

**Draft**

# **MONTA VISTA/WOLFE/STELLING LOOPING PROJECT**

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*Mitigated Negative Declaration*

*A.98-10-026*

*February 3, 1999*

*Prepared for:  
California Public  
Utilities Commission*

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

**DRAFT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY'S  
APPLICATION NO. A.98-10-026  
MONTA VISTA/WOLFE/STELLING LOOPING PROJECT

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

In compliance with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Order No. 131-D, Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) has applied for a Permit to Construct (PTC) the Monta Vista/Wolfe/Stelling Looping Project, which would create a new loop circuit between the Monta Vista and Wolfe substations in the City of Cupertino and would reconfigure two existing 115 kV circuits between the Ames substation in Mountain View and the Monta Vista substation in Cupertino. The project would involve construction on PG&E and Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) property, as well as construction within existing street and utility corridor rights-of-way within the City of Cupertino and Santa Clara County.

A combined overhead and underground double-circuit 115 kV line approximately 1.5 miles long would be constructed between the Monta Vista substation and property owned by the SCVWD north of Interstate 280, and the existing 115 kV line between the SCVWD property and the Wolfe and Stelling substations in Cupertino would be reconducted. The new line would connect with the existing Wolfe substation at a point northeast of the I-280/Foothill Expressway interchange. The project also involves reconfiguration of two existing circuits between the Ames and Monta Vista substations. The Mountain View substation would be disconnected from one circuit (Circuit #1) and connected to the other circuit (Circuit #2), and the Stelling and Wolfe substations would be disconnected from the second circuit (Circuit #2) and connected to the new loop circuit (Circuit #3).

The proposed project involves five major components, described below.

**Overhead Line Construction.** The overhead portion of the new circuit (Circuit #3) would be constructed at the Monta Vista substation. The new power line would originate as two separate circuits from two take-off structures on the upper portion of the substation. A 50-foot steel lattice take-off structure would be installed as part of the project. The two new 115 kV lines would span across four new self-supporting tubular steel poles ranging from 40 to 65 feet in height. The overhead portion of the lines would terminate at a new 75-foot riser pole structure on the lower

portion of the Monta Vista substation property. This portion of the overhead line construction would require a crew of six to ten workers approximately six to eight weeks to complete.

**Transition Structures.** A 75-foot riser pole would be used to connect the two overhead 115 kV lines to the new underground power line at the lower Monta Vista substation. A platform containing termination equipment would be mounted on each of two existing 55-foot dead-end lattice structures located on SCVWD property. The new underground line would terminate at the SCVWD property below the lattice structures and connect to newly installed termination equipment. Installation of termination equipment would take approximately two weeks and a crew of 10 to 12 workers.

**Underground Line Construction.** Approximately one mile of underground line would be placed in trenches along the following route: from the lower portion of the Monta Vista substation east of Heney Creek; east on Salem Avenue to Foothill Boulevard; north on Foothill Boulevard to Starling Drive; east on Starling Drive to Baxter Avenue; north on Baxter Avenue to Creston Drive; east on Creston Drive to Groveland Drive; and north on Groveland Drive to the SCVWD property. The underground line construction involves trenching and excavation, equipment and cable installation, and backfilling and paving. This portion of the project would require 10 to 20 workers six months to complete.

**Horizontal Dry Boring.** Two sites require the use of horizontal dry boring—under I-280 and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks at the SCVWD property and under Heney Creek. At the SCVWD property the horizontal dry boring would be located approximately 6 feet below the Union Pacific Railroad and 15 feet below I-280. A bore pit on the SCVWD property would be excavated, and an angle bore would be drilled to a receiving pit at Groveland Drive. The horizontal dry boring operation at Heney Creek would be located approximately 10 feet below the surface of the creekbed and originate 50-feet west of Heney Creek and extend 50 feet on the east side. This portion of the project would require approximately 4 to 6 workers six weeks to complete both sites.

**Reconductoring.** Reconductoring would occur between the SCVWD property and Wolfe and Stelling substations. The existing Wolfe Loop Ames/Wolfe Loop Monte Vista wires (conductors) would be removed and new wires would be strung in their place on existing towers and poles. Temporary crossing structures would be installed over roads, railroads, and other power lines over which the circuits cross in order to avoid accidental contact. Reconductoring would require approximately 10-20 workers approximately three weeks to complete.

## **Project Construction**

Construction of the Monta Vista Looping Project would occur over a period of six months. Trenching, installation of concrete duct bank, and vault installation is expected to take approximately four months. Cable installation, splicing, and terminating would take approximately two months.

Major equipment expected to be used for construction of the proposed project includes:

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Use</b>
dump truck	transporting excavated material
back hoe	trenching and excavation
front-end loader	back-filling; lifting & setting of steel plates
flatbed with hoist	delivery of materials & lifting heavy equipment
rubber-tired crane with outriggers	unloading & placement of prefabricated vaults
jackhammers	break-up sections of concrete that cannot be reached with other cutting or pavement breaking machinery
concrete saw	cut concrete
pavement breakers	break pavement
truck-mounted auger	boring foundation holes for new poles
aerial lifts and cranes	reconductoring
tensioner trucks	reconductoring
conductor reel trailers	reconductoring
conductor take-up reel trucks	reconductoring
three-quarter-ton crew cabs	reconductoring
two-ton flat bed trucks	reconductoring
paving equipment	paving
pick-up trucks	miscellaneous
boring equipment	bore trenches

Equipment for installing power line conductors would be placed at opposite ends of the new line section. The initial installation would involve the use of a temporary pulling line known as a “sock line” which is installed by hand. The sock line is then attached to the final aluminum conductor and pulled in place and tensioned to the required design clearances in compliance with CPUC General Order 95.

### **Project Operation and Maintenance Procedures**

The Monta Vista substation and the SCVWD facility would operate without on-site personnel, but would require annual inspection by PG&E personnel. The overhead segments of the project would be inspected for corrosion, equipment misalignment, loose fittings, or other mechanical problems. The same vaults used during underground line construction would be used for routine inspection of the power line and to perform maintenance and repairs.

### **Detailed Project Information**

Further details on proposed construction methods and the proposed facilities are included in the Initial Study prepared for the project and in PG&E’s Application (A.98-10-026) and Proponent’s Environmental Assessment.

### **CPUC's Permit to Construct Process**

The CPUC's process for granting a Permit to Construct requires compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An Initial Study was prepared for this project, specifically to examine the construction of the PG&E Monta Vista/Wolfe/Stelling Looping Project at its proposed location. A CEQA Initial Study does not study project alternatives; however, under the General Order 131-D process, if appropriate the CPUC considers alternatives to the project in determining whether or not to issue the Permit to Construct.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

An Initial Study was prepared to assess the potential effects on the environment, and the respective significance of those effects, from the proposed PG&E Monta Vista/Wolfe/Stelling Looping Project. Based on that Initial Study, the proposed project would have less than significant environmental effects or no impact in the following areas:

- Land Use and Planning
- Energy and Mineral Resources
- Visual Resources
- Population and Housing
- Hazards
- Cultural Resources
- Geologic Problems
- Noise
- Recreation
- Air Quality
- Public Services
- Cumulative Impacts
- Transportation/Circulation
- Utilities and Service Systems

Based on the Initial Study, the proposed PG&E Monta Vista/Wolfe/Stelling Looping Project would have potentially significant environmental effects in the areas of:

- Water
- Biological Resources

The identified potentially significant impacts can be avoided or reduced to less than significant levels by implementation of mitigation measures proposed and incorporated into the project by PG&E. In addition, some impacts that were determined to be less than significant can be further reduced or avoided by mitigation measures that PG&E has proposed and incorporated into the project. These measures are provided in the following table.

**Summary of Mitigation Measures Proposed by PG&E as a Part of the Project  
Monta Vista/Wolfe/Stelling Looping Project**

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>LAND USE</b>	
<i>Land use disturbances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least two weeks prior to construction, PG&amp;E will give advance notice of construction and the anticipated disturbances to property owners, businesses, and residents potentially affected by construction activities. PG&amp;E will provide this notice by: (1) posting bulletins in neighborhoods that would be affected by construction activities; and (2) publishing notices in local newspapers.</li> <li>• PG&amp;E will appoint a public affairs representative to act as the public liaison or point of contact before, during, and after constructing the proposed project. The representative will be available to discuss public concerns or questions. Procedures for reaching the public affairs representative via telephone or in person will be included in notices distributed to the public as stated above.</li> </ul>
<b>GEOLOGY &amp; SOILS</b>	
<i>Soil erosion</i>	<p>Implementation of standard erosion control measures, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintaining construction setbacks of 100 feet from Stevens Creek, and 50 feet from Heney Creek;</li> <li>• immediately hauling off-site all excavated materials and not storing any excavated materials on the sites;</li> <li>• use of hay bales and silt fences to protect biological resources, roadways, and adjacent property.</li> </ul>
<i>Seismic hazard</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG&amp;E, in conjunction with other utilities and equipment vendors throughout the country, has revised the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers standard 693, "Recommended Practices for Seismic Design of substations," ("IEEE 693") to address equipment and voltage-specific seismic qualification requirements. All equipment for the proposed project will be procured using the seismic qualification requirements of IEEE 693, which are generally more stringent than the Uniform Building Code (PG&amp;E, 1998). In addition, PG&amp;E will comply with all requirements set forth in CPUC General Orders 95 (overhead line construction) and 128 (underground electric line construction).</li> </ul>
<b>WATER</b>	
<i>Discharge into surface waters or other alteration of surface water quality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No work would be permitted within 50 feet of Heney Creek and 100 feet of Stevens Creek. Designation of a buffer zone between disturbed soils and nearby creeks would reduce the potential for transport of pollutants to the creeks from the construction site.</li> <li>• All spoils would be loaded directly into dump trucks and hauled to approved dumping locations. Collection and disposal of spoils would remove a potential source of sediments for entrainment in stormwater runoff and possible discharge to nearby creeks.</li> </ul>

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Water (cont.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of an erosion control plan using Best Management Practices for control of stormwater runoff from the construction site near Heney and Stevens Creek. When correctly implemented and managed, a suitably developed erosion control plan can adequately control erosion and the possible discharge of suspended sediment into waterways.</li> </ul>
<b>AIR QUALITY</b>	
<i>Fugitive dust</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All personnel working on the project will be trained prior to starting work on methods for minimizing air quality impacts during construction.</li> <li>All construction areas, unpaved access roads, and staging areas will be watered at least twice daily, or soil stabilizers will be applied, as necessary to minimize fugitive dust.</li> <li>All trucks hauling soil and other loose material will be covered, or have at least two feet of freeboard.</li> <li>Construction vehicles will use paved roads to access the construction site wherever possible.</li> <li>Vehicle speeds will be limited to 15 mph on unpaved roads and construction areas, or as required to control dust.</li> <li>Streets will be cleaned daily with water sweepers if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent public streets.</li> <li>Exposed stockpiles of soil and other excavated materials will be enclosed, covered, watered twice daily, or applied with non-hazardous soil binders, as necessary to control fugitive dust.</li> <li>Vegetation will be replanted in previously vegetated areas as soon as possible following the completion of construction, but no later than the following planting season appropriate to the replacement vegetation.</li> </ul>
<i>Construction vehicle and equipment emissions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carpooling will be encouraged among construction workers through contractor bid specifications and project orientation training for workers.</li> <li>Vehicles used in construction activities will be tuned per the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule, or at least annually thereafter.</li> <li>Vehicle idling time will be minimized (e.g., five minute maximum), unless required for construction purposes (e.g., concrete trucks).</li> </ul>
<b>TRANSPORTATION &amp; CIRCULATION</b>	
<i>Transportation and traffic impacts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG&amp;E will submit a Traffic Management Plan subject to approval of the City of Cupertino and Santa Clara County. PG&amp;E is a member of the California Joint Utility Traffic Control Committee, which published the Work Area Protection and Traffic Control Manual in August 1996. The traffic control plans and associated text depicted in that manual provides basic standards for the safe movement of traffic on highways and streets in accordance with the California Vehicle Code. These recommendations include provision for safe access of police, fire, and rescue vehicles. All construction activities in roadway rights-of-way, including traffic control, will be subject to the conditions of encroachment permits</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation (cont.)</b>	issued by the Santa Clara County Traffic Engineering Division and the City of Cupertino Public Works Department.



<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required permits for temporary lane closures will be obtained from the City of Cupertino. When obtaining its roadway encroachment permit from the City of Cupertino, PG&amp;E will submit a Traffic Management Plan (described above) subject to the City’s review and approval. As part of this plan, traffic control measures and construction vehicle access routes will be identified. An alternative route (i.e., Vista Knoll Boulevard) also will be identified for residents to access the Creston area during construction on Starling Drive between Baxter Avenue and Foothill Boulevard. All property owners and residents of streets affected by construction will be noticed prior to the start of construction. Advance public notification will include postings of notices and appropriate signage of construction activity.</li> <li>• PG&amp;E will consult with the City of Cupertino regarding daily construction timing along Foothill Boulevard as part of the required encroachment permit process.</li> <li>• All open trenches will be covered with metal plates capable of handling prevailing traffic loading at the end of each workday to accommodate traffic.</li> <li>• The timing and route selection for movement of heavy equipment and truck traffic will be coordinated with Santa Clara County and Cupertino Public Works Departments.</li> <li>• During street crossings (i.e., across Salem Avenue, Foothill Boulevard, Starling Drive, Creston Drive, and Groveland Drive), construction will occur in a manner that will avoid lane blockage and minimize obstruction of local circulation. The General Contractor will work with local inspectors at the time of construction to develop and implement best management practices.</li> <li>• All construction activities will be coordinated with the Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Department and the Santa Clara County Central Fire District. Emergency service providers will be notified of the timing, location, and duration of construction activities. All roads will remain passable to emergency service vehicles at all times.</li> <li>• At least one sidewalk on all streets with sidewalks along the project route will remain open at all times during construction to allow for pedestrian access.</li> <li>• PG&amp;E will restore all affected streets pursuant to its franchise agreements with the City of Cupertino and Santa Clara County.</li> <li>• PG&amp;E will consult with the Cupertino Unified School District and Fremont Union High School District at least one month prior to construction to coordinate construction scheduling adjacent to school bus stops. If necessary, school bus stops will be temporarily relocated or buses will be rerouted until construction in the vicinity is completed. School buses will be allowed to pass at all times during project construction.</li> <li>• PG&amp;E will consult with the SCVTA at least one week prior to construction to reduce potential interruption of transit service on Foothill Boulevard.</li> </ul>

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Transportation (cont.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG&amp;E will provide notification to the nearby quarries prior to construction so quarry truck drivers can be informed of impending construction activities.</li> <li>• PG&amp;E will implement mitigation measures provided by the Cupertino Public Works Department, intended to ensure the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists in the area. These include: (1) warning signs will be posted at the ends of the affected portions of Foothill Boulevard advising of alternate routes for bicycles; (2) alternate bicycle routes will be publicized during the construction period; (3) “Yield to Bicycles” signs will be posted in sections where the roadway narrows to one lane; (4) sidewalks will be opened to bicycles as an alternative route in constricted areas, and posted with speed limit signs in consideration of pedestrian traffic; and (5) when the project is completed, the roadway surface will be restored to its original smooth conditions.</li> </ul>
<b>BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</b>	
<i>Disturbance of nesting raptors/migratory birds</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before the spring breeding season (early February) and within 30 days prior to construction, a survey of the construction area for raptors and their nests will be performed by a qualified biologist.</li> <li>• If avoidance of an active nest is not practicable (February to July), a buffer zone of 250 feet will be maintained for equipment and activities. If a nest is detected, a qualified biologist would be consulted to monitor nest activity. If nest disruptions or abandonment are noted, PG&amp;E will consult with the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine any additional mitigation that may be required.</li> </ul>
<i>Disturbance of botanical resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A temporary fence will be constructed around the dripline of the valley oak tree adjacent to the laydown area on the west side of Heney Creek.</li> <li>• Any removed trees on SCVWD property would be replaced with native, low-growing species that are compatible with the powerline, and approved by the SCVWD. Suitable species include interior live oak and riparian species such as elderberry (<i>Sambucus</i> sp.) and red willow (<i>Salix laevigata</i>).</li> </ul>
<b>HAZARDS</b>	
<i>Public Health and Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In accordance with the CPUC’s EMF OII – Decision 93-11-013, PG&amp;E will incorporate “no cost” and “low cost” magnetic field reduction steps on the proposed transmission and substation facilities.</li> <li>• Soil sampling and potholing will be conducted prior to start of construction. Soil information will be provided to construction crews to inform them about soil conditions and utility locations. Soils from the trench will also be regularly monitored for possible contamination from hazardous materials. If hazardous materials are detected, work will be stopped until the material is properly identified and remedial action is taken in compliance with federal, state, and local environmental regulations, including Chapter 6.95 of the California Health and Safety Code and Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations. Hazardous materials would be handled, transported, and disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local environmental regulations.</li> </ul>

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Hazards (cont.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access for emergency vehicles would be maintained throughout project construction. PG&amp;E will coordinate any lane closures with emergency service providers. PG&amp;E will submit a Traffic Management Plan subject to approval of the City of Cupertino and Santa Clara County. This plan will include provision for safe access of police, fire ,and rescue vehicles. All construction activities in road rights-of-way, including traffic control, will be subject to the conditions of encroachment permits issued by the Santa Clara County Traffic Engineering Division and the City of Cupertino Public Works Department.</li> <li>• The PG&amp;E <i>Fire Prevention Manual</i> contains explicit provisions to prevent fires from occurring during project construction. In the unlikely event of a fire during construction, all construction vehicles are equipped with 5-gallon water tank sprayers and shovels. In addition, construction specification will include provisions for brush clearing around trench and pit areas, and No Smoking restrictions will be strictly enforced.</li> <li>• In addition, the following measures will be taken to prevent accidental wildfires. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fire prevention activities will be performed by mowing dead, herbaceous vegetation in areas where vehicles will be parked, equipment and materials will be stored, and where crews may work.</li> <li>- No campfires or trash burning will be allowed anywhere within the project boundaries.</li> <li>- Smoking will be restricted to vehicle interiors. All cigarette butts will be disposed of in vehicle ashtrays.</li> <li>- All vehicles will be equipped with a minimum five-gallon container and at least a two-pound fire extinguisher. Hand tools and shovels will also be stocked on all vehicles.</li> <li>- Fire resistant mats or windscreens will be placed on the ground below welding and splicing equipment/operations wherever dry vegetation is present.</li> <li>- All welding and splicing rigs/trailers will be equipped with a minimum 20-pound fire extinguisher and a minimum of five gallons of water in a fire fighting apparatus.</li> <li>- The construction foreman will have a cellular phone on hand to immediately report a fire.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>NOISE</b>	
<b>Construction Noise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The location and sequencing of construction activities shall be coordinated with the City of Cupertino and Santa Clara County.</li> <li>• Compressors and other small stationary equipment will be shielded and equipment exhaust will face away from noise-sensitive buildings (residences and businesses).</li> <li>• Any generators operating during nighttime hours shall be noise insulated “super quiet” units emitting a noise level of approximately 48 dBA at a distance of 50 feet.</li> <li>• Existing natural and manmade features (e.g., landscaping, fences) will be used to shield construction noise whenever possible.</li> </ul>

Impact	Mitigation
<b>Noise (cont.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular equipment maintenance and mufflers will be required on all construction equipment to control noise.</li> <li>• Vehicle idling time will be minimized (e.g., five minutes maximum), unless required for construction purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>UTILITIES &amp; SERVICE SYSTEMS</b>	
<i>Impacts on utilities or service systems</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG&amp;E conducted surveys to locate underground and overhead utilities, and all utilities encountered by project facilities have been put on the construction plan maps. During construction, before any ground disturbance occurs, Underground Service Alert (USA) will be contacted to verify the location of existing underground utilities in order to ensure that they are avoided.</li> <li>• Representatives from all aerial utilities crossed by the project will be requested to be on-site for monitoring during construction.</li> <li>• Where the project crosses or is adjacent to live, overhead electric lines, signs will be installed warning equipment operators of the presence of the line.</li> <li>• PG&amp;E will locate poles and install conductors at a safe distance from intersecting transmission line structures, conductors, and telephone wires in accordance with the distances specified in CPUC General Order 95.</li> <li>• During reconductoring, temporary crossing structures will be installed at major roads, railroad crossings, and in the vicinity of other lines to prevent accidental contact during conductor removal and installation. Refer to the Project Description for more detail on the reconductoring process.</li> <li>• PG&amp;E underground distribution gas lines will be located by PG&amp;E technicians.</li> </ul>
<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>	
<i>Disturbance of paleontological, archaeological, or historical resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to the initiation of construction or ground disturbing activities, all construction personnel will receive environmental training. The training will include discussion of the possibility of buried remains, and the procedure, detailed below, that is to be followed if buried cultural remains are encountered during construction.</li> <li>• If buried cultural materials, including prehistoric and historic resources, are discovered in the project area: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work in the immediate area of the find will be halted.</li> <li>2. PG&amp;E's archeologist will be notified.</li> <li>3. PG&amp;E's archeologist will identify the find and make the necessary plans for treatment of the find. PG&amp;E's archeologist will evaluate the find and, if it is found to be historically or culturally significant per CEQA, determine appropriate mitigation measures for review and approval by the CPUC.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Cultural Resources (cont.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If buried human remains are encountered during construction:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work will halt in the area.</li> <li>2. PG&amp;E's archeologist and the Santa Clara County coroner will be immediately notified.</li> <li>3. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) will be notified within 24 hours as required by Public Resources Code 5097. The NAHC will notify designated Most Likely Descendants who will provide recommendations for the treatment of the remains within 24 hours. The NAHC will mediate any disputes regarding treatment of the remains.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
SOURCE: PG&E, 1998 PEA	

## **FINDINGS**

Based on the analysis in the Initial Study and the Mitigation Measures identified in the Initial Study and listed above for inclusion into the project, the CPUC finds that the PG&E Monta Vista/Wolfe/Stelling Looping Project (A. 98-10-026) will not have a significant effect on the environment.

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Natalie Walsh, Program Manager  
Analysis Branch  
Energy Division  
California Public Utilities Commission

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Date