

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PGandE) proposes to construct and operate a three-bank, 230/21 kilovolt (kV) distribution substation and related facilities, known as the Delta 21 kV Distribution Planning Area (DPA) Capacity Increase Substation Project (Delta Substation project or project). The project is needed to relieve the electric system deficiency projected to occur in eastern Contra Costa County (County) and ensure safe and reliable electric service to existing and approved development in the eastern part of the County. The project area includes southern Antioch, Brentwood, Oakley, and portions of rural eastern Contra Costa County. Table 1-1 lists existing and proposed developments that would be served by the new project. The project consists of:

- installing a new, three-bank 230/21 kV distribution substation,
- replacing an existing transmission line tower with a new tower and installing a second tower with loop circuits approximately 600 feet in length (one way) to connect the substation to an existing 230 kV transmission line,
- installing six to nine distribution circuits (ultimate build-out)<sup>1</sup>, and
- constructing a steel-reinforced concrete bridge and temporary asphalt access road to the substation.

See Figure 1-1 in Chapter 1: Project Description for a project overview map.

The project is needed by summer 2007 to relieve the electric system deficiency projected to occur in eastern Contra Costa County and to ensure the ability of the system to safely and reliably serve the area without interruptions or emergency conditions that would result from the deficiency. A new 21 kV distribution circuit will be needed by 2007, as well as future additional 21 kV circuits as the demand in the DPA increases. Because of limited capacity and physical space in existing distribution substations, a new distribution substation must be constructed from which to extend the necessary distribution circuits.

This Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) evaluates the impacts that could result from construction and operation of the project. Some of the key environmental issues evaluated were:

- Potential impacts to biological resources (e.g., wetlands, streams, San Joaquin kit fox, California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, burrowing owl, and San Joaquin pocket mouse)
- Potential impacts to cultural resources (e.g., through ground-disturbing construction activities)

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<sup>1</sup> Although the distribution lines do not require formal approval from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) under General Order 131-D, they are included in the project description to assist the Commission with its environmental review of this application under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

- Potential noise impacts from construction and operation of the substation
- Potential visual impacts in scenic areas

However, the analysis in this PEA shows that all potentially significant project impacts can be avoided or mitigated to a less than significant level.

PGandE performed a siting and alternatives analysis before selecting the proposed project to ensure that development of the project components was feasible and would have the lowest potential for environmental impacts. As required by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) guidelines, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Initial Study Checklist from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines was used as the format for describing potential project impacts. Chapter 1: Project Description provides a detailed discussion of the project, its purpose, and need. Chapter 2: Alternatives Analysis provides an explanation of the siting study and an analysis of the alternatives that were considered before selecting the proposed project. The CEQA checklist in Chapter 3: Environmental Impact Assessment Summary provides a summary of all potential impacts likely to result from the project. Chapters 4 through 16 of this PEA demonstrate how all project impacts are either less than significant, or can be avoided or reduced to less than significant levels through implementation of best management practices, PGandE's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan, Reclamation/Restoration Plan, and applicant-proposed avoidance and mitigation measures. Chapter 17: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting describes the proposed avoidance and mitigation measures, as well as the monitoring and reporting procedures that PGandE will implement during construction and operation of the project.

In accordance with CPUC General Order No. 131-D (GO 131-D), PGandE is submitting this PEA in support of its application for a Permit to Construct (PTC) for the project. In the application of which this PEA is a part, PGandE seeks a PTC from the CPUC confirming the proposed location, based on environmental review required by CEQA, and authorizing construction of the project in the CPUC-approved location, consistent with GO 131-D. The CPUC's PEA "Information and Criteria List" was used to produce this report. Because all project impacts are less than significant or can be mitigated to a less than significant level, it is anticipated that the CPUC will be able to prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration for its review of this project pursuant to CEQA. After permits are obtained, construction is expected to take approximately one year to complete. PGandE seeks to have the project in operation by summer 2007.