transportation, disposal requirements and sites, and recycling and waste minimization/reduction plans.

**Visual Resources (MM VIS-1):**

~~PG&E~~ Utility Switchyard ~~and Downstream Network Upgrades~~ Surface Treatment Plan. To reduce potential significant impacts associated with contrast and glare for components of the utility switchyard ~~and downstream network upgrades~~, the applicant will prepare and implement a Utility Switchyard ~~and Downstream Network Upgrades~~ Surface Treatment Plan. The

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| Utility Switchyard ~~and Downstream Network Upgrades~~ Surface Treatment Plan will require that the finishes on all new transmission and other structures with metal surfaces shall be non-reflective, new conductors shall be non-specular, and the plan will be prepared consistent with PG&E's surface treatment standards. |
| **Water Resources (MM WATER-1):**<br>The project owner must manage stormwater pollution from project construction activities by fulfilling the requirements contained in State Water Resources Control Board's NPDES CGP for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002) and all subsequent revisions and amendments. Among the requirements of the CGP, the project owner shall submit an NOI and file permit registration documents electronically using SMARTS, and develop and implement a construction SWPPP for the construction of the project Construction SWPPP). The SWPPP shall include all applicable BMPs for the project construction activities conducted in the local environment. |
| **Water Resources (MM WATER-2):**<br>Prior to commencing project operations, the project owner must prepare a site-specific operations DESCP that addresses all project elements of stormwater management during project operations. The DESCP shall include the following:<br>- Discussion, site maps, plans and applicable BMPs demonstrating how stormwater and sediment erosion shall be managed during project operation.<br>- Final design and rational of detention basins proposed for the 16 drainages areas.<br>- Discussion of BMPs deployment and materials management practices at the project site.<br>- Discussion and schedule of BMP inspections, storm event monitoring, and stormwater management structure maintenance. |

As indicated above, the measures applicable to PG&E's construction will be incorporated as Construction Measures. The CPUC will not be issuing a discretionary permit for these facilities because PG&E's construction will qualify for the CPUC's noticing provisions under General Order 131-E.

Sincerely,

*Jameson Saberon*

Jameson Saberon
Senior Land Planner, Environmental Planning and Permitting

Cc:
Jo Lynn Lambert, Counsel for PG&E
Wendy Nettles, PG&E Supervisor, Environmental Management