

Section 4.7

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Introduction

This section discusses potential hazards to the environment and the public, and worker health and safety associated with construction and operation of the project. Potential hazards include fire hazards, releases or encounters with existing hazardous substances, and helicopter use during construction. The section also describes potential impacts to public health and safety that would result from the project, such as corona effects. Implementation of applicant-proposed measures would ensure that these impacts are less-than-significant.

Methodology

Existing conditions were determined from review of published literature, searches of public records of known hazardous materials sites, examination of aerial photographs, and site-specific surveys and descriptions of location and project components as outlined in the Project Description.

Environmental database searches were performed using (1) the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) Department of Toxic Substances (DTSC) Control Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese List) to identify sites in the proposed project vicinity with known contamination and a potential to contaminate the project alignment areas; and (2) the State Water Board GeoTracker database to identify leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites.

Affected Environment

Regulatory Setting

For the purposes of this discussion, hazardous materials consist of raw materials and products, and hazardous wastes consist of wastes that are generated by facilities and businesses or that remain onsite from past activities. Hazardous materials that would be used during construction activities for the proposed

project include diesel fuel and other liquids in construction equipment. Applicable hazardous materials and wastes regulations and policies are summarized below.

Federal Regulations

EPA is the principal federal regulatory agency responsible for the safe use and handling of hazardous materials. The key federal regulations pertaining to hazardous wastes are described below. Other applicable federal regulations are contained primarily in Titles 29, 40, and 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) enables EPA to administer a regulatory program that extends from the manufacture of hazardous materials to their disposal, thereby regulating the generation, transport, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste at all facilities and sites in the nation.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, and Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act Title III

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as Superfund, was passed to facilitate the cleanup of the nation's toxic waste sites. In 1986, Superfund was amended by the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act Title III (community right-to-know laws), also called the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act. The act states that past and present owners of land contaminated with hazardous substances can be held liable for the entire cost of the cleanup even if the material was dumped illegally when the property was under different ownership. These regulations also establish reporting requirements that provide the public with important information on hazardous chemicals in their communities to enhance community awareness of chemical hazards and facilitate development of state and local emergency response plans.

State of California

California hazardous materials and wastes regulations are equal to or more stringent than federal regulations. EPA has granted the state primary oversight responsibility to administer and enforce hazardous waste management programs. State regulations require planning and management to ensure that hazardous materials are handled, stored, and disposed of properly to reduce risks to human health and the environment. Several key state laws pertaining to hazardous materials and wastes are discussed below.

Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventory Act of 1985

The Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventory Act, also known as the Business Plan Act, requires businesses using hazardous materials to prepare a hazardous materials business plan that describes their facilities, inventories of hazardous materials, emergency response plans, and training programs. *Hazardous materials* are defined as raw or unused materials that are part of a process or manufacturing step. They are not considered hazardous waste. Health concerns pertaining to the release of hazardous materials, however, are similar to those relating to hazardous waste.

Hazardous Waste Control Act

The Hazardous Waste Control Act created the State Hazardous Waste Management Program, which is similar to, but more stringent than, the federal RCRA program. *Hazardous wastes* are defined as waste products with properties that make them dangerous or potentially harmful to human health or the environment; they can be the by-products of manufacturing processes or simply discarded commercial products, like cleaning fluids or pesticides. The act is implemented by regulations set forth in 26 CCR, which describes the following required parameters for the proper management of hazardous waste: identification and classification; generation and transport; design and permitting of recycling, treatment, storage, and disposal facilities; treatment standards; operation of facilities and staff training; and closure of facilities and liability requirements.

These regulations list more than 800 materials that may be hazardous and establish criteria for identifying, packaging, and disposing of them. Under this act and 26 CCR, a generator of hazardous waste must complete a manifest that accompanies the waste from the generator to the transporter to the ultimate disposal location. Copies of the manifest must be filed with DTSC.

Emergency Services Act

Under the Emergency Services Act, the state developed an emergency response plan to coordinate emergency services provided by federal, state, and local agencies. Rapid response to incidents involving hazardous materials or hazardous waste is an important part of the plan, which is administered by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES). The office coordinates the responses of other agencies, including EPA, California Highway Patrol, regional water quality control boards, air quality management districts, and county disaster response offices.

California Occupational Safety and Health Administration Standards

Worker exposure to contaminated soils, vapors that could be inhaled, or groundwater containing hazardous constituents are subject to the monitoring and personal safety equipment requirements established in Title 8 of the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal-OSHA) regulations. The primary intent of the Title 8 requirements is to protect workers, but compliance with some of these regulations also will reduce potential hazards to non-construction workers and project vicinity occupants because required controls related to site monitoring, reporting, and other activities will be in place.

Fire Hazard Regulations and Requirements

Public Resources Code 4290

PRC 4290 was adopted to establish minimum wildfire protection standards in conjunction with building, construction, and development in State Responsibility Areas (SRAs). Under PRC 4290, the future design and construction of structures, subdivisions, and developments in SRAs must provide for basic emergency access and perimeter wildfire protection measures as specified in the code. These measures provide road standards for emergency access, signing, and building numbering; water supply reserves; and fuel breaks and greenbelts. Local standards that exceed those of PRC 4290 supersede PRC 4290.

SRAs are those lands that meet the conditions listed below.

- Are covered wholly or in part by forests or by trees producing or capable of producing forest products.
- Are covered wholly or in part by timber, brush, undergrowth, or grass, whether of commercial value or not, that protect the soil from excessive erosion, retard runoff of water, or accelerate water percolation, if such lands are sources of water that is available for irrigation or for domestic or industrial use.
- Are in areas principally used or useful for range or forage purposes and are contiguous to the lands described above.

California Environmental Protection Agency

CalEPA implements and enforces a statewide hazardous materials program established by Senate Bill 1082 (1993) to consolidate, coordinate, and make consistent the administrative requirements, permits, inspections, and enforcement activities for the following environmental and emergency management programs for hazardous materials:

- Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventories (Business Plans).

- California Accidental Release Prevention (CalARP) Program.
- Underground Storage Tank Program.
- Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act Requirements for Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plans.
- Hazardous Waste Generator and Onsite Hazardous Waste Treatment Programs.
- California Uniform Fire Code: Hazardous Materials Management Plans and Hazardous Material Inventory Statements.

Other State Laws, Regulations, and Programs

Additional state regulations that affect hazardous waste management are listed below:

- California Government Code Section 65962.5, under which CalEPA compiles a list of possible contaminated sites in the state.

Consolidated Hazardous Materials Programs

The Certified Uniform Program Agency (CUPA) is responsible for implementing a unified hazardous materials and hazardous waste management program. California Health and Safety Code Section 25505 requires handlers of hazardous materials to submit business plans to the CUPA if hazardous materials inventories meet or exceed established thresholds. CalEPA can delegate responsibility for many of its programs to local governments. A CUPA can be a county, city, or Joint Powers Authority that demonstrates its ability to administer the program.

Local Regulations

Because the CPUC has exclusive jurisdiction over the construction of utility facilities, this project is not subject to local discretionary permitting requirements. However, PG&E will obtain all required non-discretionary permits, such as traffic and encroachment permits.

San Benito County

San Benito County Health and Human Services, Environmental Health Division serves as the CUPA for San Benito County, and administers the consolidated hazardous materials program (San Benito County 2008). The County oversees businesses that require Hazardous Material Business Plans or Accidental Release Prevention Plans, operate underground or above ground storage tanks, generate hazardous wastes, or have onsite treatment of hazardous waste(s).

Agencies participating with the County in the program include the San Benito County Office of Emergency Services, City of Hollister Police Department, City of Hollister Fire Department, San Benito County Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), CDF, DFG, State Department of Parks and Recreation, Red Cross, emergency medical response personnel (ambulance), San Benito County Emergency Medical Services Office, Hazel Hawkins Hospital, San Benito County Agricultural Commissioner, San Benito County Communications Department, City of Hollister Public Works Department, San Benito County Public Works, San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Department, San Juan Bautista Fire Department, and the City of San Juan Bautista Public Works Department.

San Benito County General Plan

The policies and actions in the San Benito County General Plan (San Benito County 1980 and 1988) related to safety and hazardous materials include:

Safety Element

***Policy #1:** Roads should be of adequate capacity for use in time of emergency.*

***Policy #4:** It will be the County's policy to update periodically information on existing hazards and reduce the risk from them.*

***Policy #5:** It will be the County's policy to maintain local police, fire and health forces in a state of readiness to insure adequate protection for the citizens of San Benito County.*

***Policy #6:** It will be the County's policy to cooperate with other local state and federal agencies in the event of a major disaster.*

***Action:** The County will continue its mutual assistance programs and will work closely with the Cities of San Juan Bautista and Hollister as well as state and federal authorities in assuring emergency preparedness.*

***Policy #7:** It will be the County's policy to incorporate into subdivision and zoning ordinances those fire safe guides adopted by the Board of Supervisors and entitled "Fire Safe Guides for Residential Development in California (in or near forests, brush and grassland areas)", revised and printed by the California Department of Forestry, May, 1980.*

Open Space and Conservation Element

Goal 7 – Environmental Hazards

Policy 41: Fire Safety

New development will not be allowed where access is a fire safety risk.

City of Hollister General Plan

Goals and policies in the City of Hollister General Plan (City of Hollister 2005a) related to safety and hazardous materials are as follows:

Goal HS1: Protect community health and safety from natural and man-made hazards.

Policy HS1.3 Coordination with San Benito County and Other Agencies on Safety Matters.

Cooperate with the County of San Benito and with other government agencies in all matters related to safety, hazardous waste management and emergency planning.

Policy HS1.8 Electromagnetic Fields

Monitor available information regarding possible health hazards of electromagnetic fields and will continue to prohibit the construction of permanent buildings directly beneath electrical transmission lines.

Policy HS1.12 Potential Hazardous Soils Conditions

Evaluate new development prior to development approvals on sites that may contain hazardous materials.

Policy HS1.13 Hazardous Waste Management

Support measures to responsibly manage hazardous waste to protect public health, safety and the environment, and support state and federal safety legislation to strengthen requirements for hazardous materials transport.

Policy HS1.14 Hazardous Materials Storage and Disposal

Require proper storage and disposal of hazardous material to prevent leakage, potential explosions, fires, or the escape of harmful gases, and to prevent individually innocuous materials from combining to form hazardous substances, especially at the time of disposal. Provide the public, industry, agriculture and local government with the available

information needed to enable them to take rational and cost effective actions to minimize, recycle, treat, dispose of or otherwise manage hazardous wastes within the Hollister Planning Area.

City of San Juan Bautista General Plan

Goals and policies in the City of San Juan Bautista General Plan (City of San Juan Bautista 1998a) related to safety and hazardous materials are as follows:

Goal S-4: Hazardous Materials. Maintain an environment which is free of contamination by hazardous materials.

***Policy S-16:** Ensure that local businesses comply with all county, state and federal laws regulating the handling, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials.*

***Policy S-17:** Require soil sampling for development on those sites where past activities, including application of agricultural chemicals, may have led to soil contamination.*

***Policy S-18:** Discourage new industries that use significant quantities of hazardous materials or that would substantially increase the amount of hazardous materials stored in or transported through San Juan Bautista.*

***Policy S-19:** Maintain zoning and environmental review procedures which ensure that development around potentially hazardous sites, such as the wastewater plant, occurs with minimal future risks to health, life, and property.*

Goal S-3: Wildfire. Reduce exposure in fire hazards in both urban and wildland areas.

***Policy S-13:** Maintain building and development regulations which minimize the potential for damage, injury, or loss of life due to fire. These regulations could address roofing materials in high and very high fire hazard areas, and minimum clearance requirements to keep vegetation and flammable debris cleared around residences.*

***Policy S-14:** Maintain mutual aid agreements with the California Department of Forestry (CDF) for wildland fire protection. The San Juan Bautista Volunteer Fire Department has a mutual aid agreement with the CDF for wildland fires in the hills south and west of the City. Although CDF has ultimate responsibility for fire suppression in these areas, San Juan volunteers respond to calls.*

Monterey County

In Monterey County, the Monterey County Environmental Health Division serves as the local CUPA and administers the county's Hazardous Materials Management Services.

Monterey County General Plan

Goals and policies in the Monterey County General Plan (Monterey County 2006a) that relate to safety and hazardous materials include:

Goal S-4: Minimize the risks from fire.

***Policy S-4.26:** When public facilities and aboveground utilities are located in very high or extreme fire hazard areas, special precautions shall be taken to mitigate the risks from wildfire and to ensure uninterrupted operation.*

Goal S-5: Assure the county is prepared to anticipate, respond and recover from emergencies.

***Policy S-5.12** New roads, bridges, and utility lines shall be designed and constructed in accordance with applicable seismic safety standards.*

***Policy S-5.13** Utilities serving new development should be sited and constructed to minimize the risks from hazards to the greatest extent feasible.*

Project Setting

This section describes use of hazardous materials in the study area, known and potential hazardous waste sites within or adjacent to the project site, potential sensitive receptors in the vicinity, locations of the nearest airports, and fire safety.

Use of Hazardous Materials in the Study Area

San Benito County

San Benito County is a rural community in the Central Coast Ranges of California with an economic base that includes agriculture, light industry, and tourism. The majority of the county's 57,324 residents (AMBAG 2008) live in the City of Hollister and the surrounding area. A number of industries in the county can utilize or be associated with hazardous materials; these can include,

but are not limited to, munitions plants, bulk storage facilities, and agriculture-related operations (San Benito County 2008).

City of Hollister

A variety of agricultural and industrial hazardous materials are handled and stored within the Hollister planning area. Pesticides are regularly applied throughout the agricultural lands that surround the city. In addition, a number of underground storage tanks containing petroleum products such as aviation gas and jet fuel tanks are located near the municipal airport (City of Hollister 2005b).

City of San Juan Bautista

In addition to the presence of pesticides in agricultural areas surrounding the city, other businesses handling hazardous materials in the city planning area include auto service stations, an auto dismantling company, a phone company, and producers of agricultural fertilizers (City of San Juan Bautista 1998b).

Monterey County

A portion of the project alignment runs through the northeastern edge of the county that is home to 422,632 residents (AMBAG 2008), through unincorporated areas—nearest to the city of Salinas, and the unincorporated area of Prunedale. The most common potential users of hazardous materials in this area are commercial and industrial users, such as agricultural producers, automotive repair, dry cleaners, gas stations, pest control, energy providers, correctional facilities, utilities, hospitals, military installations, landfills, and other public agencies (Monterey County 2006b).

Contaminated Soil/Groundwater Sites

Research was conducted on vicinity sites known to be associated with a historical release of hazardous materials or wastes; the results include sites listed in state and federal databases. The California DTSC EnviroStor Database (DTSC 2008) indicates that, as of July 18, 2008, eight sites in San Benito County and 28 sites in Monterey County fell under the following categories: federal Superfund sites (National Priorities List), state response sites, voluntary cleanup sites, school cleanup sites, permitted (hazardous waste) sites, and corrective action sites. The State Water Board GeoTracker data show three LUST sites in Monterey County, and 55 LUST sites in San Benito County (see Figure 4.7-1). From the report details provided, it appears that none of the identified sites are situated in path of the project study area, defined as land within an approximately 500-foot corridor of the alignments.

The closest site to the Hollister Tower Segment is the Crazy Horse Sanitary Landfill, a federal Superfund site located near Salinas on Crazy Horse Canyon Road. The site is approximately 1.5 miles adjacent to the southern portion of the

segment, near the Lagunitas Switches. Remaining sites in Monterey County are 8 miles or more from the southernmost border of this segment of the project area.

The closest sites to the Hollister Pole Segment are concentrated in the City of Hollister and its surrounding area. They include:

- Tom Long Tire Company, located 0.5 mile from the Hollister Substation on San Felipe Road, was listed as a LUST clean-up site due to soil contamination from gasoline in 1988; cleanup was performed and verified in 1989.
- El Camino Crop Supply is a manufacturer of pesticides, located approximately 1.25 miles southeast of the Hollister Substation. This business was listed as a state response site due to a soil contamination incident reported in 1982; cleanup was performed and certified by DTSC in 1983.
- Pacific Scientific Energetic Materials Co. Inc. is a manufacturer of electronic and laser systems, and aircrew safety systems and components for the aerospace and defense industries. The Hollister facility is listed as a “Hazardous Waste-Operating Permit” site, and is located approximately 3 miles from the Hollister Substation. Permitted activities include tank treatment, open burning and open detonation, and operation of hazardous waste management units accepting offsite waste.

Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive receptors are individuals who have the potential to come into direct or indirect contact with a released substance. Sensitive receptors include nearby schools (less than 0.25 mile away) and residential populations likely to be affected by project activities or operations.

San Benito County

The nearest school in the Hollister Pole Segment alignment area is Countryside Day-Care, located within 0.25 mile of the border of the Hollister Substation. In addition, a low-density residential area is located along the portion of the Hollister Tower Segment alignment that intersects SR 156.

Monterey County

Within the Hollister Tower Segment project area, the closest school in Monterey County is Lagunita Elementary School. It is located approximately 1 mile southwest of the Lagunitas Switches. The closest residential area in the county is located approximately 1.5 miles southwest of the alignment.

Airports

San Benito County

The nearest existing airport facility in San Benito County is the municipal airport in the City of Hollister, located on the west side of San Felipe Road at Airport Drive (City of Hollister 2008) and approximately 1.5 miles from the Hollister Substation. A private airfield (Christensen Ranch) is located approximately 3 miles northeast of Hollister.

Monterey County

The nearest existing airport facility in Monterey County is the Salinas Municipal Airport, located 3 miles southeast of City of Salinas between Highway 101 and Alisal Road, and approximately 8 miles from the Lagunitas Switches. More than 30 private airstrips and agricultural landing fields are located in the county (Monterey County 2006b).

Fire Safety

San Benito County

San Benito County has a climate typical of much of central California, with mild winters and hot, dry summers. Along most of the project alignment are agricultural areas and rolling foothills. The abundant natural vegetation, combined with dry climate conditions, makes the area susceptible to wildfires. According to CDF, the Hollister Pole Segment alignment runs through areas mapped as posing a moderate to high fire risk. The tower segment is located in areas mapped as moderate to very high fire risk (CDF 2007).

Four agencies are responsible for fire protection services in San Benito County:

- San Benito County Fire Department (SBCFD) – SBCFD contracts with CDF for structural fire protection services. Maximum response time to the proposed project area would be approximately 10–15 minutes; this is not considered adequate (Dellamonica pers. comm.).
- The City of Hollister Fire Department provides services within the city limits. The Hollister Fire Department has a mutual aid agreement with San Benito County for fire protection in unincorporated areas just beyond the Hollister city limits.
- City of San Juan Bautista Volunteer Fire Department. Their services are provided through a contractual agreement with the SBCFD to an area extending from Highway 101 on the west to Union Road on the east, and

from the San Benito River on the north to the Gabilan Mountains on the south.

- The Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District provides structural and wildland fire protection in the northwest corner of the county.

CDF has responsibility for fire protection in the unincorporated areas of San Benito County identified as SRAs. See also the discussion of fire safety in Section 4.13, “Public Services.”

Monterey County

The portion of the project alignment in Monterey County falls within an SRA and is covered by CDF. There are six stations for wildland fire protection, and response times could be hampered; fire protection services in the remainder of the county generally are provided by special districts and community services districts (Monterey County 2006b).

The proposed project will also be serviced by the North County Fire Protection District (NCFPD) of Monterey County. NCFPD is a special district detached from County government. (NCFPD 2006).

Within the NCFPD, Station 2 would provide the first response to the proposed project area. Due to the length of the Hollister Tower Segment, there are multiple anticipated response times, ranging from 4.5 to 12 minutes. The closer the incident is to Station 2, the faster the response would be. However, the further the line moves into the pastureland and foothills, the more difficult and extended the response time becomes. The range of response from 4.5 to 8 minutes is considered adequate; a longer response time is not typical and would not be considered adequate. (McCallan pers. comm.)

Environmental Effects

This section describes potential impacts relating to hazards and hazardous materials associated with the proposed project. It lists the thresholds used to conclude whether an impact would be significant. Applicant-proposed measures to mitigate potentially significant impacts are described, as applicable.

Significance Criteria

For this analysis, an impact pertaining to public health and safety was considered potentially significant under CEQA if the project would result in any of the following environmental effects; these criteria are based on professional practice and Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines:

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials;
- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment;
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school (this analysis also considered residences within the same distance);
- Is located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment;
- Result in a safety hazard to people residing or working within an airport land use area or in the vicinity of a private airstrip;
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or
- Expose people or structures to a significant loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Potential for hazardous materials spills during construction – less-than-significant impact

During the construction phase, hazardous materials such as vehicle fuels, oils and other vehicle maintenance fluids would be used and stored in construction staging areas. Spills of these hazardous materials during construction activities could cause soil or groundwater contamination. Improperly maintained equipment could leak fluids during construction activities and while parked, resulting in soil contamination.

PG&E will implement APM-HYDRO-2 (Develop and implement a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan), described in Section 4.8, “Hydrology and Water Quality”. This measure will reduce the potential for spills and leaks of hazardous materials, and reduce the severity of the impact in the event of an inadvertent spill.

In addition, PG&E will implement APM BIO-1 (Conduct an Environmental Training and Monitoring Program for construction crews before beginning construction), described in Section 4.4, “Biological Resources.” This program will communicate environmental concerns and appropriate work practices, including spill prevention, emergency response measures, and applicable BMPs, to all construction personnel. A program will be implemented to monitor compliance with plans and regulations during the construction project.

Implementation of the above actions will ensure that potential impacts associated with spills of hazardous materials during construction will be less than significant, and no additional mitigation is required.

Potential to encounter previously unknown contamination during construction – less-than-significant impact

Unexpected soil or groundwater contamination could be encountered during grading or excavation. As noted above, PG&E will implement an Environmental Training and Monitoring Program, which details sampling methods and protocol if unexpected contamination is encountered along the project route or in substations. Implementation of this program will reduce potential impacts associated with encountering previously unknown contamination during construction. PG&E will implement the additional measures listed below to ensure that potential impacts associated with previously unknown contamination are less than significant.

APM HAZ-1: STOP WORK IF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES ARE ENCOUNTERED DURING CONSTRUCTION.

If hazardous substances are unexpectedly encountered during trenching, grading, or excavating work, work will be stopped until the material is properly characterized and appropriate measures are taken to protect human health and the environment. If excavation of hazardous materials is required, the materials will be handled, transported, and disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.

APM HAZ-2: CONDUCT GROUNDWATER SAMPLING AND TESTING IF SUSPECTED CONTAMINATED GROUNDWATER IS ENCOUNTERED DURING CONSTRUCTION.

If suspected contaminated groundwater is encountered in the proposed project construction areas, samples will be collected and submitted for analysis of petroleum hydrocarbons, metals, volatile organic compounds, and semi-volatile organic compounds. If necessary, groundwater will be collected during construction, contained, and disposed of in accordance with all applicable regulations.

Potential impacts on sensitive receptors associated with hazardous materials – less-than-significant impact

The nearest school (Countryside Day-Care Preschool) is located approximately 0.25 mile from the border of the existing Hollister Substation site. The nearest residential area is immediately adjacent to a portion of the current Hollister Tower Segment alignment southwest of SR 156. Reconstruction of the power line in these areas will not change the existing conditions, which are not adversely affected by PG&E's current operations and maintenance activities. No new significant sources of hazardous materials will be introduced by the project.

Construction equipment will be stored and dispatched from laydown (staging) areas to be located at designated sites during the project (see Figures 3-2 through 3-19). Two of the proposed staging areas (TLV-4 and PLV-6 [in Figures 3-10 and 3-19, respectively]) are within the impact radius of 0.25 mile from sensitive receptors as defined in the CEQA guidelines. To avoid potential impacts on sensitive receptors in the project area, PG&E will prepare and implement a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan (as described above). Implementation of these actions will reduce potential impacts on sensitive receptors from hazardous materials to a less-than-significant level.

Potential hazard from location on a hazardous waste site – no impact

According to the DTSC Cortese List and the State Water Board GeoTracker database, the proposed project area does not contain or border any hazardous waste sites; therefore, the proposed project would not result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment through exposure to such sites. No impact is associated with this concern.

Potential safety hazard for people residing or working within an airport land use area or in the vicinity of a private airstrip – less-than-significant impact

The proposed project area includes the Hollister Substation, which is located approximately 1.5 miles from the Hollister municipal airport. In addition, a private airfield (Christensen Ranch) is located approximately 3 miles northeast of Hollister. These are existing conditions without adverse effects related to PG&E's current operations and maintenance activities. The project includes a minor upgrade and reconstruction of the Hollister Substation and will use the site as a staging area; however, these activities do not introduce any hazards to airport operations.

An aeronautical study of the proposed project, under the provisions of 49 USC Section 44718, and if applicable Title 14 of CFR Part 77, was performed by the FAA. A Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation was issued for 45 locations along the pole section, pole structures 20/01 through 22/06b. A check also was done for pole locations 18/14 through 20/00, but these locations did not

qualify for the aeronautical study. On all but two locations, poles 22/00 and 22/01, the aeronautical study revealed that the structures did not exceed obstruction standards and would not be a hazard to air navigation, and that marking and lighting were not necessary. For pole locations 22/00 and 22/01, the aeronautical study revealed that the structures would not result in a substantial adverse effect on the safe and efficient utilization of the navigable airspace by aircraft or on the operation of air navigation facilities, provided the structure is marked or lighted in accordance with FAA Advisory Circular 70/7460-1 K Change 2, Obstruction Marking and Lighting, red lights – Chapters 4, 5 (RED), and 12. PG&E has designed a lighting system to comply with the above requirements for these two pole locations.

The proposed project will not affect existing airport operations and will result in a less-than-significant impact related to airports.

Potential risks to persons and structures from operation of helicopters in populated areas – less-than-significant impact

Excavated soils, foundation forms, concrete, TSPs, and miscellaneous tools and materials will be transported in and out of the construction areas by helicopter. Helicopters also may be used to transport construction workers to some pole sites. Operation of these helicopters in populated areas can pose a risk to structures or person. To comply with requirements of the FAA, PG&E will require the helicopter vendor to develop and implement a Helicopter Lift Plan. Implementation of the APM HAZ-3 described below will reduce the risks associated with helicopter operations to a less-than-significant level.

APM HAZ-3: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A HELICOPTER LIFT PLAN.

PG&E will require the helicopter vendor to prepare a Helicopter Lift Plan for approval by the FAA prior to any construction helicopter operations. Any specific transportation needs (e.g., temporary road closures) will be identified in the plan and will be coordinated with the appropriate jurisdictions.

Potential to impair or interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan – less-than-significant impact

The proposed project is a short-term construction effort considered small in scope that does not require additional emergency support measures. As part of standard operating procedures, PG&E's standard safety plans provide protocols for emergency situations, and PG&E will coordinate with local agencies if road closures will be required that may impede emergency access routes or services.

Potential for significant risk of wildland fires – less-than-significant impact

The proposed project alignments are located in areas considered moderate to high wildfire hazard areas. The primary risks of potential fire hazards for the project involve the use of vehicles and equipment during construction. Heat or sparks emitted from equipment in the area can ignite dry vegetation and cause a fire. Construction crews will use existing roads along most of the alignment corridor to access pole and tower sites or new access roads that will be constructed for the project. After construction, the PG&E vegetation management inspector will continue to inspect and document vegetation conditions annually. Where needed, vegetation inspections may be conducted more frequently. To maintain appropriate clearance under the power line, vegetation removal will continue to be performed on an annual basis or as needed.

Currently, emergency response times are considered inadequate along portions of the Hollister Tower Segment and the Hollister Pole Segment. The response times are based on the distance from fire department stations in relation to the project area. Because the proposed project will not substantively alter the existing alignment except near the Proposed River Crossing at the San Benito River, response time will not change because of this project. Emergency staff (including both police and fire) will be patrolling the unincorporated areas of both counties, as well as the cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista. Therefore, it is more likely that response times to the proposed project area will be less than the 10- to 15-minute estimated maximum response time.

Implementation of APM HAZ-4 described below will ensure that potential fire hazards are reduced to a less-than-significant level.

APM HAZ-4: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN.

PG&E follows a standard practice of developing and implementing a Fire Risk Management Plan that addresses fire-suppression equipment and procedures to be used during construction and training of construction and maintenance crews. Additionally, fire suppression equipment and materials will be kept adjacent to all areas of work and in staging areas, and will be clearly marked. Detailed information for responding to fires will be provided in the project's Fire Risk Management Plan. Information contained in the plan and the locations of fire-suppression materials and equipment will be included in the employee environmental training discussed in APM BIO-1.

Electric and Magnetic Fields

Recognizing that there is public interest and concern regarding potential health effects from exposure to electric and magnetic fields (EMF) from power lines, this document provides some general background information regarding EMF associated with electric utility facilities in Appendix D. However, EMF is not

addressed here as an environmental impact under CEQA. The CPUC has repeatedly recognized that EMF is not an environmental impact to be analyzed in the context of CEQA because (1) there is not agreement among scientists that EMF does create a potential health risk; and (2) there are no defined or adopted CEQA standards for defining health risk from EMF. See, for example, CPUC Decision No. 04-07-027 (Jul. 16, 2004); Delta DPA Capacity Increase Substation Project Final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Supporting Initial Study (November 2006), A.05-06-022, Section B.1.14.1, page B-31, adopted in Decision 07-03-009 (March 1, 2007).

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