

*Comment Received From: Margaret Osa
Submitted On: 9/1/2023
Docket Number: 23-OPT-01*

Opposition and Request Denial of the Fountain Wind Project

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

September 1st, 2023

To: Drew Bohan, Executive Energy Director, California Energy Commission
Leonidas Payne, Project Manager, California Energy Commission

Subj: Denial of the Fountain Wind Opt-In Application

I request you deny the Fountain Wind “Opt-In” application and support the Shasta County denial due to Shasta County Code 17.92.20(F) and 17.88.335 including the additional information below.

The information listed below is a small fraction of the objections regarding the Project and went into the five-year consideration by the County, and community regarding review, comments, public hearings, public testimonies, etc. Our duly elected decision-makers took the necessary action to provide, and enforce, the protections for the community members, that only they can understand as residents within the very same community, as found in Shasta County Code 17.92.20(F) and 17.88.335.

Shasta County Code 17.92.20(F) Use Permit states – “Except as provided in subsection (G) of this section, the planning commission may approve, conditionally approve, or deny approval of the application by resolution. A resolution approving a use permit application shall clearly describe the uses permitted, set forth all conditions of approval, and identify which conditions, if any, must be met prior to use of the use permit. No use permit shall be granted unless findings of fact are made that the establishment, maintenance or operation of the use, building or facilities applied for will not, under the circumstances of the particular use, be detrimental to the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed use or be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the county; the findings shall so state. The planning commission may require security it deems reasonably necessary to ensure compliance with any conditions imposed.” **Shasta County decision makers reviewed the facts brought before them and chose the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, and general welfare of their community members.**

Shasta County, in light of the evidence found throughout the Project review, and documented over several years, took the additional step to update their zoning code to include the zoning code update, 17.88.335, to ensure the protections of the community members against Projects deemed “detrimental to the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed use or be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the county.” Zoning code 17.88.335 ensures the residents safety in addition to notification of any other potential wind developers, which consider Shasta County is not a potential development site, and that because all the unincorporated areas are under such a high wildfire risk that no projects are worth the potential of loss of life.

17.88.335 Large wind energy systems.

- A. Legislative findings. The Board of Supervisors finds as follows:
 - 1. California Government Code section 65850 authorizes the County of Shasta to adopt ordinances that regulate the use of buildings, structures, and land and the intensity of land uses.

2. Pursuant to Article XI, Section 7, of the California Constitution, the County of Shasta may adopt and enforce ordinances and regulations not in conflict with general laws to protect and promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of its citizens.
 3. The adverse impacts of large wind energy systems, particularly with respect to wildfire, aerial firefighting, aesthetics, biological resources, and historical, cultural, and tribal resources, are of significant concern to many residents of Shasta County as evidenced by the numerous public comments received between 2019 and 2021 regarding the proposed Fountain Wind Project.
 4. Most of the unincorporated area of Shasta County is designated as being in the High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones as recommended by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Large wind energy systems are incompatible in the High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.
 5. Regulations are needed to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of residents from the adverse impacts of large wind energy systems.
 6. The board of supervisors enacts this section to prohibit large wind energy systems in furtherance of the public necessity, health, safety, convenience, and general welfare.
- B. Definitions. The following definition governs this section:
- "Large wind energy system" means a wind energy conversion system that is not defined as a small wind energy system pursuant to subsection 17.88.035.A. of this chapter.
- C. Prohibition. Large wind energy systems are prohibited in all zone districts of the unincorporated area of the County of Shasta and no permit or approval of any type shall be issued, therefore.

From a resident perspective, AB 205 uses the language "necessity, convenience, and economic benefit" which appears only beneficial to the Applicant. What I don't see in the language is any statement to determine if a Project is "detrimental to the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed use or be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the county." Any and/or all of those words have been used for the protection of the lives of the residents and to avoid further erasure of the local Tribal heritage, culture, and scared practices. Since the terms listed in AB 205 "necessity, convenience, and economic benefit" appear intentionally vague, and subject to interpretation at best, with no clear indication of when the "necessity, convenience, and economic benefit" has been met and/or overcome via any "findings of fact" language to approve and/or deny this Project.

Since this is the first "Opt-In" application under AB 205, I am asking the CEC to make the effort to obtain the facts from Shasta County, and stop the piecemeal back-and-forth communications, at the expense of the County and the state taxpayers. I ask the CEC to conduct an unbiased site visit with the Shasta County decision-makers alone, without any influence from the Applicant or lobbyist, to step through the truth as to why this Project was denied. In a cooperative effort, I ask that you meet with the Shasta County decision-makers (Planning Commissioners, and Board of Supervisors) immediately so you can see for yourself that the County in no way "thwarted" any clean energy goal efforts outlined by the state but simply put the very lives and welfare of its residents first.

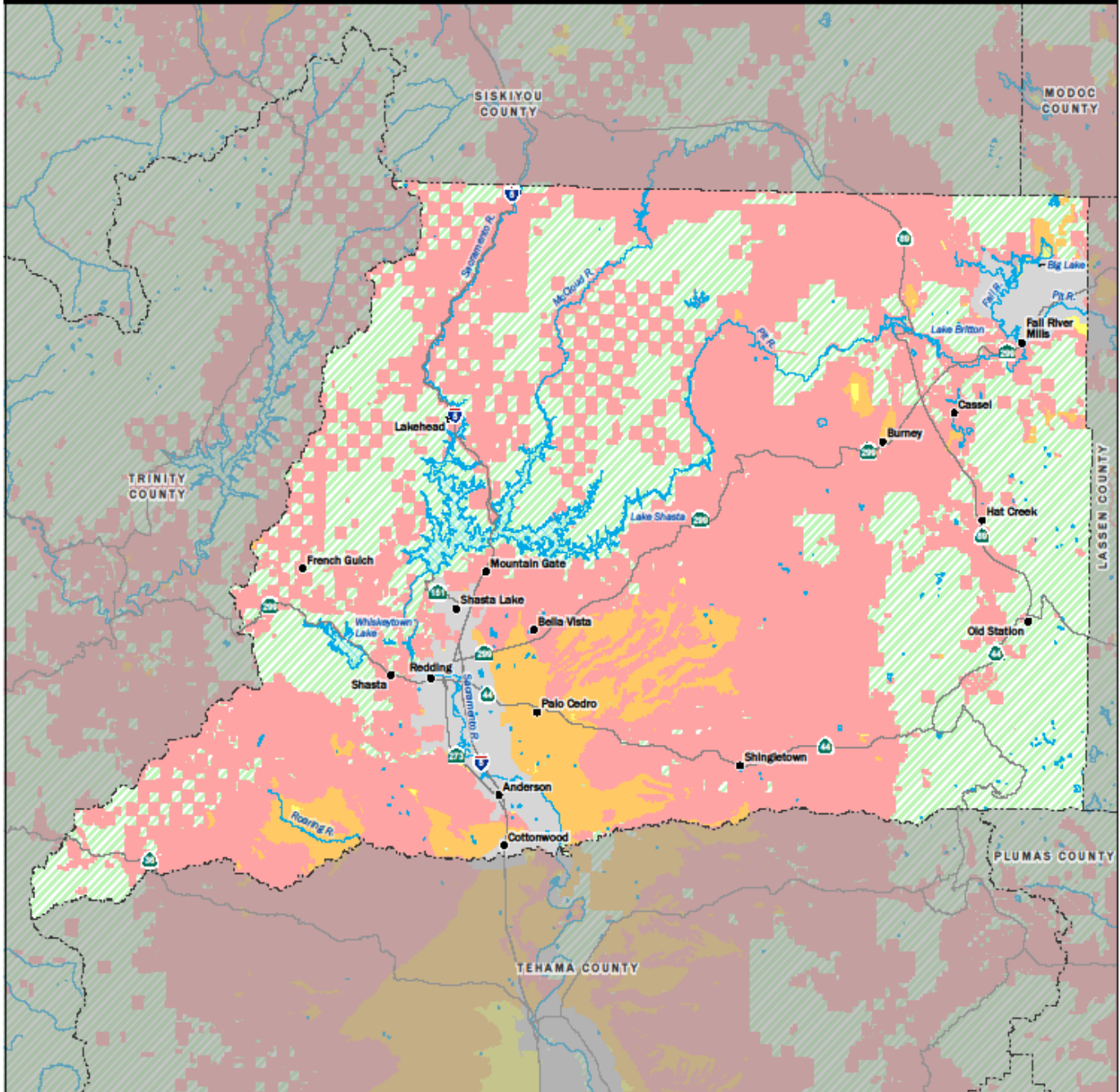
The Shasta County Administrative Record contains over 2,000+ pages of CEQA documentation, which includes all the comments and public testimony, including over 20 hours of public hearing from the previous CEQA review. Shasta County denied this Project because it was proven, beyond any doubt, that this Project threatened our lives, by increasing the wildfire potential, in what is already the Highest Wildfire Threat Areas within the State, as identified by CAL FIRE and the CPUC. In fact, since the denial of the Project in 2021, Cal

Fire has increased the wildfire threat (high to very high) within, and surrounding, the entire Project site. Due to the extreme wildfire threat ratings, residents have lost their homeowners insurance, and policies continue to be cancelled. Without viable homeowner's insurance we have few options to sell due to new owners not being able to obtain the own homeowner's insurance either. The fact that the insurance companies are leaving California or not writing any new policies because of our area's extreme wildfire threat only adds to the evidence that this is not the location for this Project.

The two maps below are the CAL FIRE and CPUC map (with the proposed development area highlighted and circled in red). The state publishes these maps to identify the territories that are most prone to wildfire threats by experts appointed by the state. The Project has been proven to severely limit and/or inhibit any aerial wildfire support which has proven to be the most effective in saving lives, properties, and territories across the state. To inhibit or remove any aerial wildfire support is completely unacceptable and this Project must be denied.

State Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones

June 15, 2023

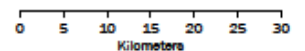
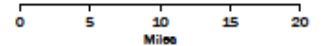


Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Area (SRA)

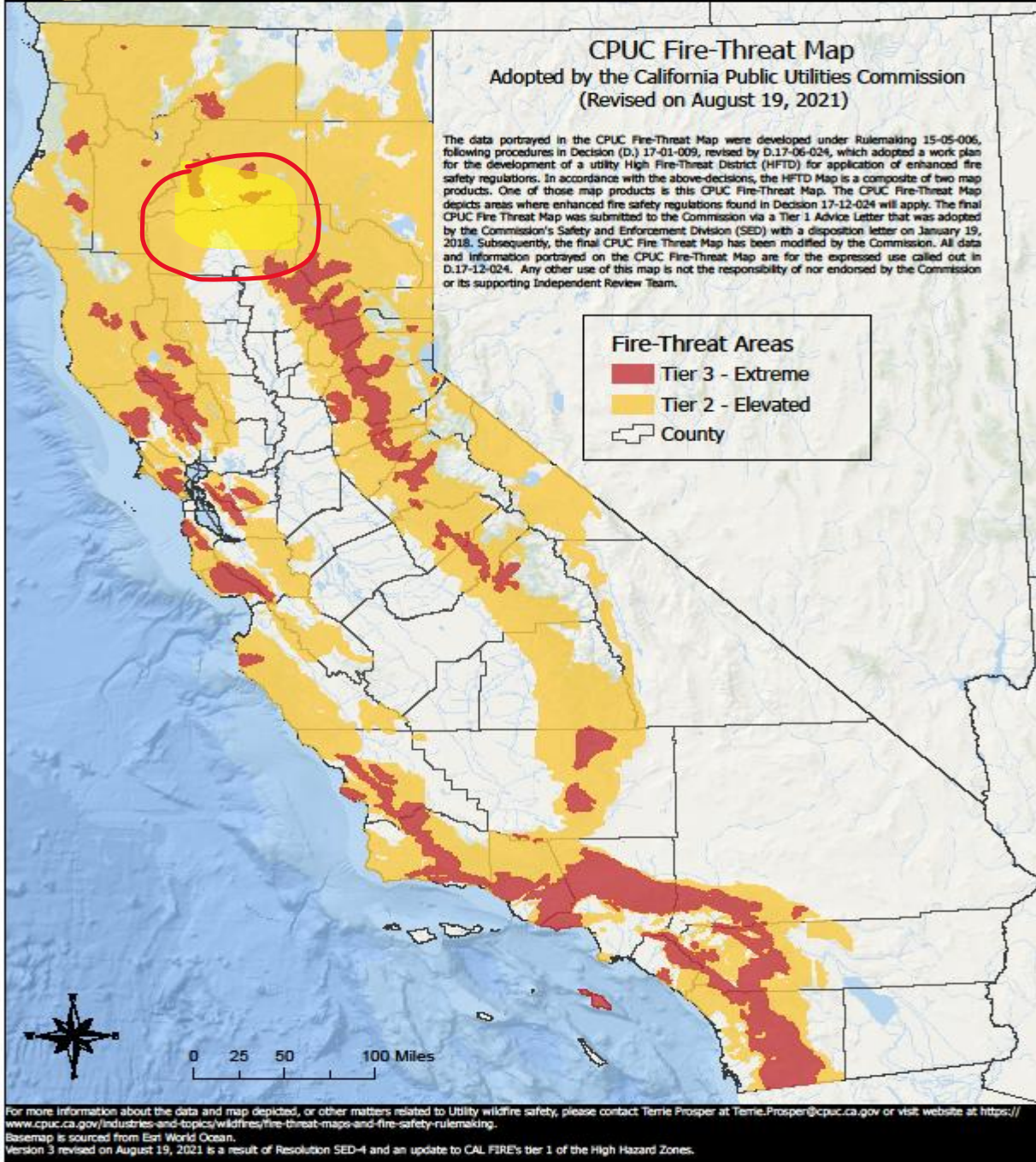
Very High	1,170,037 Acres
High	189,176 Acres
Moderate	6,084 Acres

Fire Protection Responsibility Areas (non-SRA)

Federal Responsibility Area (FRA)
Local Responsibility Area (LRA)
Waterbody



Projection: NAD 83 California Teale Albers
Scale: 1:595,000 at 11" x 17"



This Project was shown to potentially create hundreds of thousands of new ignition sources, which would not otherwise be in the area. The thousands of additional ignition sources include activities from increased personnel on site, electrical/mechanical equipment operations, thousands of car/truck trips and loads for equipment transports, project construction, equipment deliveries, maintenance operations, blasting, and thousands of others, which were also identified within County’s CEQA comments. The wildfire ignition sources are not just limited to the wind turbines catching fire, as the Applicant wants us to believe, but by every person in the area, throughout every stage of construction, maintenance, and decommissioning. During the County’s public hearings, the Applicant’s own wildfire advisor stated aerial wildfire support would be limited while the fire was within or near the turbine field. The territories near the Project site consistently experience Red Flag Warnings and Power Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events, as we are in now. The PSPS events are a wildfire threat mitigation method devised after the Camp Fire in Paradise and plainly emphasizes the vast amount of work still needed on PG&E’s transmission systems maintenance/restoration efforts. It also provides further evidence as to how dangerous and frequent these wind/wildfire threat events are in this area. We are usually the first to lose power and the last to have it restored during a PSPS event. This is no place to add tens of miles of additional power lines, additional ignition source or any type of firefighting impediments as this project clearly would. As you can see from the figure below this typical PSPS event is clearly in the general proposed project area.

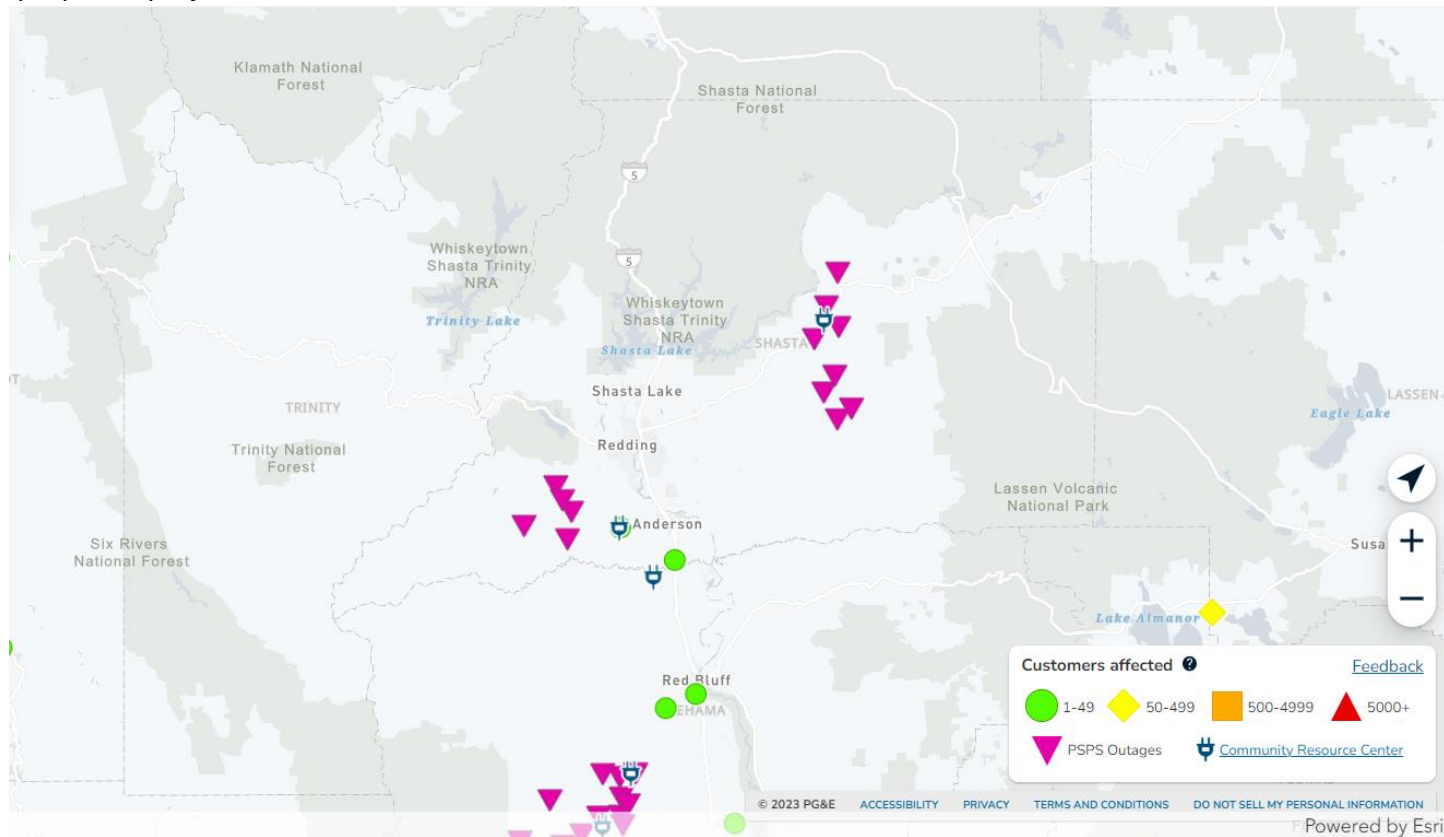


Figure 1. Map of the current PSPS event 8/30-8/31 – affected over 288 households surrounding the Project site.

As was evidenced through the PG&E bankruptcy, the Project is not the only wildfire threat, but also the very power lines the project would connect to. As was stated in the 2018 Keely and Syphard Historical Patterns

of Wildfire Ignition Sources, pg. 708, Conclusion – “Most ignition sources have declined markedly in recent decades with one notable exception, powerline ignitions. One important avenue for future fire hazard reduction will be consideration of solutions to reduce these sources of dangerous fires.” Sadley, the North state, and now Maui, has been made horribly aware of the deadly and destructive powerline ignitions sources, which caused the Paradise, Kincaid, Dixie, Zogg, Maui, and numerous other fires caused by powerlines. The 2018 report discusses the Historical Pattern of wildfire ignition sources in California, up to 2018, however the most deadly and destructive wildfires in California history beginning in 2018 (Carr fire started with a blown tire catching the roadside vegetation on fire on a windy day). PG&E stated they have 10-15 years of maintenance and restorative work, costing over \$40 billion, to make their lines safe through a combination of efforts including: burying transmission lines, vegetative management, new power poles, etc. That work is not anywhere near completion. No tangible evidence has been provided by the CPUC, CEC, nor PG&E that any significant portion of the needed work has been completed, or to what degree the safety of those living in these high threat areas has been improved.

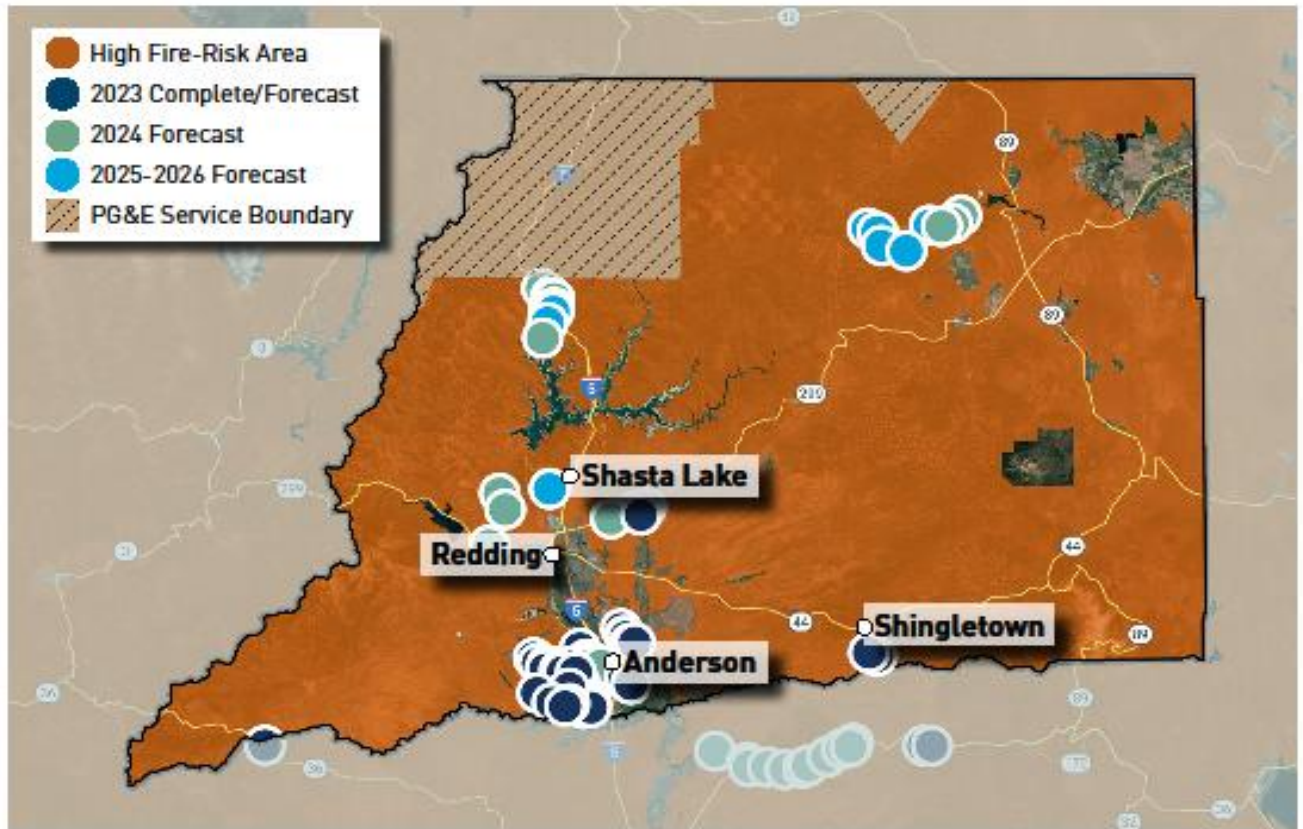


Undergrounding Map Shasta County

To reduce the risk of wildfires and keep our communities safe, PG&E is undergrounding 350 miles of distribution lines across our service area in 2023. Undergrounding is one of many layers of protection that PG&E uses to keep our customers and hometowns safe. The map below shows the approximate locations of recently complete or forecast projects for 2023, as well as areas we have identified for potential work in 2024-2026. Forecast miles include areas that are in any stage of the planning process and projects are subject to change.

2023 COMPLETE/FORECAST	2024 FORECAST	2025-2026 FORECAST*
APPROX. 72 MILES	APPROX. 41 MILES	APPROX. 42 MILES

*Extended forecast does not include all planned work and has a higher potential for changes.



For more information, please visit pge.com/undergrounding.

Data as of 4/30/2023. This map is for illustrative purposes. Forecasts can change as our risk model evolves to address the greatest wildfire risk. Forecast miles also exceed annual targets and include Rule 20A projects initiated by agencies in high fire-risk areas. Mileage in a community may increase or decrease due to access, weather, permitting or other constraints. In most cases, if a project is not completed during the year originally identified, it will continue through planning/construction phases during subsequent years.

Some of the measures included in this document are contemplated as additional precautionary measures intended to further reduce the risk of wildfires. *PG&E refers to Pacific Gas and Electric Company, a subsidiary of PG&E Corporation. ©2023 Pacific Gas and Electric Company. All rights reserved. 7/28/2023.

Also, as documented in the County DEIR/EIR review, and in the CAL ISO approved Transmission Plan (2018-2019), are transmission upgrades needed to the Round Mountain Substation due to severe thermal overload and voltage instability issues. The Round Mountain Substation upgrades are being implemented within the Shasta County and Millville areas but are not complete. The Substation upgrades are required due to thermal overload and voltage instability issues, on the 500kV lines that also affect the associated 230kV, 115kV and even lower voltage transmission lines, including those at the Cottonwood substation. Even though this Project may not tie directly into the Round Mountain Substation they do propose the tie into the 230kV lines that are also affected by these severe transmission grid issues. The CEC has no evidence that the transmission lines the Project proposes their tie into are even safe due to these identified issues, or what other transmission risks this Project could inject into the on-going upgrade efforts, whose completion has now been delayed unto 2025.

The following paragraphs from the 2018-2019 CAL ISO Transmission Plan (2.4.3 Assessment and Recommendations and the Round Mountain 500 kV Dynamic Reactive Support) identify the issues with the transmission system at the Round Mountain substation and associated transmission grid infrastructure:

2.4.3 Assessment and Recommendations

The ISO conducted a detailed planning assessment based on the study methodology identified in section 2.3 to comply with the reliability standards requirements of section 2.2. Details of the planning assessment results are presented in Appendix B. The ISO study assessment of the northern bulk system yielded the following conclusions:

- *The starting cases used Security Constrained Generation Dispatch. Thus, no Category P0 overloads were observed on the PG&E Bulk system on the facilities 230 kV and above. However, there were three Category P0 overloads of the 115 kV lines: one in the 2028 Summer Peak case (Palermo-Wyandot) and two in the 2020 Spring off-Peak case (Wilson-Le Grand and Smyrna-Atwell Island). Heavy loading above 95% under normal system conditions were observed on one 230 kV line (Cayetano-Lone Tree), on one 230/70 kV transformer (Helm) and one 115 kV transmission line (Cheny-Panoche). There were also seven 70 kV line overloads under normal system conditions in the off-peak cases. Five overloads were identified on the 60 kV lines under summer peak normal conditions, and additional three 60 kV overloads were identified in the sensitivity peak cases. The overloads on the 230/70 kV transformer and the 115 kV and below systems and their mitigation measures are discussed in the local area sections of the peak cases. The overloads on the 230/70 kV transformer and the 115 kV and below systems and their mitigation measures are discussed in the local area sections of the report. The same transmission lines were also overloaded with single and double contingencies. Overloads of these facilities were either due to high generation, or for the lower voltages, some were radial lines overloaded due to high load at the end of the line.*

The 60 kV and 70 kV facilities are not considered to be Bulk Electric System (BES), therefore, considering that they were overloaded under normal system conditions, their overloads are not discussed here further. These overloads are considered in the local area studies.

- *Two Category P1 overloads were identified under summer peak conditions in the base cases. These overloads were observed on the two circuits in the same corridor: Round Mountain-Table Mountain # 1 and # 2 500 kV lines with an outage of the parallel circuit. In addition, one transformer, Gates 500/230 kV, was identified as overloaded with a Category P1 contingency in the 2023 sensitivity off-Peak case with high renewable and minimum gas generation output. Also, Table Mountain 500/230 kV transformer may become heavily loaded in the same sensitivity case with a Category P1 contingency.*
- *Under a Category P2 contingency, Round Mountain-Table Mountain # 1 500 kV line may also overload. This Category P2 contingency includes an outage of the parallel 500 kV Round Mountain-Table Mountain 500 kV circuit. There were no additional Category P2 contingency overloads on the Bulk System.*
- *Under Category P3 contingencies with an outage of one of the Diablo Canyon generating units and another transmission facility, in addition to the facilities that were overloaded under Categories P0 and P1, Malin-Round Mountain # 1 500 kV line was identified as overloaded in the sensitivity peak cases, and as heavily loaded in the base peak cases. Other facilities that may overload under Category P3 contingencies studied include the Cottonwood –Round Mountain # 3 230 kV line, the Henrietta 230/115 kV transformer, and the Henrietta-Leprino 115 kV transmission line. All these overloads were identified in the sensitivity cases. It was assumed that there were no system adjustments between the contingencies.*

- Thirty-nine P6 overloaded facilities were identified in the studies in the base cases. Out of these, sixteen overloads were identified under summer peak conditions including three 500/230 transformers at the same substation (Metcalf). Twenty-three facilities were overloaded under off-peak conditions, including two 500/230 kV transformers at the same substation (Gates). Out of these facilities, there were also overloaded under peak load conditions. Twelve Additional facilities were identified as overloaded only in the sensitivity cases: nine in the peak cases, three in the off-peak and one both in the peak and off-peak sensitivity cases. In the P6 studies, no generation re-dispatch was assumed after the first contingency.
 - Twelve overloaded or heavily loaded facilities were identified with the 500 kV double contingencies in the same corridors, nine under peak, and three under off-peak conditions in the base and sensitivity cases.
- High voltages were observed on the 500 kV system in Central California after Diablo Canyon Power Plant retires. Low voltages were observed on the WAPA's Maxwell 500kV Substation for COI 500 kV double line outages under peak load conditions.
- No voltage deviation or reactive margin concerns were identified in the studies. It was assumed that all appropriate RAS are in service for all double line outages that were studied. Dynamic stability studies used the new WECC composite load model to reflect more accurate load composition and load parameters. The composite load model included distributed solar PV generation modeled with the latest models that are more detailed than the distributed generation models used previously.

The studies showed that some renewable projects tripped due to under-voltage, underfrequency, or other dynamic issues. This generation tripping could be due to modelling issues. In addition, some load and distributed generation was tripped off with three-phase faults by the composite load model due to low voltages. Some small generators located close to the simulated three-phase faults went out-of-step with double contingencies and were tripped. Also, several contingencies indicated some under-voltage load tripping. Dynamic stability studies used the new WECC TPL criteria that included transient voltage recovery. No criteria violations were identified in the studies.

Round Mountain 500 kV Dynamic Reactive Support

An assessment of reactive support in the Round Mountain area of the northern portion of the PG&E 500 kV system was conducted. The detailed assessment is included in Appendix B. High voltage issues at Round Mountain 500 kV substation bus occur frequently in real-time operation under non-peak conditions when the COI flows are typically lower. High voltage issues have resulted in limited clearance opportunities to do maintenance work on system elements and in some cases the clearance had to be cancelled to bring the element back in service to address voltage issues. The worst condition occurs under the N-1 contingency of Round Mountain 500/230 kV transformer which is a 3-winding transformer with 4 x 47.7 Mvar reactor connected to its tertiary winding. The loss of the transformer disconnects the reactors and as a result high voltage condition worsens. Round Mountain bus voltage under N-0 and N-1 conditions in a 2019 minimum load case are 549 kV and 554 kV respectively.

To address the issue, a device with 500 Mvar reactive absorption rating is assumed at Round Mountain 500 kV bus. The reactive device is sized to bring the voltage close to 540 kV which is PG&E's maximum normal operating voltage. The studies showed that with reactive device in service, the voltage at the Round Mountain 500 kV bus drops to 538 kV and 541 kV under N-0 and N-1 conditions, respectively.

In addition to high voltage issues under light loading conditions, Round Mountain bus voltage varies significantly on a daily basis with the output of solar generation in California which results in COI flow changes on a daily basis. The hourly voltage fluctuations are expected to increase in future with more solar integration in California and the expansion of EIM in the northwest. To address the voltage variability at Round Mountain 500 kV bus, the recommended reactive device should be a dynamic device to be able to actively manage the voltage as the need for reactive support changes based upon the flows on COI. The analysis of the study results demonstrates the need for a dynamic device at Round Mountain to absorb up to 500 Mvar reactive power. The benefits of the Round Mountain voltage support device having a dynamic range to inject reactive power is discussed in the following section. The maximum voltage drop at Round Mountain 500 kV bus occurs following the trip of PDCI under a scenario in which both PDCI and COI are highly dispatched. This scenario is more severe under spring off-peak load conditions and is expected to happen typically in the evenings when imports from northwest are high to manage the evening ramp and the higher flows in the non-solar hours. The study results show that following the PDCI contingency and after all the automatic switching of the existing reactive devices (post transient condition), the voltage drop at Round Mountain 500 kV bus is around 35 kV. To prevent voltage from dropping below low end of emergency operating voltage of 495 kV, system operators keep the pre-contingency voltage quite high to ensure acceptable post contingency voltage. Having high voltage on 500 kV system will result in high voltages on 230 kV and to some degree the 115 kV and 60/70 kV lower voltage networks. High voltages across the PG&E system have been observed in real-time and planning studies under light load conditions that pose ongoing challenges for system operations. A dynamic device that has both reactive and capacitive range at Round Mountain, will enable system operations to be able to set the pre-contingency system voltages at lower values so that the post-contingency reactive power injection at Round Mountain 500 kV bus will support the voltage within acceptable ranges for normal operations and after the contingency. Study results show that with 500 Mvar injection from Round Mountain dynamic reactive device, the voltage drop after PDCI outage will be only 18 kV. The results show that the voltage in the area ranged between 488

kV and 558 kV in the existing system, which is outside the acceptable range, especially on the high voltage. After implementing the Round Mountain ±500 Mvar dynamic voltage support, the voltage in the area ranged between 503 kV and 548 kV which is within acceptable range. Further review of the engineering details for the termination of the Round Mountain 500 kV Reactive Project is required due to siting issues at Round Mountain for the project. Board of Governor approval is recommended, and the additional detail will be posted as an addendum to the transmission plan. The competitive procurement process for the project will commence after that has taken place. The reactive device is to be installed in a minimum of two equally sized blocks independently connected to the 500 kV to accommodate maintenance and contingencies of the reactive device. The reactive power support is required to provide continuous dynamic reactive power support over the complete range of the capability (unless the facility experienced a planned or forced outage). It can be one of the following types of devices: SVC (Static VAR Compensator) with Thyristor Switched Capacitors (TSC), STATCOM (Static Synchronous Compensator), or Synchronous Condenser. An appropriately sized and configured inverter associated with a battery storage project could also provide the reactive support. Voltage support requirements would take precedence over any other operation of the battery storage facility. The estimated cost of the project is \$160 million to \$190 million with an expected Inservice date of June 2024.

The Fountain Wind Project Description dated 4 January 2022, on pg. ii, has several statements that I believe need additional consideration and/or clarification as listed below.

- (1) “A lack of transmission capacity in the state.”
 - a. This statement proves that that the state must take additional steps to provide safe adequate infrastructure to support their own energy goals including the addition of transmission capacity and not just every project that chooses to “Opt-In.” As also indicated in reference (6) “These improvements will require significant investments in infrastructure, development of new energy, and storage assets.” Unfortunately, these same transmission capacity issues are not specific to California but have led to several years delay for clean energy projects across the US, but most importantly those transmission lines, and new energy, must be safe for the community members in the state and where each project is located.
- (2) “It is proximate to an existing PG&E 230 kV transmission line with existing capacity.”
 - a. The statement may be true however, I believe it does not reflect the rest of the story. As found within the 2018-2019 CAL ISO Transmission Plan these maintenance issues have not yet been resolved, particularly with the overload issues regarding the 230kV lines and pose additional dangers that maintenance work had been delayed and/or cancelled.
- (3) “Hatchet Ridge being a safely and reliably operated for over ten years without the negative impacts raised by those in opposition Fountain Wind”,
 - a. There was a fire due to the construction phase of the Hatchet Ridge project, which was quickly contained to under several acres, fortunately it was not a particularly windy day when the fire broke out and the wind turbines had not been erected yet. The incident does point to the fact that a catastrophic wildfire could occur throughout all stages of this project and under the right conditions we would have another major tragedy to deal with. I can say “Thank Goodness” for no operational wildfire issues at Hatchet Ridge to date. However, what they don’t say is that Hatchet Ridge had the very same opposition issues raised when that project was proposed. Hatchet Ridge had two appeals, filed to the County (one submitted by the Pit River Tribe), and numerous objections from the citizens in the surrounding area. Many community members will tell you they believe they were lied to during the presentations/discussions, when Hatchet Ridge was approved, and now are more

astute to the propaganda used to get these projects approved and are no longer swayed by the “Community Benefit Agreements” but align with the protections of our lives and Tribal Cultural sacred resources. In the Administrative Record CEQA DEIR document you will find that Hatchet Ridge (Pattern Energy) filed a letter, Comment Letter P39, pg. 2-706 – 709). The letter identifies impacts for Hatchet Ridge ability to generate power due to the “wake affect” the Project would bring, which is the aggregated influence on energy production of a wind energy project from the changes in wind speed caused by other turbines. It discussed the potential impacts on downwind turbine arrays are a key concern in permitting new wind energy project and repowering existing.... They state that “even with the string of turbines removed north of SR-299, the rest of the Project is likely to reduce energy production from Hatchet Ridge by 3,400 MWh per year. The reduction in Hatchet Ridge’s generation of renewable energy would have a significant financial impact on Hatchet Ridge, including potentially impacting Hatchet Ridge’s ability to comply with its contractual obligation to meet the minimum gross energy production requirement under its power purchase agreement, but it also would result in significant adverse environmental impacts and changes in how impacts are calculated that should be addressed in the EIR.” I believe the reduction in energy production, from an existing energy source, to get approval for the Project, which only exacerbates the environmental destruction, increasing the wildfire threats and restriction and/or lack of aerial firefighting support, in addition to continued destruction of Tribal cultural resources/scared ceremonies and the removal of carbon sequestering trees and destruction of soil biome (also a significant source of carbon sequestration) is completely unacceptable to County’s residents and the taxpayers of California!

- (4) “Shasta County planning staff recommended approval of the CUP and certification of the Final EIR based on compliance with all applicable zoning requirements/laws and extensive mitigation measure.”
 - a. It appears the Applicant was satisfied with the County’s DEIR/FEIR since they choose to move forward for a decision. As with each County once the planning department has completed their work with the FEIR then the final decision is made by the County’s decision makers. This Project has not been the only project recommended by the planning department and denied by the Commissioners and/or Board of Supervisors. The Applicant always knew that even if the planning department made their “recommendation” they would have to get the final approvals through the Planning Commission and ultimately Board of Supervisors. Due to the increase in wildfire threats alone several decision makers made the comment that they could not have the deaths of their residents on their conscious should a fire break out during any phase of the Project or should the project impede critical firefighting efforts for any fire Project caused or not. The county’s decision makers reviewed all the evidence on record, listened to community, including expert testimony, and conducted over 20 hours of public hearings (which captured the heart, concerns and

fears of the residents and Tribal members that simply cannot be understood on paper) and then made the final decision to deny the Project.

- b. The CEQA process provided the Applicant additional recourse through the courts, that they did not exercise, which implies that they accepted the final decision by the County and that no further recourse should be available to them.

(5) “Most of the concentrated commercially viable wind energy area...”.

- a. The Applicant has not provided any evidence, even recently in the Applicant’s response to the CEC, that they made any effort to pursue other “Alternative sites” outside of Shasta County, as required by CEQA. Community members pointed out the same deficiencies during the CEQA process in the County to no avail. The Applicant provided alternatives, which were only within the original footprint and were not really alternatives at all, but simply different arrangements already allowed under the verbiage of the permit applied for; (1) – No Project Alternative, Alternative (2) South of 299 and Alternative (3) Increased setbacks, which obviously are just different turbine option laydowns within the same footprint of the original 72 turbines Project and provided not alternatives sites outside the County. These alternatives they provided are merely moving the deckchairs on the Titanic as they say. The alternatives they provided do nothing to mitigate any increased threat to wildfire risk nor reductions on impacts to the scared Tribal Cultural resource, so are not true alternatives at all.

b. The first six bullets listed restrictions put in place by other jurisdictional authorities that are out of the control of Shasta County, however, those restrictions do not give the Applicant a pass not to find alternative sites per the CEQA process. These statements made by the Applicant also detail how the state is to enact clean energy goals, dictated through SB 100, with transmission line restrictions and storage technologies that has not been upgraded nor developed yet. As the Lead Agency, the CEC should do a complete review of all the energy projects, across the state, and complete your own analysis regarding how much energy is needed, or even where are the safest locations to build these energy projects. It appears, projects proposed across the state, including this Project, are being considered and/or evaluated as independent projects (case by case) without being considered as a ‘whole.’ To the residents it appears that developers are taking advantage of this lack of determination of precisely what power is needed and/or a thorough curtailment analysis, wholistic planning by the state, the lack of transmission capacity, and limitations on megawatts of repowering, just to name a few, to target areas of extreme wildfire danger, and continued destruction of Tribal cultural resources, to try and get projects approved. If one were to look at California’s curtailments alone it would be clear that we curtail half a dozen or more Fountain Wind project’s generation capacity regularly and that what is really needed is not more power that would have to be curtailed but increased storage so that we don’t have to build more projects like this one than necessary. The taxpayers are being forced to subsidize clean energy projects, subsidize power providers, subsidize PSPS events

through our own gas-powered sources, and curtailment efforts across the state daily. The AB 205 process must also consider and evaluate any reduction in power to already existing clean energy sources, such as stated by Hatchet Ridge, in addition to just how much energy is being curtailed daily. The technologies available for the vast amount of energy storage capacity needed, to get through one day, are extremely limited or even nonexistent. This project is not necessary, but storage is.

- (6) “Local prohibitions, moratoria, or denials of new or repowered utility-scale wind energy (such as those in Shasta, Solano, Humboldt, and Los Angeles Counties).
 - a. It appears that other decision makers, within the various Counties, also recognize, and have taken steps to provide some of the same protection to their citizens. The citizens have educated themselves and are determined not to allow the continued exploitation of our biological and natural resources or putting our lives (when there exist extreme wildfire threats due to transmission system safety issues and mismanagement of forested areas), or continued destruction of local Tribal resources and cultural heritage, when clearly other options are available with much less risk and and/or destruction.

- (7) “The location is suitable for wind development as demonstrated by the California Environmental Protection Quality Act (CEQA) evaluation and the fact the Shasta County approved a wind project in this same location a decade ago.”
 - a. As a participant in the County’s CEQA process I believe this statement is distorted and manipulated. CEQA was not used, nor is it used, to determine if a location is suitable for wind development. CEQA, as the name implies, identifies environmental impacts, and/or needed protections of natural, cultural, biological, and environmental resources, and it is not used to “demonstrate if a location is” or not suitable for a Project. Prior to the application to the County, the Applicant conducted their own meteorological studies, and determined independently, even before the CEQA process started that this is where they wanted to build the Project based on their own assessment of the location. The wildfire threat conditions of this type of project or this area were also not as well known or understood when Hatchet Ridge was approved. Since Hatchet Ridge we have experienced the most devastating fires California has ever seen, many caused by the transmission systems and now understand how critically dangerous this region is for wildfires and the importance of aerial firefighting efforts in combating these mega wildfires that are becoming more and more common.

- (8) “The site has commercially viable wind resource, with wind speeds or greater than 6 meters per second at 100 meters from the ground (based on NREL data).”
 - a. Although wind resources may be available it also makes the Project area, and all the surrounding communities, at even greater risk considering the existing fuel load and the fact that it is a heavily forested area, unlike offshore, agricultural, or desert lands might offer. The winds in this area have only intensified the existing wildfire threat of this area to the highest in the state; hence are frequent and prolonged PSPS

events and the numerous Red Flag Warning days. The community also previously provided documented research which proves turbines attract lighting, which also increases the wildfire risk, and demonstrates another reason that industrial turbines are not built within heavily forested areas like this area.

Sadly, the character assassination of Shasta County, and others, as found in reference (2) indicating that the County has “thwarted” any efforts against the State’s clean energy goals is simply not true. Shasta County has proven through the numerous clean energy projects such as hydro, biomass, wind and solar that it is a willing participant in pursuing clean renewable energy already producing many times the clean energy it uses and will continue to do so in the future. It appears to that this type of character assassination allows the Applicant, along with other possible applicants, to resurrect denied projects across the state, which have also already completed the CEQA process through the local jurisdiction. The Shasta County decision-makers, followed the CEQA process, heard over four years of testimony, all while witnessing numerous wildfires (with various causes) that affected them personally and their constituents, sadly including the loss of lives and ultimately, both fairly and responsibly, denied the Project. The elected decision-makers in Shasta County sincerely took to heart the “health, safety, peace, morals, comfort and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed site” over all the proposed “necessity, convenience, and economic gain” that would be brought to the County. They made the decision that our lives are more valuable, and any potential loss of lives is not worth the risk.

I find it extremely suspicious, that the Applicant provided updates to their Project Description, after reference (1) was submitted. The second update to the Project Description, dated 8/17/23, completely changes the Executive Summary, by eliminating the Project History within Shasta County (Section 1.1 – 1.3.1). The updates to the project description removed the history which showed the Project completed the CEQA process, which spanned over several years, including the estimates to bring several million dollars to Shasta County, and subsequently denied by a 9 of 10 vote by the decision-makers in Shasta County. The Applicant’s original permit request stated “up to 72 turbines” which of course included the 48 proposed during the appeal, to the Supervisors, and now to the CEC. Please make no mistake, this never was, and never will be, a new nor revised Project! This is the same Project, always within the original 72 turbine footprint, reduced to 48 turbines now with taller turbines, in the same heavily forested area, with the entire Project rated in the Very High Wildfire Threat Zone by CAL Fire and the CPUC (Tier 3).

When the Applicant stated that they listened to the community during the County’s public hearing I believe this can’t be further from the truth! So now yet again, the residents in Shasta County are now dealing with the trauma of yet another fight to stop this Project, submitted through the “Opt-In” trailer bill process. The Applicant has told the community they are working to “get their foot in the door in California”, and with that we believe they will move forward and submit additional projects, throughout the original project footprint named “The McCloud” project which extended up through McCloud, and further, in order to develop Fountain Wind II/III/IV.

The local community members engaged early with the Project leadership, and we testified that we live in the “Very High Wildfire Threat Zone” and Tier 3. They told us they would provide mitigation measures for the Project, but the residents know that is not possible, and witnessed the same in review of the DEIR/FEIR.

Many communities wait for the next of many lightning strikes to see if we are the next wildfire victims to evaluate, as you are now witnessing across the North state. We are the communities that lived through and continue to rebuild through the Fountain Fire (same footprint as the Project location), and lost family members and homes who have had to relocate due to the Paradise fire. Recent reports show the communities still suffer from PTSD due to the Dixie, Carr, Camp, Paradise, Fawn, Hirtz, Elder, and other wildfires. We have read the Butte County District Attorney report regarding the criminal negligence against PG&E resulting in 85 deaths, and that PG&E has settled the case in four deaths within Shasta County. We watch heartbroken, as the death numbers increase in the recent Lahaina wildfire, supposed by powerlines, and another suit is filed against another utility company. Regardless of any clean energy goals established by the state in SB 100, or AB 205, the CEC nor anyone else has the right to approve the Project, or others, when the wildfire risks alone are so great to the community, let alone all the other environmental and Tribal cultural impacts. The supposed “necessity, convenience, or economic benefit to the community” cannot trump the potential loss of life in anyway. Many people can make the statement “it will never happen” but times have changed, and we know that statement is not true any longer. So, I must ask you, is it worth the risk? It was not worth the risk for the decision makers of Shasta County, and I hope that you will make that same decision regarding our safety and the value of our lives. I believe it is completely unacceptable, given that the estimated financial loss of a fire in our area, especially if it burned through eastern Redding, would be in the billions, as was seen with PG&E caused fires, that any sort of financial gain can be identified for this project. A wildfire in this area would completely erase any proposed economic benefits to the county and state.

If the Applicant had listened, they would have heard the voices of the Pit River Tribe members who testified to their family stories of their own “trail of tears”, and how the specific tribal names for the very same mountains that they used to find their way back to their ancestral territories. These are the same mountains to be used to build the Project, which as you see in the letters written by numerous Tribal members, where they state the continued colonization, and through the on-going exploitation by the government. The Pit River Tribe once again fights against further exploitation through vague and financially driven incentives such as listed in AB 205. The CEC has received numerous letters from Tribal members in opposition to the Project, stating that the “topography of the Project Site is central to the Tribe’s identity, oral traditions, and history.” Numerous Tribal members have shared that their culture and work is very much alive, not a dead culture that can be removed and/or placed in a scrapbook. The approval of yet another industrial turbine project continues to erase the Pit River Tribe history. If the Applicant had listened, they would have heard the overwhelming testimony by Tribal members of the impacts the Project brings and continued attempts to erase their on-going traditions. You can also find these same pleas, submitted by Tribal members, to stop this Project from further erasing of their heritage in the CEQA documents from the County. The Pit River Tribe, as the Wiyot Tribe in Humboldt, took the same stance, and continued to state how very important, and non-negotiable, their scared culture, identity, oral traditions, and history are and not for sale at any price.

Shasta County denied the Project in accordance with County code 17.92.20(F), and the risk (even potential risk) to lives as found in public testimonies during the Project public hearing, which further resulted in additional updates in the county zoning code to include 17.88.335, which prohibits large scale industrial turbines in all the unincorporated areas of the county, because of the evidence found in 17.92.20(F). AB 205 requires the CEC take Shasta’s county’s ordinances and ban into account when considering this Project. The special findings necessary to approve the Project can’t be made because the Project may not in fact

provide any economic benefit to the county and may likely cause or allow billions of dollars of damage to the county if it causes or impedes firefighting a catastrophic wildfire. To make any assumption otherwise is not supported based on evidence provided by the aerial wildfire pilots testimony, reference (4) and the evidence regarding the thermal overload issues, the PG&E bankruptcy maintenance and restoration work still in process (including ungrounding transmission line efforts in Shasta County), and the recent wildfires in the North State due to transmission lines (Paradise, Dixie, and Zogg).

As stated in references (5-8) Shasta County is not the only city/county voicing CONCERNS AND OPPOSITION to AB 205. References (5-8) provide concerns/opposition to the usurping of local authority, that city and/or county officials will still be held accountable for any project within their jurisdiction (even when it was not approved by them), how the state must improve energy reliability (both at the local level and for the larger grid), communities suffering dramatic decline in energy reliability over the past several years, and including future litigation issues. AB 205 usurps the local permitting authority, who as stated are the most invested with authority over local land use decisions and permitting who know the community members the best. RCRC also recognizes that the transmission grid “improvements will require significant investments in infrastructure, development of new energy, and storage assets, and rethinking the state’s lengthy interconnection process.” As stated in the references (5-8), AB 205 “misses the mark” and lists the “dramatic decline in energy reliability” will I believe will only put additional communities at risk as I have stated earlier. I am asking that you “listen” to all the representatives listed in references (5-8) and deny the Project. As they state, they are willing to work to find real solutions regarding the larger grid issues, storage, and energy sources, but safety of the community members must come first, by the representatives who elected them and know those communities best.

I ask that you deny the Project submitted by the Applicant, by upholding, and honoring the Shasta County ordinances and zoning code, put in place to protect our lives. The ongoing threats due to wildfires, and continued destruction of sacred Tribal cultural resources is unacceptable. The Shasta County decision makers were aware of the economic benefits and supported the clean energy goals of the state however viewed this Project, and others to be too much of a risk to loss of life. The County decision makers, having first-hand experience, of just how destructive the most recent wildfires are, and how quickly lives were lost chose to deny the Project. They witnessed how important immediate aerial firefighter resources are needed, in saving lives, homes, and surrounding territories. They rejected the Project because any hinderance to wildfire aerial fighter support, particularly 600-foot turbines, on extreme terrain, only endangers more lives unnecessarily. The site visit by the CEC leadership and staff, coordinated with the Shasta County leadership alone, will open your eyes to the dangers this Project brings. The supposed mitigation measures outlined by the Applicant simply are not enough. The County has been dealing with precious lives lost, in addition to the economic loss, due to the recent catastrophic wildfires (Carr, Zogg, Dixie, Fawn, and Hirtz) just within the last five years, and chose to protect the residents. I ask that the CEC truly listen to the Shasta County residents, and leadership, and act to do the same in protecting the lives of the residents in Shasta County by denying the Fountain Wind Project.

Best Regards,
Maggie Osa
Shasta County Resident

References:

- 1) Fountain Wind Project Description, did January 4th, 2023, submitted to the California Energy Commission (CEC) for the AB 205 “Opt-In” application.
- 2) Response to Shasta County Jurisdiction Claims, did August 21st, 2023, submitted by Cox Castle on behalf of their Client (“Applicant” – ConnectGen – Fountain Wind LLC)
- 3) <https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/justin-california> , California’s Wind Market Has All but Dried Up. Could Grid Services Revenue Help? dtd, 30 March 2020.
- 4) Docketed TN# 249668, Stephen Allen Fitch Comments – Air Attack Issues, dtd, 4/14/2023
- 5) League of California Cities, Draft “Energy Reliability, Relief, and Clean Energy Investment” Trailer Bill notice of Position of CONCERNS (As Amended 05/18/22), dtd June 1st, 2022.
- 6) Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), Energy Trailer Bill Opt-In Streamlined Review for Renewable and Zero Carbon Facilities – OPPOSE, June 3rd, 2022.
- 7) California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Draft “Energy Reliability, Relief, and Clean Energy Investments” Trailer Bill Notice of Position of CONCERNS (As Amended 05/18/22), dtd June 6th, 2022.
- 8) CSAC, Urban Counties of California, RCRC, League of California Cities, FLOOR ALERT, Assembly Bill 205 (Committee on Budget) Senate Bill 122 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review) As Amended June 26th, 2022- OPPOSE, dtd June 27th, 2022.