

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



July 21, 2003

**MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**  
**PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY (PG&E)**  
**APPLICATION NO. A.02-11-051**  
**SAN MATEO-MARTIN #4 CONVERSION PROJECT**

**INTRODUCTION**

Pursuant to the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) General Order 131-D, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) has filed an application with the CPUC for a Permit to Construct for the PG&E San Mateo-Martin #4 60 kV Conversion Project (proposed project). The Application was filed on November 27, 2002 and includes the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA), prepared by PG&E pursuant to Rules 17.1 and 17.3 of CPUC's Rules of Practice and Procedure. The proposed project includes the upgrade of an existing transmission line in northern San Mateo County (referred to as San Mateo-Martin #4) in order to reduce potential electrical service interruptions in the event of overloading of the existing electrical transmission system serving San Francisco and northern San Mateo County. Under the CPUC's General Order 131-D, approval of this project must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Pursuant to CEQA, the CPUC must prepare an Initial Study (IS) for discretionary projects such as the proposed project to determine whether the project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment. If an IS prepared for a project indicates that such an impact could occur, the CPUC would be required to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). If the IS does not reveal substantial evidence of such an effect, or if the potential effect can be reduced to a level of insignificance through project revisions, a Negative Declaration can be adopted (Section 21080, CEQA Public Resources Code).

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is the third type of document that could be prepared based on an IS. CEQA allows preparation of an MND "when the Initial Study has identified potentially significant effects on the environment, but (1) revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by, the applicant before the proposed Negative Declaration and Initial Study are released for public review and would avoid the effects or mitigate the effect to a point where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur, and (2) there is no substantial evidence in light of the whole record before the public agency that the project, as revised, may have a significant effect on the environment" (Section 21064.5; CEQA Public Resources Code).

Based on the assessment of the IS prepared for the PG&E San Mateo-Martin #4 Conversion Project, this Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Following is a summary of the project that PG&E has proposed; the attached IS presents more details on the proposed project under Section B, Item 8.

PG&E is proposing to construct the San Mateo–Martin #4 60 kV Conversion Project to convert an existing 60 kV line between the San Mateo and Martin Substations to 115 kV. A project location map is provided as Figure B-1 and a project route map is provided as Figure B-2. The project includes replacing the existing wires (“conductors”) and insulators on the existing San Mateo–Martin #4 60 kV power line with new wires (“reconductoring”) and modifying facilities at the existing San Mateo, Burlingame, Millbrae, and Martin Substations to accommodate the 115 kV circuit. (As a result, the proposed project is also referred to as the San Mateo–Martin #4 Reconductoring Project.) No new or replacement towers or new access roads would be required as part of this project.

The San Mateo–Martin #4 60 kV circuit is on the same towers as the San Mateo–Martin #3 115 kV circuit, which was reconducted in February 2000. As part of that project, over 30 towers were modified to accommodate the new circuit, and six towers were replaced. Based on the improvements made by PG&E as part of that earlier reconductoring effort, PG&E is proposing modifications to only three towers for the San Mateo–Martin #4 60 kV Conversion Project. Three additional towers may also require steel reinforcement work, such as replacing cross members or bracing. As part of the substation modifications required by the project, a total of four new tubular steel poles would be installed, two within the San Mateo Substation property and two within the Millbrae Substation property. In addition, two wood poles just outside of the Millbrae Substation would be removed.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

CEQA does not require that MNDs include an alternatives analysis because the IS concludes that, with mitigation, there are no significant impacts resulting from the proposed project. Because the purpose of exploring alternatives is to identify options that would feasibly attain the project objectives while reducing significant environmental effects and no significant effects would be anticipated after incorporation of the recommended mitigation measures, no alternatives analysis is provided in the IS.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT**

All major transmission lines providing power to San Francisco and northern San Mateo County are located in a single corridor along US 101 between the San Mateo and Martin Substations, the latter of which lies just south of the City and County of San Francisco boundary (see Figure B-1). Transmission facilities in this San Mateo–Martin corridor include one 230 kV underground cable and six overhead circuits on three double-circuit tower lines. The overhead circuits consist of five 115 kV and one 60 kV transmission circuits.

The San Mateo–Martin #4 circuit is the only overhead circuit operating at 60 kV in the corridor. The #4 circuit is located on the same towers as the #3 115 kV circuit, which was reconducted in 2000. As a result, this tower line is already capable of carrying the proposed 115 kV conductors without the need for substantial modifications to the supporting towers.

The proposed project is intended to serve the following PG&E objectives:

- Meet electricity demand — PG&E’s transmission planning study indicates that emergency overload conditions may occur on two of the 115 kV circuits between San Mateo and Martin Substations.
- Comply with planning criteria — PG&E seeks to ensure that the San Francisco and the northern San Mateo County area transmission system continues to meet the California Independent System Operator and the North American Electric Reliability Council standards to ensure the safety and reliability of the transmission system.

PG&E states that between 1998 and 2000 peak electric demand in San Francisco and northern San Mateo County increased from 1,130 MW to 1,245 MW (an average of about 57 MW per year). Furthermore, peak electric demand in 2001 dropped by 122 MW to 1,123 MW due to heightened energy conservation during the energy crisis and a general economic downturn. PG&E anticipates that, despite the 2001 decline, electricity demand will grow at or near the previous pace in the long term with the recovery of the California economy.

For purposes of the proposed project, PG&E examined three different load forecasts (high, medium, and low) to make a determination of demand in its planning efforts (see Figure A-1). Data used to develop forecasts include the October 2000 San Francisco Stakeholder Technical Report and PG&E’s own growth forecasts from December 2000, June 2001, and August 2002. Furthermore, because of the uncertainty of development of new generation facilities, PG&E assumed there would be no additional generation capacity to the area.

Given these load forecasts, PG&E believes completion of the proposed project would ensure that sufficient electric power from sources outside the area could be transmitted to San Francisco and northern San Mateo County to meet the planning criteria under all three forecast scenarios. PG&E contends that without the proposed project, overloading could occur on the 115 kV circuits between the San Mateo and Martin Substations by the summer of 2004 under either the “medium” or “high” load forecasts.

The proposed project would provide PG&E with the capability to transmit approximately 135 MW of additional, imported power, thus addressing an immediate need to provide additional transmission capability by 2004 and to help ensure safe and reliable electric service to San Francisco and northern San Mateo County area customers.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The IS (Section B) has been prepared to identify the potential effects on the environment from implementation of the proposed project and to evaluate the significance of these effects. The IS is based on PG&E’s PEA filed on November 27, 2002, site inspections by the CPUC environmental team, and other environmental analyses for the project. Measures addressing potentially significant impacts, proposed by the PG&E in the PEA, are referred to as Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) and are incorporated into the Project Description section of the IS. Additional mitigation measures are recommended as a result of the analyses conducted for the IS. PG&E had agreed to implement these

measures as well. Some of the additional mitigation measures are supplemental to the APMs; other measures supersede the APMs.

Based on the IS, the project as proposed by PG&E would be mitigable to less-than-significant effects or have no impacts in the areas of aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, recreation, transportation and traffic, and utilities and service systems. Implementation of APMs and additional mitigation measures would avoid all potential impacts or reduce them to less-than-significant levels.

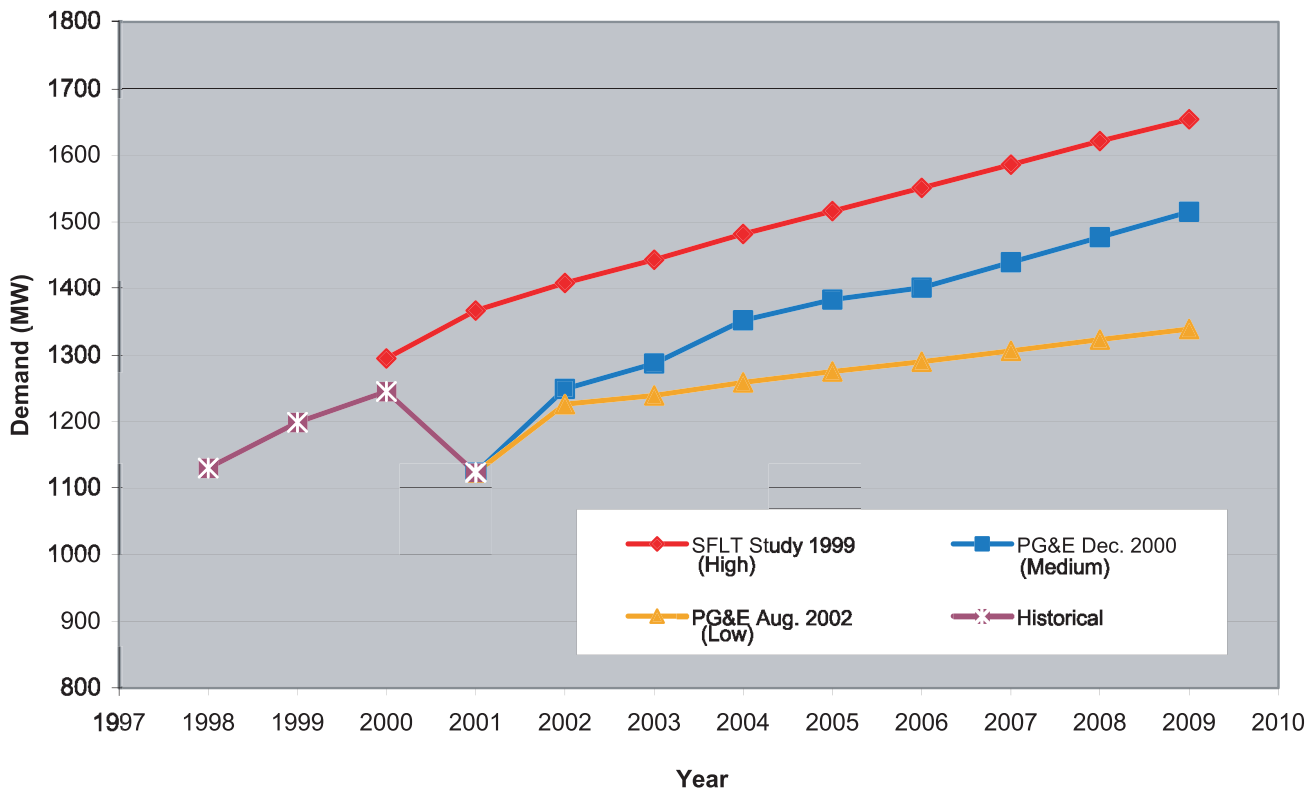
A Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan (see Section C) has been prepared to ensure that the APMs and the additional mitigation measures are properly implemented. The plan describes specific actions required to implement each measure, including information on the timing of implementation and monitoring requirements.

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California Public Utilities Commission

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Date



**FIGURE A-1**  
**Historical and Forecast Summer Peak Demand**

Not to Scale