

3. Introduction to the Initial Study

3.1 Proposed Project Overview

San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), a regulated California utility, filed an application (A.16-07-016) with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on July 27 2016, for a Permit to Construct (PTC) the Ocean Ranch Substation Project (Proposed Project). The application was deemed complete by the CPUC on October 6, 2016.

SDG&E is proposing to construct a 69/12 kilovolt (kV) distribution substation and associated transmission and distribution lines and communications facilities. As proposed by SDG&E the project would include:

- Ocean Ranch Distribution Substation
- A 69 kV power line underground loop-in to the substation
- Four 12 kV distribution lines underground from the substation to existing local distribution lines
- A monopole with microwave antenna and associated telecommunications equipment

The Proposed Project would be located on Avenida del Oro north of Avenida de la Plata, in the Pacific Coast Business Park within the City of Oceanside, San Diego County, California. The project would provide enhanced reliability to the electric system locally and off-load some distribution currently provided from other substations in the region.

3.2 Environmental Analysis

3.2.1 CEQA Process

This Initial Study has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the amended State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.), and the CPUC CEQA rules (Rule 2.4). The purpose of the Initial Study is to inform decision-makers, responsible agencies, and the public of the Proposed Project, the existing environment that would be affected by the project, the environmental effects that would occur if the project is approved, and proposed mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce environmental effects.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) has been prepared based on the assessment of potential environmental impacts identified in the Initial Study. All potentially significant impacts associated with the project can be mitigated to a level below significant; therefore, an MND can be adopted by the CPUC in accordance with California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.

3.2.2 CEQA Lead Agency

The CPUC is the lead agency for review of the project under CEQA because it must make a decision whether to adopt the MND and to approve or deny the PTC.

3.2.3 Initial Study

The Initial Study presents an analysis of potential effects of the Proposed Project on the environment. The Initial Study is based on information from SDG&E's Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) and associated submittals, site visits, CPUC data requests, and additional research.

Construction activities and project operation could have direct and indirect impacts on the environment. The following environmental parameters are addressed in the Initial Study based on the potential effects of the Proposed Project and potential growth-inducing or cumulative effects of the Proposed Project in combination with other projects:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gases
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Traffic and Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Mandatory Findings of Significance
- Corona and Induced Current Effects

The Initial Study has been organized into the following sections:

- Section 3: Introduction. Provides an introduction and overview describing the Proposed Project and the CEQA process, and identifies key areas of environmental concern.
- Section 4: Project Description. Provides an in-depth description of the Proposed Project, including construction details and methods, and presents the project objectives.
- Section 5: Environmental Analysis and Mitigation. Includes a description of the existing conditions and an analysis of the Proposed Project's potential environmental impacts, and identifies mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels.
- Section 6: Mitigation Monitoring Plan. Includes applicant proposed measures (APMs) and mitigation measures that SDG&E must implement as part of the project, actions required to implement these measures, monitoring requirements, and timing of implementation for each measure.
- Appendices
 - Appendix A: References (Sources of information used to prepare the Initial Study)
 - Appendix B: Report Preparation (Lists the preparers of the Initial Study)
 - Appendix C: Landscape Concept Plan (Preliminary)
 - Appendix D: Water Quality BMP Manual
 - Appendix E-1: Geotechnical Study 2012
 - Appendix E-2: Geotechnical Study 2015
 - Appendix F: O&M Wildland Fire Prevention Plan
 - Appendix G: Biological Technical Report
 - Appendix H: Additional Special-status Species
 - Appendix I: Preliminary Jurisdictional Delineation
 - Appendix J: Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration