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- The California Public Utilities Commission regulates public utilities in California, including certain: energy, telecommunications, natural gas, water, and transportation companies.
 - The purpose of CPUC regulation is to ensure that these services are provided to the public in a safe and reliable manner and at a reasonable price.



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- When a utility proposes to build or expand its infrastructure in California, the utility files an application with the CPUC.
 - The filing of an application triggers a twofold process including: (1) Environmental review, and (2) Economic review.



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- (1) Economic review looks at how the proposed project will affect rates, market competition, market structure and whether the proposed project will meet the needs of the people in California.
 - (2) Environmental review is in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The purpose of this review is to make the public aware of the possible environmental impacts of the proposed project, along with possible mitigation measures and a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project.



CPUC - Basic Application and Environmental Review Processes

1. After a utility submits an application, the CPUC hires an environmental consultant with appropriate qualifications to assist with the review and preparation of environmental documents.
2. When it is determined that the application includes sufficient information, the environmental review begins.
3. The first major step in this process is the scoping meeting where the project team solicits information from the public to ascertain the range of issues and project alternatives that should be considered.



CPUC - Basic Application and Environmental Review Processes (Continued)

4. Based on this input, environmental surveys in the field, either a Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration or a Draft Environmental Impact Report is prepared. The document will identify the project that have the least overall environmental impacts based upon the studies conducted during the environmental review.
5. Upon publication, the Draft Environmental Document is circulated to the public for 30 to 45 days for review and comment.



CPUC - Basic Application and Environmental Review Processes (Continued)

6. At the conclusion of this review period, all substantive comments submitted on the Draft Environmental Document are considered, and responses to all such comments are incorporated in a Final Environmental Document.
7. The Final Environmental Document is forwarded to the Commission's Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) who incorporates the major findings from, and the environmental mitigation measures identified in, the Final Environmental Document into a proposed Commission decision.



CPUC - Basic Application and Environmental Review Processes (Continued)

8. The ALJ's draft decision is circulated for 30 days to parties on the Commission's service list for the proceeding.
9. Comments on the proposed decision from parties to the proceeding are considered and addressed in a proposed final decision.
10. The Commissioners vote on the proposed decision in a Commission public meeting.
11. If approved, the decision goes into effect in 30 days.





For Additional Information
<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov>

