

**Comment Set A**



**City of Rocklin**

November 16, 2001

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 Rocklin, CA 95677-2720  
 916-632-4000  
 TDD 916-632-4013

Nicolas Procos, CPUC  
 c/o Aspen Environmental Group  
 235 Montgomery Street, Suite 800  
 San Francisco, CA 94194

Dear Mr. Procos:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study (hereinafter collectively "Mitigated Neg. Dec.") on the Pacific Gas and Electric Company ("Applicant") proposed Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project. Briefly, the Applicant proposes to construct four (4) miles of new 60 kV overhead lines on approximately 30 new single-shaft tubular steel pole structures, varying from 75 feet to 100 feet in height. The project would be built to 115 kV standards so that at some future date, Applicant could convert to a 115 kV line on the proposed pole structures. Applicant's preferred route traverses through Central Rocklin along the right-of-way of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, from the Atlantic Substation in Roseville, parallel along the west side of the tracks, to Farron Street. At Farron Street, the line will cross over to the east side of the UPRR tracks and run to Sierra Meadows Drive, where the line will turn southeasterly along Sierra Meadows Drive, to connect into the existing Del Mar Substation, in Rocklin

The City of Rocklin and the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Rocklin (hereinafter collectively the "City"), have reviewed the Mitigated Neg. Dec. and submit the following comments:

**1. Summary of Concerns:**

The Mitigated Neg. Dec. discusses several areas that the City believes are inadequately addressed and demonstrate that the mitigated negative declaration is an inappropriate document to use for a project of this scope and impact. In particular, the impacts that the City believes have not been adequately discussed, and therefore have not been adequately mitigated, are impacts or potential impacts to Visual Resources, Land Use Compatibility, Cultural and Historical Resources and Public Health Hazards.

Administrative Services 632-4000 FAX 632-4173 · City Hall 632-4050 FAX 624-8018 · Community Development 632-4020 FAX 624-4759  
 Engineering 632-4042 FAX 624-4759 · Building 632-4030 FAX 624-4759 · Community Services & Facilities 632-4100 FAX 632-4111  
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In addition to the discussion of inadequate analysis of project impacts within the Mitigated Neg. Dec., the City will also discuss substantial evidence which gives rise to a fair argument that significant impacts may result from this project, and that they are not being mitigated to a less than significant level with the mitigation currently proposed within this Mitigated Neg. Dec. Even if other substantial evidence supports the opposite conclusion, The Public Utilities Commission, as lead agency, must nevertheless prepare an environmental impact report for this project if substantial evidence in the record gives rise to a fair argument that significant environmental impacts may result from this project. The "fair argument" standard creates a "low threshold" for requiring preparation of an environmental impact report. *No Oil, Inc. v. City of Los Angeles* (1974) 13 Cal.3d 68, 75 [118 Cal.Rptr. 34] ("*No Oil I*"); *Friends of "B" Street v. City of Hayward* (1<sup>st</sup> Dist. 1980) 106 Cal.App.3d 988, 1000-1003 [165 Cal.Rptr. 514]; *Citizens Action to Serve All Students v. Thornley* (1<sup>st</sup> Dist. 1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 748, 754 [272 Cal.Rptr. 83]; *Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino* (1<sup>st</sup> Dist. 1988), 202 Cal.App.3d at p. 310, quoting *No Oil I, supra*, 13 Cal.3d at p. 75.

Through the environmental impact report ("EIR") process, all project impacts, feasible mitigation measures, and project alternatives can be examined, allowing the decision makers and the public to become fully informed. The EIR is an informational document. It does not require the body to approve or not approve a project; rather, it provides information that is taken into account in making the decision. The adequacy of an EIR is reviewed in light of what is needed to provide the decision-maker with information that enables it to make a decision, which intelligently takes into account the environmental consequences of a project. The Initial Study and Mitigated Neg. Dec. prepared for this project are lacking in thorough analysis and are inadequate to provide the level of information necessary for the Public Utilities Commission to make an informed decision on this project.

### 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION IS INADEQUATE

The project description within the Mitigated Neg. Dec. describes the Application for a Permit to Construct approximately 4 miles of 60-kilovolt (kV) single-circuit electric power line, and to install a new 60 kV breaker at the existing Atlantic Substation, and to install a new switch at the existing Del Mar Substation. However, the next section discusses the power line and notes that the line shall be built to 115 kV standards, though initially energized at 60 kV. It is not clear that all of the analysis in the Mitigated Neg. Dec. address the impact of the 115 kV line as well as the 60kV line. Will the 115kV be higher even though the poles will remain the same height? Will the affect from EMF (Electric and Magnetic Fields) be greater? Will there be more noise produced by the 115 kV lines?

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A project is defined as the whole of an action which has the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines sec. 15378(a); Pub. Res. Code sec. 21065. An agency is not permitted to segment or piecemeal a project into small parts if the effect is to avoid full disclosure of environmental impacts. See *Bozung v. Local Agency Formation Commission, (1975) 13 Cal. 3d 263*. The only exception to this rule is if the future portion of the project is remote and speculative. Since the Applicant intends to construct the project to 115 kV standards, it would appear neither remote or speculative that they intend to in fact operate the electric line at that voltage and therefore the entire Mitigated Neg. Dec. should be analyzed on the basis of a 115kV system. Since the project application and project description define the project as construction of approximately 4 miles of 60 kV single-circuit electric power line, the project application and project description should be amended to more accurately reflect the actual construction contemplated.

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Since the remainder of the Mitigated Neg. Dec. is unclear as to the kilovolt standard being evaluated, this document should be revised to clarify that the impacts under analysis are those of a 115 kilovolt system, and the Mitigated Neg. Dec. should be recirculated.

**3. VISUAL IMPACTS / AESTHETICS**

**A. Visual Impacts are Significant Impacts and are Incorrectly Categorized as Less Than Significant within the Mitigated Neg. Dec.**

The Aesthetics Section of the Mitigated Neg. Dec. concludes that the visual impacts are less than significant. Section (a) on page B-25 states the project is not within the vicinity of a scenic vista – and therefore there is “No Impact”. Initial study checklist items b, c, and d are deemed less than significant. The City realizes that the project does not affect any State designated Scenic Highways, (which is address in item (b) on Page B-25). However, the overhead powerline project would adversely affect the scenic vista as seen from various City viewpoints along PG&E’s preferred railroad corridor. This project would substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the City’s Downtown Revitalization Area and the Front Street Historical District.

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The initial study starts out by categorizing the addition of the large 80’ to 100’ power poles along a route that has lower existing wooden poles as less than significant due to low contrast. The second paragraph on page B-26 states “As shown in the simulations, the degree of contrast between the existing visual landscape and the proposed power line would not be great. The poles would be noticeable. However, because the existing landscape is already defined by distribution lines and structures and transportation elements (vehicle traffic on surrounding roads and highways, a railroad, a number of highway overpasses), the Proposed Project results in a low degree of visual contrast.

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However, the initial study prepared by the Public Utilities Commission for the Northeast San Jose Transmission Reinforcement Project concludes the contrast between two existing power lines and their lower existing wooden poles and the new power lines to be a potentially significant impact. An explanation to checklist item I.c) from page 8 of that initial study states, "Approximately twenty-seven percent of the Proposed Route is adjacent to two existing PG&E power lines; **however the proposed new pole design would result in more massive structures, inconsistent with the appearance of the current structures.**" (Emphasis added)

The aesthetics section of the initial study also deems the railroad corridor to be a visual landscape of little worth, and concludes that "this impact is considered less than significant because the poles would be backdropped by the UPRR ROW." (Union Pacific Railroad right of way) This assumption is merely an outsider's opinion of the visual significance of the railroad vista and is unsupported by any evidence. The historical significance of the railroad to the City of Rocklin as discussed below in the section on the Front Street Historical Plan, the actions taken by the City to construct a new train station, and the lengthy discussion between PG&E and the City on the location of the electric lines in relation to the train station site all support the opposite conclusion, that in fact the railroad corridor is a valued scenic vista by the citizens of Rocklin.

The photographs in the Mitigated Neg. Dec. present a limited view and therefore a limited analysis of the visual impact of this project that impacts a 4-mile corridor. The document contains a list of views on page B-26 that are listed as the most viewer sensitive areas along the route. Only two Rocklin views were considered in the Mitigated Neg. Dec., and only one of the views attempted to show the visual impact in Central Rocklin. Staff has attached several photographs (see Attachment I, "Photographs of Various Views" 1 through 27) to demonstrate the various views that are important to the visual environment in the City of Rocklin. Special attention should be given to the following vistas:

- ξ From Pacific Street (at the Kmart Shopping Center) looking westerly towards the railroad corridor (see photographs 1 through 5).
- ξ From Front Street within the Rocklin Historic District looking easterly towards the railroad corridor, particular towards the original site of the Rocklin Train Station (see photographs 6 through 14). The City is currently developing plans along with Caltrans, Amtrak and the Capital Corridor to construct a new train station on the original site (see Attachment 2, "Rocklin Train Station Plans").
- ξ From Midas Avenue looking in all directions to and from the railroad corridor (see photographs 15 through 17).

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The City of Rocklin and the people who live and work in Rocklin are the best resources for identifying visual impacts and view sheds that are important to the community. The consultant, who prepared the photo simulations for the Mitigated Neg. Dec., apparently was not sensitive to the significance of this area. As will be discussed in detail below, the City has adopted a Redevelopment Plan, a Downtown Revitalization Plan, and a Front Street Historical District Plan, and has spent millions of dollars implementing these plans, which included undergrounding of utility lines, to protect and enhance the urban viewshed from Sunset to Midas Ave.

The attached captioned photos and maps more clearly represent the viewpoints considered significant by the City. The introduction of a series of 80 to 100 foot tall power poles and the large high tension wires into this view shed is a significant impact on the visual character of the Downtown Revitalization Area and the Front Street Historical District. Preparation of more photo simulations would demonstrate a more significant impact than currently assessed in the Mitigated Neg. Dec. More analysis will also demonstrate that impacts caused by the poles and overhead lines in the Pacific Street, Front Street and Midas Avenue location are not being mitigated under in the proposed Mitigated Neg. Dec.

The discussion in this entire section of the Initial Study on visual impacts is incomplete and does not fully analyze the impacts. The analysis does not include discussion of the impact on the downtown area and it only superficially discusses the impacts on the Front Street Historic District. The conclusion in paragraph 2 (page 38) only addresses the impacts of the residences along Front Street and does not discuss the degradation that the overhead powerline project would have on the cumulative impact of development of commercial and residential sites within the Historic District.

Nor does the Mitigated Neg. Dec. address the current and future development in the Downtown area, along Railroad Avenue and along Pacific Street. Most importantly, the proposed PG&E project is located within the Rocklin Redevelopment Agency boundaries. This is an area where by its nature, development incentives are important factors to maintain and revitalize an area. Incentives are not merely direct economic aid, but include the City's efforts to create a desirable location in which to live and work. The visual character of the area is a critical component of creating a desirable environment. The proposed overhead project would have an overshadowing visual presence that would degrade the visual and aesthetic character of the area within the Redevelopment Agency boundaries.

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The following plans and programs have been adopted and implemented by the City to preserve, protect, create and enhance the visual character of the City between Sunset Blvd. and Midas Ave.

**i. The Front Street Historical District Plan**  
(Ref: photographs 6 through 14)

To implement the Front Street Historical District Plan, the City created a formal Historic District in 1982 by Ordinance # 480, August 2, 1982 and a follow-up zoning ordinance No. 485, September 2, 1982. The importance of preserving this area can be illustrated by this quote from page 45 of Rocklin, Past, Present and Future; An Illustrated History of Rocklin, Placer County from 1864 to 1981 by Leonard Davis, "The period between 1890 and 1905 marked the high water mark in the development of Rocklin as the railroad and granite center of Placer County." The Front Street Historical District Plan discusses further the importance of preservation of this area in Section IV, Architectural Styling & Design Standards, "From the previous analysis of the Historic District, it can be seen that the focus of Rocklin's history is on the period 1865 to 1920. It is during this period that Front Street achieved its greatest development."

The City's interest is not merely on the individual structures, but rather the cumulative visual and historical setting of the area. To protect and preserve this area the City established a historical zone within the City of Rocklin Zoning Code, Rocklin Municipal Code Chapter 17. This area is important to the City and residents of Rocklin and rather than an area of little visual character and low viewer sensitivity as discussed in the Mitigated Neg. Dec., this is an area of high viewer sensitivity and any impacts to the viewsheds surrounding this area substantially degrade the existing visual character of the historical district.

**ii. The Downtown Revitalization Plan**  
(Ref: photographs 18 through 21)

This excerpt from the Downtown Revitalization Plan, Introduction, page 1, is evidence of the City's continued concern over the older core "downtown" along Pacific Street, which will be visually impacted by the proposed Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project:

"The historic core, or "downtown", of the City along Pacific Street and First Street paralleling the Southern Pacific Railroad, has not fared well in several decades. Pacific Street is currently a commercial strip that reflects the more recent role of service center along the former route of U.S. Highway 40.

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Recognition of the new economic development potential in the community has combined with concern over community image, and a desire to enhance and reinforce the historic commercial core as a central place in the City. There is concern that the historic city center will decline in significance as a commercial, social, and civic center of the City as new growth occurs further from the historic center. The town could literally grow away from the old center and render it as an insignificant element of the "new" Rocklin.

Awareness and concern by the City led to the formation of the Downtown Revitalization Committee to establish guidelines for the future development and revitalization of the downtown area."

A primary goal of this plan is to "improve the overall image of the community", and a specific goal is to "protect and enhance the special natural features of the downtown area." One part of the City's efforts to achieve these goals has been active steps to underground all utilities in the downtown area. Starting in 1991, a major streetscape renovation project was undertaken by the City, which included undergrounding of all electric lines along Pacific Street and Rocklin Road at a cost of over \$1,000,000. The City's request of PG&E to underground the portion of their proposed project from Sunset Blvd. to Midas Ave. is consistent with, and required by, the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

Design Guidelines Section 4.3.6, Undergrounding of Utilities provides that "Utility installations should be placed underground. Any installation remaining above ground, such as pad-mounted transformers, should be integrated and compatible with the architecture and landscaping of the project. These installations should be located in areas less visible but easily accessible for servicing and should be screened with a fence or plant material.

Obviously, 80' high poles would neither be integrated and compatible with the architecture and landscaping, nor will they be installed in areas less visible and screened as required by the design guidelines. The next section of the Downtown Revitalization Plan, Section 4.4. Implementation, discusses Overhead Powerlines in Part 4.4.1 on page 24 as follows:

"The City should establish regulations which, through the development application process, requires property owner participation in the cost of placing existing overhead electrical and communication lines underground.

In addition, the City should consider the formation of an assessment district expressly for the purpose of funding the cost of undergrounding along Pacific Street and Rocklin Road, within the Downtown Area."

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In response to these implementation guidelines the City established Underground Utility District #4, Rocklin Road and Pacific Street, by Resolution No. 88-316 on September 27, 1988.

### iii. Redevelopment Plan for the Rocklin Redevelopment Project

The major goals of the Redevelopment Plan relevant to this comment letter are found on page 2 of the Redevelopment Plan and those goals include,

- (1) "the strengthening of retail and other commercial functions in the downtown area,
- (2) the strengthening of the economic base of the Project Area and the community by the installation of needed site improvements to stimulate new commercial/light industrial expansion, employment and economic growth, and
- (3) the establishment and implementation of performance criteria to assure high site design standards and environmental quality and other design elements which provide unity and integrity to the entire project."

Section IV of the Redevelopment Plan, Uses Permitted in the Project Area, specifically addresses underground utilities in part IV.D.8, Utilities, "The Agency shall require that all utilities be placed underground whenever physically and economically feasible."

The Mitigated Neg. Dec. does not discuss undergrounding of the electric line as a mitigation measure to environmental impacts. Since the analysis did not encompass undergrounding the electric lines, there is no information in this Mitigated Neg. Dec. which determines if undergrounding is physically or economically feasible. On page B-79 of the Initial Study, two unsupported statements from the Applicant are included which imply that the undergrounding is infeasible and impractical because the Applicant says so. There is no analysis, no evidence, no facts or studies to support this conclusion. Based on the significant amount of power lines of this type which are located underground throughout the state, that fact alone should qualify as substantial evidence supporting a fair argument that the undergrounding is not infeasible and impractical, and the correct environmental document for this project is an environmental impact report, rather than a mitigated negative declaration.

On page B-25 of the Initial Study in the discussion of part c, the significance threshold states "The impact is defined in part by the degree of contrast that the proposed facilities would have with the surrounding visual landscape. In particular, contrast that is not compatible with the character of the surrounding landscape would degrade visual character. Viewer sensitivity is an additional consideration."

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The photo's attached to this comment letter show a marked contrast between the proposed project and the existing visual landscape. The Public Utilities Commission has found potentially significant impacts exist where new power lines are being constructed adjacent to older and lower wooden pole supported lines in the Northeast San Jose Reinforcement Project (Initial Study, Section I.c, page 8). The history of Rocklin and the consistent and successive actions taken by the City to protect, preserve, and enhance the visual character of the downtown area clearly demonstrate the importance of that viewshed to the community. The presence of the proposed project will substantially degrade the visual character of this area of the community and must be identified as a significant impact on visual resources and aesthetics.

**A-2**

**B. The Mitigation Measures Identified in the Mitigated Neg. Dec. are Inadequate to Address Visual Impacts**

Even though the analysis of the visual impact is substantially incomplete, the Mitigated Neg. Dec. document goes on to state that the inclusion of three (minor) mitigation measures (Ref: APM 5-1 at the top of page B-11) will make the project have Less than Significant visual impacts. Given the scope of this project, which is 4-miles of visual wires and poles, the Mitigated Neg. Dec. doesn't clearly document how those three measures would mitigate the visual impacts of a project of this size and scope. In fact, the document merely states that the City requested these mitigation measures.

**A-2**

That statement is totally incorrect. The City did not discuss the measures mentioned as environmental mitigation measures. These measures were suggested by PG&E in response to one of the City's inquiries into what PG&E could do to lessen the impact of the poles and overhead powerline. This was only asked after the PG&E representative said they would not underground the project and stated to the City that the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) would never require undergrounding of a project of this nature.

**4. LAND USE AND PLANNING**

The Mitigated Neg. Dec. is inadequate in the area of land use. Though the Mitigated Neg. Dec. does discuss the Rocklin General Plan and the Front Street Historic District Plan mention on page 79, the discussion in the Mitigated Neg. Dec. does not include an adequate analysis of the various other community plans and local ordinances that would be affected by the physical location of the project.

**A-3**

The project, because of its scope, will affect the Rocklin Downtown Plan as well as the Rocklin Redevelopment Agency Plan. Both of these plans require undergrounding of utilities. In addition, the City of Rocklin has an ordinance requiring undergrounding of utilities.

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In the years that Rocklin has been implementing the various community plans such as the Downtown Plan and the Redevelopment Plan as well as the City ordinance requirement for underground, Rocklin has made substantial public and private investments to underground utilities. This is evident when you look at the area immediately adjacent to the project corridor along Pacific Street and Rocklin Road where substantial underground has occurred.

**A-3**

Now, even though on page B-80, the second paragraph correctly states the CPUC and PG&E are preempted from local agency jurisdiction, that fact merely dismisses the concept of a defacto finding of land use impact due to non-compliance with a local agency land use rule, plan, or policy. It doesn't negate and relieve the environmental analysis from considering land use compatibility as an environmental impact.

The threshold for determining compatibility is to consider community values. Rocklin has clearly demonstrated its community values in its actions, in implementing its plans and ordinances, and by having critical utilities improvements placed underground. The result of the City's undergrounding practices is one of the thresholds that is to be considered when making compatibility determinations. Use of that threshold, when considering impacts and mitigation for visual, land use and cultural aspects were totally ignored in the Mitigated Neg. Dec. By applying that threshold of significance to this project, the result should be a finding of potentially significant impact.

If the above ground electric lines are considered a potentially significant impact, then mitigation must be incorporated into the project to reduce those impacts to a less than significant level. The only readily apparent mitigation measure is undergrounding of the electric power line. If this is truly infeasible and impractical, then the PUC can proceed with this project, but only after completing an EIR and issuing a statement of overriding considerations. A mitigated negative declaration is a statement that all significant impacts have been mitigated. If that is not the case, due to an available mitigation measure being deemed infeasible, then the PUC should prepare an environmental impact report for this project.

**A-4**

### 5. IMPACTS ON CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

#### **A. Level of Significance of Impacts on Cultural and Historical Resources**

The Mitigated Neg. Dec. does not address nor does it analyze the cultural impacts on the downtown and historical areas from a cumulative perspective. The City has taken a number of steps through the years to protect and maintain the cultural integrity of Central Rocklin, starting in 1982 with the preparation and implementation of the Front Street Historic Area Master Plan, the 1988 Downtown Revitalization Plan, and the City of Rocklin Redevelopment Plan, first adopted in 1986 and further amended in 1997. (All of these plans are discussed in further detail above under visual impacts.)

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The focus of this work was, and continues to be, revitalization and preservation of the culture and history of old Rocklin, and the railroad and quarry industries that originally founded the economic base of the city. The appearance of the old downtown area and historic district, as a whole, are culturally important and significant assets, which warrant protection.

**A-5**

Since the Front Street Historical District has been formally recognized by the City as an important historical resource through establishment of the Front Street Historical Plan and the subsequent implementing zoning adopted in the City Zoning Code, Chapter 17 of the Rocklin Municipal Code, this area must be classified as a presumptively "historical resource" within the meaning of Public Resources Code section 21084.1. (See *League for Protection of Oakland's Architectural and Historic Resources v. City of Oakland*, 52 Cal.App.4th 896)

The degradation of the view shed in old Rocklin, and specifically the historic district, by the overhead powerlines has a potentially significant cumulative impact since those powerlines will interfere with the enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of the area's and the region's prehistory and history. It is difficult to gather a sense of regional history from an area overshadowed by 100' power poles. An analysis of the cumulative cultural impacts should be added to the Mitigated Neg. Dec. and unless the mitigation measures proposed clearly mitigate impacts to a less than significant level, an EIR is mandatory. Since undergrounding of the power lines from Sunset Blvd. to Midas Ave. would remove the incompatible visual impact on the historic district, underground installation would mitigate the cumulative cultural impacts on the Rocklin's downtown and historic districts.

The City in conjunction with Caltrans, Amtrak and the Capital Corridor are working on plans to construct the Rocklin Train Station on the site of the original train station established in the 1800's. Attached are plans that show the location and design of the station building as well as the passenger platform and parking areas. PG&E plans to construct the project with overhead powerlines spanning over the proposed train station facility. The proposed PG&E overhead powerline project would significantly impact the visual and architectural design of the station and therefore be in conflict with the cultural integrity of the building. This all leads to the project being incompatible with an integral part of Rocklin's history. Undergrounding the proposed project would mitigate this impact.

**B. Adequacy of Mitigation Measures for Impacts to Cultural and Historic Resources Proposed in this Mitigated Neg. Dec.**

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The impact of this project on the Historical District is the visual incompatibility of having 100' tall power poles and the drooping electric lines intruding into the skyline as you observe the historic district from within and from adjoining neighborhood streets and viewpoints.

No amount of documentation, protection zones, training, or reporting will adequately mitigate the visual impact on the Historical District. The City is making efforts to preserve, protect, and enhance an area which can yield a sense of time and place in a cultural context important to the City as the original town site, important to the state as the site of the quarries which supplied the granite for construction of the state capitol building, and important to the nation as a primary stop in the initial days of the transcontinental railroad.

Using the terminology from the aesthetics and visual resources section (since in this case the two issues are interconnected) the power lines will form a stark contrast to the current visual character of the site. The only mitigation measure, which can reduce this impact to a less than significant level is probably removal of the power lines from the vicinity of the historic district. This clearly could be accomplished by undergrounding the lines.

Since this Mitigated Neg. Dec. failed to identify the significant cumulative impacts on the historical district and failed to include mitigation measures to mitigate those impacts to a less than significant level, the Mitigated Neg. Dec. should at the very least be revised and recirculated to address those impacts and mitigation measures. An environmental impact report for this project is more likely the correct environmental analysis to prepare, since it is doubtful any mitigation, other than undergrounding or removal of the lines from the vicinity of the Historical District by changing the project, could eliminate a fair argument that significant impacts to the City's Historical District in a cumulative context still exist since the mitigation measures incorporated into the project have not mitigated impacts to a less than significant level.

### 6. PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARDS

The Mitigated Neg. Dec. does not adequately address the danger of the power poles and power lines being near the existing high pressure petroleum tanks along the railroad corridor at Sunset and Pacific Streets (see photographs 22 & 23). There needs to be analysis of the risks and consequences that would result if either the power poles were damaged and fell onto the petroleum tanks or if the power lines themselves were to strike the tanks. Also, the consultant should tank Kinder-Morgan, owners of the petroleum tanks and facility, to discuss and document any concerns they may identify regarding the project's affect on the their facility and vice-a-versa.

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Mitigation measures should then be developed and incorporated into this project if the assessment results in a significant hazardous impact to the public. If no mitigation is available to reduce the impacts to a less than significant level, an EIR should be prepared to fully discuss the impacts and available mitigation.

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**7. ALTERNATIVES**

One way to fully assess the impacts and mitigation alternatives to alleviate the visual problems, the land use problems and the cultural problems caused by the project would be to prepare an EIR rather than the current Mitigated Neg. Dec.

An EIR would allow for a more adequate discussion of the setting and impacts and a more meaningful discussion of the mitigation measures and mitigation alternatives. Mitigation measures in an EIR would be developed based on a more adequate analysis. It would also allow a comparison of environmental alternative as well as a discussion of the economic feasibility of certain alternatives, including the alternative to underground all or a portion of the proposed project.

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One of the side benefits of preparing an EIR is that there would be an opportunity for full development and discussion of alternatives. This isn't done in the Mitigated Neg. Dec. Even PG&E recognizes the value of alternative analysis because they attempted to address some alternatives in their application. However, those alternatives were given a cursory review by the City and hardly any review by the residents and business owners of Rocklin, especially those immediately adjacent to the project.

Another scenario to having to prepare an EIR would be to take the above comments from the City of Rocklin, written comments received from others, and from those individuals that attended the information meeting held by Aspen Environmental in Rocklin, on October 25, 2001, as suggestions of more meaningful mitigation measures and change the project description to incorporate those measures. The mitigation measure that the City is proposing, and that the City believes can be environmentally justified, is to have the facility placed underground from Sunset Boulevard to Midas Avenue. More specifically, the undergrounding should take place from the south side of Sunset Boulevard (see photographs 24 through 27) to the northern side of Midas Ave. to a point where the huge transition towers can be adequately screened.

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The transition towers are much larger than the typical tubular steel poles of the project. According to the PG&E representative, the transition towers are used to transition overhead lines to underground and to transition back from underground to an overhead system. The PG&E representative, at a previous Rocklin City Council meeting presented exhibits of how these towers would look in the vicinity of the Rocklin Train Station. The Rocklin Council rejected the towers at the locations near the train station site. PG&E, however,



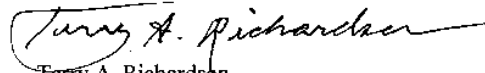
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did not present other alternative locations for the siting of these towers. Such transition towers located south of Sunset Boulevard and north of Midas Avenue, to accommodate undergrounding as suggested by the City, should be considered in the environmental analysis.

Thank you for considering the City of Rocklin's comments on the Mitigated Neg. Dec. The City hopes that consideration of the comments will result in the undergrounding of portions of the proposed project.

Sincerely,



Terry A. Richardson  
Community Development Director

Attachments: 1. Photographs of Various Views" 1 through 27  
2. Rocklin Train Station Plans

Cc: Rocklin City Council Members  
Carlos Urrutia, City Manager  
Sabina Gilbert, City Attorney  
Russell Hildebrand, Deputy City Attorney  
Scott Wilson, PG&E Senior Land Project Analyst

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 San Francisco, CA 94104

Via E-Mail and U.S. Mail

E-mail: [atlanticdelmar@aspeneq.com](mailto:atlanticdelmar@aspeneq.com)

**Subject: Comments Regarding the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study for the Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project (A.01-07-004)**

The City of Roseville has reviewed the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study for the Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project (A.01-07-004), and offers the following comment.

The City has three primary concerns with this project; compliance with a potentially applicable City ordinance (Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance), the aesthetic impacts of the proposed overhead crossing of State Route 65, and the adequacy of the initial study in its analysis of noise and aesthetic issues. The remaining comments are more editorial in nature.

It does not appear, based on the proposed alignment, that line poles at the proposed Antelope Creek crossing would be located within the City's designated floodway or flood fringe. Projects located within these designated areas require a Flood Encroachment Permit from the City's Planning Commission. Should the proposed project meet the requirements of a Flood Encroachment permit, the City expects that PG&E would comply with the associated permitting process.

Our second concern involves the overhead pole line crossing of State Route 65 which is an elevated freeway at the crossing location. The Notice of Application indicated pole heights would vary between approximately 75-110 feet. We have since learned that pole height at the State Highway crossing would be a minimum 120 feet. This crossing will be the most highly visual aspect of the project from a regional perspective yet it is minimally addressed in the Initial Study. The PEA contained pole and line visual simulations at other locations but none were presented for this prominent State Highway crossing. In our August 16, 2001 letter to the CPUC, prepared in response to the Application of PG&E for a permit to construct the proposed project, the City requested that the public draft CEQA document include visual simulations of this crossing. Visual simulations were not provided, and therefore the City's concern remains. Furthermore, the August 16<sup>th</sup> letter included a request from the City to work with PG&E to explore alternatives such as passing under the elevated highway or placing the line underground at this location. We do not see where an evaluation of such an alternative has been included in the CEQA document.

**B-1**

**B-2**

## Comment Set B, *cont.*

Atlantic Del Mar Project

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Page 2

It's unclear whether new poles proposed adjacent to existing poles would be higher than the existing poles. If new poles are higher, this would increase the aesthetic impact. In fairness, mitigation measure APM 5-1 should also be applied within the City of Roseville. These omissions bring the adequacy of the document into question.

**B-2**

### General Comments

Figure 1-5: The foremost power pole is not shown in the photo simulation of the proposed project, is that pole to be removed as part of the project?

**B-3**

Page B-41, Table III-2, Placer County Attainment Status: The Air Basin shown in the table is identified as San Joaquin Valley Air Basin. Is the data shown for the Sacramento Valley Air Basin?

**B-4**

Page B-49, Table IV-2, Potential Special Status Wildlife Species in Project Area: The table does not include Burrowing Owls or American Badgers, although those species are included in the mitigation measures, but do not appear in Table IV-2.

**B-5**

Page B-51, Mitigation Measure # B-3: In order to be consistent with Mitigation Measure B-2, text should be changed to read, "All tree removal or trimming shall occur between September 15 and ~~March~~ February 15..."

**B-6**

Page B-53, last paragraph (b): The justification for determination of a less than significant impact to riparian habitat is that riparian habitat would be avoided. However, the project would require removal of approximately 21 oak trees, in addition to tree trimming for routing operational maintenance. Additional justification for the determination of less than significant is warranted.

**B-7**

Page B-86, second paragraph: Regarding exposure of persons to noise levels in excess of local standards. The explanation includes a statement that implementation of mitigation measure APM 12-1 would reduce potentially significant on-site and off-site construction noise impacts to less than significant. However, the noise levels with mitigation are not provided, and there is no quantifiable method of evaluating mitigation effectiveness.

**B-8**

Page B-87, just because construction noise is "temporary and short-term" doesn't mean it's not significant (CEQA Appendix G XI.d). If significant unavoidable noise impacts will result, an EIR is required for the project. Consequently, the adequacy of the negative declaration is again questionable.

**B-9**

Questions or inquiries concerning this comment letter should be sent to:

Mark Morse  
Environmental Coordinator  
Roseville Community Development Department  
316 Vernon Street, room 102  
Roseville, CA 95678

## Comment Set C, *cont.*

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*Atlantic Del Mar Project*

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Page 2*

The City would like to thank the CPUC for consideration of our concerns and requests the CPUC assistance in resolution of these issues to ensure an adequate and complete CEQA document.

Sincerely,

Mark Morse, Environmental Coordinator  
Roseville Community Development Department

cc: Terry Richardson  
Rocklin Community Development Department  
P.O. Box 1380  
Rocklin, CA 95667

**Comment Set C, cont.**



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
1-1-02-SP-0106

**United States Department of the Interior**

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office  
2800 Cottage Way, Room W2605  
Sacramento, California 95825

October 24, 2001

Mr. Nicolas Procos, CPUC  
c/o Aspen Environmental Group  
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 800  
San Francisco, California 94104

Subject: Species List for Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project (A.01-07-0904),  
Placer County, California

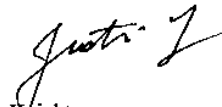
Dear Mr. Procos:

We are sending the enclosed list (Enclosure A) in response to your October 19, 2001 notice. The list covers the following U.S. Geological Survey 7½ minute quads of Rocklin and Roseville.

Please read *Important Information About Your Species List* (enclosed). It explains how we made the list and describes your responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act. Please contact Harry Mossman, Biological Technician, at (916) 414-6674, if you have any questions about the attached list or your responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act. For the fastest response to species list requests, address them to the attention of Mr. Mossman at this address. You may fax requests to him at 414-6710 or email them to [harry\\_mossman@fws.gov](mailto:harry_mossman@fws.gov).

C-1

Sincerely,

  
for Jan Knight  
Chief, Endangered Species Division

Enclosures



**Comment Set D**

**COUNTY OF PLACER**



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

11444 B AVENUE / AUBURN, CALIFORNIA 95603-2603  
TEL: 530/889-7500 / FAX: 530/889-7544  
www.placer.ca.gov/works / public\_works@placer.ca.gov

November 9, 2001

Nicolas Procos, CPUC  
c/o Aspen Environmental Group  
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 800  
San Francisco, CA 94104

**SUBJECT: PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY (PG&E), ATLANTIC-DEL MAR  
REINFORCEMENT PROJECT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

Dear Mr. Procos:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above-mentioned project for concerns relating to Placer County. After reviewing the project submittal, The Department of Public Works has no comments or questions regarding the Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project Mitigated Negative Declaration.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding our review, please do not hesitate to call me at (530) 889.7584.

Sincerely,

COUNTY OF PLACER  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
T. D. HACKWORTH, DIRECTOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
PHILLIP A. FRANTZ, P.E.  
ASSOCIATE CIVIL ENGINEER

kbr-D:\Data\Pa\FLetter\120-59

**D-1**