CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

LS POWER GRID CALIFORNIA's POWER SANTA CLARA VALLEY PROJECT

Volume III: Comments and Responses to Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report

December 2025

A.24-04-017
State Clearinghouse No. 2024090200

Prepared for:
California Public Utilities Commission

Prepared by:
Environmental Science Associates

ESA

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Acronyms and Other Abbreviations

Acronym	Abbreviation
AB	Assembly Bill
AC	alternating current
AC-1	Alternative Combination 1
ACE	agricultural conservation easement
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
Alternative Combination 1	Grove Terminal Alternative 3
APM	Applicant-proposed measure
APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
BART	Bay Area Rapid Transit
BESS	battery energy storage system
BMP	best management practice
California Register	California Register of Historical Resources
Cal/OSHA	California Division of Occupational Safety and Health
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
City of San José DOT	City of San José Department of Transportation
Commission	California Public Utilities Commission
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
CRHR	California Register of Historic Resources
CRTP	Cultural Resources Treatment Plan
dBA	A-weighted decibels
EIR	environmental impact report
EMF	electric and magnetic fields
ESA	Environmental Science Associates
FP	field protocol
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GO	General Order
Greater Bay Area	Greater San Francisco Bay Area
GTA-3	Grove Terminal Alternative 3

Acronym	Abbreviation
HCP	habitat conservation plan
HDD	horizontal directional drilling
HVAC	High Voltage Alternating Current
HVDC	high-voltage direct current
in/sec	inches per second
ITP	incidental take permit
KOP	key observation points
kV	kilovolt
L_{eq}	equivalent continuous sound level
L_{max}	instantaneous maximum noise level
LRT	light-rail transit
LS Power	LS Power Grid California
LSPGC	LS Power Grid California
m	meters
MLD	Most Likely Descendant
MM	Mitigation Measure
MMCRP	Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance, and Reporting Program
mph	miles per hour
Muni Water	San José Municipal Water System
MW	megawatts
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NOA	notice of availability
NOC	notice of completion
NOP	notice of preparation
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
OSA	Open Space Authority
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PEA	Proponent's Environmental Assessment
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
PM	Particulate Matter
POST	Peninsula Open Space Trust
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	California Public Resources Code
Project	Power Santa Clara Valley Project
ROW	right-of-way
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board

Acronym	Abbreviation
Santa Clara Valley HCP	Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan
SB	Senate Bill
SCVURPPP	Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program
SF Bay RWQCB	San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
SJW	San José Water Company
SLF	Sacred Lands File
SVP	Silicon Valley Power
SWPPP	stormwater pollution prevention plan
TCP	traffic control plan
TCR	tribal cultural resource
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Valley Water	Santa Clara Valley Water District
VdB	vibration decibel
VTA	Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
XLPE	cross-linked polyethylene

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has prepared this document to respond to comments provided on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project (Project). This volume also includes copies of all written comments received on the Draft EIR and CPUC's responses to these comments. This document has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (as amended) and the CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 15000 et seq. [14 CCR 15000 et seq.]). Together with Volumes I and II, this document constitutes the Final EIR for the Project.

1.1 Format and Organization of this Document

This Volume of the Final EIR contains the following components:

- **Chapter 1, *Introduction*.** This chapter describes the organization of the document and its preparation. This chapter also contains information on the public review period for the Draft EIR and the Final EIR certification process.
- **Chapter 2, *Master Responses*.** This chapter contains the master responses prepared in response to comments received on the Draft EIR. As described in Section 1.2, *Public Review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report*, a total of 305 comment letters were received during the public review period for the Draft EIR. Many of these letters raised similar concerns. Therefore, master responses were prepared to eliminate repetitiveness in responding to similar comments and to address the shared concerns and comments received during the public review period.
- **Chapter 3, *Individual Responses to Comments*.** This chapter contains written responses to individual comments raising significant environmental issues received on the Draft EIR. Where appropriate, responses to individual comments within comment letters refer the reader to the applicable master response(s), which are delineated in Chapter 2, *Master Responses*. Chapter 3, *Individual Responses to Comments*, contains a list of the agencies, organizations, utilities, and individuals that provided comment letters on the Draft EIR.

1.2 Public Review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report

The public review period for the Draft EIR began on July 10, 2025, with the filing of the notice of completion with the State Clearinghouse and the distribution and posting of the notice of availability (NOA). The NOA was posted on the CPUC website along with the electronic Draft EIR files. The public review period for the Draft EIR closed on August 25, 2025.

During the public review period for the Draft EIR, CPUC held a hybrid (virtual and in-person) public meeting on August 5, 2025. The meeting featured a presentation by CPUC describing the Project objectives, components, and a summary of the analysis and conclusions set forth in the Draft EIR. The meetings provided an opportunity for attendees to provide oral comments. Copies of the meeting presentation slides, recording, and transcript are available for download and viewing on CPUC's website.[1]

CPUC received a total of 302 letters containing comments on the Draft EIR during the public review period. Letters were submitted by local and state agencies, utilities, organizations, and individual members of the public. No federal agencies submitted comments on the Draft EIR. Chapter 3, *Individual Responses to Comments*, provides copies of the letters submitted during the public review period and the list of individuals, agencies, and organizations that submitted comments.

1.3 Preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Report

Preparation of the Final EIR involved preparing responses to comments received during the public review period for the Draft EIR. Comments were responded to either through master responses (for common recurring themes) or through individual responses to comments, or a combination of the two. Comment letters were assigned a letter code and individual comments within the unique comment letters were bracketed and numbered (e.g., agencies were coded as letter "A" and listed as A-1, A-2, etc.). Copies of the unique comment letters and associated responses to comments are provided in Chapter 3, Individual Responses to Comments, of this document. Revisions to the Draft EIR text are shown in Volumes I and II of the Final EIR, with substantive changes from the original Draft EIR text shown in underline/strikeout and are also shown in Chapter 4 of this Volume III document.

[1] Available: https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/pscv/pdfs/Recording.mp4; https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/pscv/pdfs/Transcript.txt

1.4 Final Environmental Impact Report Review and Certification

The Final EIR will be posted on CPUC's website, and all public agencies that submitted comments on the Draft EIR will be notified of the Final EIR's availability at least 10 days prior to certification. After the close of the 10-day public agency review period, CPUC will consider the EIR, staff recommendations, and public testimony, and decide whether to certify the EIR and approve or deny the Project or approve one of the alternative combinations. If CPUC chooses to certify the EIR and approve the Project or one of the alternative combinations, it will file a notice of determination with the Office of Land Use and Planning Innovation (14 CCR 15094). Because the EIR has identified significant and unavoidable impacts from the Project and alternative combinations, a statement of overriding considerations would be required as part of the record of project or alternative approval (14 CCR 15093[c]).

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CHAPTER 2
Master Responses

This section presents master responses on topics where commenters made similar comments on the same topic. This document contains two Master Responses related to Wildlife Connectivity and Alternatives.

2.1 Master Response 1: Wildlife Connectivity

2.1.1 Comment

Several comments were received stating that Coyote Valley serves as an important wildlife corridor between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range open lands, providing a critical linkage for east-west wildlife migration. The commenters note the area is recommended in local and regional plans, such as the Peninsula Open Space Trust Coyote Valley Wildlife Connectivity Planning Project, for preservation as protected open space. They expressed concern that developing the Grove HVDC Terminal at the existing orchard site would further fragment habitat, exacerbate roadkill issues along Monterey Road, and interfere with future planned wildlife connectivity improvements. One commenter also mentions Assembly Bill (AB) 1889 ("Room to Roam Act"), signed into law on September 27, 2024, which mandates that connectivity be included in the conservation elements of future general plans in California.

Noting the proximity of Coyote Creek to the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal, commenters also point out that animals moving through the existing Coyote Creek riparian corridor may be disturbed by noise, light, or human presence during construction or operation of the terminal. One commenter points out that the fence surrounding the existing orchard is permeable, noting that a bobcat has been recorded in the orchard, and holes may be present in chain-link fences that allow animals to access the orchard.

Commenters also suggest that locating the Grove HVDC Terminal at the site of the existing orchard would increase cumulative impacts on connectivity by inhibiting the planned wildlife connectivity improvements associated with potential future projects, such as the California High-Speed Rail.

2.1.2 Response

The Draft EIR Section 3.4, *Biological Resources*, acknowledges Coyote Valley as an important wildlife corridor. Specifically, section 3.4.2.4 Wildlife Movement and Corridors of the Draft EIR states that "there is a large area of Essential Connectivity Area from approximately Bernal Road along Monterey Road to the eastern end of the biological resources study area … with movement

pathways for mammals, amphibians, and reptiles from the Diablo Range to the east to the Santa Cruz foothills to the west." Furthermore, the Draft EIR notes that the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority views the valley as a "resource of statewide significance" and acknowledges its interest in "promoting conservation and restoration of the valley, as expressed in the Coyote Valley Conservation Program (Public Resources Code Section 35180 et seq.)." and that the Peninsula Open Space Trust Coyote Valley Wildlife Connectivity Planning Project is planning for wildlife corridor enhancements in the area (see Draft EIR pages 3.4-22 and 3.4-23). The Draft EIR also states that Monterey Road serves as "a barrier to wildlife movement due to a lack of safe pathways under the road." The importance of the Coyote Creek riparian corridor for wildlife movement is also noted in the Draft EIR on pages 3.4-23 and 3.4-56.

As noted in the Draft EIR Impact 3.4-4 (page 3.4-57), at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site, the existing fencing surrounding the 13.6-acre orchard prevents wildlife from accessing the site. The Draft EIR explains that fencing serves as a wildlife barrier, inhibiting movement of terrestrial wildlife into the orchard. While one commenter notes there is a record of one bobcat sighting in the orchard, the sighting of one individual does not disprove that fencing is a barrier to movement across the orchard, though not impermeable. While some individuals may succeed in penetrating the fence, most will not. The fencing is one of multiple wildlife barriers that exist at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site, which is located between two additional existing barriers, including Monterey Road to the west of the site and US 101 to the east of the site. Both major roadways already restrict wildlife movement across the site under existing conditions. As discussed in Impact 3.4-4, Applicant-Proposed Measures (APMs) and LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.4-2 and LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.4-4 would be implemented during construction of the Grove HVDC Terminal. Following Project construction, the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal would have permanent security fencing around the smaller 6.3-acre terminal, which would restrict wildlife access from a smaller area than the currently fenced orchard (13.6 acres). The reduction in permanent fencing at the site would allow for wildlife passage on an additional 7.3 acres, providing wildlife access to the Coyote Creek riparian corridor and areas beyond. Therefore, with implementation of APMs and LSPGC Mitigation Measures, along with the existing fencing's barrier to wildlife movement, the Project site's location between additional existing wildlife barriers, and the reduction in permanent fencing after Project construction is completed, the Project's impacts to wildlife movement resulting from the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal would remain less than significant.

Project-generated noise, light, and human activity during construction may temporarily create additional disturbance for wildlife movement across the Coyote Creek riparian corridor; however, because LSPGC would implement APMs BIO-1, BIO-4, BIO-6, BIO-7, BIO-9, BIO-11 and Mitigation Measures 3.1-2 and 3.4-2, these measures would protect wildlife moving east-west through the site, and north-south along the Coyote Creek riparian corridor and their habitat from noise, light, injury, and human disturbance. The lighting associated with the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal during operation would be consistent with the existing lighting conditions in the vicinity of Coyote Creek that includes light generated from the PG&E Metcalf Substation and light from nearby commercial buildings and residences. As stated in the Draft EIR (page 3.1-40), "The facilities at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal are not likely to require consistent nighttime illumination." Implementation of APMs and LSPGC Mitigation Measures would also

reduce impacts from light during operation. APM BIO-7 states that outdoor lighting during construction and operation and maintenance shall be minimized, using photocell and motion-controlled lights for safety and security, directed downward where possible, with night work avoided unless required by local municipalities, primarily in commercial and industrial areas. LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.1-2 would selectively place, shield, and direct lighting to minimize fugitive light, minimize lighting, and direct it away from sensitive species habitat where feasible. Thus, during operations, light generated from the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal is not expected to substantially impact wildlife movement around the terminal, because lighting would be similar to existing conditions in the area (i.e., light generated from the PG&E Metcalf Substation, commercial buildings, and residences), the terminal would not require consistent nighttime illumination, and because mitigation measures to reduce impacts from light would be implemented.

Specific to noise impacts during operation and as stated in the Draft EIR (page 3.13-30), "Routine operation and maintenance activities associated with the HVDC terminals and PG&E substation upgrades and modifications would generally be similar to existing operation and maintenance activities conducted by PG&E for the existing substations." Noise generated from the operation of the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal is expected to have less than significant impacts with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.13-2, Grove HVDC Terminal Noise Characterization and Reduction Plan. Thus, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.13-2, noise impacts during operation of the Grove HVDC Terminal would be less than significant and would not be expected to substantially impact wildlife movement in the area beyond the existing condition.

The commenters also note that the cumulative impacts assessment should include the proposed California High-Speed Rail wildlife crossing near Emado Avenue, which may be affected by the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal. The Emado Avenue crossing is the closest of the three proposed California High-Speed Rail wildlife crossings in Coyote Valley, with the other two located to the north at Fisher Creek and near Tulare Hill. The existing orchard currently includes a fence along the southeastern and southwestern sides which serves as a restrictive barrier that limits wildlife movement toward the south where the proposed Emado Avenue crossing would be located. As noted above, the permanent fencing around the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal would cover 6.3 acres, which is a smaller area than the existing fenced area around the orchard (i.e., 13.6 acres). Additionally, the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal would be located in the northwestern half of the orchard, and the surrounding permanent security fence is not expected to alter wildlife accessibility to the west, east, or south beyond the baseline condition. A portion of the existing fenceline that separates the adjacent residence north of the orchard would not be expected to affect wildlife accessibility to the proposed crossings. Wildlife using the crossings would still be able to move through the open space surrounding the new terminal. Thus, although the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal would be enclosed by a security fence when constructed, the fenced area would be smaller than the currently fenced orchard area and the proposed location of the terminal is not anticipated to substantially deter access to the proposed California High-Speed Rail wildlife crossings at Emado Avenue, Fisher Creek, or Tulare Hill.

In response to the cumulative effects concerns described above, Section 3.4.7.4 of the Draft EIR (Cumulative Effects Analysis, Criterion [d], page 3.4-73) has been revised to clarify that the existing fencing around the orchard is a partial barrier, as noted above:

> *Additionally, construction of the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site would occur in an existing orchard, which is currently fenced, and serves as a partial barrier to wildlife movement.*

In response to the concerns described above, Section 3.4.7.4 of the Draft EIR (Cumulative Effects Analysis, Criterion [d], page 3.4-74) has been modified to discuss wildlife crossings as follows:

> *The majority of the cumulative projects would be constructed and operated on developed or previously disturbed land. These cumulative projects would undergo development review by local departments/jurisdictions, the results of which, if necessary, would require adherence to regulatory rules and regulations, and if necessary, elicit further environmental reviews. For example, cumulative projects would be subject to measures (e.g., mitigation measures, avoidance and minimization measures) as part of their respective environmental review, or as existing mitigation commitments to avoid or limit their impacts on wildlife movement or nursery sites.*
>
> Reasonably foreseeable future projects may include environmental mitigation related to wildlife connectivity. The California High-Speed Rail project would be an additional barrier to wildlife movement across Coyote Valley, and, for mitigation, its preferred alternative would include three dedicated wildlife crossings in Coyote Valley, at Emado Avenue, Fisher Creek, and Tulare Hill that would cross Monterey Road near the Metcalf Substation and Grove HVDC Terminal.[2] The currently proposed Emado Avenue crossing is located near the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal. Wildlife using this crossing could continue through the open space surrounding the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal to access the proposed California High Speed Rail wildlife crossings, and also access Coyote Creek and the open space beyond. Additionally, wildlife would not be expected to be deterred from using the crossings as a result of light and noise generated by the terminal because of the combination of existing conditions in the area (i.e., PG&E Metcalf Substation, commercial buildings, and residences) and the implementation of APMs and mitigation measures.

2.2 Master Response 2: Alternatives

Several comments expressed support for Alternative Combination 1, which combines installing the alignment of the Grove to Skyline 320 kV Transmission Line, as proposed, with the Grove Terminal Alternative 3 (GTA-3) site, which would construct the Grove HVDC Terminal on the property of the existing PG&E Metcalf Substation directly northwest of the proposed Metcalf Substation modification area. Since this alternative terminal site would be directly adjacent to the proposed PG&E Metcalf Substation modification area, it would eliminate the need for the proposed 1.2-mile Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line, and would instead include

[2] California High Speed Rail Authority. 2022. Factsheet on Wildlife Movement: San Jose to Merced Project Section.

construction of an approximately 200-foot Metcalf to Grove 500 kV transmission tie line that would be overhead from the LSPGC dead-end structure within the terminal site to a PG&E-owned dead-end structure inside the proposed PG&E Metcalf Substation modification area.

Draft EIR Chapter 4, *Alternatives*, analyzes the Proposed Alignment and Grove Terminal Alternative 3 (Alternative Combination 1).

CEQA does not require a lead agency to adopt the identified environmentally superior alternative. Section 21081 of the Public Resources Code requires that an agency may not approve a proposed project if feasible alternatives exist that would substantially lessen its significant environmental effects, but an agency may reject alternatives if economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations make the alternatives infeasible (Pub. Resources Code § 21081, subd. (a)(3).) "[P]otentially feasible alternatives 'are suggestions which may or may not be adopted by the decisionmakers'" (*California Native Plant Society v. City of Santa Cruz* (2009) 177 Cal.App.4th 957, 999, citing *No Slo Transit, Inc. v. City of Long Beach* (1987) 197 Cal.App.3d 241, 256). Feasibility is a factor to consider when adopting a proposed project or an alternative:

The issue of feasibility arises at two different junctures: (1) in the assessment of alternatives in the EIR and (2) during the agency's later consideration of whether to approve the project. (See *Mira Mar Mobile Community v. City of Oceanside* (2004) 119 Cal.App.4th 477, 489 (*Mira Mar*).) But "differing factors come into play at each stage." (Kostka & Zischke, Practice under the Cal. Environmental Quality Act (Cont.Ed.Bar 2d ed. 2009) § 15.9, p. 740.) For the first phase – inclusion in the EIR – the standard is whether the alternative is *potentially* feasible. (*Mira Mar*, at p. 489; Guidelines, § 15126.6, subd. (a).) By contrast, at the second phase – the final decision on project approval – the decision-making body evaluates whether the alternatives are *actually* feasible. (See Guidelines, § 15091, subd. (a)(3).) At that juncture, the decision-makers may reject as infeasible alternatives that were identified in the EIR as potentially feasible. (*Mira Mar*, at p. 489.) (*California Native Plant Society v. City of Santa Cruz* (2009) 177 Cal.App.4th 957, 981.)

Ultimately, the selection of the Proposed Project or an alternative will be up to the CPUC's decisionmakers who will consider the support expressed for Alternative Combination 1 in reaching their final decision.

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CHAPTER 3
Individual Responses to Comments

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains copies of the comment letters received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project (Project) and provides individual written responses to the comments contained in the comment letters. Brackets are placed adjacent to individual comments to indicate the extent of the comment. Each comment letter is followed by the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) responses to that letter, which are numbered to correspond with the comments marked on the letter. Where appropriate, responses to individual comments in this chapter refer the reader to the applicable master response(s), which are provided in Chapter 2.

3.2 Limitations on Responses to Comments

CEQA does not require that substantive responses be provided for comments that do not address the adequacy or accuracy of the environmental analysis or that do not identify an environmental issue (Pub. Res. Code Section 21091(d); CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(c)). Additionally, the CEQA Guidelines specify that the level of detail contained in a lead agency's response to a comment "may correspond to the level of detail provided in the comment (i.e., responses to general comments may be general)" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(c)).

Comments that do not warrant detailed agency responses in this Final EIR include, for example, those that merely express favor or disfavor for the project or an aspect of the project, that address topics that do not fall under the purview of CEQA, or that are not specific to the Project. In general, CEQA does not require a detailed response to the following types of comments:

1. Those that merely acknowledge the opportunity to review the Draft EIR or express support for the project, without providing further input.
2. Summaries of Project components or quotations from the Draft EIR's analysis or conclusions, including those that acknowledge that the Project would, if implemented, result in significant and in some cases significant and unavoidable impacts. Such comments do not meet CEQA's threshold for receipt of a detailed response unless they explain whether, how, or why the Draft EIR is believed to be inaccurate or inadequate and provide supporting evidence.
3. Input that is beyond the scope of CEQA, which is concerned with the potential significance of impacts on the physical environment.

Nonetheless, such comments are addressed within Sections 3.4.1, *Public Meeting Comments,* 3.4.2, *Agency, Organization, and Utility Comment Letters,* 3.4.3, *Comment Letters by Individuals,*

and 3.4.4, *Form Letter 1,* commensurate with the level of detail in the comment. Regardless of whether a detailed response is provided, the CPUC acknowledges receipt of all comments received and has included them as part of the record of information that will be considered during its decision-making process.

3.3 Responses to Comments

For purposes of responding to all comments received, each comment letter was assigned a letter and number identifying the source as either a local agency (e.g., LA1), a state agency (e.g., SA1), a utility (e.g., UT1), or an organization (e.g., O1). Each comment was assigned a comment number (e.g., O2-1, O2-2, etc.). On the following pages, each comment letter is reproduced in its entirety followed by the responses to each comment within the letter. In some instances, a brief summary or paraphrase is provided within the response to provide context and/or clarification based on the input received. Some comments received during the public and agency review period resulted in minor revisions to the Draft EIR, as summarized here and shown in underline and ~~strikeout~~ in this chapter.

As indicated in the responses to comments below, the text from the Draft EIR has been revised based on certain specific comments received. Although the changes are shown in Volumes I and II of this Final EIR, the revisions are reproduced here for reference. The page numbers listed refer to the numbering or pagination in the Final EIR, not the original Draft EIR.

3.4 Comment Letters and Responses to Comments

For purposes of responding to all comments received, each comment letter was assigned a letter and number identifying the source as a public meeting comment (e.g., PH), a local agency (e.g., LA1), a state agency (e.g., SA1), a utility company (e.g., UT1), an organization (e.g., O1), an individual (e.g., I), or Form Letter 1 (e.g., F1). Each comment was assigned a comment number (e.g., O2-1, O2-2, etc.). On the following pages, each comment letter is reproduced in its entirety followed by the responses to each comment within the letter. In some instances, a brief summary or paraphrase is provided within the response to provide context and/or clarification based on the input received. Some comments received during the public and agency review period resulted in minor revisions to the Draft EIR, as summarized here and shown in underline and ~~strikeout~~ in Volume I of this Final EIR.

As indicated in the responses to comments below, the text from the Draft EIR has been revised based on certain specific comments received. Although the changes are shown in Volumes I and II of this Final EIR, the revisions are reproduced here for reference. The page numbers listed refer to the numbering or pagination in the Final EIR, not the original Draft EIR.

3.4.1 Public Meeting Comments

The CPUC conducted a public meeting on August 5, 2025, to provide an overview of the environmental review process and to receive public comments on the Project and the Draft EIR. This section presents the verbal comments received during the public meeting on the Project, as

well as the CPUC's coded responses to those comments. The individuals who provided the 8 comments during the public meeting are listed below in **Table 3-1**.

TABLE 3-1
PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS

Letter	Commenter	Date
PH1	Open Space Authority, Lena Ian	August 5, 2025
PH2	Green Foothills, Policy and Advocacy Director, Alice Kaufman	August 5, 2025
PH3	Santa Calara Valley Audubon Society, Shani Kleinhaus	August 5, 2025
PH4	Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action, Kayla Ngo	August 5, 2025
PH5	Serena Myjer	August 5, 2025
PH6	Gina White	August 5, 2025
PH7	Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action, Calvin Sridhara	August 5, 2025
PH8	Elizabeth Polland	August 5, 2025

Good evening. My name is Lena Ian, and I'm speaking today on behalf of the Santa Clara Valley Open Space authority as a public agency. Our mission is to conserve the natural environment, support agriculture, and connect people to nature for the benefit of current and future generations. Our comments this evening will be followed by a more detailed comment later this month, but overall the Open Space Authority is supportive of the overall goals of the power Santa Clara Valley project to strengthen the reliability of the electrical grid, and to provide increased access to affordable renewable energy. Throughout the project, the Open Space Authority has proactively engaged with both LS Power and PG&E to support least conflict siting that best serves public interest and investments. We strongly support the environmentally superior alternative combination, one which co-locates the Southern HVDC or Grove terminal at the existing Metcalf PG& E Substation. Co-location would be less costly for ratepayers, more energy efficient and involve fewer environmental impacts compared to the proposed site which is undeveloped agricultural land. That is a part of an important wildlife corridor located within the Coyote Valley conservation program area. To date, over 120 million dollars in public and private investments have been made to protect over 1,500 acres of this important landscape, which lie directly across from the proposed site. In addition to significant, unavoidable impacts to agricultural resources, we believe the EIR inadequately evaluated and therefore underestimated the impacts of this location on wildlife connectivity. The analysis concludes that impacts could be reduced to a less than significant level, but it does not consider planned and in progress wildlife connectivity improvements, including those with the Valley transportation, authority, and peninsula, Open Space Trust as well as planned improvements from high speed rail. So in summary, again, we support alternative Combination one. It's our understanding that LS Power and PG& E agree that co-location is feasible. It is feasible, and we are hoping that an agreement for co-location will be reached soon. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

PH1-1

PH1-2

PH1-3

PH1-4

PH1-5

PH1-6

Comment PH1: Open Space Authority, Lena Ian

PH1-1 The commenter states support for the overall goals of the Project and its engagement with the Applicant and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) to locate the Project on sites that would allow for the fewest conflicts while best serving the public interest. The comment is noted.

PH1-2 The commenter expresses support for the environmentally superior alternative. The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives.

PH1-3 The comment concerns the Coyote Valley wildlife corridor and its proximity to the proposed Grove HVDC terminal. The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 1: Wildlife Connectivity.

PH1-4 The commenter expresses concerns about the Project's impact on agricultural resources if the Grove HVDC terminal is sited at its proposed location. The comment is noted. Potential impacts on agricultural resources will be, as proposed in the Draft EIR, mitigated to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.2-1.

PH1-5 The commenter asserts that the EIR inadequately evaluated and underestimated the impacts on wildlife connectivity if the Grove HVDC terminal is constructed at its proposed location. The commenter notes, "The analysis concludes that impacts could be reduced to a less than significant level, but it does not consider planned and in progress wildlife connectivity improvements, including those with the Valley transportation, authority, and peninsula, Open Space Trust as well as planned improvements from high speed rail.'

The comment is noted. Please refer to the Master Response 1: Wildlife Connectivity.

PH1-6 The commenter expresses support for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1), with the Grove HVDC terminal co-located at the existing PG&E Metcalf Substation. The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives.

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to comment. My name is Alice Kaufman. I'm the policy and advocacy director for green foothills. and we support alternative combination one, the alternative in the EIR which locates the Grove terminal at the PG&E Metcalf substation, and which was identified in the EIR as the environmentally superior alternative. We believe that the CPUC should choose alternative Combination one as the preferred path forward for the Power Santa Clara Valley project. Locating the Grove terminal at the Metcalf substation instead of on an orchard in Coyote Valley would significantly reduce the environmental impacts of the project. Coyote Valley forms a critical landscape linkage for wildlife to migrate between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range. Numerous scientific studies support conserving all of Coyote Valley as protected open space to ensure the environmental and economic vitality of the greater San Jose area. Santa Clara County voters agree and have consistently and overwhelmingly demonstrated their support for conservation of Coyote Valley. The Coyote Valley orchard that would be the site for the terminal under the project as proposed, is right next to Coyote Creek, which is the backbone of the Wildlife Corridor, through Coyote Valley. Animals that depend on the Creek corridor to be able to migrate from the Santa Cruz Mountains to the Diablo range would be subject to noise, nighttime, lighting, human activity, and other disturbances from the construction and operation of the energy facility. Furthermore, Monterey Road, where the orchard site is located, is already a wildlife, roadkill, hotspot. The highest incidence of bobcats, badgers, coyote, deer, and other animals being killed by cars is right around this location, proving that animals are desperately trying to get across Monterey Road to the safety of Coyote Creek on the other side. Putting a 6-acre energy facility in the path of these animals will only make this problem worse. Please choose AC-1 as the preferred path forward for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project. Thank you.

PH2-1

PH2-2

PH2-3

Comment PH2: Green Foothills, Alice Kaufman

PH2-1 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives.

PH2-2 The comment concerns the Coyote Valley wildlife corridor and its proximity to the proposed Grove HVDC terminal. The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 1: Wildlife Connectivity.

PH2-3 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives.

Good evening. My name is Shani Kleinhaus. I'm the environment. I'm the environmental advocate for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. I don't want to repeat what the representative from Green Foothills said, but we also support the alternative. At Metcalf, there is a certain level of opportunity loss that CEQA may not capture, but it's very, very important, and if we are going to have wildlife movement through Coyote Valley, it's important not to put the infrastructure on the valley floor to the largest extent possible, and to use existing infrastructure such as the Metcalf station. Thank you. PH3-1

Comment PH3: Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Shani Kleinhaus

PH3-1 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives.

Hello! My name is Kayla Ngo, and I'm a rising senior at Pioneer High School and a member of the Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action, San Jose team. I'm speaking to urge the CPUC to select alternative combination one or AC-1 placed in the Grove terminal at the PG&E Metcalf substation. The CPUC's own draft environmental impact report confirms that it's the environmentally superior option and if placed in the orchard near Coyote Valley, the site would replace 6 acres of trees with concrete, tear up nearly a mile of the Coyote Creek trail and require tunneling under the creek, which is right through a critical wildlife corridor. Building next to Coyote Creek severely disrupts the wildlife's migration patterns with noise and light, and increases their chances of being hit and killed by cars. Adding over a mile of new infrastructure would also bring more financial burden onto the public. Please choose AC-1. It's a clear, responsible path forward. Thank you.

PH4-1

PH4-2

PH4-3

Comment PH4: Silicon Valley youth Climate Action, Kayla Ngo

PH4-1 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives.

PH4-2 The commenter expresses concerns for the Coyote Valley wildlife corridor and its proximity to the proposed Grove HVDC terminal. The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 1: Wildlife Connectivity.

PH4-3 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives.

Hi! My name is Serena Myjer and I would like to say, please choose AC-1 as the preferred path forward for the power of the Santa Clara Valley project. Locating the Grove terminal at Metcalf Substation instead of at an orchard in Coyote Valley would significantly reduce the environmental impact of the project anecdotally. After working in Coyote Valley as a restoration technician, I spoke with people like farmers, hikers, cyclists in the area, and everyone overwhelmingly values the beauty of this place because it is undeveloped farmland and mountains. Also, Santa Clara County voters have agreed to support conservation of Coyote Valley over and over again. Monterey Road, where this orchard is located, is already a wildlife roadkill hotspot. Putting the energy facility there will only make this problem worse if you remove the orchard. There's no habitat restoration or mitigation that can replace the existence of open space needed for wildlife movement. I'd also like to express my concern for the removal of cultural resources in the area that cannot be replaced. And finally, as a taxpayer, I don't want to pay for an additional energy facility when it could be located at the Metcalf substation. Thank you.

PH5-1

Comment PH5: Serena Myjer

PH5-1 The commenter states a preference for locating the Grove HVDC terminal at PG&E Metcalf Substation and expresses concern for the removal of cultural resources in the area. The comment is noted. For a response regarding the Draft EIR Chapter 4, *Alternatives*, please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives. Impacts on tribal cultural resources are analyzed in the Draft EIR Sections 3.5, *Cultural Resources and 3.18, Tribal Cultural Resources*. Although this comment does not raise "significant environmental issues" for purposes of CEQA (PRC Section 21091[d][2][B]; CEQA Guidelines Sections 15088[c], 15132[d], 15204[a]), CPUC has received and reviewed it and included it in the record for consideration by decision-makers separate from the CEQA process.

Yes, Hi, thank you. I'd just like to say that I concur with a lot of the previous commenters that the best choice is AC-1, and the reasons are to check Wildlife Corridor. It doesn't disrupt Coyote Valley, the Coyote Valley orchard, and the Coyote Creek trails, and all of the obviously all of the noise and lighting would disrupt the wildlife. So I hope you will choose alternative AC-1. Thank you.

PH6-1

Comment PH6: Gina White

PH6-1 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to the Master Response 2: Alternatives.

Hi. My name is Calvin Sridhara, and I'm also a member of Silicon Valley's Youth Climate Action, San Jose team to add on to what everyone else said. Yes, I also agree that we should select alternative combination one. And on top of what everyone else said, adding over a mile of new infrastructure would make the project much more expensive, and these costs would fall on the public. As well as building next to Coyote Creek would bring noise and light into a fragile migration path, and the site is near a high conflict wildlife crossing, which would put more animals at risk of being hit by cars. Please choose AC-1 is the clear and responsible path forward. Thank you.

PH7-1

Comment PH7: Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action, Calvin Sridhara

PH7-1 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to the Master Response 2: Alternatives.

Okay, great. So I agree with the earlier comments. I'm a South San Jose resident and a hiking enthusiast and a nature enthusiast, and I think that the AC-1 alternative, the A combination one, is the way to go versus using our valuable resources with the Coyote Valley floor, the Coyote Valley orchard. And please please take that into consideration all of these requests here. Thanks so much.

PH8-1

Comment PH8: Elizabeth Polland

PH8-1 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to the Master Response 2: Alternatives.

3.4.2 Agency, Organization, and Utility Comments

This section presents the comments received from agencies or other organizations on the Project, as well as the CPUC's coded responses to those comments. The public agencies and officials, utilities, and interest groups who provided the 10 comment letters are listed below in **Table 3-2**.

TABLE 3-2
LIST OF AGENCY/ORGANIZATION COMMENT LETTERS

Letter	Commenter	Date
LA1	City of San Jose, Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department, David Keyon	August 25, 2025
LA2	Santa Clara Valley Water District, Matthew Sasaki	August 25, 2025
SA1	California Department of Transportation	August 25, 2025
SA2	Judicial Council of California, Alexandra Cervantes	August 25, 2025
UT1	LS Power Grid California, LLC, Dustin Joseph	August 25, 2025
UT2	Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), David Thomas	August 25, 2025
O1	Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority	August 25, 2025
O2	Green Foothills, Moises Mena	July 23, 2025
O3	Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action, Nora Carino	August 3, 2025
O4	Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action, Grace Wang	August 3, 2025

CITY OF SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
PLANNING DIVISION

August 24, 2025

VIA E-MAIL

Tharon Wright, CPUC Project Manager
Power Santa Clara Valley Project; Attn. V. Nez
c/o Environmental Science Associates,
575 Market Street, Suite 3700, San Francisco, CA 94105
Or via-email: PowerSCV@esassoc.com

Re: City of San José's Comment Letter relating to the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project (A. 24-04-017); State Clearinghouse No. 2024090200.

On behalf of the City of San José (City), we would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft EIR for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project. The City's comments are outlined below.

General Comments

- Confirm if "GO-88" for CPUC permits for work near or at railroad crossings needs to be added in section *2.14 Anticipated Permits and Approvals* — LA1-1
- Coordination is needed with the Monterey Road Wildlife Crossing design team & the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) lead project. — LA1-2
    - Structural changes to roadway sub surface, ie, new culvert crossings and expanded bridge crossings could impact the profile aligment of the trenching/duct bank installation for the LS Power to Santa Clara project
        - CSJ DOT Contacts – Nicholas Frey (Nicholas.Frey@sanjoseca.gov) & Neil Ong (Neil.Ong@sanjoseca.gov)
- Coordinate duct bank alignment with following DOT projects and team project managers: — LA1-3
    - Monterey Rd Grade Separations Project (Alisar Aoun-Alisar.Aoun@sanjoseca.gov and Stacey Lu-Stacey.Lu@sanjoseca.gov)
    - Monterey Rd Transit Project (Brian Stanke - Brian.Stanke@sanjoseca.gov)
    - Monterey Rd Railroad Crossing Improvements n/o Curtner (Brian Stanke - Brian.Stanke@sanjoseca.gov)
    - High Speed Rail Project (Brian Stanke - Brian.Stanke@sanjoseca.gov)
- Coordination with VTA and BART will be required for locations impacted by LS Power's trench and vault work adjacent to existing bus stops (including concrete bus pads), LRT and future BART alignment, station footprint, and construction staging/haul routes conflicts — LA1-4
- Coordination with UPRR will be required for: — LA1-5
    - Design, construction and traffic control near UPRR railroad crossings
    - use this FRA GIS map to gather information on the railroad crossing info (DOT#, LATITUDE, LONGITUDE)
        - https://fragis.fra.dot.gov/GISFRASafety/ .

200 E. Santa Clara Street, 3rd FL San José, CA 95113 *tel* 408-535-7911 www.sanjoseca.gov/pbce

- City lead will need to submit a Public Project Inquiry to UPRR to inform them of the work. UPRR will provide the requirements to work near/within UPRR right of way
  - https://www.up.com/real_estate/roadxing/contacts/
- UPRR will require the City to execute a reimbursement agreement for UPRR time to coordinate the work (they do not coordinate directly with developers)

LA1-5 cont.

Other Comments on Section in the draft EIR

2.8.1.2 New Access Roads

- Add description in this section to indicate who will have jurisdiction/ownership/maintenance respobilities for the new access roads

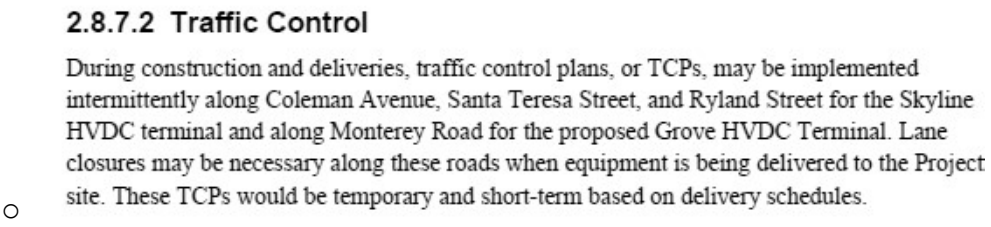
LA1-6

2.8.5.3 Trenching Techniques

- Add description in this section to indicate if there is a maximum depth for the trenching for which open-cut trenching will not be considered the safest technique

LA1-7

2.8.7.2 Traffic Control

- Add all the CSJ public streets along the proposed trench alignment to be part of the potential traffic control plans (N 1st Street, Bassett Street, etc)
- 
  2.8.7.2 Traffic Control

  During construction and deliveries, traffic control plans, or TCPs, may be implemented intermittently along Coleman Avenue, Santa Teresa Street, and Ryland Street for the Skyline HVDC terminal and along Monterey Road for the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal. Lane closures may be necessary along these roads when equipment is being delivered to the Project site. These TCPs would be temporary and short-term based on delivery schedules.

LA1-8

3.17.2 (page 3.17-10)

- Add a paragraph and description of the San Jose Better Bike Plan 2025 in this section

LA1-9

Sincerely,

David Keyon
David Keyon (Aug 25, 2025 14:43:39 PDT)

David Keyon, Principal Planner
Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

Letter LA1: City of San Jose, Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department

LA1-1 The commenter requests confirmation that CPUC General Order 88 needs to be added to Section 2.14 Anticipated Permits and Approvals. CPUC GO 88 would be applicable only if the Project alignment includes at-grade or grade-separated crossings of existing railroads. LSPGC would implement LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1c, which includes a requirement for the applicant to confirm the applicability of GO 88 for any work within or adjacent to existing railroad crossings. Any applicable approvals required by CPUC under CPUC GO 88 have been added to the list of Anticipated Permits and Approvals in Section 2.14 of the Draft EIR.

LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1c: Pre-Construction Coordination

Prior to construction within the public right-of-way or near railroad crossings, the Project Applicant shall coordinate with the appropriate transportation and infrastructure agencies to ensure that the design, alignment, and construction methods for trenching, duct bank installation, vaults, access roads, and other subsurface facilities do not adversely affect roadway geometry, rail infrastructure, or multimodal transportation facilities. This coordination shall include the following requirements:

- *Railroad Crossings and CPUC GO-88 Compliance*: The Project Applicant shall confirm whether a California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Order 88-B (GO-88-B) application is required for any work within or adjacent to railroad crossings. If applicable, the Applicant shall obtain CPUC approval under GO-88-B prior to construction and provide documentation to the CPUC. The Applicant shall coordinate with the applicable local jurisdiction and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) for all design, construction, and traffic control activities near rail crossings.
- *Coordination with City of San José Department of Transportation*: The Project Applicant shall coordinate trench and duct bank design, alignment, and construction staging, including verification that subsurface or structural modifications will not create conflicts or hazards in geometric alignment or sight-distance, with project managers for the following City of San José Department of Transportation (DOT) projects:
  - Monterey Road Grade Separations Project
  - Monterey Road Transit Project
  - Monterey Road Railroad Crossing Improvements (north of Curtner Avenue)
  - High-Speed Rail Project
- *Coordination with Adjacent Transportation and Transit Agencies*: The Project Applicant shall coordinate with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) for trenching and vault work located adjacent to existing or planned bus stops (including concrete bus pads), light-rail transit (LRT) facilities, or future BART station footprints, alignments, and construction staging/haul routes. Traffic control

and access plans shall be designed to maintain safe pedestrian, bicycle, and transit operations consistent with City of San José standards and the San José Better Bike Plan 2025.

- *Coordination with the Monterey Road Wildlife Crossing Project and POST*: The Project Applicant shall coordinate with the Monterey Road Wildlife Crossing design team and the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) to ensure consistency between proposed trenching or duct bank installations and planned crossing infrastructure. Any proposed design changes to subsurface facilities that could affect the wildlife crossing structure or roadway profile shall be reviewed in coordination with these entities prior to construction.
- *Traffic Control and Public Right-of-Way Management*: The Project's traffic control plans shall include all City of San José public streets along the trench alignment (including but not limited to North 1st Street and Bassett Street), ensuring full compliance with City standard details and permitting requirements. All construction staging, lane closures, and detours shall be coordinated with City DOT to avoid cumulative disruption or unsafe geometric design changes.

Documentation of agency coordination and final design approvals from each relevant entity (City of San José DOT, UPRR, VTA, BART, CPUC, and POST) shall be submitted to the CPUC prior to issuance of the Notice to Proceed for construction within affected rights-of-way. The Project shall implement all reasonable design modifications or timing adjustments requested by these agencies to maintain roadway safety and geometric integrity.

LA1-2 The commenter requests that coordination with the Monterey Road Wildlife Crossing and Peninsula Open Space Trust occur. The comment is acknowledged. Section 3.17.6 of the Draft EIR discusses the potential cumulative effects of the Project in combination with several existing and future cumulative projects within a 2-mile radius from the Project's proposed transmission lines and proposed HVDC terminals. As detailed in the Final EIR Section 3.17.6.3 (Criterion C), the Project and cumulative projects would conform with design standards, particularly those that would align with the jurisdictions' existing infrastructure.

LSPGC would implement LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a, which includes requirements for pre-construction coordination. To address the specific design and pre-construction coordination with the City of San Jose and cumulative projects, the Final EIR includes the following new LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1c: Pre-Construction Coordination.

LA1-3 The commenter requests that coordination with named Department of Transportation project managers occur. During both the scoping period, as well as the review of the Draft EIR public comment period, the Department of Transportation was invited to participate in the public review process under CEQA Guidelines 15087. CalTrans District 4 was explicitly invited to review the Draft EIR through noticing, namely the Notice of Completion (NOC) on September 6, 2024. Noticing requirements under CEQA Guidelines 15087 have been met.

LSPGC would implement Mitigation Measures 3.17-1a, which includes requirements for pre-construction coordination. To address the specific design and pre-construction coordination with the City of San Jose and cumulative projects, the Final EIR includes LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1c: Pre-Construction Coordination. Please see response to Comment LA1-2 for more details.

LA1-4 The commenter requests that coordination with VTA and BART occurs for Project trench and vault work adjacent to existing bus stops, light rail train and future BART alignment, station footprint, and construction staging and haul routes. The comment is acknowledged. Section 3.17 of the Draft EIR, Impact 3.17-7, discusses the potential Project construction impacts on public transit. LSPGC would implement APM TRA-2, which requires LSPGC to coordinate closures with VTA and provide advance notice of potential service disruption, which would allow bus service providers to plan accordingly. The Project would be required to implement a Coordinated Traffic Control Plan (LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-a) and Infrastructure Repair Reporting (LSPGC Mitigation 3.17-b). Additional pre-construction coordination requirements are specified in the Final EIR, LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1c: Pre-Construction Coordination. Please see response to Comment LA1-2 for more details.

LA1-5 The commenter states that the City of San José will lead coordination with the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) for Project design, construction and traffic control near UPRR railroad crossings. During both the scoping period, as well as the review of the Draft EIR public comment period, the UPRR was invited to participate in the public review process. Noticing requirements under CEQA Guidelines 15087 have been met.

LSPGC would implement LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a, which supersedes APM TRA-1, which requires LSPGC to coordinate all construction activities with applicable local jurisdictions before construction to help ensure that construction activities and associated lane closures comply with encroachment permit requirements, including UPRR railroad crossings. To address the specific design and pre-construction coordination with the City of San Jose and cumulative projects, the Final EIR includes LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1c: Pre-Construction Coordination. Please see response to Comment LA1-2 for more details.

LA1-6 The commenter recommends adding further description regarding the new access roads as part of the Project. In response to this comment, Section 2.8.1.2 of the EIR has been updated to indicate who will have jurisdiction and maintenance responsibilities over the new access roads.

LA1-7 The commenter requests adding additional details pertaining to maximum trenching depth and technique to Draft EIR Section 2.8.5.3. As described in Draft EIR Section 2.8.5.3, “Trench depths may vary depending on soil stability and existing substructures. The trenches would be widened and shored where necessary to meet California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) safety requirements.” In such instances where open-cut trenching is required, a maximum of

1,000 feet of trench at a single worksite would be left open at any one time. In addition, open-cut trenching would be used for most of the transmission duct bank installation. This has been analyzed throughout the Draft EIR as part of the Project.

LA1-8 The commenter requests that City of San José public streets along the proposed trench alignment be included in the Traffic Control Plans. As stated in Draft EIR Section 2.8.7.2, temporary routes, timing, and processes for detour locations would be identified in the Traffic Control Plans (TCPs) that LSPGC would develop in consultation with the applicable local agencies. This would include City of San José streets, to be included in the TCPs as needed prior to construction.

LA1-9 The commenter requests that a description of the San Jose Better Bike Plan 2025 be added to Draft EIR Section 3.17.2 of the Transportation section. The San Jose Better Bike Plan 2025 has been added to Draft EIR Section 3.17.2, as follows:

> **San Jose Better Bike Plan**
>
> The San Jose Better Bike Plan 2025 outlines the City's vision for a safe, connected, and equitable bicycle network that supports increased biking for all users and trip purposes. The plan provides a framework for implementing infrastructure improvements, policies, and programs to enhance bicycle safety, comfort, and accessibility throughout the city. It serves as the City's guiding document for achieving its transportation mode shift and sustainability goals, consistent with San Jose's Envision 2040 General Plan and Climate Smart San Jose initiative (City of San Jose 2020).

From: Matthew Sasaki <MSasaki@valleywater.org>
Sent: Monday, August 25, 2025 4:41 PM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Cc: Colleen Haggerty
Subject: Valley Water File 34968 - LS Power Grid California Power Santa Clara Valley Project DEIR

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi,

The Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for LS Power Grid California's Power the Santa Clara Valley project, received on July 11, 2025.

Based on our review, we have the following comments:

1. The proposed project improvements cross over or are located on Valley Water's easement, fee title property, and/or facilities. In accordance with Valley Water's Water Resources Protection Ordinance, a Valley Water encroachment permit will be required for the project and Valley Water is to be considered a Responsible Agency under CEQA. LS Power Grid California is currently working with Valley Water to secure these permits. LA2-1
2. Proposed crossings of creeks need to follow Valley Water's Guidelines and Standards for Land Use Near Streams at a minimum where they are in Valley Water's right of way. LA2-2
3. Page 2-32: The Skyline HVDC is proposed on parcels with APNs 259-23-020 and 259-23-024. Valley Water holds an easement on the parcel with APN 259-23-024. This should be noted in Section 2.7.2 under Existing Rights-of-Way or Easements. Encroachments onto the easement will require a Valley Water encroachment permit. The transmission lines proposed between the Grove HVDC Terminal and the PG&E Metcalf Substation may encroach onto Valley Water's fee title property. If use of Valley Water property and land rights on Valley Water's property is needed, it needs to be specified in this Section 2.7.2. LA2-3
4. Page 2-45: Vegetation clearing or tree trimming and removal around the Metcalf to Grove Transmission Line is proposed. Any proposed vegetation clearing on Valley Water's right of way will require Valley Water approval in the form of a Valley Water encroachment permit. LA2-4
5. Pages 2-55 to 2-60, Section 2.8.5.4: The project proposes to cross over Valley Water's Snell Pipeline via horizontal bore. information on protection and mitigation measures to reduce impacts on the Snell Pipeline, such as an insulation blanket, need to be provided including impacts related to installation of the mitigation measures. LA2-5
6. LS Power Grid California has previously communicated to Valley Water that high-voltage DC monopolar earth return cables will be used where there transmission line crosses Valley Water's Snell Pipeline. This needs to be confirmed and additional information needs to be provided regarding the proposed corrosion protection system. LA2-6
7. Pages 2-64 and 3.10-24 to 3.10-26: Runoff from the proposed Skyline site needs to be collected into the City of San Jose's storm drain system. Runoff shall not flow onto Valley Water's easement for the Guadalupe River to the west. LA2-7
8. On several occasions, the draft EIR states that take coverage for tricolored blackbird individuals would be obtained through coverage under the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan (VHP). The VHP's LA2-8

take coverage for tricolored blackbird is limited to non-breeding habitat; the VHP does not provide take coverage for tricolored blackbird individuals or colonies. LA2-8 cont.

9. The western bumble bee has been identified throughout this draft EIR as having a "moderate potential to occur" within the study area. Range maps from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Candidate Bumble Bee Species document state the Western Bumble Bee's current range has contracted and has been reduced to high elevation areas. Furthermore, survey data collected from the California Bumble Bee Atlas also supports the notion that the species' current range has contracted to areas far beyond its historic range. Considering both factors indicate the species range does not overlap with the Project's study area, the occurrence determination for this species should be changed to "absent". LA2-9
10. Page 3.4-2: Table 3.4-1 Vegetation Communities in the Biological Resources Study Area- veg community classification is very high-level and non-descriptive, which makes it difficult to understand or assess vegetation resources within the study and project areas. The table needs to be revised to be more specific including information on vegetation community type and specifically identify which vegetation communities are sensitive natural communities per the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. LA2-10
11. Page 3.4-7: Figure 3.4-1e- area across from PG&E Metcalf Substation (north of Hwy 101 at the base of Coyote Ridge) is mapped as annual grassland; however, this area is underlain by serpentine soils and serpentine grassland. There are also documented occurrences of sensitive plants located within the mapped area (Metcalf Canyon jewelflower, smooth lessingia, hall's bush mallow, SCL dudleya). Maps need to be revised to accurately reflect sensitive natural communities known to occur.
12. 3.4-8: Sensitive Natural Communities are incomplete and do not include the known mapped serpentine-associated communities in the project area. The serpentine-associated communities need to be mapped in the project area. LA2-11
13. Pages 3.4-12 to 3.4-14: Section 3.4.2.1 Special Status Plants- text notes that CNDDB, USFWS and CNPS data resources were consulted for a 5 mile radius of the biological resources study area. There are known and documented occurrences of sensitive and listed plant species clearly identified and spatially displayed in these resources that overlay the project study area. This section needs to add additional species- Mt. Hamilton thistle (Cirsium fontinale var. campylon) and smooth lessingia (Lessingia micradenia var. glabrata). LA2-12
14. Pages 3.4-40 to 3.4-52: Impact 3.4-1: Impact assessment conclusion should be revised to include more than just the four plant species listed- there are additional species such as Malacothamnus hallii, Lessingia micradenia var. glabrata, and Streptanthus albidus ssp. peramoenus known to occur in the project area that should also be assessed for potential impacts. LA2-13
15. Pages 3.4-52 to 3.4-54: Impact 3.4-2: Should include an evaluation of potential impacts to serpentine-associated sensitive natural communities which are known to occur within the project area. Please revise. LA2-14
16. Pages 3.4-52 to 3.4-54: Impact 3.4-2: states that the project would impact 3.5 ac of temporary impact to riparian habitat. If the impact will result in tree removal or excessive root disturbance or work within the TPZ (defined Tree Protection Zone), is this impact still considered to be temporary? If so, please elaborate in more detail. Also, as noted previously, list of sensitive natural communities that could potentially be impacted by the proposed project is incomplete as there not an assessment of potential impacts to serpentine associated vegetation communities. Please revise. LA2-15
17. Page 3.4-42: LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Avoid Impacts to Rare Plants: LA2-16

a. Under 2).: why does the language include "...but that may kill living plants or severely alter their ability to reproduce"? If the activities are timed to occur during the dormant season of plants, there should not be any killing of living plants or impacts to their ability to reproduce, at least for annuals. For perennial plants, the activity during a dormant season would not automatically sufficiently reduce an impact to LTS. Please revise. LA2-16 cont.

b. Under 5).: "...or relocation of plants to appropriate locations by a qualified botanist"- this language should be removed due to the high potential of plant pathogens such as Phytophthora being introduced during relocation activities (such as movement of soil with plant roots that could be or could become contaminated during that activity). Also, the CA Native Plant Society has a long-standing policy against relocation/transplantation activities being used as a mitigation measure. LA2-17

c. There is no related mitigation measure that addresses how impacts will be assessed and minimized to a less than significant level, if impacts to sensitive and/or listed plant species cannot be avoided. This is an omission in this EIR- please revise/add an appropriate mitigation measure to address this. LA2-18

18. Page 3.4-48: The last paragraph states that burrowing owls are not a species covered by the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan. This is incorrect, the owl is a covered species under the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan. LA2-19

19. Pages 3.4-53 to 3.4-54: LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.4-3 and 3.4-4: These mitigation measures do not include all the sensitive natural communities that may be found within and impacted by, the proposed project. These mitigation measures should be revised to include serpentine-associated sensitive natural communities. LA2-20

20. Page 3.4-35: APM BIO-5: Vehicle Cleaning Prior to Entering Natural Areas: this APM states that vehicles and equipment will be cleaned prior to use in native habitat, but does not give any specifics at all on how the cleaning will occur, where it will occur, or any other detail on method (such as washing off site at truck wash facility prior to arrival, thorough removal of soil, mud and debris from vehicle or equipment tires, tread, undercarriage, bucket loaders, interior of vehicle, etc.). The measure also does not include any mention of vehicle or equipment inspections or a QA/QC process. Please revise to include these specifics and give more detail on this measure. LA2-21

21. While the DEIR outlines standard dewatering practices, including pumping groundwater to trucks or containment tanks and discharging only after meeting water quality standards, it lacks estimates of expected dewatering volumes and assessments of localized impacts on groundwater levels, nearby wells, or stormwater infrastructure. These details need to be provided to properly assess potential site-specific groundwater drawdown risks. LA2-22

22. The use of unlined stormwater detention basins aims to promote infiltration and groundwater recharge. However, at the Grove HVDC Terminal site where shallow groundwater exists, infiltration capacity may be limited, and there is risk of groundwater mounding causing nuisance conditions. Based on Valley Water's Historical Groundwater Elevation Data web page (https://gis.valleywater.org/Wells.html), the site has a generalized depth-to-first groundwater from 0-5 feet below ground surface (bgs). It would be important to confirm that site-specific hydrogeologic investigations have been conducted to evaluate the appropriateness and potential impacts of infiltration under these conditions. LA2-23

    The proposed unlined stormwater detention basins (Grove HVDC site) do not meet the minimum 10-ft vertical separation distance to seasonally high groundwater, as required in the Valley Water guidelines for infiltration devices. Any proposed stormwater infiltration devices, such as retention/detention basins should adhere to the requirements in Table A-1 of the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (SCVURPPP) C.3 Stormwater Handbook,

including vertical separation to seasonally high groundwater and horizontal setbacks from water supply wells, septic systems, and contaminant release sites. In complying with all local and state stormwater regulations, all efforts should be made to protect groundwater quality and ensure that infiltration rates in the soil allow the bioretention areas to accommodate receiving runoff. LA2-23 cont.

23. The proposed placement of unlined stormwater detention systems near oil-containing transformer equipment poses water concerns:
    a. **Risk of Contaminant Infiltration:**
    Unlined detention basins promote infiltration, which could allow oil or other contaminants from spills to reach the subsurface and impact groundwater quality. To mitigate this risk, it is recommended to line stormwater detention systems or provide effective pretreatment before infiltration. Secondary containment features, groundwater monitoring, and leak detection systems at critical locations should also be implemented to detect contamination early. Adequate vertical separation distance between the base of any infiltration device and/or oil-containing (transformers) infrastructure and seasonally high groundwater provides critical treatment for infiltrating stormwater and reduces the risk of direct groundwater contamination in the event of an oil leak, unintended release, or infrastructure failure (refer to SCVURPPP C.3 Stormwater Handbook). LA2-24
    b. **Shallow Groundwater Concerns:**
    At sites with shallow groundwater such as Grove, infiltration systems near oil equipment without additional safeguards could promote contaminant migration into shallow and deeper groundwater zones, adversely affecting groundwater quality. As previously noted, the proposed infiltration device does not meet the minimum 10-foot vertical separation distance to seasonally high groundwater as outlined in Table A-1 of the SCVURPPP C.3 Stormwater Handbook. All efforts should be made to protect groundwater quality and ensure that stormwater infiltration and potential contaminant releases from oil-containing infrastructure does not degrade or threaten the groundwater quality in the area. LA2-25
    c. **Containment Failure Scenarios:**
    While oil containment basins are designed for a 25-year, 24-hour storm event, extreme events (e.g., 50- or 100-year storms), liner degradation, or accidental overflows could lead to oil release, increasing groundwater contamination risk. These scenarios need be considered in design and contingency planning. The risks noted above need to be addressed to ensure the protection of groundwater quality below the site. LA2-26
    d. **Uncertainty in Design Details:**
    The DEIR does not clearly specify the proximity of stormwater detention systems to oil-containing equipment, nor the extent of separation, secondary containment, or groundwater monitoring. Additional details on these elements are needed to evaluate potential impacts to groundwater quality. LA2-27
24. **Construction and Long-Term Operation Activities:** Ensure that lubricants, petroleum hydrocarbons and fuels, PFAS containing materials, fire retardants, heat/electrical insulating agents, soluble metals, and other industrial agents are avoided in the construction and installation of the underground transmission line and long-erm operations. LA2-28
    a. LSPGC APM HAZ-1 requires that a site-specific spill control and countermeasures plan be prepared before storage of hazardous liquids on the Project site. The requirements for secondary containment of such substances as transformer mineral oils need to need to be included in the spill control and countermeasures plan to reduce the release of contaminants. LA2-29
    b. Ensure that construction activities do not degrade surface water or groundwater via use of above chemicals, ground disturbance, and/or the introduction of sediments or and other LA2-30

pollutants into water or by mobilizing existing sediment and other pollutants that may be present at the Project sites. LA2-30 cont.

25. Page 3.10-7: The active groundwater wells on the Skyline HVDC Terminal site must be properly destroyed under a Valley Water Wells permit, if they will no longer be needed LA2-31
26. Page 3.10-15: The discussion on the Water Resources Protection Manual needs to be corrected to read "Valley Water adopted the Water Resources Protection Manual in 2006 in collaboration with the cities in Santa Clara County and Santa Clara County…" for accuracy. LA2-32
27. Page 3.19-18: Water for construction use would not be supplied by Valley Water directly. Please update the language appropriately. LA2-33

Please let me know if you have any questions on the comments. We appreciate the opportunity to review and provide comments on the DEIR for the Power Santa Clara Valley project. Please send to us for review any subsequent CEQA documentation for our review. This project has been assigned to Valley Water File 34968. Please reference this number on future correspondence regarding this project.

Thank you,

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Santa Clara Valley Water District is now known as:

Valley Water

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Letter LA2: Santa Clara Valley Water District

LA2-1 The commenter expresses that a Valley Water encroachment permit will be required for the portion of the Project located within Valley Water's easements. The comment correctly states that the Project would be located on Valley Water's easement, fee title property, and/or facilities. As stated in Section 2.14 of the Draft EIR (Table 2-11), an encroachment permit from Valley Water is on the list of necessary permit approvals. The commenter confirms that the Applicant (LSPGC) is in the process of securing this permit.

LA2-2 The commenter states that proposed crossings of creeks located in the Valley Water right-of-way need to follow Guidelines and Standards for Land Use Near Streams set by Valley Water. As noted in Draft EIR Section 3.10, Valley Water is considered a responsible agency for the CEQA environmental review of the Project. The comment correctly states that the Project would be subject to local regulations as set forth in Valley Water's Guidelines and Standards for Land Use Near Streams. This suggestion has been incorporated into the Final EIR Section 3.10 *Hydrology and Water Quality*.

LA2-3 The commenter notes that Section 2.7.2 of the Draft EIR should indicate that Valley Water holds an easement on APN 259-23-024. The commenter is correct in noting that the Existing Rights-of-Way or Easements listed in Section 2.7.2 of the Draft EIR should include Valley Water's easement on APN 259-23-024. The Draft EIR has been updated to reflect this change. Further, Table 2-11 of the Draft EIR lists an encroachment permit from Valley Water among the anticipated permits and approvals for the Project.

The revised text is as follows:

> Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) holds an easement on one of the parcels (APN 259-23-020) in which the construction of the Skyline HVDC Terminal is proposed on. Encroachments onto the easement would require a Valley Water encroachment permit.

LA2-4 The commenter recommends specifying that a Valley Water encroachment permit will be needed for vegetation clearing or tree trimming around the Metcalf to Grove Transmission Line. The commenter correctly suggests that a Valley Water encroachment permit will be needed. As noted in Table 2-11, the Draft EIR lists an encroachment permit from Valley Water among the anticipated permits and approvals.

LA2-5 The commenter raises a concern regarding impacts to Valley Water's Snell Pipeline via horizontal bore, recommending mitigation to reduce impacts. As described in Draft EIR Section 3.19.3, coordination with existing utilities and a final induction study is required under APM UTIL-1 and APM HAZ-5. As such, construction methods shall be adjusted as necessary to ensure that the integrity of existing utility lines is not compromised. This includes the Snell Pipeline, as included in the existing pipelines mapped in Figure 3.19-2. In addition, LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.19-5 requires further coordination for potential utilities affected by AC-induced corrosion. Thus, the

Draft EIR evaluates all potential Project-related impacts on existing utility infrastructure, and APMs proposed ensure impacts are reduced to a less than significant level.

LA2-6 The commenter notes that high-voltage DC monopolar earth return cables need to be confirmed where transmission line crosses Valley Water's Snell Pipeline. As described in the Draft EIR Section 3.19.3, coordination with existing utilities and a final induction study is required under APM UTIL-1 and APM HAZ-5. LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.19-5 requires further coordination for potential utilities affected by AC-induced corrosion. As such, these APM's and MM's ensure potential corrosion impacts resulting from the Project be reduced. Thus, information regarding the proposed corrosion protection system has been addressed in the Draft EIR.

LA2-7 The comment suggests that runoff from the proposed Skyline HVDC Terminal site needs to be collected into the City of San José's storm drain system; not flow onto Valley Water's easement. As discussed in Section 2.8.8.3 of the Draft EIR, the Project would include a stormwater drainage and conveyance system and a stormwater detention system at the location of each HVDC terminal to manage runoff. In addition, as discussed in Section 3.10 of the Draft EIR, in the context of impacts to water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, the Project would be a regulated project under the NPDES Municipal Regional Permit. Therefore, construction activities would be subject to site inspection by member agencies—the City of San José, Santa Clara County, and Valley Water—to ensure that the activities are consistent with the terms of the Municipal Regional Permit.

LA2-8 The commenter states that the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan is limited to non-breeding habitat and does not provide take coverage for tricolored blackbird breeding colonies. Tricolored blackbird is a covered species in the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan (Table ES-1, p.ES-4), but the Plan does not allow impacts to breeding sites. Thus, take coverage under the Plan could include adult birds only. While the Project would not be likely to directly impact a tricolored blackbird nesting colony, if one is identified during species-specific surveys and impacts cannot be avoided, take could be covered under a State ITP in consultation with CDFW, as discussed in the Draft EIR Section 3.4, *Biological Resources* (p.3.4-48).

LA2-9 The commenter notes that western bumblebee range has contracted and it is primarily now found in high elevation areas, recommending that this species' potential be reduced to absent. The commenter is correct that western bumblebee range has contracted; the most recent occurrence in the survey area dates from 1979 (CDFW 2025). Thus, the species may have lower potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project site. However, including this species does not change the impact analysis for the Draft EIR, because protection measures for special-status invertebrates apply to all species. Therefore, no change has been made.

LA2-10 The commenter requests that vegetation community descriptions be more specific and identify which communities are CDFW sensitive natural communities. Vegetation

community descriptions are provided on the Draft EIR Section 3.4, *Biological Resources* (pp. 3.4-8-9). The Draft EIR p.3.4-8 notes under the Sensitive Natural Communities heading that two CDFW sensitive natural communities are present on the Project site: hardwood woodland (riparian) and wetland (freshwater marsh). The Final EIR has also been revised to state, in response to comment LA2-11 below, that serpentine grassland is present within the survey area (though not on the Project site). Specific locations of natural communities are shown on Figure 3.4-1, though serpentine grassland cannot be mapped, as it was not delineated (LSPGC 2025).

LA2-11 The commenter describes the grassland on the hillside west of the PG&E Metcalf Substation as serpentine grassland, a sensitive natural community, and recommends updating Figure 3.4-1e to reflect this. The commenter also recommends adding this community description to the Draft EIR and showing it on maps.

Based on records of serpentine-endemic plants in the hillside grassland west of Metcalf substation, the commenter is correct that this grassland is likely underlain by serpentine soil. The Final EIR Section 3.4.1, Environmental Setting, (p.3.4-8) has been updated to reflect that grassland along the hillsides within the biological resources survey area (not within the Project site) includes serpentine grassland, but as the boundaries have not been delineated, no change was made to Figure 3.4-1e. The revisions are as follows:

> Natural communities are assemblages of plant species that occur together in the same area and are defined by their species composition and relative abundance. Sensitive natural communities are designated by various resource agencies, such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), or through local policies and regulations. These communities are generally considered to have important functions or values for wildlife or are recognized as declining in extent or distribution and are considered threatened enough to warrant some level of protection. CDFW tracks communities it believes to be of conservation concern through its California Sensitive Natural Community List (CDFW 2024a; Sawyer et al. 2009). Two sensitive natural communities occur on the Project site: hardwood woodland (riparian) and wetland (freshwater marsh). Serpentine grassland is also present within the biological resources survey area on the slope west of Metcalf substation.

The grassland community description on p.3.4-9 of the Final EIR has also been modified to note the presence of serpentine grassland, as follows:

> **Annual Grassland.** Annual grasslands are dominated by non-native grasses and forbs, such as wild oats, ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), soft brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*), Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), and stinkwort. Some native species, such as purple needlegrass (Stipa pulchra) and common fiddleneck (A*msinckia menziesii*), may also be present (LSPGC 2025), notably in serpentine grassland on the hillside west of Metcalf substation. Some of these areas may be disturbed, mowed, and/or grazed, but often provide habitat for rodents and other small mammals, reptiles, and ground-

dwelling bird species. Annual grassland habitat is present in the hills east and west of the proposed alignment routes, and along Coyote Creek (Figure 3.4-1). Approximately 4 percent of the study area is annual grassland habitat (Table 3.4-1).

LA2-12 The commenter states that the description of sensitive plants in the Draft EIR is incomplete and omits Mt. Hamilton thistle and smooth lessingia; the commenter recommends adding these species to the text.

Mt. Hamilton thistle (*Cirsium fontinale* var. *campylon*) is listed in the Draft EIR (p.3.4-12) as having recent occurrences in the survey area and moderate potential to occur. Smooth lessingia (*Lessingia micradenia* var. *glabrata)* is listed in Appendix C as low potential; the table notes that the nearest record of the species is from 2013 north of the PG&E Metcalf Substation (CDFW 2025). Therefore, no additional edits to the Draft EIR are required.

LA2-13 The commenter states that the sensitive plants listed in the impact section of the Draft EIR is incomplete and recommends adding *Malacothamnus hallii*, *Lessingia micradenia* var. *glabrata*, and *Streptanthus albidus* ssp. *peramoenus* to the text. As stated in response to comment LA2-12, smooth lessingia is listed in Appendix C of the Draft EIR as low potential. Hall's bush-mallow (*Malacothamnus hallii*) and most beautiful jewelflower (*Streptanthus albidus* ssp. *peramoenus*) are also listed as low potential in Appendix C of the Draft EIR. The section notes the nearest occurrence of most beautiful jewelflower is ¼-mile east of the survey area from 2017 (CDFW 2025). Though these species are not listed as moderate potential in the section, the Draft EIR survey and mitigation requirements would apply to all rare plants. To clarify that rare plant surveys would be conducted for all plants with potential to occur in the area (not just those with moderate potential) page 3.4-41 of the Final EIR has been revised as follows:

> Direct impacts on special-status plant species and sensitive vegetation communities could include destruction of individual plants or groups of plants. Indirect impacts could include loss of areas that contain suitable microhabitat conditions for special-status plants or introduction of non-native weed species that may outcompete these plants. Four special-status plant species have moderate potential to occur within the biological resources study area <u>and additional plant species have low potential to occur, as shown in Appendix C</u>. Rare plants could be affected within riparian hardwood woodland and annual grassland habitats along Coyote Creek. These impacts would be potentially significant.

In addition, the first paragraph of Mitigation Measure 3.4-1a has been revised to require rare plants surveys under APM BIO-2 be conducted for all rare plants with potential to occur in the survey area. The revised text is as follows:

> **LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Avoid Impacts on Rare Plants**
>
> Rare plant surveys conducted under APM BIO-2 shall be floristic in nature and shall be conducted by a qualified botanist according to procedures outlined in the CDFW publication Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special-

status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities (CDFW 2018b). The survey(s) shall be conducted in early, mid-, or late spring, in conjunction with the blooming seasons of ~~those~~ all rare plants with ~~moderate~~ potential to occur in the survey area.

LA2-14 The commenter recommends adding discussion of serpentine grassland to the discussion of sensitive natural community impacts (Impact 3.4-2). Serpentine grassland would be completely avoided in construction of the Project, as discussed below in the response to comment LA2-20.

LA2-15 The commenter recommends adding discussion of potential impacts to tree roots or work within the "Tree Protection Zone" to the riparian impact discussion. Protection of tree root zones for all trees to be preserved onsite is an important component of site work in riparian areas and would be implemented in the Project final design. APM BIO-1 states that areas temporarily disturbed during construction would be restored to preconstruction conditions, which includes protection of retained trees.

LA2-16 The commenter suggests revising Mitigation Measure 3.4-1a to reflect that work during plants' dormant season may not protect perennial plants and would only be protective of annual plant species. The option to work during the dormant season is included as one potential minimization measure in the event a special-status plant species cannot be avoided. As stated, this option would not be chosen unless it was compatible with the dormant phase of the plant, i.e., for perennial plants, this option would not be chosen. Therefore, no revisions to the Draft EIR are required.

LA2-17 The commenter recommends removing relocation as a mitigation option for rare plants, due to the potential for spreading plant pathogens. The commenter's concern regarding rare plant relocation is appreciated. However, relocation of rare plants is a potential option in Mitigation Measure 3.4-1a only if authorized by CDFW or USFWS, as stated in the measure. Avoidance measures would be attempted first, and relocation or re-seeding would be conducted as a last resort with agency authorization. Agency authorization would include requirements to include precautions against pathogens. Therefore, no revisions to the Draft EIR are required.

LA2-18 The commenter states that unavoidable impacts to sensitive plant species do not have mitigation to reduce them to a less than significant level in the Draft EIR. A revision has been added to Mitigation Measure 3.4-1a in the Final EIR to clarify that take coverage would be sought for rare plants in the event of unavoidable impacts, as follows:

(6) Take coverage may be sought from the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Authority for covered plant species in the event of unavoidable impacts, or from CDFW and/or USFWS for state or federally listed species.

LA2-19 The commenter states that the Draft EIR incorrectly lists burrowing owl as not covered by the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan. The commenter is correct. Page 3.4-48 of the

Final EIR has been revised in the Final EIR to include the burrowing owl as covered species under the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan. This revision does not substantively effect the impact analysis. The revised text is as follows:

> Tricolored blackbird and western burrowing owl are ~~is a~~ covered species under the Santa Clara Valley HCP. If the species is identified during species-specific surveys and impacts cannot be avoided, take for the~~is~~ species would be covered either under the HCP or under a State ITP in consultation with CDFW. If impacts are identified during species-specific surveys for State-listed or candidate bird species not covered under the Santa Clara Valley HCP (Swainson's hawk, bald eagle~~, burrowing owl~~, or any other bird species found), take would be covered under a State ITP, in consultation with CDFW. Impacts on white-tailed kite, a State fully protected species, would be completely avoided.

LA2-20 The commenter states that Mitigation Measures 3.4-3 and 3.4-4 omit serpentine grassland, a sensitive natural community. Serpentine grassland habitat occurs on the hillside west of the PG&E Metcalf Substation, as discussed in the response to comment LA2-11. This grassland would be completely avoided during construction of the Project; thus, inclusion in the mitigation measures for compensatory mitigation and habitat restoration is not warranted. However, the Impact 3.4-2 discussion has been modified in the Final EIR to include serpentine grasslands as sensitive natural communities to be avoided by the Project. The text is as follows:

> Wetland and serpentine grassland areas would be completely avoided, and the PG&E substation modification and upgrades would not affect any sensitive natural communities.

LA2-21 The commenter requests additional details in APM BIO-5 regarding vehicle cleaning including how and where it will occur, and methods of cleaning or inspection of vehicles. APMs are part of LSPGC's Application and cannot be amended by the CPUC. Specific vehicle cleaning requirements may be applied during the pre-construction permitting phase.

LA2-22 The commenter states that the discussion of dewatering practices in the Draft EIR does not provide estimates of expected dewatering volumes to assess localized impacts on groundwater levels, nearby wells, or stormwater infrastructure.

Dewatering is discussed in the context of Project construction in Section 2.8 of the Draft EIR. Dewatering is only anticipated for discrete portions of the Project's construction and, as such, would be temporary. There would be no ongoing dewatering requirements during Project operation and maintenance. No change to the text of the EIR is warranted.

LA2-23 The comment raises issues related to the proposed use of unlined stormwater detention basins and nuisance risk related to shallow groundwater, which could be present at the Grove HVDC terminal site. In the comment, Valley Water recommends that site-specific

hydro-geotechnical investigations confirm where shallow groundwater exists, infiltration capacity may be limited, and there is risk of groundwater mounding causing nuisance conditions at the Grove HVDC terminal site. Further, the commenter notes that based on Valley Water's historical groundwater elevation data, the (Grove terminal) site has a generalized depth to first groundwater from 0-5 feet below ground surface. For these reasons, a site-specific geotechnical investigation at the Grove HVDC terminal site is needed.

During preparation of the Draft EIR, the CPUC requested LSPGC to provide an engineered site plan including details regarding grading and drainage at the proposed HVDC terminal sites (CPUC 2025). In response to the CPUC's data request, the LSPGC stated that the detailed site plans showing grading and drainage at the proposed Skyline and Grove terminal sites were still being developed; however, the grading and drainage design for the new HVDC terminals would ensure proper water management, stability, and compliance with standard substation engineering practices. In addition, LSPGC stated that "[t]he proposed grading and drainage plan for the new HVDC terminals would ensure efficient stormwater management by maintaining natural drainage patterns while incorporating engineered conveyance features to direct water to the stormwater detention systems. These measures would help protect substation infrastructure, maintain site stability, and ensure long-term operational reliability." (LSPGC 2025).

In response to the commenter's concerns about risk of groundwater mounding and potential nuisance conditions at the Grove HVDC terminal site, a new mitigation measure (LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.10-1: Geotechnical Report and Groundwater Protection) has been added in the Final EIR Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality (see below), to require site specific hydro-geotechnical investigations to confirm the site-specific ground and groundwater constraints associated with the proposed Project prior to construction, as further discussed in response to comment LA2-24.

The comment also notes that proposed stormwater infiltration devices, such as retention/detention basins, would be required to adhere to Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (SCVURPPP) C.3 Handbook guidance and include a minimum 10-foot vertical separation distances to seasonally high groundwater as required by Valley Water (Water Resource Protection Ordinance) guidelines for infiltration devices.

As noted in response to comment LA2-7 and discussed under Impact 3.10-1 of the Draft EIR, the Project would be a regulated project under the NPDES Municipal Regional Permit. Therefore, the Project would be required to adhere to SCVURPPP standards and would be subject to site inspection by member agencies—the City of San José, Santa Clara County, and Valley Water—to ensure that the drainage systems meet the C.3 Handbook operational standards and are consistent with the terms of the Municipal Regional Permit.

Mitigation Measure 3.10-1, Geotechnical Report and Groundwater Protection

Prior to final design, the Applicant (Project owner) shall conduct a hydro-geotechnical investigation to assess specific site conditions with respect to soil and groundwater at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal Site. The investigation shall be conducted by a registered professional engineer, professional geologist, or certified hydrogeologist and include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Depth to groundwater at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal Site
- Soil testing to determine existing pollutants or constituents of concern
- Calculation of estimated groundwater infiltration capacity across the site
- Calculation of estimated groundwater dewatering requirements
- Cut and fill calculations and depth of foundation estimates for the site

In addition to ensure that the proposed design considers all feasible measures to protect groundwater quality and provides adequate safeguards for secondary containment, the Applicant (Project owner) shall consult with Santa Clara County and the Santa Clara Valley Water Agency (and other responsible agencies such as the SF Bay RWQCB, as needed) and prepare the following:

- A detailed site plan depicting the proposed location of specific Project components such as stormwater detention basin(s) and setbacks relative to other existing and proposed features such as water supply wells, surface waters, septic systems, and stormwater facilities proximal to proposed Project features such as transformers, DC conduits, foundations, and bioretention areas
- Grading and drainage plan showing surface drainage and any proposed stormwater facilities
- Design details for proposed infiltration pretreatment devices shall demonstrate adequate compliance with design standards and requirements in Table A-1 of the Santa Clara Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program C.3 Stormwater Handbook.
- Oil containment contingency plan to account for secondary containment, liner degradation, accidental overflow, leak detection, and failure contingency in the event of flooding.

Prior to construction of the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal Site, the Applicant shall obtain and submit to the CPUC copy of all necessary authorizations from the County of Santa Clara, Santa Clara Valley Water Agency, and (if deemed necessary) Waste Discharge Requirements and associated conditions of approval from the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board.

LA2-24 The comment states that proposed unlined stormwater basins pose water quality concerns and suggests specific secondary containment and other design measures to reduce the risk of groundwater contamination.

The Applicant would be responsible for designing and implementing a stormwater detention and pretreatment system that allows for appropriate separation distances to protect groundwater quality. The commenters' request has been incorporated into the Final EIR Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality. In response to this comment, a new mitigation measure (LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.10-1: Geotechnical Report and Groundwater Protection) addresses specific requirements for LSPGC to consult with Santa Clara County, the Santa Clara Valley Water Agency, SF Bay RWQCB, and other responsible agencies, as needed, prior to and during Project construction on the design details for infiltration pretreatment devices to ensure all feasible secondary containment is implemented.

LA2-25 The commenter expresses concerns about the proposed placement of unlined stormwater detention systems near oil-containing transformer equipment and associated risk of contaminant infiltration at sites with shallow groundwater such as the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site.

See responses to comments LA2-23 and LA2-24. Comments noting the specific vertical separation standards and setback requirements will be considered by the Applicant (project owner) in the context of final design and permitting, ensuring that any design considers and adheres to these parameters.

LA2-26 The commenter expresses concerns about the increased groundwater contamination risk in the event of oil liner degradation or accidental overflows that could lead to oil release from transformer equipment and recommends use of containment failure scenarios.

Failure containment scenarios as suggested by the comment, are incorporated into and will be required in the Final EIR (LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.10-1: Geotechnical Report and Groundwater Protection), as shown in response to Comment LA2-23. Specifically, Mitigation Measure 3.10-1 requires LSPGC to prepare an oil containment contingency plan to account for secondary containment, liner degradation, accidental overflow, leak detection, and failure contingency in the event of flooding.

LA2-27 The commenter expresses concerns about the uncertainty in design details to evaluate potential impacts to groundwater quality. As required by the new LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.10-1: Geotechnical Report and Groundwater Protection, added in the Final EIR in response to this comment, LSPGC, in consultation with Santa Clara County, Santa Clara Valley Water Agency and SF Bay RWQCB, is required to prepare a site plan depicting the proposed project components, such as transformers and stormwater facilities, as well as the extent of separation, a secondary containment contingency plan, and other design details consistent with SCVURPPP C.3 Stormwater Handbook. These plans are subject to Valley Water review and approval and required to be submitted to CPUC prior to start of construction of the project.

LA2-28 The commenter recommends the avoidance of a list of hazardous materials during construction and operation of underground project components. The Applicant will be required to adhere to all regulatory requirements governing hazards and hazardous

materials. As discussed in Section 3.11 of the Draft EIR, and outlined in LSPGC's APM HAZ-1, a site-specific spill control and countermeasures plan will be prepared.

LA2-29 The commenter requests inclusion of requirements for secondary containment of transformer oil and other hazardous materials in a site-specific spill control and countermeasure plan (APM HAZ-1). The applicant has committed to adhering to all regulatory requirements governing hazardous materials as described in Section 3.11, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*.

LA2-30 The commenter requests that Project construction activities avoid surface water or groundwater degradation. As described in Section 3.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, a stormwater pollution prevention program will be implemented as part of the Project consistent with discharge regulations (NPDES) as part of the Construction General Permit.

LA2-31 The commenter notes that the existing active groundwater wells on the proposed Skyline HVDC Terminal site must be properly destroyed under a Valley Water Wells permit, if they are no longer needed. The Valley Water Well Permit has been added to the Project's list of anticipated permits and approvals in Chapter 2 of the Final EIR (Table 2-11).

LA2-32 The commenter requests to correct the discussion of the Water Resources Protection Manual in the Draft EIR. In response to this comment Section 3.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality,* page 3.10-15 of the Draft EIR has been corrected.

LA2-33 The commenter requested to update language on page 3.19-18 of the Draft EIR describing sources of water for Project construction. In response to this comment, the following revision has been included in the discussion of Impact 3.19-1 in the Final EIR has been updated as follows:

> It is likely that water used for construction activities would predominantly be trucked in from a nearby off-site location ~~provided by~~ sourced through Valley Water, Muni Water, SJW, or Great Oaks Water supplies.

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

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GTS ID: 33927
Co/Rt/Pm: Various

Tharon Wright, Public Utilities Regulatory Analyst
Public Utilities Commission
180 Grand Avenue, Suite 1050
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Power Santa Clara Valley Project – Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Tharon Wright:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project. The Local Development Review (LDR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities. The following comments are based on our review of the July 2025 DEIR. SA1-1

Please note this correspondence does not indicate an official position or approval by Caltrans on this project and is for informational purposes only.

Project Understanding

The proposed project would include two new high-voltage direct current terminals and associated new transmission lines that would cover thirteen miles from Grove terminal to Skyline terminal. The project would be located in San Jose and would cross State Right-of-Way (ROW) in multiple locations. SA1-2

Construction-Related Impacts

Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on State roadways requires a transportation permit that is issued by Caltrans. To apply, please visit Caltrans Transportation Permits (*link*). SA1-3

Prior to construction, coordination may be required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to the State Transportation Network (STN). SA1-4

Equitable Access

If any Caltrans facilities are impacted by the project, those facilities must meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards after project completion. As well, the project must maintain bicycle and pedestrian access during construction. These access considerations support Caltrans' equity mission to provide a safe, sustainable, and equitable transportation network for all users. SA1-5 SA1-6

Encroachment Permit

Several portions of Caltrans' operating ROW have been identified as staging areas for this project that are under or adjacent to structures. The project sponsor should be advised that construction staging for non-Caltrans projects will likely not be allowed due to recent Airspace Program policy changes. The project sponsor should be aware that reliance on operation right of way may not be prudent considering the new restrictions on staging. SA1-7

Please be advised that any temporary or permanent work including traffic control that encroaches in, under, or over any portion of the State ROW requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. SA1-8

The Office of Encroachment Permits requires 100% complete design plans and supporting documents to review and circulate the permit application package. The review and approval of encroachment projects is managed through the Encroachment Permits Office Process (EPOP) or the Project Delivery Quality Management Assessment Process (QMAP), depending on project scope, complexity, and completeness of the application. Please use the following resources to determine the appropriate review process:

- TR-0416 Applicant's Checklist (*link*)
- Caltrans Encroachment Projects Processes – Information Video (*link*)
- Flowchart, Figure 1.2 in Section 108, Overview of the Encroachment Review Process, of Chapter 100 – The Permit Function, Caltrans Encroachment Permit Manual (*link*)

The permit approval typically takes less than 60 days, but may take longer depending on the project scope, size, complexity, completeness, compliance with applicable laws, standards, policies, and quality of the permit package submitted. Projects requiring exceptions to design standards, exceptions to encroachment policies, or external agency approvals may need more time to process.

To obtain more information and download the permit application, please visit Caltrans Encroachment Permits (*link*). SA1-9

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Marley Mathews, Associate Transportation Planner, via LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov. For future early coordination opportunities or project referrals, please visit Caltrans LDR website (*link*) or contact LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov. SA1-10

Sincerely,

YUNSHENG LUO
Branch Chief, Local Development Review
Office of Regional and Community Planning

c: State Clearinghouse

Letter SA1: California Department of Transportation

SA1-1 The commenter introduces the remainder of the comment letter and does not raise an environmental issue related to the Draft EIR adequacy, so no response is required.

SA1-2 The commenter provides a brief project understanding, including the proposed construction of associated new transmission lines that would cover thirteen miles from Grove HVDC Terminal to the Skyline HVDC terminal. Please note that the Project would include approximately 14.2 miles of both overhead and underground transmission lines. CEQA Guidelines section 15088 requires the lead agency to respond to comments raising environmental issues. This comment does not raise an environmental issue with the analysis in the Draft EIR; therefore, no additional response is required.

SA1-3 The commenter suggests the Project requires construction related work that necessitates a Caltrans Transportation Permit for oversized and excessive loads and included the link to where these permits can be applied for. The comment is acknowledged. Permits that may be required, including transportation-related permits, are listed in Table 2-11 of the Draft EIR. The construction equipment and vehicle list submitted by the Applicant in the Proponent Environmental Assessment and subsequent responses to CPUC Data Requests reviewed for preparation of the Draft EIR do not include the potential need for oversized and excessive loads. In response to this comment, Table 2-11 has been modified to include the Caltrans Transportation Permit in the event the Project requires the use of oversized or excessive loads for construction work. The revisions are as follows:

California Department of Transportation	Caltrans Transportation Permit	Use of oversized or excessive loads for construction work.	Submit application to Caltrans for review and approval.	Before the start of construction.

SA1-4 The commenter recommends coordination with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan to reduce construction related impacts to the State Transportation Network. The Project will adhere to all Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs), which includes APM TRA-1: Traffic Control Plan and APM TRA-3: Repair Infrastructure. As analyzed in the Draft EIR Section 3.17, *Transportation*, these two APMs, when combined with Project **LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a: Implement Coordinated Traffic Control Plan** and **LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1b: Infrastructure Repair Reporting**, construction-related transportation impacts associated with potential conflicts with relevant federal, state, and local transportation policies, plans, and standards would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. This includes any potential impact on Caltrans and the State Transportation Network. The Applicant (LSPGC) is required to conduct the Project in accordance with the Traffic Control Plan and report any necessary repairs to infrastructure temporarily disturbed as a result of construction activities.

SA1-5 The commenter states that any Caltrans facility impacted by the Project must meet ADA Standards upon Project completion. **LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1b: Infrastructure Repair Reporting** requires that repairs of any damaged roads, sidewalks, trails, and bicycle facilities resulting from Project construction activities are

consistent with preconstruction conditions and in accordance with applicable requirements associated with permits granted for the Project, including compliance with ADA standards required under the Caltrans Encroachment Permit requirements.

SA1-6 The commenter states that the Project must maintain bicycle and pedestrian access during construction. Implementation of APM TRA-1 and **LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a: Implement Coordinated Traffic Control Plan** requires compliance with the policies C-TR 35 and C-TR 36 of the Santa Clara County General Plan that address safe bicycle and pedestrian travel and a safe transit system. Further, these measures require compliance with *Envision San José 2040 General Plan* Policy TR-6.1 (minimizing potential conflicts between trucks and pedestrians, bicycle, transit, and vehicle access, and circulation).

SA1-7 The commenter suggests that Caltrans operating right of way (ROW) may not be available for easement. As stated in the Draft EIR Section 2.14.3, the Applicant would apply for a ROW easement for a total of 7 acres. In addition, as shown in Draft EIR Table 2-11, the Applicant is required to apply for an encroachment permit from Caltrans for construction under Caltrans roads or within Caltrans ROWs. This application process is required to be submitted before the start of construction.

SA1-8 The commenter states that an encroachment permit would be needed for any work within the State ROW. The commenter correctly states that a Caltrans encroachment permit would be required prior to Project construction. See response to Comment SA1-7.

SA1-9 The commenter describes the Caltrans encroachment permit requirements needed for the permit application. Please see responses to Comments SA1-7 and SA1-8 above.

SA1-10 The commenter provides point of contact information for future coordination. Comment noted.

Letter SA2

Judicial Council *of* California

2860 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 400 · Sacramento, California 95833-4336
Telephone 916-263-7885 · Fax 916-263-1966

PATRICIA GUERRERO
Chief Justice of California
Chair of the Judicial Council

MICHELLE CURRAN
Administrative Director

August 25, 2025

Tharon Wright, CPUC Project Manager
Power Santa Clara Valley Project; Attn. V. Nez
c/o Environmental Science Associates
575 Market Street, Suite 2700, San Francisco, CA 94105;
PowerSCV@esassoc.com

Re: Power Santa Clara Valley Project DEIR

The Judicial Council of California ("Judicial Council") has recently had the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR) for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project ("Project"). The Project affects Judicial Council owned properties where four major court facilities are located within the Project construction impact area in downtown San Jose. Court facilities impacted by this project are as follow:

- Family Justice Center Courthouse 201 N. First Street, San Jose, CA 95113
- Historic Courthouse 161 N. First St., San Jose, CA 95113
- Downtown Superior Court 191 N. First St., San Jose, CA 95113
- Sixth District Court of Appeals , 333 W. Santa Clara St, (various suites), San Jose, CA 95113

SA2-1

Upon review of the DEIR, the Judicial Council has some concerns regarding the impacts to our facilities from the construction activities of the Project. The Judicial Council understands that the Project includes the construction of two new high-voltage direct current terminals, the proposed Skyline and Grove HVDC Terminals, and three new transmission lines connecting the proposed HVDC terminals. The Judicial Council has identified four resource areas that may be significantly impacted during construction phase of the project in relation to judicial operations: Transportation, Noise, Utility and Service Systems, and Public Services. Impacts to these four resources will negatively affect the courts' ability to maintain access to justice and guarantee of uninterrupted judicial proceedings.

Letter SA2

The Judicial Council has concerns that the two-year construction period will present unprecedented challenges for continuing court operations. The Judicial Council reviewed the DEIR and has determined that the Project requires coordination with the impacted courts to provide detailed construction phasing plans with advanced notification of major construction activities, backup operational plans for utility disruptions, and coordination with court calendar scheduling to minimize conflicts. SA2-1 cont.

Transportation

Transportation is a concern due to construction occurring within a 2-mile radius of four courthouses. The attached figures (1, 2, and 3) shows the construction area outlined in red in relation to the location of all four courthouses. The Judicial Council is requesting that the DEIR be revised to account for Transportation impacts to the court facilities, including guaranteed pedestrian access routes to all court facilities, ADA-compliant alternative access during construction phases, clear wayfinding and signage throughout construction periods, and safe drop-off zones for vulnerable court users. Transportation and parking constraints will significantly impact court users in downtown San Jose where parking is already severely limited. SA2-2

The Project must include a comprehensive parking impact assessment with concrete mitigation plans, alternative parking arrangements for court users during construction, preservation of public transit access routes, and maintenance of rideshare and taxi drop-off areas near court entrances. SA2-3

Noise

The DEIR also outlines Noise and vibration having a temporary daytime and nighttime impact in surrounding areas. The report indicates there will be a noise characterization and reduction plan, which shall be submitted to the City, County and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for review and approval. The report also notates that contractors shall conduct a site survey 50 feet of existing structures for vibration impacts to surrounding structures. Both the Downtown Superior Court and Historic Courthouse are across the street from part of the construction area and so extending the survey to 100 feet will better indicate how construction SA2-4

may impact court proceedings. The Judicial Council is also requesting that it be included as part of the review and approval process for the noise plan and vibration survey. Courts require quiet environments for proceedings, witness testimony, and attorney-client conferences. The Historic Courthouse, Family Justice Center Courthouse, and Downtown Superior Court are within a quarter mile of the project. The use of heavy construction equipment near these courthouses demands construction time restrictions during court hours from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, continuous noise level monitoring near courthouses with intervention protocols, advanced notice of high-noise activities, and physical sound barriers around construction zones adjacent to court facilities. Figure 3 shows the locations of the three court facilities closest to the construction zone, all of which are expected to be affected by noise and vibrations resulting from ongoing construction activities. SA2-5

Letter SA2

Utility and Service Systems

The Judicial Council is concerned that underground work may disrupt utilities critical to court operations, including power, internet, telecommunications, HVAC systems, and water services. Courts cannot function without reliable utilities. If there is any risk of utility disruption, the Judicial Council requests the Project include provisions for backup power systems during utility work, as well as internet and telecommunications continuity plans, HVAC system protection during construction, and guaranteed water and sewer service continuity. The Judicial Council requests notice or a schedule of construction activities that could cause system outages. It is preferred that these activities occur outside of court hours in order to not interfere with court proceedings. SA2-6

Public Services

This Project must recognize that courts provide essential public services that cannot be interrupted without serious consequences to the delivery of and access to justice. The Judicial Council is requesting revisions to the DEIR to account for requirements for courthouse operation continuity measures. The Judicial Council also requests a construction plan, which includes consultation with the Judicial Council during construction planning phases and establishes advanced coordination requirements for major construction activities. This plan must recognize that courts provide essential public services that cannot be interrupted without serious consequences for the administration of justice. SA2-7

Lastly, the Judicial Council welcomes continued dialogue about how this project aligns with renewable energy benefits for government facilities, state and judicial branch sustainability goals, and green construction practices near sensitive court environments. SA2-8

Thank you for the opportunity to review. Should you have any questions, or wish to discuss, please contact me at alexandra.cervantes@jud.ca.gov or (916) 643-6924.

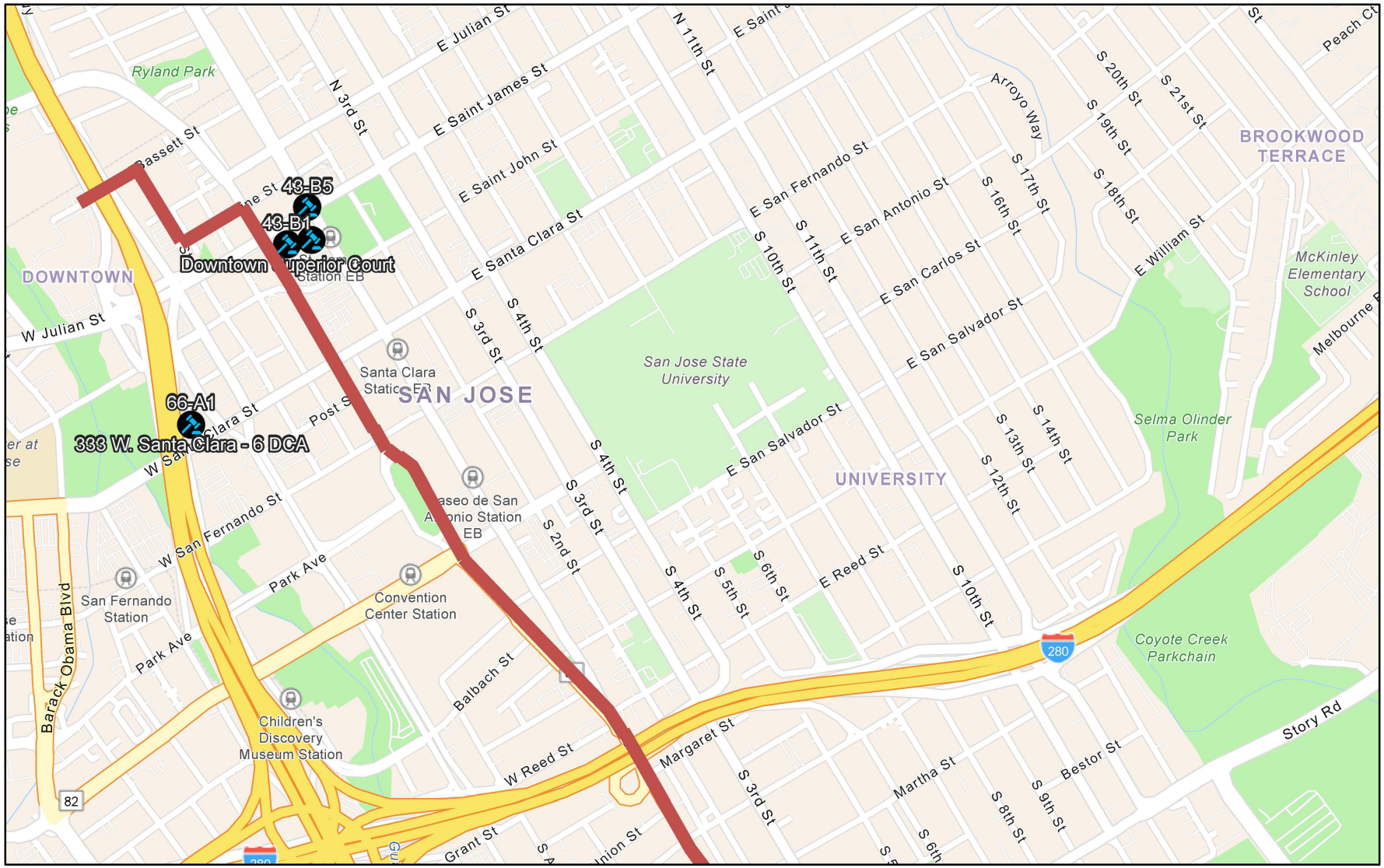
Sincerely,

Alexandra Cervantes

Alexandra Cervantes
Senior Facilities Analyst

cc: Jagan Singh, Deputy Director, Facilities Services, Judicial Council
Mary Bustamante, Manager, Facilities Services, Judicial Council
Jennifer Chappelle, Manager, Risk Management, Facilities Services, Judicial Council
Hilda Iorga, Facilities Supervisor, Facilities Services, Judicial Council
Yassen Roussev, Supervisor, Sustainability, Judicial Council

Figure 1



SA2-2.a

JCC_Properties_2025

Construction

Courthouse

1:18,056

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 mi

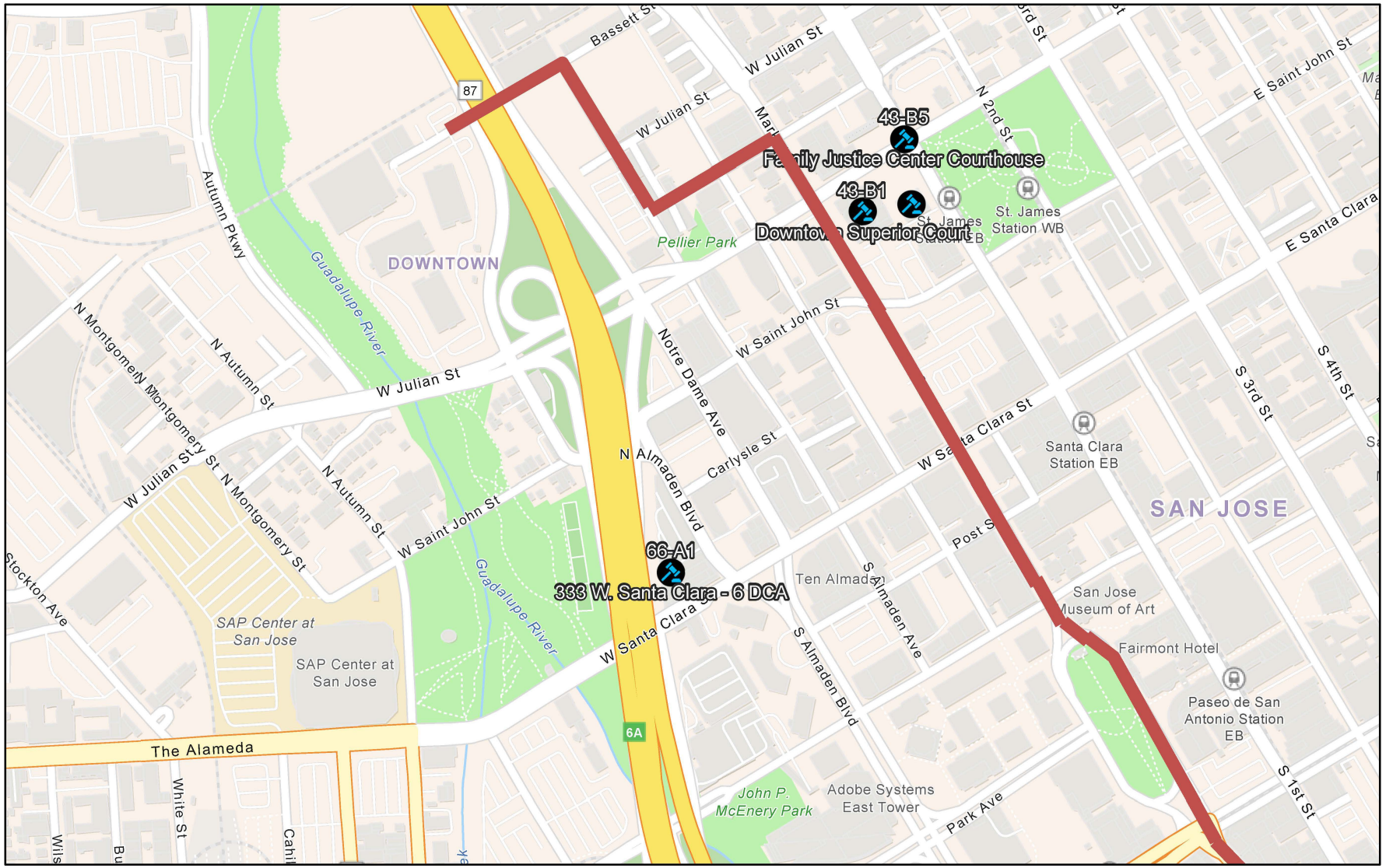
0 0.17 0.35 0.7 km

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

ArcGIS Web AppBuilder

Sources: Esri; U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Geodetic Survey (NGS) | Regrid | Esri Community Maps

Figure 2



SA2-2.b

JCC_Properties_2025 — Construction

Courthouse

1:9,028

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 mi

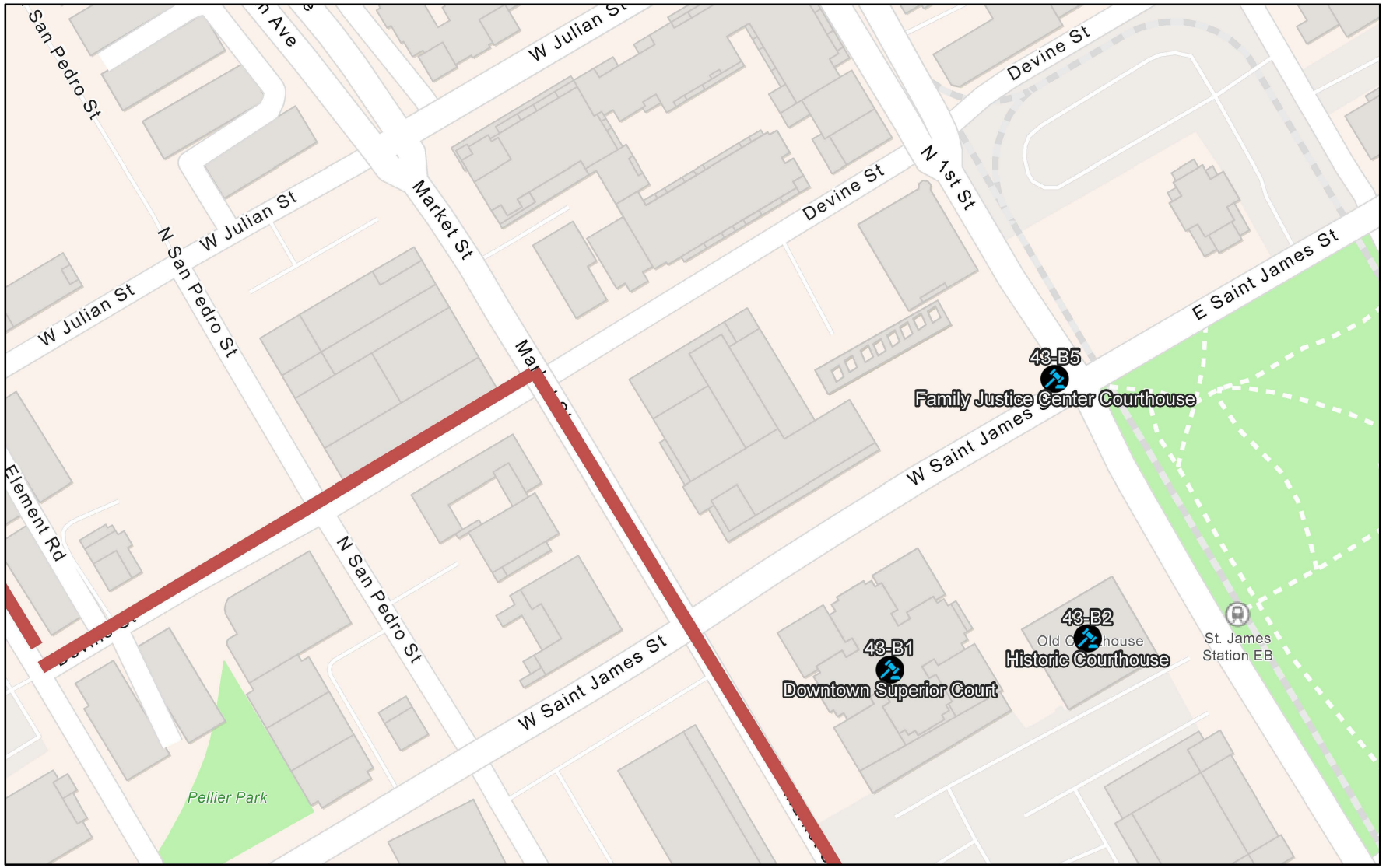
0 0.07 0.15 0.3 km

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

ArcGIS Web AppBuilder

Sources: Esri; U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Geodetic Survey (NGS) | Regrid | Esri Community Maps

Figure 3



SA2-2.c

Letter SA2: Judicial Council of California

SA2-1 The commenter expresses concerns with Project construction as it pertains to effects on four court facilities located within the Project construction area in downtown San Jose. The commenter asserts that impacts related to Transportation, Noise, Utility and Service Systems, and Public Services would pose challenges to the court's ability to maintain uninterrupted judicial proceedings during Project construction. The commenter recommends notifications and schedule coordination with the four impacted courts prior to Project construction.

The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, Draft EIR Sections 3.15, *Public Services*, and 3.17, *Transportation*, have been updated to include the four court facilities identified in the Project area. Specific revisions to each of these sections are discussed in Responses to Comments SA2-4, SA2-5, and SA2-8 below.

SA2-2 The commenter expresses concerns for the location of four court houses within 2 miles from Project construction areas in downtown San José, including figures showing relative location. In addition, the commenter requests revisions to the Draft EIR to account for transportation impacts related to ADA compliance and pedestrian access to court facilities. The commenter suggests that transportation and parking constraints may occur as a result of the Project.

The Final EIR Section 3.15, *Public Services*, has been revised to include the existing court facilities located in the Project area. The description of court facilities is included in Section 3.15.1, *Environmental Setting*, as shown below.

> **Court Services**
>
> Several court facilities are located in the Project's vicinity and provide essential public services. The four major court facilities located within the Project construction impact area include the following:
>
> - Family Justice Center Courthouse is located approximately 75 feet east, adjacent to the Grove to Skyline 320-kilovolt direct current Transmission Line (201 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95113).
> - Historic Courthouse is located approximately 310 feet east (161 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95113) near the Grove to Skyline 320-kilovolt direct current Transmission Line.
> - Downtown Superior Court is located approximately 75 feet east, adjacent to the Grove to Skyline 320-kilovolt direct current Transmission Line (191 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95113).
> - Sixth District Court of Appeal is located approximately .25 mile west (333 West Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95113) near the Grove to Skyline 320-kilovolt direct current Transmission Line.

In addition, the FEIR Section 3.15.5.2, *Impact Assessment*, includes court facilities as part of "other public facilities" listed under Criterion (a). The impact analysis in Criterion (a) has been updated as follows:

> Four court facilities in downtown San Jose are located within the Project vicinity, including the Family Justice Center Courthouse, Historic Courthouse, Downtown Superior Court, and Sixth District Court of Appeals. These court facilities provide essential public services that in order to properly function, must remain operational without interruption. The approximately two-year construction period could present challenges in maintaining court operations, particularly regarding access, traffic circulation, and noise-sensitive court proceedings, witness testimony, and attorney-client conferences. Construction activities could result in temporary disruptions related to traffic congestion, noise, and access to facilities.
>
> As discussed in Section 3.17, *Transportation*, implementation of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a would minimize the Project's construction-related impacts on public services, including court facilities, through the implementation of a coordinated traffic control plan. Therefore, impacts would be reduced to a **less-than-significant** level.

LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a: Implement Coordinated Traffic Control Plan requires compliance with local policies requires compliance with the policies C-TR 35 and C-TR 36 of the Santa Clara County General Plan that address safe bicycle and pedestrian travel and a safe transit system. CEQA generally does not consider the adequacy of a project's parking or its "impacts on parking" unless it will result in significant secondary effects on the physical environment. As required by LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a: Implement Coordinated Traffic Control Plan, a circulation and detour plan would be developed and implemented by LSPGC that addresses parking along public roadways, such as Market Street. Implementation of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a would require coordination with reduce the potentially significant transportation impacts to a less-than-significant level.

LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1b: Infrastructure Repair Reporting requires that repairs of any damaged roads, sidewalks, trails, and bicycle facilities resulting from Project construction activities are consistent with preconstruction conditions and in accordance with applicable requirements associated with permits granted for the Project, including compliance with ADA standards, if required under other permit requirements.

SA2-3 The commenter requests that the transportation impact analysis in the Draft EIR includes a parking impact assessment with plans to minimize construction-related impacts to court facilities.

The FEIR Section 3.17.5 discusses transportation-related impacts that would be associated with the Project. As required by LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a: Implement Coordinated Traffic Control Plan, a circulation and detour plan would be

developed and implemented by LSPGC that: addresses the use of signage and flagging to guide vehicles through or around the construction zone and any temporary traffic control devices; requires implementation of bicycle or pedestrian detour plans, where applicable; and addresses parking along public roadways. The second bullet of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a has been updated in the to include coordination with court facilities prior to construction in the vicinity of court services, as follows:

- Coordination between LSPGC, Project proponents, contractors, and State and local agencies, including court facilities, in developing circulation and detour plans that include safety features (e.g., signage and flaggers). The circulation and detour plans shall address the following:
  - Full and partial roadway closures.
  - The use of signage and flagging to guide vehicles through or around the construction zone and any temporary traffic control devices.
  - Bicycle or pedestrian detour plans, where applicable.
  - Parking along public roadways and in the proximity of court facilities.

SA2-4 The commenter states that both the Downtown Superior Court and Historic Courthouse are across the street from part of the Project construction area and suggests extending the noise characterization and reduction plan site survey to 100 feet to estimate how Project construction may impact court proceedings. The commenter also requests to be included in the review and approval process for the noise plan and vibration survey.

As described in the *Construction Noise Impacts* discussion in Draft EIR Section 3.13.5.1, *Approach to Analysis*, short-term construction noise levels that would be associated with the Project are evaluated relative to ambient noise levels and local standards of the applicable jurisdictions. For construction activities within the San José city limits, Section 20.100.450 of the City of San José Municipal Code restricts construction within 500 feet of a residential unit to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and prohibits construction on weekends. In addition, as stated in General Plan Policy EC-1.7, the City of San José considers significant construction noise impacts to occur if a project located within 200 feet of commercial or office uses would involve substantial noise-generating activities (such as building demolition, grading, excavation, pile driving, use of impact equipment, or building framing) that would continue for more than 12 months.

The City of San José Municipal Code and General Plan include no quantitative noise limits for what the City considers to be substantial construction noise. However, temporary construction-related noise generated in San José is considered by CPUC staff to be substantial if ambient noise levels would increase by 10 dBA L_{eq} or more at the nearest noise-sensitive land uses for a period of more than 12 months. For projects that would result in a significant construction noise impact under those criteria, Policy EC-1.7 requires the preparation of a construction noise logistics plan that specifies hours of construction, measures to minimize noise and vibration, posting or notification of construction schedules, and designation of a noise disturbance coordinator who would respond to the neighborhood.

The proposed Grove to Skyline 320 kV transmission line construction activities that would occur along Market Street would be as close as 50 feet from the Superior Court of Santa Clara County and the Santa Clara County Family Court buildings. Based on measured noise levels collected in the downtown area, daytime ambient 1-hour L_{eq} noise levels in the vicinity of the courthouse buildings may range between 65 dBA and 69 dBA (see Table 3.13-1, Location Number LT-1).

As described in Table 3.13-10, construction noise levels that would be associated with the Grove to Skyline 320 kV transmission line at 50 feet would be approximately 80 dBA L_{eq}, which would represent an 11 dBA to 15 dBA increase over ambient levels and could cause an adverse impact. However, proposed construction activities in the vicinity of the courthouse buildings would not be expected to last for more than a 2 to 4 weeks and would therefore not represent a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise pursuant to City of San José General Plan Policy EC-1.7. The associated construction impact at the courthouse buildings would be less than significant, and implementation of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b (Construction Noise Reduction and Logistics Plan) would not be required to reduce a significant impact in that area (see Impact 3.13-1, Draft EIR pages 1.13-22 through 3.13-25 for additional details).

With regard to the vibration levels that would occur at the courthouse building areas during Project construction, the level of vibration associated with the underground transmission line work would be approximately the same as current vibration levels from trucks that frequently travel on Market Street where the transmission line would be constructed (see Impact 3.13-3, Draft EIR pages 1.13-32 and 3.13-33). Therefore, compared to baseline conditions, construction activities of the proposed transmission line would result in a less-than-significant vibration impact at the courthouse buildings and implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.13-3 (Vibration Monitoring for High Vibratory Equipment Contingency Plan) would not be required to reduce a significant impact. Furthermore, Project vibration levels would not be expected to result in any disruptions to courthouse proceedings; therefore, vibration monitoring within 100 feet of construction activities near courthouse proceedings is not warranted.

SA2-5 The commenter states that four courthouses identified within a quarter mile of the Project require quiet environments for proceedings, witness testimony, and attorney-client conferences. The commenter also expresses concerns about the use of heavy construction equipment near these courthouses and associated time restrictions. The comment also suggests use of continuous noise level monitoring near courthouses, advanced notice of high noise activities, and placement of physical barriers around construction zones adjacent to court facilities.

As described in response to Comment SA2-4, above, the Construction Noise Reduction and Logistics Plan and the Vibration Monitoring for High Vibratory Equipment Contingency Plan would not be implemented for construction activities in the vicinity of the courthouse buildings because construction noise and vibration impacts disclosed

in the Draft EIR that would occur in that area along Market Street were found to be less than significant.

SA2-6 The commenter suggests the Project includes provisions for backup utilities during construction, as the commenter is concerned with utility disruption during construction, and the potential interference with court operations. The comment is noted.

SA2-7 The commenter recommends revising Draft EIR and incorporate courthouse operations into the Public Services analysis. The commenter correctly states that courthouse operations should be analyzed under Public Services CEQA Appendix G criteria. Thus, revisions to the Draft EIR have been made in response to this comment to account for the four court houses located within 200 feet of the Project construction area proposed in downtown San José, in compliance with the City of San José General Plan Policy EC-1.7. See the Final EIR Section 3.15, *Public Services*, for these revisions.

SA2-8 The commenter welcomes continued dialogue about the Project and how it aligns with energy benefits for government facilities, sustainability goals, and green construction practices near sensitive court environments. Comment noted.

August 25, 2025

VIA EMAIL

Tharon Wright, CPUC
Power Santa Clara Valley Project
c/o Environmental Science Associates; Att. V. Nez
575 Market Street, Suite 3700
San Francisco, CA 94105
PowerSCV@esassoc.com

RE: LS Power Grid California, LLC Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Power Santa Clara County Project (Application 24-04-017); State Clearinghouse No. 2024090200

Dear Ms. Wright:

LS Power Grid California (LSPGC) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) dated July 10, 2025, for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project (Project). LSPGC appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. Please see **Attachment A**, LSPGC Draft EIR Comment Table and **Attachment B**, Editorial Suggestions Table for the Power the South Bay Project Draft EIR.

Should you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (925) 808-0291.

Sincerely,

Dustin Joseph

Dustin Joseph
Director of Environmental Permitting

Enclosures

cc: Casey Carroll (LSPGC)
Jacob Diermann (LSPGC)
Lucy Marton (LSPGC)
David Wilson (LSPGC)
Silvia Yanex (ESA)
Valisa Nez (ESA)

16450 Main Circle Drive, Suite 310, MO 63017
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Comment Number	DEIR Page #	DEIR Section, Paragraph, Figure # or Table #	Original DEIR Text	LSPGC Comments and Proposed Revisions	
General					
1	Global Comment	Not Applicable (N/A)	N/A	LSPGC (LS Power Grid California, LLC) has completed additional diligence on the identified Environmentally Superior Alternative, Grove High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Terminal Alternative 3, and is prepared and expects to be able to implement this alternative if the Commission selects the Grove Terminal Alternative 3 site over the Proposed Project's Grove Terminal site.	UT1-1
2	Global Comment	N/A	e.g., "…the County eliminated the potential alternatives listed below…"	Search entire document for instances where the DEIR intended to say "CPUC" (California Public Utilities Commission) but said "County" instead. Make corrections as needed.	UT1-2
3	Global Comment	Various Figures (e.g., Figures 2-3d, 3.1-2, etc.)	N/A	Please fix the errors on all figures where a green triangle is included to represent "Existing Distribution Pole – to be removed." While there are four existing distribution poles located on the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site, only three of these poles would be removed. The westerly most distribution pole on the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site is not planned to be removed.	UT1-3
4	Global Comment	Chapter 2, Chapter 3	e.g., "LSPGC plans to leave 150 trees along the Monterey Road frontage at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site." e.g., "…the top of the underground duct bank would be a minimum of 3 feet beneath the surface, with depths ranging from 3 to 10 feet." e.g., "Horizontal bore sending and receiving pits measure 15 feet by 50 feet ."	The DEIR does not include qualifying language (e.g., "approximately," "typically," "are anticipated to", etc.) in the Project Description. LSPGC recommends restoring appropriate qualifying language throughout the Project Description, consistent with LSPGC's Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA).	UT1-4
5	Global Comment	N/A	N/A	LSPGC has identified multiple inconsistencies between Tables ES-2, ES-3, and 4-11 and the individual Impact Assessment sections in Chapter 3, including discrepancies where impact conclusions differ between tables and detailed sections (e.g., "less than significant" versus "less than significant with mitigation"), incorrect parenthetical statements following impact descriptions throughout Chapter 3, and criteria concluded as "no impact" that are omitted from Table ES-2. LSPGC recommends that a comprehensive cross-reference review of all summary tables and corresponding impact analysis sections be performed to ensure consistency and accuracy throughout the Final EIR.	UT1-5
6	Global Comment	N/A	N/A	For consistency, LSPGC suggests that the DEIR reference the Appendix G language in the Impact Assessment headers as opposed to using the ultimate conclusion of the analysis.	UT1-6
7	Global Comment	Executive Summary, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4	"Determining an environmentally superior alternative can be difficult because of the many factors that must be balanced. Nonetheless, at this stage of this Draft EIR, the combination of the "Proposed Alignment + Grove Terminal Alternative 3" (i.e., Alternative Combination 1, or AC-1) has been determined to be preferred because, relative to the Project, would avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts of the Project on aesthetics, agricultural and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, energy, geology, soils, and paleontological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous	LSPGC has identified multiple inconsistencies between Tables ES-2, ES-3, and 4-11 and the individual Impact Assessment sections in Chapter 3 and the alternatives in Chapter 4. In addition, the following resource areas listed in the text on page ES-29 do not have potentially significant impacts: energy, geology, soils, and paleontological resources, greenhouse gas emissions.	UT1-7

Comment Number	DEIR Page #	DEIR Section, Paragraph, Figure # or Table #	Original DEIR Text	LSPGC Comments and Proposed Revisions	
			materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, recreation, transportation, utilities, and wildfire." For example, the significantly shorter Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line would no longer traverse 1.2 miles along Coyote Creek Trail and Coyote Creek, which, under the Project, would result in potentially significant impacts associated with biological resources, recreation, and transportation, among other resource areas."	Furthermore, all impacts except cultural and tribal cultural resources are less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures.	UT1-7 cont.
Executive Summary					
8	ES-8 to ES-27	Table ES-3	N/A	LSPGC noted several differences between the mitigation measures in the Executive Summary and the detailed Environmental Analysis sections. Please ensure mitigation measures are consistent throughout the Final EIR.	UT1-8
9	ES-31	5th bullet in Section ES.9	"Determine whether the significant and unavoidable impact related to cultural resources and tribal cultural resources outweighs the need for the Project and, if so, prepare a statement of overriding considerations."	This sentence is constructed such that a statement of overriding considerations is prepared if the significant unavoidable impacts outweigh the need for the Project, which is incorrect. The text should be revised as follows: "Determine whether **need for the Project outweighs** the significant and unavoidable impact related to cultural resources and tribal cultural resources ~~**outweighs the need for the Project**~~ and, if so, prepare a statement of overriding considerations."	UT1-9
1. Introduction					
10	1-5	4th paragraph	"…no local discretionary (use permits) are required."	The CPUC authority preempts all local discretionary approvals issued pursuant to local authority, not just "use" permits. Please delete "use" from the identified sentence.	UT1-10
11	1-5	4th paragraph	"The CPUC's General Order 131-D requires LSPGC to comply with local building, design, and safety requirements and standards, to the degree feasible, to minimize potential Project conflicts with local land uses."	CPUC General Order (GO) 131-D states "…public utilities shall consult with local agencies regarding land use matters. In instances where the public utilities and local agencies are unable to resolve their differences, the Commission shall set a hearing no later than 30 days after the utility or local agency has notified the Commission of the inability to reach agreement on land use matters." As such, LSPGC suggests the following language: "The CPUC's General Order 131-D (GO 131-D) requires LSPGC to **consult with local agencies on land use matters even though local jurisdictions are preempted from regulating the proposed project. In instances where the public utility and the local agency have unresolved differences regarding land use matters, GO 131-D provides a process by which the CPUC would resolve those differences.**".	UT1-11
12	1-9	3rd paragraph	"Eleven members of the public provided oral or written comments on the Project during the September 6, 2024, hybrid scoping meeting."	Please revise as the scoping meeting was held on September 18, 2024.	UT1-12
13	1-9	5th paragraph	"As of this scoping report, the following tribes have responded to the CPUC to express interest in the Project…"	LSPGC suggests rewriting this to capture the intent of the early tribal outreach process.	UT1-13
2. Project Description					
14	2-2	1st paragraph	"…are not part of the work submitted for authorization in LSPGC's application as PG&E and Silicon Valley Power (SVP) are not applicants."	Please remove the reference to SVP as Project is not interconnecting to SVP.	UT1-14

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15	2-10	Figure 2-3a	N/A	Figure 2-3a should be revised to include the updated Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) San Jose B Substation Rebuild/Expansion Area.	UT1-15
16	2-16	Figure 2-4c	N/A	Please add a label to the dashed lines in the figure legend.	UT1-16
17	2-19	Figure 2-5	N/A	Remove black circle and label for Dead End Structure.	UT1-17
18	2-20	2nd paragraph	"The Project proposes 500/320 kV transformers at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal and 320/115 kV transformers at the proposed Skyline HVDC Terminal."	The Skyline HVDC Terminal will have 320/230 kilovolt (kV) transformers, not 320/115 kV.	UT1-18
19	2-20	2nd paragraph	"…and space would be reserved for future multi-terminal expansion."	Please remove reference to "future multi-terminal expansion", as the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) removed this requirement in the revised Transmission Plan.	UT1-19
20	2-22	Footnote 7	"Should any conflicts between the Project and existing transmission or distribution lines be discovered during final engineering of the transmission line alignments…	Revise to, "Should any conflicts between the Project and existing **utility facilities** ~~**transmission or distribution lines**~~ be discovered during final engineering of the transmission line alignments…"	UT1-20
21	2-23	2nd paragraph	"The proposed Grove to Skyline 320kV Transmission Line would be encased in a 36-inch casing pipe proposed to have five smaller internal ducts: three…"	Revise to "… would be encased in a **duct bank proposed to have five ducts** ~~**a 36-inch casing pipe proposed to have five smaller internal ducts**~~: three…"	UT1-21
22	2-23	Table 2-2 second column header	"Number of Duct Banks"	Revise to "Number of **Internal** Duct**s** ~~**Banks**~~."	UT1-22
23	2-31	2.6.5.2	"The access road at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal would approximately 300 feet to be 20 feet wide. At this location, Monterey Road has four lanes and is 80 feet wide, and is a public paved, divided road. For access to the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal from Monterey Road, the Project includes the installation of a paved access road apron where the new access road approaches Monterey Road as required."	Revise to include upgrade of the existing access road at the proposed Grove Terminal site to support construction traffic from Monterey Road to the terminal facility's perimeter wall as discussed in LSPGC's PEA (page 3-14).	UT1-23
24	2-32	2.7.3	"New easements or ROW would range in width from 3 feet to 5 feet,"	LSPGC suggests revising to: "New easements or ROW would **typically** range in width from **approximately** 3 feet to **10** ~~**5**~~ feet."	UT1-24
25	2-40	First Paragraph	"…site availability during the construction window, which is years in the future, is uncertain at this stage."	Construction is no longer years in the future. Recommend removing the word "years".	UT1-25
26	2-54	4th paragraph	"Should groundwater be encountered, dewatering may be required using a portable pump, and the water would be disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations and acquired permits. Groundwater encountered during underground construction would be pumped either into water trucks for haul-off or directly into containment tanks. Dewatering procedures are described further in Section 2.8.9, Water Use and Dewatering."	Strike the following sentence as shown below: Should groundwater be encountered, dewatering may be required using a portable pump, and the water would be disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations and acquired permits. ~~**Groundwater encountered during underground construction would be pumped either into water trucks for haul-off or directly into containment tanks.**~~ Dewatering procedures are described further in Section 2.8.9, Water Use and Dewatering.	UT1-26
27	2-55	1st paragraph	"All pit soils would be hauled off-site and a fluidized backfill would be used after the trenchless construction."	LSPGC recommends deleting this. It is repetitive and it does not belong in this section since it refers to trenchless (Section 2.8.5.4).	UT1-27

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28	2-62	Last paragraph	"Public access restrictions would range from a few days or weeks for trenching operations to up to the full duration of construction (approximately 27 months)."	LSPGC suggests revising the parentheticals to read "approximately **24** months" for consistency with the remainder of the EIR.	UT1-28
29	2-64	2.8.8.3 Runoff	2.8.8.3 Runoff	Please add the following text, as included in LSPGC response to CPUC Data Request No. 2: "Given the urban nature of the Skyline terminal site, LSPGC may also discharge stormwater from the Skyline terminal site into the City of San Jose's existing stormwater system within Santa Theresa Street, adjacent to the Skyline terminal site." The stormwater drainage and conveyance system may include a combination of surface drainage, swales, and/or underground piping to efficiently direct stormwater towards the stormwater detention system while minimizing erosion and standing water risks.	UT1-29
30	2-66	2.8.9.2 Dewatering	"Dewatering would be conducted using a pump or well points. Groundwater encountered during underground construction would be pumped either into water trucks for haul-off or directly into containment tanks (e.g., Baker tanks) that allow acceptable de-sedimentation before discharge and tested for turbidity, pH, and other required parameters. The groundwater would be discharged into the storm sewer system when the water meets quality standards in accordance with applicable regulations and acquired permits, or it would be hauled off for disposal if quality standards are not met…	LSPGC suggests revising to: "Dewatering would be conducted using a pump or well points. Groundwater encountered during underground construction would be ~~**pumped either into water trucks for haul-off or directly into containment tanks (e.g., Baker tanks) that allow acceptable de-sedimentation before discharge and**~~ tested **(e.g.,** turbidity, pH, and other required parameters) and ~~**. The groundwater**~~ would be discharged into the storm sewer system when the water meets quality standards in accordance with applicable regulations and acquired permits, or it would be hauled off for disposal if quality standards are not met."	UT1-30
31	2-91	1st Paragraph	"Power lines, like electrical wiring and electrical equipment, produce EMFs at 60 Hz (OSHA 2025)."	The current statement refers generally to 'power lines' producing electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) at 60 Hz. However, alternating current (AC) and direct current (DC) lines differ in this respect. To be accurate, the text should state: "**AC** power lines, like electrical wiring and equipment, produce electromagnetic fields (EMFs) at **a frequency of** 60 Hz (OSHA, 2025). **In contrast, DC power lines generate static electric and magnetic fields, reflecting the constant, unidirectional flow of current.**"	UT1-31
3.0 Introduction to Environmental Analysis					
32	3-2	1st paragraph	"For this Draft EIR, unless as otherwise noted, baseline conditions are those as they existed on or about September 18, 2024, the date the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this Draft EIR was published."	Please update the NOP publishing date to September 6, 2024.	UT1-32
3.1 Aesthetics					
33	3.1-41	Mitigation Measure 3.1-2	"The use of outdoor lighting shall be minimized during construction, operation, and maintenance. Photocell and motion detection-controlled lighting shall be provided at a level sufficient to provide safe entry and exit to the Project work sites and to ensure the security of the sites. All lighting shall be selectively placed, shielded, and directed to minimize fugitive light. Portable lights shall be operated at the lowest feasible wattage and height. The number of nighttime lights used shall be limited to those necessary to accomplish the task	Mitigation Measure (MM) 3.1-2 is essentially identical to Applicant-Proposed Measure (APM) BIO-7. LSPGC recommends deleting MM 3.1-2 since APM BIO-7 already addresses concerns regarding outdoor lighting and this would reduce confusion between the two measures. In addition, the use of photocell and motion detection-controlled lighting is not technically feasible during nighttime construction where continuous lighting is needed for safety. If MM 3.1-2 is retained, LSPGC requests the reference to photocell and motion detection-controlled lighting be removed.	UT1-33

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			completely and safely. All lighting near sensitive species habitat shall be directed away from these areas where feasible."		UT1-33 cont.
3.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources					
34	3.2-16	Impact 3.2-1	"The Project would convert Prime Farmland, which is defined as 'farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production' (see Section 3.2.2.2, State). The proposed Grove HVDC Terminal would be located on a 13.6-acre property designated as Prime Farmland, which would be permanently converted to non-agricultural use. Specifically, approximately 3.3 acres of the site are located within the city of San José and zoned for Planned Development within an Agricultural Base District. The remaining 10.3 acres are located within unincorporated Santa Clara County. Collectively, this 13.6-acre property is currently used as an orchard, and this use would be terminated upon Project construction; however, 150 of the 3,000 existing trees would remain along Monterey Road."	Development of the Grove Terminal site would result in a permanent conversion of 7.4 acres of the 13.6-acre parcel, of which 10.3 acres are designated as Prime Farmland. Please note that the remaining 6.2 acres of the parcel would still be available for future agricultural use. As such, compensatory mitigation should only apply the permanent conversion of Prime Farmland and not include any temporary impacts to agricultural uses.	UT1-34
35	3.2-17	Mitigation Measure 3.2-1	Mitigation Measure 3.2-1: Conservation and Restoration of Farmland	The text of MM 3.2-1 should be revised to clarify that this mitigation measure applies only to alternatives that impact Prime or Unique Farmland.	UT1-35
36	3.2-17	Mitigation Measure 3.2-1	"LSPGC shall provide a financial donation or purchase an agricultural conservation easement to protect and restore farmland in Santa Clara County, subject to review and approval of the Santa Clara County Agricultural Commissioner and Santa Clara County Open Space Authority. The ratio of mitigation shall be equivalent to 1:1 as compensation for Project Prime Farmland removed from agricultural productivity. The conservation mitigation shall be paid to the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority or other appropriate agricultural land trust operating in Santa Clara County for the purposes of reclaiming, restoring, and/or conserving Prime Farmland in Santa Clara County."	As written, this measure does not provide ratepayers with sufficient cost protection and may effectively provide the Santa Clara County Agricultural Commissioner and the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority with veto power over the Project. As such, we recommend the following revisions to ensure that CPUC maintains an appropriate level of oversight over the Project: "…subject to review and approval of **CPUC Energy Division staff, in consultation with** the Santa Clara County Agricultural Commissioner and Santa Clara County Open Space Authority."	UT1-36
3.3 Air Quality					
37	3.3-30	1st paragraph	"Given the relatively large scope of ground disturbance that would occur under the Project, implementing only the basic BMPs could result in a potentially significant impact per BAAQMD's recommended approach for evaluation of fugitive dust emissions."	While the Project as a whole includes a large area of disturbance, most of the disturbance areas associated with transmission line construction are located within paved and landscaped areas which do not generate high levels of fugitive dust. Utilization of standard dust control Best Management Practices (BMPs), as outlined in APM AQ-2, would be sufficient to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.	UT1-37
38	3.3-31	Mitigation Measure 3.3-2a	"LSPGC shall ensure that at least 75 percent of equipment horsepower hours related to off-road construction equipment include Tier 4 Final emissions controls for all construction locations except the Grove and Skyline HVDC Terminals. LSPGC shall ensure that 100 percent of all off-road construction equipment used at the terminal sites is Tier 4 Final compliant. An initial listing that identifies each off-road unit's certified tier specification to be operated for the Project shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval before the start of construction activities. Construction activities shall not begin until the equipment listing has been submitted to and approved by the CPUC.	LSPGC requests that the requirement to provide documentation for new or replacement construction equipment to be approved before use on the project be eliminated as this is logistically difficult to implement without causing significant construction delays. We suggest adding the documentation of new and replacement equipment as a component to the tracking tool that will be submitted to the CPUC on a monthly basis.	UT1-38

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			As LSPGC requires new or replacement construction equipment on the Project, LSPGC shall document verification of the certified engine tier and provide such documentation to the CPUC for approval before its use on Project sites. Before the start of construction, LSPGC shall develop an off-road construction equipment-use hours tracking tool and procedure. Construction activities shall not begin until the tracking tool and procedure have been submitted to and approved by the CPUC. The tracking tool shall be utilized by LSPGC to keep track of the certified engine tier and daily equipment use hours of all off-road diesel-powered equipment. If all off-road construction equipment is Tier 4 Final certified, the tracking tool is not required. The tracking tool shall be maintained by LSPGC, and tracking updates shall be submitted to the CPUC monthly to track the Project's compliance. The updated tracking tool shall be submitted to the CPUC no later than the 10th day of the following month."	In addition, LSPGC requests that the Tier 4 requirement be only applicable to the Grove Terminal site. LSPGC's response to Data Request 3 (Attachment B Updated Air Quality Emissions) includes the following statement: "LSPGC shall ensure that at least 75 percent of all off-road construction equipment includes Tier 4 interim or Tier 4 final emissions controls for all construction locations with the exception of the Grove terminal. Due to the close proximity of homes to the Grove terminal, LS Power shall ensure that 100 percent of all off-road construction is Tier 4 interim or Final."	UT1-38 cont.
39	3.3-32	Mitigation Measure 3.3-2c	"LSPGC shall implement all of the following best management practices, which would reduce fugitive PM10 and PM2.5 emissions:"	The intent of the BAAQMD fugitive dust mitigation measures is to ensure that visible fugitive dust emissions do not cross property lines. As such, we request that the language of MM 3.3-2c be revised to reflect this and to prevent unreasonable and unnecessary requirements and suggest adding the language below: "LSPGC shall implement all of the following best management practices, which would reduce fugitive PM10 and PM2.5 emissions:" In addition, LSPGC recognizes that the list of Best Management Practices for Construction-Related Fugitive Dust Emissions referenced in MM 3.3-2b originates from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD's) California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. However, upon review of the list of the basic and enhanced measures, we request the following changes be made to adapt these measures to a linear Project, as well as to make them feasible to implement during construction: "All trucks and equipment, including their tires, shall be washed off or otherwise cleaned prior to leaving the site." We request that this condition not apply to Project locations in developed/paved areas. "All excavation, grading, and/or demolition activities shall be suspended when average wind speeds exceed 20 mph." We request that this condition not apply to Project locations in developed/paved areas. "All exposed surfaces (e.g., parking areas, staging areas, soil piles, graded areas, and unpaved access roads) shall be watered two times per day." Please add that this requirement may be adjusted during rain events as needed (similar to the APM AQ-2). "Install wind breaks (e.g., trees, fences) on the windward side(s) of actively disturbed areas of construction. Wind breaks should have a maximum of 50 percent air porosity." This measure can be implemented at the terminal sites and staging yards	UT1-39

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				but is not feasible for the linear Project components. As such, we suggest limiting this measure to only terminal sites and staging yards. Please add note that some of the measures involving erosion control and revegetation may be superseded by the Project's SWPPP requirements.	UT1-39 cont.
40	3.3-32	Mitigation Measure 3.3-2c	"Post publicly visible sign with the telephone number...."	Mitigation Measure 3.3-2c doesn't say where signs are to be posted. LSPGC suggests posting signs at the terminal site locations and staging yards.	UT1-40
3.4 Biological Resources					
41	3.4-14	1st paragraph 3.4.2.2	"The following fish and wildlife species were identified with a moderate potential to occur:"	For consistency with the PEA, this should read "...moderate **<u>or higher</u>** potential to occur:"	UT1-41
42	3.4-42	Mitigation Measure 3.4-1	"Rare plant surveys conducted under APM BIO-2 shall be floristic in nature and shall be conducted by a qualified botanist according to procedures outlined in the CDFW publication Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special-status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities (CDFW 2018b). The survey(s) shall be conducted in early, mid-, or late spring, in conjunction with the blooming seasons of those rare plants with moderate potential to occur in the survey area. If no special-status plants are observed during appropriately timed surveys conducted by a qualified botanist, it shall be assumed that the construction activity will have no impact on special-status plants and no further action is required. If special-status plants are identified within the survey area, the individuals or populations shall be mapped and quantified and reported to the CNDDB, and the project manager shall be notified so that potential impacts on these known occurrences will be avoided or minimized. Coordination with CDFW and/or USFWS staff shall be conducted to establish appropriate avoidance and minimization measures if the species is federally or State listed. Avoidance and minimization measures may include: (1) No-disturbance buffers. The size of the buffer would typically be 25–50 feet but may be increased or decreased by the biologist depending on the plant species and surroundings. (2) Work windows for low-impact activities that are compatible with the dormant phase of a special-status plant life cycle but that may kill living plants or severely alter their ability to reproduce. (3) Silt fencing or construction fencing to prevent vehicles, equipment, and personnel from accessing the occupied habitat. (4) Erosion control BMPs such as straw wattles made of rice straw, erosion control blankets, or hydroseeding with a native plant seed mix to prevent sedimentation from upslope construction activities. (5) In consultation with and as authorized by CDFW or USFWS, collection and spreading of seeds or relocation of plants to appropriate locations by a qualified botanist."	While LSPGC agrees that rare plants should be addressed and mitigated through the CEQA process, utilities are exempt from Fish and Game Code FGC 1913: "(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 1911, timber operations in accordance with a timber harvesting plan submitted pursuant to the provisions of the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 (Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 4511) of Part 2 of Division 4 of the Public Resources Code), or required mining assessment work pursuant to federal or state mining laws, or the removal of endangered or rare native plants from a canal, lateral ditch, building site, or road, or other right-of-way by the owner of the land or the owner's agent, or the performance by a public agency or a publicly or privately owned public utility of its obligation to provide service to the public, shall not be restricted by this chapter because of the presence of rare or endangered plants, except as provided in subdivision (c) of this section." As such, LSPGC would request that the language in the mitigation measure referencing a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Incidental Take Permit (ITP) permit be removed. We also ask that this utility exemption be added to the Regulatory Setting section of the Biological Resources Section.	UT1-42

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43	3.4-53	Mitigation Measure 3.4-4	"At least 30 days before the completion of Project activities, the Applicant shall submit a restoration plan to CDFW for review and written approval. No restoration activities shall commence until the restoration plan has been approved by CDFW in writing…"	LSPGC requests that this measure be modified to only be required for areas of construction that would be in delineated State or Federal jurisdictional waters. As currently written, this measure as written may delay the start of construction activities in upland and disturbed/developed habitats. Please revise to "Before construction in areas containing waters of the U.S. and/or State, the applicant shall obtain all required environmental permits…" and "At least 30 days before the scheduled commencement of Project activities within waters of the U.S. and/or State, the applicant shall submit…"	UT1-43
44	3.4-58	Mitigation Measure 3.4-5	"All removal of street trees within the jurisdictional limits of the City of San José and Santa Clara County shall be coordinated with the responsible department in each jurisdiction (see Section 3.4.3) to obtain any necessary tree removal permits. LSPGC shall comply with all permit conditions, including tree replanting and monitoring to ensure successful replanting. LSPGC shall provide copies of the approved permits from the applicable jurisdictions before the start of construction."	Please revise this section to apply only to **ministerial** tree removal permits. Per GO 131-D, LSPGC is exempt from local discretionary approvals issued pursuant to local authority (including discretionary tree removal permits).	UT1-44
45	3.4-58	Mitigation Measure 3.4-5	"…LSPGC shall provide copies of the approved permits from the applicable jurisdictions before the start of construction."	LSPGC suggests the following change to MM 3.4-5, "LSPGC shall provide copies of the approved permits from the applicable jurisdictions before the start of construction **in the vicinity of a street tree being coordinated**."	UT1-45
46	3.4-78	Last reference (USFWS 2025b)	"USFWS (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). 2025b. Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) Resource List (Power the South Bay Project). Retrieved January 2025. Available: https://ecos.fws.gov/IPaC/. Accessed June 2025."	This reference lists the IPaC resource list for LSPGC's Power the South Bay project. The instance of "Power the South Bay" should be revised to "Power Santa Clara Valley".	UT1-46
3.5 Cultural Resources					
47	3.5-12 and -13	Section 3.5.4, Table 3.5-1	Resource P-43-000571 is mentioned twice in 3.5 Cultural Resources of the DEIR: **3.5.4 Cultural Resources Identified within the Project Area** (pages 3.5-12 to -13) – describes resource P-43-000571 as "an indigenous habitation site with human remains" that has "not been evaluated for the California Register" and is therefore treated as eligible for the California Register and therefore as a historical resource per CEQA. **Table 3.5-1 Cultural Resources Identified in the Project Area** (3.5-13) - line 5 lists P-43-000571 as a historical resource per CEQA (boldface) described as a "Habitation site with human remains" with California Register Eligibility status as "Not previously evaluated; assumed eligible".	The discussion regarding P-43-000571 (SCL-000576) in 3.5.4 and listing in Table 3.5-1 appears to be a typographical error that occurred during drafting of the DEIR. The site description and California Register eligibility are incorrectly identified. P-43-000571 (SCL-000576) is consistently identified in the Cultural Resource Technical Report (Mengers et al. 2024), the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA, April 2024), and the resources DPR 523 site form on file with the California Historical Resource Information System (CHRIS) as a "Lithic scatter and fire-cracked rock" that has been extensively tested and recommended Not Eligible for the National Register and California Register (Scher 2014). No human remains have been encountered at this site at any time. Within the DEIR text, the following should be corrected within Section 3.5.4 Cultural Resources Identified within the Project Area: • Add resource P-43-000571 to the "these resources are not historical resources, are not unique archaeological resources, and have no potential to be affected by the Project" paragraph (3.5.4 second paragraph, page 3.5-12) • Remove resource P-43-000571 from the "have not been evaluated" paragraph (top of page 3.5-13) On Table 3.5-1, the following should be corrected:	UT1-47

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				• The entry for P-43-000571 should not be shown in boldface, as it is not a Historical Resource per CEQA • The Description field should be "Lithic scatter and fire-cracked rock", not "Habitation site with human remains" • The California Register Eligibility field should be "Previously evaluated; recommended not eligible for the California Register", not "Not previously evaluated; assumed eligible"	UT1-47 cont.
48	3.5-13	Table 3.5-1 and page 3.5-13	Table 3.5-1 and the following text. "Therefore, there are six historical resources in the Project area. Table 3.5-1, Cultural Resources Identified in the Project Area, provides additional details. Historical resources are designated in boldface." (page 3.5-13)	Table 3.5-1 Cultural Resources Identified in the Project Area is misleading since it includes resources on the Downtown Alignment Alternative 1 without identifying them as such. The following resources shown in Table 3.5-1 are only located within the Downtown Alignment Alternative 1 and not within the main Project alignment: • P-43-000141 • P-43-000369 • P-43-001056 Each of these resources is also incorrectly included in summary text preceding Table 3.5-1 in Section 3.5.4 Cultural Resources Identified within the Project area and are incorrectly included in counts of resources within the Project area: • Paragraph 1: "nine cultural resources were identified in the Project area: four pre-contact resources and five historic-era resources" incorrectly includes all three above resources • Paragraph 3: "Two cultural resources in the Project area have been recommended or determined eligible for listing in the California Register and qualify as historical resources under CEQA" incorrectly includes resource P-43-000141 • Paragraph 4: "Four resources have not been evaluated for the California Register" incorrectly includes resources P-43-000369 and P-43-0001056 • Paragraph 5: "Therefore, there are six historical resources in the Project area" incorrectly includes all three above resources Resources P-43-000141, P-43-000369, and P-43-001056 should be removed from Table 3.5-1 since the Table purports to show only cultural resources identified in the Project area. Text: The resource counts should be corrected in Section 3.5.4 as follows: • Paragraph 1: "…**six** ~~**nine**~~ cultural resources were identified in the Project area: **three** ~~**four**~~ pre-contact resources and ~~**five**~~ **three** historic-era resources" • Paragraph 3: "**One** ~~**two**~~ cultural resource~~s~~ in the Project area has been recommended or determined eligible for listing in the California Register and qualifies as a historical resource under CEQA" • Paragraph 4: "**One** ~~**four**~~ resource~~s~~ has not been evaluated for the California Register"	UT1-48

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				• Paragraph 5: "Therefore, there are ~~six~~ **two** historical resources in the Project area" The following additional edits are requested within the text on page 3.5-13, paragraph two: "**Four** of these resources are not historical resources, are not unique archaeological resources, and have no potential to be affected by the Project. **P-43-000571, a lithic scatter with fire-cracked rock, has been subject to extensive archaeological testing and was previously recommended as not eligible for the California register (Scher 2014).** P-43-00116, the San Jose B Station, was previously recommended as not eligible for the California Register and this evaluation is concurred with by the CPUC (PanGIS 2024). P-43-002628, the historic alignment of the El Camino Real/Juan Bautista de Anza Historic Trail, was previously recommended as not eligible for the California Register but is listed locally. However, this resource is solely the historic alignment of a road. P-43-002629, Keesling's Shade Trees, was also previously determined not eligible for the California Register and is not considered a historical resource."	UT1-48 cont.
49	3.5-16	APM CUL-4	"The temporary construction staging areas shall be surveyed prior to construction. If additional proposed facilities and ground-disturbing activities move outside the previously surveyed acreage, the new areas shall be subjected to a cultural resources inventory to ensure that any newly identified cultural resources are either avoided by project redesign or evaluated and treated."	Edits made to this APM in LSPGC's Deficiency Response #1 are not reflected in the DEIR version of the APM.	UT1-49
50	3.5-25	Significance after Mitigation	[Significant and unavoidable]	As discussed in the preceding comments, the nature and location of known cultural resources within and surrounding the Proposed Project features is incorrect and misleading. DEIR Table 3.5-1 outlines nine potential cultural resources in the Project area. The DEIR impact analysis discussion takes these resources into account, then extrapolating that the potential for undiscovered resources is also high. Within the DEIR (Section 3.5.5), the overall cultural sensitivity is based primarily on these known, documented resources. However, the impacts associated with the Project are exaggerated based on the information and clarifications provided in the preceding comments. Specifically, three of the sites listed in DEIR Table 3.5-1 are located along an alternative route, not the Proposed route. Therefore, the Proposed Project does not have potential to impact these resources. Of the remaining 6 sites that are potentially within the Project area, four have been evaluated and recommended or determined not to be eligible for listing on the California Register. Of the remaining two sites, one (P-43-000189) was determined eligible for the National and California Registers. However, as detailed in the Cultural Resources Technical Report (PanGIS, 2024), this site appears to be mis-mapped in the NWIC database. This site is associated with the PG&E project component, and the majority of the corrected map site is not located within the Proposed Project APE. The final site that is located within the Project area (P-43-000449) has not been previously evaluated and therefore is presumed eligible for the California Register. This site was originally recorded in 1980, and was not relocated during additional surveys	UT1-50

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				conducted in 1981, 1983, 2000, and 2023 (Proposed Project surveys). Furthermore, this site is not located within the Proposed Project APE. Particularly in light of these factual clarifications, the APMs, BMPs, and mitigation measures identified in the DEIR (specifically LSPGC APMs CUL-1 through CUL-5 and TCR-1 to TCR-2; PG&E BMPs CULT-1 through CULT-5; LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.5-1; and PG&E Mitigation Measure 3.5-1), are more than sufficient to ensure impacts are less than significant with mitigation. The Final EIR should reflect these impact conclusions. The measures identified in the DEIR provide robust, comprehensive protections consistent with applicable law to ensure the project does not cause significant impacts to cultural or tribal resources. For example, in addition to providing worker education and archaeological and Native American monitoring, these measures require work to immediately stop in the event of unanticipated discoveries of cultural resources, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5. (See APM CUL-1 through CUL-5; BMP CULT-1 through CULT-3, CULT-4; MMs 3.5-1). Furthermore, the measures identified in the DEIR prioritize preservation in place if historical, archaeological, or tribal cultural resources are present, consistent with Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(3)(A) and Public Resources Code Section 21084.3. (See APM CUL-3, LSPGC MM 3.5-1, PG&E MM 3.5-1.) Preservation in place would ensure adverse impacts are avoided altogether. But even in the highly unlikely event that data recovery through excavation is the only feasible mitigation option, the cultural resource measures of the EIR comply with Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(3)(C) by requiring treatment plans that ensure recovery of scientifically consequential information and require consultation with CPUC and Tribes to make sure recovered materials are treated properly and curated at appropriate facilities or transferred to appropriate Tribal organizations. (See APM CUL-3, CUL-5, LSPGC MM 3.5-1, PG&E MM 3.5-1). Additional safeguards would apply in the event human remains are discovered. Specifically, APM CUL-3 and CUL-5 and BMP CULT-5 require compliance with the Guidelines Sections 15126.4(b)(3)(C) and 15064.5(d)-(e), Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. LSPGC and its archaeologists have been unable to identify any additional feasible mitigation. In light of the corrections and clarifications to DEIR Table 3.5-1 provided within LSPGC's comments herein, and the established legal and technical adequacy of the CPUC's prescribed mitigation, LSPGC asserts that impacts to cultural and tribal cultural resources should be less than significant with implementation of mitigation.
3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials				

UT1-50 cont.

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51	3.9-39	Section 3.9.6.4	Cross-references to Mitigation Measure	Mitigation Measure 3.13-1a (Nighttime Construction Noise Plan) is cross-referenced four times in this section. The second and third instance omit the "1" (preceding the "a"), which should be added to correctly reference the intended measure.	UT1-51
3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality					
52	3.10-17	APM WQ-1	"Recovered groundwater shall be contained on-site and tested prior to discharge;"	Please revise to: "Recovered groundwater shall be ~~**contained on-site and**~~ tested prior to discharge;"	UT1-52
53	3.10-28	3rd paragraph	"Among the directives in LSPGC APM WQ-1 is the requirement that during dewatering activities, the Project shall contain the recovered groundwater on-site and test it before discharge."	Please revise to: "Among the directives in LSPGC APM WQ-1 is the requirement that during dewatering activities, the Project shall ~~**contain the recovered groundwater on-site and**~~ test **the recovered groundwater** ~~**it**~~ before discharge."	UT1-53
3.13 Noise					
54	3.13-8	3rd paragraph	"Noise-sensitive receptors near the site of the proposed Skyline HVDC Terminal are multifamily residential units approximately 200 feet to the east, across SR 87 on Coleman Avenue."	Please revise to: "Noise-sensitive receptors near the site of the proposed Skyline HVDC Terminal are multifamily residential units approximately 200 feet to the east, across SR 87 on ~~**Coleman Avenue**~~ **Ryland Street**."	UT1-54
55	3.13-22	1st paragraph	"All Project construction activity would be consistent with the time-of-day restrictions established by local ordinances, as discussed above."	Suggest deleting this sentence which seemingly contradicts surrounding sentences.	UT1-55
56	3.13-23	Table 3.13-10	Table 3.13-10	Distances listed in Table 3.13-10 in reference to the Grove Terminal site represent worst case scenarios, occurring when construction equipment would be active nearest these receptors. However, it should be noted that the Grove Terminal site is large in relation to these receptors, and as such construction equipment's distance from receptors will vary by construction phase, and day-to-day within a given construction phase. This is misleading as construction equipment will most often be located further from these receptors, resulting in lower noise levels.	UT1-56
57	3.13-23	2nd paragraph	"In addition to the transmission line construction noise levels presented in Table 3.13-10, construction noise for driving of sheet piles during transmission line construction would occur for shoring of trenchless installation pits. Horizontal boring machines would also generate high noise levels."	LSPGC does not intend to utilize sheet piling to shore the installation pits associated with the horizontal directional drilling (HDD). Hence, HDD pits are not anticipated to require driving sheet piles. Noise generated by horizontal boring machines is generally comparable to other heavy construction equipment and significantly less noisy than the use of an impact pile driver. LSPGC requests the following revisions to the text on DEIR page 3.13-32: "…construction noise for driving of sheet piles during transmission line construction ~~**would**~~ **could** occur for shoring of trenchless installation pits.	UT1-57
58	3.13-26 and 3.13-27	Mitigation Measure 3.13-1a	"The plan shall include documentation that a variance from the municipal code of the applicable local jurisdiction (i.e., the City of San José or Santa Clara County) has been received."	The requirement in the first bullet point of MM 3.13-1a for the Project to receive a noise variance from the applicable code of the applicable local jurisdiction conflicts with GO 131-D Section XIV.B, which "clarifies that local jurisdictions acting pursuant to local authority are preempted from regulating electric power line projects, distribution lines, substations, or electric facilities constructed by public utilities subject to the Commission's jurisdiction." Since local noise standards and noise variances are not applicable to the Project, we recommend that this bullet point be deleted in its entirety.	UT1-58
59	3.13-26 and 3.13-27	Mitigation Measure 3.13-1a	"…shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval at least 30 days before the start of the subject nighttime construction activities"	Submittal of a Nighttime Construction Noise Plan at least 30 days prior to the start of construction may not always be possible and could result in construction delays.	UT1-59

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				Suggest MM 3.13-1a be revised to instead require that Nighttime Construction Noise Plans must be approved by the CPUC prior to commencement of applicable construction activities.	UT1-59 cont.
60	3.13-27 and 3.13-28	Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b	"LSPGC and/or its contractors shall develop a construction noise reduction and logistics plan for residences within 500 feet of the Grove HVDC Terminal site…"	The Grove HVDC terminal site is shown as the property boundary in Figure 2-6 however, construction noise would predominately be occurring inside the Grove terminal's perimeter wall. Suggested revisions are as follows: "LSPGC and/or its contractors shall develop a construction noise reduction and logistics plan for residences within 500 feet of the Grove HVDC Terminal ~~**site**~~ **perimeter wall**."	UT1-60
61	3.13-27 and 3.13-28	Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b	"LSPGC and/or its contractors shall develop a construction noise reduction and logistics plan … for residences within 500 feet of trenchless installation pits in unincorporated Santa Clara County …"	The requirement for preparation of a Construction Noise Reduction and Logistics Plan for the horizontal directional drill (HDD) (i.e., "trenchless" installation) is predicated on the assumption of driving sheet piles to shore the installation pits associated with the HDD. However, HDD pits are not anticipated to require driving sheet piles. Therefore, LSPGC requests that Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b is revised to clarify that preparation of the Construction Noise Reduction and Logistics Plan be required for trenchless construction only if driving of sheet piles is required within 500 feet of residences. Suggested revisions are as follows: "LSPGC and/or its contractors shall develop a construction noise reduction and logistics plan … for residences within 500 feet of trenchless installation pits in unincorporated Santa Clara County **if driving sheet piles is required for installation pit shoring**."	UT1-61
62	3.13-27 and 3.13-28	Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b	"The plan shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days before the start of construction activities."	Submittal of the Construction Noise Reduction and Logistics Plan at least 60 days prior to the start of construction at the Grove Terminal is not possible without causing potential construction delays. Suggest MM 3.13-1b be revised to instead require that the Construction Noise Reduction and Logistics Plan must be approved by the CPUC prior to commencement of applicable construction activities.	UT1-62
63	3.13-27 and 3.13-28	Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b	"The proposed perimeter wall at the Grove HVDC Terminal shall be installed as part of the first phase of construction activities at the terminal site."	Only the northwestern boundary of the Grove Terminal site is located within 500 feet of residences. Therefore, only that associated segment of perimeter wall should be required to be constructed as part of the first phase of construction. LSPGC request that Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b is clarified accordingly: "The proposed perimeter wall **along the northwestern boundary of** the Grove HVDC Terminal shall be installed as part of the first phase of construction activities at the terminal site."	UT1-63
64	3.13-30	Table 3.13-12	Table 3.13-12	Table 3.13-12 does not appear to account for any noise reduction from the terminal perimeter wall. However, DEIR Appendix E2 does include a noise reduction factor for the terminal perimeter wall. The absence of this noise reduction factor affects the severity of noise impacts associated with operation of the Grove Terminal. While implementation of MM 3.13-2 will ultimately demonstrate the operation noise emissions, Table 3.13-12 overstates impacts. LSPGC requests that Table 3.13-12 be updated to also include estimate noise levels with the perimeter noise wall reduction factor, as calculated in Appendix E2.	UT1-64

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65	3.13-30 and 3.13-31	Mitigation Measure 3.13-2	" LSPGC shall retain an acoustical engineer/specialist to prepare a noise characterization and reduction report. The report shall identify ambient noise levels near the Grove HVDC Terminal site…"	This mitigation measure is based on the premise that the Grove HVDC Terminal site will be selected for implementation. LSPGC recommends that the language be revised as follows to clarify that this measure is applicable only if construction occurs as the Grove HVDC Terminal site: "**If the Grove HVDC Terminal site is selected for implementation,** LSPGC shall retain an acoustical engineer/specialist to prepare a noise characterization and reduction report. The report shall identify ambient noise levels near the Grove HVDC Terminal site…"	UT1-65
66	3.13-30 and 3.13-31	Mitigation Measure 3.13-2	"The noise characterization and reduction plan shall be submitted to the City, County, and the CPUC for review and approval."	Local Agency involvement should be limited to review and comment, with potentially discretionary approvals being limited to the CPUC. LSPGC requests that the City and County component of approval is deleted from this measure as the CPUC Is the lead agency under CEQA and is responsible for compliance during construction and operations.	UT1-66
67	3.13-32	Last paragraph	"The highest vibration levels during Project construction would likely be generated by the use of a vibratory or impact pile driver to install sheet piles in support of trenchless construction installation pits for the proposed transmission lines."	LSPGC does not intend to utilize sheet piling to shore boring pits. Slide rails are the preferred method. Slide rails do not require pile driving or similarly high vibratory equipment or methods. Therefore, it is strictly true that the Project *may* result in vibration levels up to 0.65 in/sec *if* driving sheet piles are utilized. LSPGC requests the following revisions to the text on DEIR page 3.13-32: " The highest vibration levels during Project construction **could** ~~**would likely**~~ be generated by the use of a vibratory or impact pile driver to install sheet piles in support of trenchless construction installation pits for the proposed transmission lines."	UT1-67
68	3.13-32	Last paragraph	"Horizontal boring activities could also generate vibration at levels similar to those of a vibratory or impact pile driver. According to the Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Manual, both impact pile driving and vibratory pile driving typically generate vibration levels of 0.65 in/sec PPV at a distance of 25 feet (Caltrans 2020)."	Within the impact discussion for vibration, the DEIR states that horizontal boring can generate vibration levels similar to those of a vibratory or impact pile driver. However, while the DEIR substantiates the level of vibration from pile driving (Caltrans 2020), it does not provide support or sourcing for boring to results in similar levels of vibration. The Final EIR should include sufficient reference for the vibratory emissions of horizontal boring, or remove this statement. In addition, LSPGC does not plan to conduct horizontal borings utilizing pipe ramming or similar machinery. Rather, LSPGC intends to utilize jack-and-bore or micro-tunneling techniques, which would produce substantially less vibration than pipe ramming or similar equipment. Such impact discussions should appropriately state high vibration impacts could occur, *if* the Project utilizes high vibratory equipment instead of the jack-and-bore or micro-tunneling machinery.	UT1-68
69	3.13-33	2nd paragraph	"The San José Marriott would be exposed to a vibration level of 0.23 to 0.65 in/sec PPV, which is equivalent to 95–104 VdB. At this distance, vibration levels would exceed the building damage threshold (0.20 in/sec PPV), …"	As discussed in previous comments, the worst-case vibration impacts described in the DEIR resulting from trenchless construction are based on presumed usage of pile driving sheet piles for bore pit shoring. However, as previously explained, LSPGC does not intend to utilize driven sheet piles for shoring unless other methods, such as slide rails, are not feasible. Therefore, the impact analysis should be amended to state that impacts *could* occur, instead of statement that such impact *would* occur. LSPGC suggests edits as follows: "The San José Marriott **could** ~~**would**~~ be exposed to a vibration level of 0.23 to 0.65 in/sec PPV **if a vibratory or impact pile driver is needed to install sheet piles**,	UT1-69

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				which is equivalent to 95–104 VdB. At this distance, vibration levels would exceed the building damage threshold (0.20 in/sec PPV) **if pile-driven sheets are utilized**, …"	UT1-69 cont.
70	3.13-33	3rd paragraph	"…trenchless construction activities within 50 feet of structures would exceed the vibration level significance thresholds. In addition, City of San José General Plan Policy EC-2.3 discourages the use of impact pile drivers within 125 feet of any buildings. Therefore, the vibration impact from trenchless construction activities would be **potentially significant**."	As outlined in previous comments, trenchless construction activities could result in high levels of vibration if pile-driven sheets are utilized to shore bore pits. These effects could exceed thresholds within 50 feet of vibration sensitive structures. However, LSPGC does not intend to utilize these methods unless other methods are not feasible. Therefore, the vibration impacts from trenchless construction could be potentially significant only if pile driving methods are utilized. LSPGC requests the vibration impact discussion be updated accordingly. Suggested text edits are provided below: "…trenchless construction activities within 50 feet of structures could exceed the vibration level significance thresholds, **if high-vibratory equipment or methods are used**. In addition, City of San José General Plan Policy EC-2.3 discourages the use of impact pile drivers within 125 feet of any buildings, **consistent with LSPGC's intent to utilize slide rail or other non-pile-driven methods**. Therefore, the vibration impact from trenchless construction activities **could** ~~**would**~~ be **potentially significant**, if impact pile driving equipment or methods are utilized.	UT1-70
71	3.13-33 and 3.13-34	Mitigation Measure 3.13-3	"LSPGC and/or its construction contractors shall conduct a site survey along segments of the proposed transmission line alignments where trenchless construction techniques may occur within 50 feet of existing structures. If construction with high vibratory equipment occurs within 50 feet of structures, a vibration monitoring for high-vibratory equipment contingency plan shall be implemented."	As discussed in previous comments, it is the intent of LSPGC to implement slide rails or other non-pile-driven methods for shoring of bore pits. Therefore, trenchless construction within 50 feet of structures may or may not exceed thresholds. The trigger for such potentially significant impacts is the type of equipment utilized, not the trenchless construction itself. Therefore, MM 3.13-3 should be revised to ensure that it is clear that a site survey is not required unless high vibratory equipment is planned to be used. Additionally, some sections of the MM refer to the trenchless areas while others refer to the final transmission line alignments. Please ensure the areas applicable to the MM are consistently referenced throughout the MM.	UT1-71
72	3.13-34	Mitigation Measure 3.13-3, Last Bullet	"The results of all vibration monitoring shall be summarized and submitted in a report shortly after substantial completion of trenchless construction that occurs within 50 feet of structures."	LSPGC requests edits to MM 3.13-3, last bullet, as follows: "The results of all vibration monitoring shall be summarized and submitted in a report shortly after substantial completion of trenchless construction **utilizing high-vibratory equipment** that occurs within 50 feet of structures."	UT1-72
3.17 Transportation					
73	3.17-15	Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a	" LSPGC shall coordinate with Project proponents, contractors, and local agencies, as applicable, for other construction projects in the Project vicinity that may temporally overlap with Project construction, such as projects identified as potentially contributing to cumulative effects. In consideration of these coordination efforts, at least 30 days before the issuance of construction or building permits, LSPGC shall prepare and implement a traffic control plan for roadways adjacent to and directly affected by the Project. The traffic control plan shall address the transportation impact(s) of the temporally overlapping construction projects within the Project vicinity…"	LSPGC and the other nearby projects will be subject to encroachment permitting through the affected municipalities prior to beginning work that requires traffic control plans. As such, the municipalities processing the encroachment permit applications will be optimally positioned to review the potential for overlapping traffic effects and potentially interacting traffic control plans prior to the start of construction for any given project. This will provide the affected municipalities with ample opportunity to impose appropriate encroachment conditions and/or require coordination between applicants prior to construction. As such, a CPUC requirement to prepare a coordinated traffic control plan would likely lead to duplicative efforts, increased costs, and delays to the start of construction, without	UT1-73

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				providing more value in terms of avoiding and minimizing traffic impacts than the affected municipalities would provide through the normal course of their encroachment permitting processes. Considering these factors, LSPGC requests that MM 3.17-1a be removed and that APM TRA-1 not be superseded.	UT1-73 cont.
74	3.17-15	Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a	"LSPGC's traffic control plan, with proof of coordination, shall be submitted to the CPUC 30 days before the start of construction."	If MM 3.17-1a is not removed as requested by LSPGC, submittal of proof of coordination 30 days before the start of construction is not possible without causing potential construction delays. LSPGC suggests that MM 3.17-1a be revised to instead require that the proof of coordination be submitted to the CPUC prior to commencement of applicable construction activities.	UT1-74
75	3.17-15 and 3.17-16	Mitigation Measure 3.17-1b	"After completion of the repair of any damaged roads, sidewalks, trails, and bicycle facilities resulting from Project construction activities, LSPGC shall submit a report to the CPUC and other jurisdictions whose facilities have been affected by Project construction (e.g., city, county, state, etc.). This report will confirm that repairs are consistent with preconstruction conditions and in accordance with applicable requirements..."	With implementation of APM TRA-3 (Repair Infrastructure), it is unclear why Mitigation Measure 3.17-1b is required to reduce potential impacts to less than significant, given that the APM and Mitigation Measure provide an identical level of assurance regarding infrastructure repair. Although the mitigation measure includes a reporting requirement that the APM does not explicitly specify, LSPGC's reporting requirements under the MMCRP will ensure that compliance with the infrastructure repair APM is documented. As such, the requirements of the APM and the mitigation measure are not substantively different, so we request that CPUC remove MM 3.17-1b be removed since the APM is sufficient.	UT1-75
3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources					
76	3.18-6	APM TCR-2	**APM TCR-2: Native American Monitoring** "Native American monitoring shall be conducted during ground disturbance associated with the Project when within 100 feet (30 meters) of previously recorded prehistoric, ethnohistoric, or TCRs. Prehistoric and/or ethnohistoric archaeological sites have been recorded within the Project area, and the SLF search and Tribal outreach indicates that lands sacred to sacred to the Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area, the Ohlone Indian Tribe, the Tamien Nation, and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band are present within the Project search area. A Native American monitor determined during Tribal consultation shall be retained by LSPGC to monitor excavation associated with the Project to ensure that there is no impact to any significant unanticipated prehistoric, ethnohistoric, or TCR. Prior to construction, LSPGC shall confer with a designated Tribal representative on the appropriate course of action to be taken should unanticipated cultural materials, and specifically human remains, be discovered during construction. Native American monitoring requirements established in this APM may be superseded by government-to-government consultation conducted between the CPUC and Tribal organizations as part of the AB 52 process or otherwise."	Edits made to this APM in LSPGC's Deficiency Response #1 are not reflected in the DEIR version of the APM.	UT1-76
77	3.18-8 to 3.18-9	Last paragraph	"APM TCR-2 contradicts the legal requirements regarding the treatment of human remains under PRC Sections 5097.98 and 5097.99, as well as Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, because the treatment plan in the event of human remains is determined by the Most Likely Descendant (MLD), who is designated by the NAHC following the discovery of Native American human	The statement that APM TCR-2 contradicts legal requirements is incorrect. APM TCR-2 provides in pertinent part: "Prior to construction, LSPGC shall confer with a designated tribal representative on the appropriate course of action to be taken should	UT1-77

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			remains. It is not possible to determine who the MLD will be for human remains identified during Project construction before a discovery is made."	unanticipated cultural materials, and specifically human remains, be discovered during construction. Native American monitoring requirements established in this APM may be superseded by government-to-government consultation conducted between the CPUC and tribal organizations as part of the AB 52 process or otherwise." Nothing in APM TCR-2 conflicts with PRC Sections 5097.98 (discovery of Native American human remains), 5097.99 (possessing Native American artifacts or human remains taken from graves), or Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 (discovery of human remains) because this measure does not require (or even encourage) LSPGC to predetermine the MLD before a discovery is made or otherwise conflict with applicable law. Instead, this measure simply requires additional, pre-discovery conferral with designated tribal representatives regarding the appropriate course of action to be taken in the event of unanticipated discoveries. An "appropriate course of action" must necessarily be compliant with applicable laws such as PRC Sections 5097.98 and 5097.99, and Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5. Considering APM TCR-2 in the context of other APMs reinforces this point. Relevant here, APM CUL-5 makes clear that in the event human remains are discovered at the project site and the remains are determined to be Native American, "NAHC shall then identify the person or persons it believes to be the most likely descendant of the deceased Native American, who in turn shall make recommendations for the appropriate means of treating the human remains and any associated funerary objects." APM CUL-5 similarly requires compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(d)-(e), which in turn requires compliance with PRC Section 5097.98. Likewise, APM CUL-3 requires compliance with the requirements of Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(3)(C); that regulation, in turn, requires compliance with Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 (which in turn requires compliance with PRC 5097.98). In other words, APMs CUL-3 and CUL-5 expressly require that treatment of any unanticipated Native American remains is performed in accordance with applicable law; APM TCR-2 does not contradict applicable law, but instead supplements it by requiring additional, pre-discovery consultation with designated tribal representatives. LSPGC requests that the Final EIR reflect this correction.	UT1-77 cont.
3.19 Utilities and Service Systems					
78	3.19-15	APM UTIL-1	"LS Power shall notify all utility companies with utilities located within or crossing the Proposed Project ROW to locate and mark existing underground utilities along the entire length of the Proposed Project. Due to the linear nature of transmission line construction, utilities shall be marked in short segments at least 14 days prior to construction within said segments."	MM 3.19-5 now requires notification of all municipalities, companies, and other public and private entities owning and maintaining utilities within or crossing the right-of-way of the Project and identification of any utilities present. Therefore, LS Power would request that APM UTIL-1 be modified to require marking prior to construction within said segments without a specific timeframe.	UT1-78
79	3.19-26	6th paragraph	"The industry standard from Section 6.6.2 of National Association of Corrosion Engineers SP21424- 2018, Alternating Current Corrosion on Cathodically Protected Pipelines: Risk Assessment, Mitigation and Monitoring, states that	Pursuant to Section 6.2 of the National Association of Corrosion Engineers SP21525-2018 Alternating Current Corrosion on Cathodically Protected Pipelines: Risk Assessment, Mitigation and Monitoring, the AC current density should not exceed a	UT1-79

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			AC corrosion may occur when pipeline AC density levels increase above a time-weighted average of 30 amperes per square meter. AC potentials less than 2 volts would result in AC density levels less than this limit for pipelines with typical soil resistivity measurements and would result in a less-than-significant impact (LSPGC 2025). A preliminary analysis of the Project's potential for electromagnetic interference and induced current touch potential was completed and is provided in Appendix F."	time-weighted average of: 30 amperes per square meter if DC current density exceeds 1 ampere per square meter or 100 amperes per square meter if DC current density is less than 1 ampere per square meter. Maintaining induced AC potential to less than 2 volts is not referenced in this standard, which was provided in LSPGC's Preliminary Induction Study only as an estimate based on certain general assumptions to achieve the AC current densities cited in the above-referenced standard. LSPGC requests the time-weighted average current density values cited above be updated accordingly and the reference to maintaining an induced AC voltage of less than 2 volts be removed. Note the industry standard referenced should be Section 6.2.	UT1-79 cont.
80	3.19-28	Mitigation Measure 3.19-5	"At least 90 days prior to the start of construction, LSPGC shall notify all municipalities, companies, and other public and private entities owning and maintaining utilities within or crossing the right-of-way of the Project and shall positively identify and confirm the location and type of any utilities present. For those identified utilities that do not pose a threat of AC-induced corrosion attributable to the Project, APM UTIL-1 shall be implemented. For the identified natural gas pipelines, and all other utilities potentially affected by Project-related AC-induced corrosion (i.e., metallic utilities), design and construction of the Project's transmission lines shall be coordinated with the applicable utility owners to definitively locate each utility relative to the Metcalf to Grove 500 kV AC underground transmission line, determine the distance of separation between the transmission line and potentially affected utility, and determine the point of intersection and/or distance along which the Project transmission line is parallel to the utility. LSPGC shall prepare a detailed induction study for all identified existing utilities potentially affected by the Project transmission line alignments. At minimum, the study shall include, but not be limited to, a detailed analysis of the known [metallic] pipelines or other utilities identified during these utility surveys; shall identify adequate and implementable measures to avoid corrosion potential; and shall present commitments to the implementation of those actions, including a design of the AC mitigation system for any pipeline found to have an AC potential of 2 volts or greater and a schedule to implement any required AC mitigation systems. Pursuant to Section 6.6.2 of National Association of Corrosion Engineers SP21424-2018, Alternating Current Corrosion on Cathodically Protected Pipelines: Risk Assessment, Mitigation and Monitoring, the induction study shall demonstrate that any required mitigation system would reduce the AC potential to less than 2 volts, or an AC density level of less than a time-weighted average of 30 amperes per square meter. " "No less than 60 days prior to the start of construction, LSPGC shall submit the full induction study, including the AC mitigation component, to the CPUC for review and concurrence. Once the CPUC concurrence is secured, LSPGC shall implement the AC mitigation system during construction of the Project, phased into the construction process as appropriate."	AC induced corrosion effects are limited to coated, metallic, pipelines paralleled by the Metcalf to Grove 500 kV AC underground transmission line, rather than all metallic pipelines. LSPGC requests the reference to metallic pipelines should be updated to specify coated and metallic pipelines. Pursuant to Section 6.2 of the National Association of Corrosion Engineers SP21525-2018 Alternating Current Corrosion on Cathodically Protected Pipelines: Risk Assessment, Mitigation and Monitoring, the AC current density should not exceed a time-weighted average of: 30 amperes per square meter if DC current density exceeds 1 ampere per square meter or 100 amperes per square meter if DC current density is less than 1 ampere per square meter. Maintaining induced AC potential to less than 2 volts is not referenced in this standard, which was provided in LSPGC's Preliminary Induction Study only as an estimate based on certain general assumptions to achieve the AC current densities cited in the above-referenced standard. LSPGC requests the time-weighted average current density values cited above be updated accordingly and the reference to maintaining an induced AC voltage of less than 2 volts be removed. Note the industry standard referenced should be Section 6.2. LSPGC requests the induction study for applicable utilities within a given segment of the Project be provided prior to the start of construction of such segment. Because the Project is linear in nature, it is not efficient to condition the beginning of any construction activities on the completion of the induction study for the entire Project, particularly those segments that contain no existing pipelines susceptible to Project-induced corrosion effects. Therefore, any pre-construction Mitigation Measures that apply to specific segments of the Project, such as MM 3.19-5, need only be completed prior to start of construction within such segment. If Mitigation Measure 3.19-5 is retained within the Final EIR, LSPGC suggests the following revision to the timing: "~~**No less than 60 days**~~ Prior to the start of construction **of a Project segment containing an underground utility or utilities identified to be materially affected by accelerated corrosion caused by the Project,** LSPGC shall submit the ~~**full**~~ induction study **for such Project segment**, including the AC mitigation component, to the CPUC for review and concurrence. Once the CPUC concurrence is secured,	UT1-80

Comment Number	DEIR Page #	DEIR Section, Paragraph, Figure # or Table #	Original DEIR Text	LSPGC Comments and Proposed Revisions	
				LSPGC shall implement the AC mitigation system prior to energization of the Project, phased into the construction process as appropriate."	UT1-80 cont.
3.20 Wildfire					
81	3.20-3	Figure 3.20-1	N/A	It's unclear what the orange hatched area located west of the Metcalf substation represents, as there is no orange hatching defined in the map legend.	UT1-81
4 Alternatives					
82	4-2	1st paragraph	"The No Project Alternative analysis evaluates the existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation was published (i.e., July 29, 2024),…"	Please note that July 29, 2024 was the publication date for Power the South Bay's NOP. September 6, 2024 is the date Power Santa Clara Valley's NOP was published and the date in this section should be updated accordingly.	UT1-82
83	4-5	4.5.1.1	"The High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) Alternative would connect the existing PG&E Metcalf and PG&E San Jose B substations with an alternating current (AC) transmission line in which the current reverses direction periodically, as opposed to a single direct current (DC) line which carries electricity in a single, constant direction. An AC system, in which high voltages are carried long distances and then stepped down near end-users, typically includes three-phase generators, step-up and step-down transformers, circuit breakers, and devices such as capacitor banks or reactors to help manage voltage and reactive power. The HVAC Alternative would reduce potentially significant impacts associated with construction and operation of the proposed HVDC terminals because HVDC terminals would not be required for this alternative. However, the HVAC transmission line would be less efficient than a DC transmission line over long distances and would result in greater capacitive losses. The HVAC transmission line would also require wider rights-of-way and less precise control of power flow compared to the Project."	LSPGC suggests the following modifications to this section: "The High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) Alternative would connect the existing PG&E Metcalf and PG&E San Jose B substations with an alternating current (AC) transmission line in which the current reverses direction periodically, as opposed to a ~~**single**~~ direct current (DC) line which carries electricity in a single, constant direction. An AC system, in which high voltages are carried long distances and then stepped down near end-users, typically includes three-phase generators, step-up and step-down transformers, circuit breakers, and devices such as capacitor banks or reactors to help manage voltage and reactive power. The HVAC Alternative would reduce potentially significant impacts associated with construction and operation of the proposed HVDC terminals because HVDC terminals would not be required for this alternative. However, the HVAC transmission line would be less efficient than a DC transmission line over long distances and would result in greater capacitive losses. **The HVAC transmission line would not provide power flow control or dynamic voltage support.** The HVAC transmission line would also require **larger duct banks and splice vaults** ~~**wider rights-of-way and less precise control of power flow**~~ compared to the Project."	UT1-83
84	4-5	4.5.1.2, 1st paragraph	"Therefore, the HVAC Alternative would not improve transmission of energy from existing and proposed renewable generation projects to the Greater San Francisco Bay Area (Greater Bay Area)."	LSPGC suggests adding the following to this section: "Therefore, the HVAC Alternative would be **less effective than the HVDC Alternative in improving transmission of energy** from existing and proposed renewable generation projects to the Greater San Francisco Bay Area (Greater Bay Area)."	UT1-84
85	4-6	4.5.2.1	"This alternative would involve installation of utility-scale energy storage facilities that would be charged from the existing 230 kV San José system. There would be two battery energy storage systems (BESS) installed for this alternative; one would be installed at the proposed Skyline high-voltage direct current (HVDC) Terminal site, and one would be installed at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site. A 500 kV transmission line would connect the Grove Terminal BESS to the existing PG&E Metcalf Substation and a 230 kV transmission line would connect the Skyline Terminal BESS to the existing San Jose B Substation."	Please revise to, "This alternative would involve installation of utility-scale energy storage facilities that would be charged from the existing ~~**230 kV**~~ San José **electric transmission** system. There would be two battery energy storage systems (BESS) installed for this alternative; one would be installed at the proposed Skyline high-voltage direct current (HVDC) Terminal site, and one would be installed at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site. A 500 kV transmission line would connect the Grove Terminal BESS to the existing PG&E Metcalf Substation and a ~~**230**~~ **115** kV transmission line would connect the Skyline Terminal BESS to the existing San Jose B Substation."	UT1-85

Comment Number	DEIR Page #	DEIR Section, Paragraph, Figure # or Table #	Original DEIR Text	LSPGC Comments and Proposed Revisions	
86	4-9	Figure 4-2	N/A	LSPGC suggests updating the area of Grove Terminal Alternative 3 in Figure 4-2 to match the HVDC terminal site shown in Figure 4-4b. Additionally, Figure 4-2 currently shows a horizontal bore for the 320 kV HDD of Coyote Creek near Metcalf Road but does not capture HDDs for other creek crossings of Fisher Creek and Coyote Creek. Please update Figure 4-2 to capture all or none of the HDDs.	UT1-86
87	4-13	1st paragraph	"The Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line would require a trenchless crossing (e.g., jack-and-bore or horizontal directional drill [HDD]) of the existing railroad and the Grove to Skyline 320 kV Transmission Line would require a trenchless crossing of the existing railroad and Coyote Creek to reach the GTA-4 property."	Please revise to, "The **Grove to Skyline 320** ~~**Metcalf to Grove 500**~~ kV Transmission Line would require a trenchless crossing (e.g., jack-and-bore or horizontal directional drill [HDD]) of the existing railroad and the **Metcalf to Grove 500** ~~**Grove to Skyline 320**~~ kV Transmission Line would require a trenchless crossing of the existing railroad and Coyote Creek to reach the GTA-4 property."	UT1-87
88	4-16	4.5.7.1	"The Metcalf to Grove Transmission Line Alignment Alternative 2 would exit the proposed Grove Terminal underground toward the southwest, then follow Monterey Road for approximately 0.4 mile before turning northeast (see Figure 4-3). South of Coyote Creek the transmission line would transition to an overhead configuration and would be attached to the bottom of a new vehicular road bridge to cross the creek. The vehicular road bridge would also replace the existing failing culverts within the main and secondary Coyote Creek channels. The transmission line would then transition back underground and continue northeast, then northwest within Coyote Ranch Road until reaching the proposed PG&E Metcalf Substation modification area. This alternative would be approximately 1.3 miles in length and would be located underground except for the road bridge segment crossing Coyote Creek."	LSPGC suggests the following revisions: "The Metcalf to Grove Transmission Line Alignment Alternative 2 would exit the proposed Grove Terminal underground toward the southwest, then follow Monterey Road for approximately 0.4 mile before turning northeast (see Figure 4-3) **and crossing over Coyote Creek attached to a new vehicular road bridge.** ~~**South of Coyote Creek the transmission line would transition to an overhead configuration and would be attached to the bottom of a new vehicular road bridge to cross the creek.**~~ The vehicular road bridge would also replace the existing failing culverts within the main and secondary Coyote Creek channels. The transmission line would then ~~**transition back underground and**~~ continue northeast, then northwest within Coyote Ranch Road until reaching the proposed PG&E Metcalf Substation modification area. This alternative would be approximately 1.3 miles in length and would be located underground except for the road bridge segment crossing Coyote Creek.	UT1-88
89	4-18/4-19	Last/1st paragraphs	"The area is designated as critical habitat for steelhead trout, and the California red-legged frog and western pond turtle have the potential to occur in the vicinity of the bridge location where suitable habitat exists."	LSPGC suggests the following revisions: "The area is designated as critical habitat for steelhead trout, and the California red-legged frog and western pond turtle have the potential to occur in the vicinity of the ~~**bridge**~~ **new above ground structure** location**s** where suitable habitat exists."	UT1-89
90	4-24	Figure 4-4b	N/A	Original Grove to Skyline 320 kV transmission line (blue) and GTA-3 Grove to Skyline 320 kV transmission line (purple) are both shown on this figure. This figure is specific to GTA-3 so it should only show the relevant Grove to Skyline 320 kV transmission line.	UT1-90
91	4-26	2nd to last paragraph	"Finally, constructing the Grove HVDC Terminal at the GTA-3 site would substantially shorten the length of the Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line connection to the existing PG&E Metcalf Substation, from approximately 1.2 miles if the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site were selected, to approximately 100 feet or less using the GTA-3 site."	Please make the following correction, "Finally, constructing the Grove HVDC Terminal at the GTA-3 site would substantially shorten the length of the Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line connection to the existing PG&E Metcalf Substation, from approximately 1.2 miles if the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site were selected, to approximately **200 feet** ~~**100 feet or less**~~ using the GTA-3 site."	UT1-91
92	4-26	Last paragraph	"As discussed in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources, GTA-3 would have similar impacts related to cultural resources, which would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation."	DEIR Section 3.5 does not discuss alternatives. Sentence should be revised to clearly reference impacts of the Proposed Project, as described in Section 3.5, would be	UT1-92

Comment Number	DEIR Page #	DEIR Section, Paragraph, Figure # or Table #	Original DEIR Text	LSPGC Comments and Proposed Revisions	
				similar for GTA-3. Section 3.5 also concludes that impacts would be significant and unavoidable.	UT1-92 cont.
93	4-30	4th paragraph	"…installation of the Grove to Skyline 320 kV Transmission Line under this alternative could increase impacts to cultural resources and tribal cultural as there could be potentially sensitive cultural resources along Market Street (e.g., potential unrecorded subsurface archaeological materials)."	Downtown Alignment Alternative 2 follows the same route as the proposed alignment in Market Street and is in Market Street for approximately 300 feet less than the proposed alignment. Therefore, there should not be any additional sensitive cultural resources along Market Street than those captured in the proposed alignment.	UT1-93
94	4-31	2nd paragraph	"…installation of the Grove to Skyline 320 kV Transmission Line under this alternative could increase impacts on cultural resources and tribal cultural as there could be potentially sensitive cultural resources along Market Street (e.g., potential unrecorded subsurface archaeological materials)."	Downtown Alignment Alternative 2 follows the same route as the proposed alignment in Market Street and is in Market Street for approximately 300 feet less than the proposed alignment. Therefore, there should not be any additional sensitive cultural resources along Market Street than those captured in the proposed alignment.	UT1-94
5. Other CEQA Considerations					
95	5-2	3rd paragraph	"Furthermore, construction of the Project would result in 19 acres of permanent disturbance on vegetation communities associated with the proposed transmission lines, proposed HVDC terminals, proposed modifications to the existing PG&E substations, and temporary staging areas."	The DEIR Project Description table 2-5 lists a total of 20 acres of permanent disturbance. Included in these 20 acres of permanent disturbance is acreage within existing Metcalf and San Jose B substations as well as the Skyline Terminal. These Project features, totaling approximately 11.5 acres of the total 20 acres of permanent disturbance, are not vegetation communities. These features are currently disturbed or developed.	UT1-95
96	5-4	3rd paragraph	"The Project would not generate energy, but it would contribute to the energy supply by storing electricity during times of excess generation and dispatching it to the grid when needed."	We suggest rewording this statement to, "The Project would not generate energy, rather the Project would provide an additional pathway for existing generation."	UT1-96
97	5-5	Section 5.2	"The Project would: cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 (see Impact 3.5-1 in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources) and disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries (see Impact 3.5-2 in Section 3.5), which would result in significant and unavoidable environmental effects."	In Section 5.2 Significant Unavoidable Environmental Effects there is a missing word in the discussion of CEQA regulatory Section 15064.5 regarding human remains. Corrected text is listed below. The Project would: cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 (see Impact 3.5-1 in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources) and **may** disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries (see Impact 3.5-2 in Section 3.5), which would result in significant and unavoidable environmental effects.	UT1-97

Attachment B: Editorial Suggestions on Power Santa Clara Valley Draft Environmental Impact Report

Comment Number	DEIR Page #	DEIR Paragraph or Table #	Original DEIR Text	Editorial Suggestion
Editorial Suggestions				
1	Figure Numbering and Lettering	N/A	e.g., "Figure 2-3a" and "Figure 3.1-3A"	Chapter 2 uses lowercase letters in figure sequencing while some of Chapter 3 uses capital letters.
2	Global Comment	N/A	SOURCE: LS Power, 2024	The source cited for several figures is LS Power instead of LSPGC (e.g., Figure 1-1, 2-1, 2-3a through d, etc.).
3	ES-3, 1-4	ES.3 bullet 5, 1.3.2 Bullet 4	California's Renewables Standard Portfolio	California's Renewables **Portfolio Standard**
4	ES-16	Table ES-3		Define SU in the notes section at the bottom of the table.
5	ES-29	2nd to last paragraph	"As discussed, under Section 4.6.2, placing the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal…"	Remove the comma after "discussed."
6	1-8	2nd to last paragraph	"Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15082, both, English and Spanish NOPs were also sent to the Santa Clara County Clerk-Recorder's Office."	Remove the comma after "both."
7	1-9	3rd paragraph	"Three hundred and ninety-four members of the public and six public agencies submitted written comments on the project."	Capitalize Project to be consistent with the rest of the document.
8	2-5	2nd paragraph of 2.3.3	"The Grove to Skyline 320 kV DC underground transmission line would be located in PLSS Township 8 South, Range East; Township 8 South, Range 1 East; and Township 7 South, Range 1 East."	A number is missing in this description. It should be PLSS Township 8 South, Range **2** East;…
9	2-18	Figure 2-5	Skyline to San Jose B 115 kV AC Tie Line	The legend still has 115 kV instead of 230 kV as the voltage of the tie line.
10	2-31	1st paragraph	"The access road at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal would approximately 300 feet to be 20 feet wide."	The access road at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal would be approximately 300 feet long and 20 feet wide.
11	2-31	1st paragraph of 2.6.6	"…the same lengths as the proposed Grove to Skyline 320 kV Transmission line and proposed Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission line, respectively."	Capitalize both occurrences of "line" so be consistent with the naming conventions in the rest of the document.
12	2-33	2nd paragraph	"…13 miles for the proposed Grove to Skyline 320 Transmission Line and 1.2 miles for the proposed Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line."	Insert kV behind 320 and before Transmission Line.
13	2-40	1st paragraph	"…where approved by the local agency (e.g., City of San José)."	Do not capitalize city to be consistent with the rest of the document.
14	2-46	2nd to last paragraph	"…material would be hauled off-site, stockpiled, or disposed of consistent with regulatory requirements A total of 5,000 CY of cut material would be…"	Insert a comma between sentences (i.e., after "requirements" and before "A").
15	2-47	1st paragraph of 2.8.4	"As discussed in Section 2.6.2, *Transmission Lines*,…"	The heading for Section 2.6.2 is *New Transmission Lines*.
16	2-56	5th paragraph	"…to minimize the likelihood of an unintentional returned of HDD drilling fluids to the surface or frac-out."	Return not returned
17	2-63	1st paragraph	"…for the Skyline HVDC terminal…"	Capitalize Terminal to be consistent with the rest of the document.
18	2-79	Table 2-7, Estimated Start Date column	March 2026 2026	Remove the second occurrence of 2026.
19	2-82	2nd paragraph	"Heavy truck traffic on city-maintained roadways would require a City of San José traffic control permit."	Do not capitalize city to be consistent with the rest of the document.
20	2-89	4th paragraph	"The transmission line inspections would be performed by qualified technicians through sensors, and splice vault inspections."	Remove the comma.

UT1-98

Comment Number	DEIR Page #	DEIR Paragraph or Table #	Original DEIR Text	Editorial Suggestion
21	2-105	APM TCR-2	Prehistoric and/or ethnohistoric archaeological sites have been recorded within the Project area, and the SLF search and Tribal outreach indicates that lands sacred to sacred to the Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area	Prehistoric and/or ethnohistoric archaeological sites have been recorded within the Project area, and the SLF search and Tribal outreach indicates that lands sacred to ~~**sacred to**~~ the Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area
22	3.1-3, etc.	Section 3.1 Aesthetics	San José B Substation	It appears most if not all occurrences of this substation name in the Aesthetics section still contain the accent on the "e". Remainder of the document has removed the accent.
23	3.10-2	Figure 3.10-1a	Skyline to San Jose B 115 kV Station Tie Line	The legend still has 115 kV instead of 230 kV as the voltage of the tie line.
24	3.10-30	Last paragraph	Impact C.3.10-3: The Project, in combination with the cumulative projects, would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area through the alteration of the course of a stream or river nor through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. **(Less than Significant)**	Use boldface for Impact C.3.10-3 and its description. Change *Less than Significant* to italics.
25	3.17-24	Impact 3.17-7 Heading	***Impact 3.17-7: Project construction could substantially delay public transit. (*Less than Significant with Mitigation)**	Italicize *Less than Significant with Mitigation* instead of the impact and description to be consistent with the rest of the document.
26	4-1	1st paragraph	"This comparison is based on the analysis of environmental impacts of the Project provided in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures*."	The title of Chapter 3 is *Environmental Analysis*.
27	4-2	2nd paragraph	"…and from the CEQA team identified in Chapter 6, *Report Preparation*, as part of the EIR development process."	The title of Chapter 6 is *Report Preparers*.
28	4-4	1st paragraph	"…(see Table 4-5, *Summary of Impacts of the Project and Alternatives*)."	The table referenced here is Table 4-11.
29	4-11	Last paragraph	"The Owen House was originally built and owned by Jehial M. Owen., who is considered a Coyote Valley pioneer (Department of Parks and Recreation 2005)."	There are two punctations following Jehial M. Owen. Delete the period and keep the comma.
30	4-11	Last paragraph	"According the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Owen House is eligible under California Register Criterion 3 or National Register Criterion C,…"	Insert "to" following "according."
31	4-12	Last paragraph before Table 4-4	"**Table 4-4**, *Screening: Grove Terminal Alternative 1*, provides a brief explanation of the reasons underlying the CPUC's determination."	The title of the referenced table should be *Screening: Grove Terminal Alternative* ***2***.
32	4-18/4-19	Last/1st paragraph	"The area is designated as critical habitat for steelhead trout, and the California red-legged frog and western pond turtle have the potential to occur in the vicinity of the bridge location where suitable habitat exists."	The area is designated as critical habitat for steelhead trout, and the California red-legged frog and western pond turtle have the potential to occur in the vicinity **~~of the bridge~~** where suitable habitat exists.
33	4-22	1st paragraph	"and would instead include construction of a 200-foot Metcalf to Grove 500 kV transmission tie line"	"and would instead include construction of **an approximately** 200-foot Metcalf to Grove 500 kV transmission tie line"
34	4-22	2nd paragraph	"Additionally, PG&E would relocate an overhead distribution line to be underground along the northwestern boundary of the GTA-3 site parallel to the 320 kV underground transmission line to accommodate the new terminal layout (LSPGC 2025b; PG&E 2025)."	"Additionally, PG&E would relocate an overhead distribution line to be underground along the northwestern boundary of the GTA-3 site **~~parallel to the 320 kV underground transmission line~~** to accommodate the new terminal layout (LSPGC 2025b; PG&E 2025)."
35	4-25	1st paragraph	"The construction schedule for the Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line and the Grove to Skyline 320 kV Transmission Line would be reduced due to the shorter lengths of the line."	The last word in this sentence should be plural (i.e., lines).
36	4-29	3rd paragraph, etc.	"This alternative combine installing the…"	In several subsections under 4.6.5, the first sentence should use the word "combines" instead of "combine."

UT1-98 cont.

Attachment B: Editorial Suggestions on Power Santa Clara Valley Draft Environmental Impact Report

Comment Number	DEIR Page #	DEIR Paragraph or Table #	Original DEIR Text	Editorial Suggestion
37	4-35	Table 4-11	e.g., **Impact 3.1-2: LSM** (same than the Project) because this alternative…	Conduct a global search for sentences that read "same than the Project" and replace with "same as the Project."
38	4-35	Table 4-11	e.g., No Impact (same as the Project) because the project under Alternative 1 would not be visible from designated or eligible state scenic highways due to distance.	There are two occurrences on this page where "Alternative 1" appears to be incorrectly referenced, once under the Impacts of Alternative Combination 2 and once under the Impacts of Alternative Combination 4.
39	4-35	Table 4-11	Impact C.3.1-1: LTS (same as the Project) (same as the Project) because GTA-3, in combination with cumulative project No. 77, would not cumulatively conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality in the area.	Delete repeated "(same as the Project)"
40	4-36	Table 4-11	"**Criterion c:** The Project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land…" "**Criterion d:** The Project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.	Insert "No Impact." after each colon to be consistent with the rest of the table.
41	4-41	Table 4-11	Impact 3.6-1: LTS. **The Project could result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy, or wasteful use of resources, during Project construction or operation**.	Use boldface for "Impact 3.6-1: LTS" instead of the description.
42	4-50	Table 4-11	"**Cumulative – Criterion b:** The Project would not contribute to any cumulative impacts related to this criterion."	Insert "No Impact." After the colon to be consistent with the rest of the table.
43	5-2	Last paragraph	"As discussed in Section 3.9, *Hazards and Hazards Materials*, construction…"	The title of Section 3.9 is *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*.

UT1-98 cont.

Letter UT1: LS Power Grid California, LLC

UT1-1 The comment concerns the environmentally superior alternative described in Chapter 4 of the Draft EIR. The comment is noted.

UT1-2 The comment concerns typographical errors where "county" was used instead of "CPUC." The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

UT1-3 The comment concerns errors on various Draft EIR figures. To address this comment, the following figures have been revised in the Final EIR:

- Figure 1-1
- Figure 2-1
- Figure 2-3a
- Figure 2-3b
- Figure 2-3c
- Figure 2-3d
- Figure 2-4a
- Figure 2-10a
- Figure 2-10b
- Figure 2-10c
- Figure 2-10d
- Figure 3.1-3a viewpoint 1
- Figure 3.1-3b viewpoint 2
- Figure 3.1-3c viewpoint 3
- Figure 3.1-3d viewpoint 4
- Figure 3.1-3e viewpoint 5
- Figure 3.1-3f viewpoint 6
- Figure 3.1-3g viewpoint 7
- Figure 3.1-3h viewpoint 8
- Figure 3.1-3i viewpoint 9
- Figure 3.1-3j viewpoint 10
- Figure 3.1-3k viewpoint 11
- Figure 3.1-4 KOP 1
- Figure 3.1-5 KOP 2
- Figure 3.1-6 KOP 3
- Figure 3.1-7 KOP 4

UT1-4 The comment concerns qualifying language in the Project Description. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR Chapter 2 has been updated to reflect the changes.

UT1-5 The comment concerns inconsistencies between Tables ES-2, ES-3, and 4-11 and the individual impact assessments in the sections in Chapter 3. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

UT1-6 The comment concerns the use of Appendix G language in impact assessment section headers. The comment is noted. However, because Appendix G language is suggested, but not required, the impact assessments have used language specific to each assessment.

UT1-7 The comment concerns the language used in the Executive Summary, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4 to describe impacts from alternatives, including those resulting from the environmentally superior alternative. Specifically, the commenter points out that language stating that Alternative Combination 1 "has been determined to be preferred because, relative to the Project, would avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts of the Project on aesthetics, agricultural and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, energy, geology, soils, and paleontological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, recreation, transportation, utilities, and wildfire." For example, the significantly shorter Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line would no longer traverse 1.2 miles along Coyote Creek Trail and Coyote Creek, which, under the Project, would result in potentially significant impacts associated with biological resources, recreation, and transportation, among other resource areas."

The commenter notes that "the following resource areas listed in the text on page ES-29 do not have potentially significant impacts: energy, geology, soils, and paleontological resources, greenhouse gas emissions" and that "all impacts except cultural and tribal cultural resources are less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures."

The comment is noted. Refer to response to Comment UT1-5 regarding inconsistencies between language in the Executive Summary and Chapter 3 and 4. With respect to the description of Alternative Combination 1 in the Executive Summary, any potentially significant impacts referenced include those that are mitigated or determined to be less than significant with implementation of applicant-proposed measures, so the environmentally superior alternative would lessen impacts to the extent that mitigation is no longer required.

UT1-8 The comment concerns consistency among mitigation measures in the Executive Summary and the Environmental Analysis sections. Refer to response to Comment UT1-5 regarding inconsistencies between language in the Executive Summary and Chapter 3. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

UT1-9 The comment concerns a reference to the statement of overriding considerations in the Draft EIR Executive Summary. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

To address this comment, text is added in Final EIR Section ES.9, *Issues to be Resolved*, as follows:

> Determine whether need for the Project outweighs the significant and unavoidable impact related to cultural resources and tribal cultural resources ~~outweighs the need for the Project~~ and, if so, prepare a statement of overriding considerations.

UT1-10 The comment concerns local discretionary permits. The comment is noted, and the EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections. To address this comment, language discussing the local discretionary permits has been revised in Final EIR Section 1.4.2, *Other Agencies*. The revised text is as follows:

> Because the CPUC has preemptive jurisdiction over construction, operation, and maintenance of LSPGC facilities in California, no local discretionary ~~use~~ permits are required.

UT1-11 The comment concerns the authority of the CPUC with respect to General Order 131-D.

The suggested text is consistent with GO 131-D and has been incorporated in the Final EIR. Text on page 1-5 in the Final EIR has been revised, as follows:

> The CPUC's General Order 131-D requires LSPGC to consult with local agencies on land use matters even though local jurisdictions are preempted from regulating the Project. In instances where the public utility and the local agency have unresolved differences regarding land use matters, GO 131-D provides a process by which the CPUC would resolve those differences. ~~to comply with local building, design, and safety requirements and standards, to the degree feasible, to minimize potential Project conflicts with local land uses~~.

UT1-12 The comment concerns the date of the scoping meeting for the Project cited in Chapter 1 of the Draft EIR. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

To address this comment, the date of the scoping meeting has been revised on Final EIR Section 1.5.1, *Educational Outreach and Scoping*. The revised text is as follows:

> Eleven members of the public provided oral or written comments on the Project during the September ~~6~~18, 2024, hybrid scoping meeting.

UT1-13 The comment concerns the early tribal outreach process. The comment is noted.

UT1-14 The comment concerns an inadvertent reference to Silicon Valley Power (SVP) in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIR. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated as follows:

> The proposed modifications to the PG&E substations, though included in the PEA filed with LSPGC's application and analyzed in this CEQA document as

part of the whole of the Project, are not part of the work submitted for authorization in LSPGC's application as PG&E ~~and Silicon Valley Power (SVP) are~~ is not an applicant~~s~~.

UT1-15 The comment concerns revisions to Figure 2-3a. The comment is noted, and the EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

UT1-16 The comment concerns revisions to Figure 2-4c. The comment is noted, and the EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

UT1-17 The comment concerns revisions to Figure 2-5. The comment is noted, and the EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

UT1-18 The comment concerns revisions to the description of the Skyline HVDC Terminal (transformer voltage ratings) in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIR. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections, as follows:

> The Project proposes 500/320 kV transformers at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal and 320/230~~115~~ kV transformers at the proposed Skyline HVDC Terminal.

UT1-19 The comment concerns a reference to future multi-terminal expansion that is not applicable. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections, as follows:

> In addition, specifically for the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal, a storage pad would be constructed for outdoor equipment ~~and space would be reserved for future multi-terminal expansion~~.

UT1-20 The comment concerns Footnote 7. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections, as follows:

> Should any conflicts between the Project and existing utility facilities ~~transmission or distribution lines~~ be discovered during final engineering of the transmission line alignments, LSPGC would work with the owner of those utilities to determine whether design changes can be made or whether utility relocation is necessary.

UT1-21 The comment concerns language describing the transmission line encasing. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections, as follows:

> The proposed Grove to Skyline 320 kV Transmission Line would be encased in a ~~36-inch casing pipe proposed to have five smaller internal ducts~~ duct bank proposed to have five ducts: three 8-inch ducts for conductor (two ducts for the installed cross-linked polyethylene [XLPE] cable and one duct as a spare) and two 2-inch ducts for fiber optic cables.

UT1-22 The comment concerns language describing the duct banks on Table 2-2. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

UT1-23 The comment concerns the description of the access road at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections, as follows:

> The existing access road would be upgraded for approximately 300 feet to be approximately 20 feet wide in order to support construction traffic from Monterey Road to the terminal facility's perimeter wall.

UT1-24 The comment concerns the description of easements or ROWs. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

> New easements or ROW would typically range in width from approximately 3 feet to 10~~5~~ feet, with additional width for splice vaults.

UT1-25 The comment concerns the timeline of construction. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections, as follows:

> The 12 potential staging area sites have been included as options because site availability during the construction window, which is ~~years~~ in the future, is uncertain at this stage.

UT1-26 The comment concerns the procedures to be followed in the event groundwater is encountered during construction. The commenter requests the following sentence in page. 2-54 of the Draft EIR be stricken as shown below:

> Should groundwater be encountered, dewatering may be required using a portable pump, and the water would be disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations and acquired permits. ~~Groundwater encountered during underground construction would be pumped either into water trucks for haul-off or directly into containment tanks.~~ Dewatering procedures are described further in Section 2.8.9, *Water Use and Dewatering*.

The CPUC consulted with the commenter about the rationale for this comment and understands that this request has been made to provide more flexibility for use of dewatering methods during underground construction. The CPUC finds this revision acceptable provided that the Applicant complies with all applicable regulations and permitting requirements concerning groundwater protection and wastewater handling and disposal.

UT1-27 The comment concerns the procedure to be followed during trenching. The comment is noted, but it has been determined that the sentence the commenter requests to be omitted shall remain in the Final EIR for informational purposes.

UT1-28 The comment concerns the duration of construction. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections

UT1-29 The comment concerns the addition of text included in a response to a data request by the CPUC regarding stormwater runoff. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the changes, as follows:

> Given the urban nature of the Skyline terminal site, LSPGC may also discharge stormwater from the Skyline terminal site into the City of San Jose's existing stormwater system within Santa Theresa Street, adjacent to the Skyline terminal site.

UT1-30 The comment concerns the procedure to be followed during dewatering in the event groundwater is encountered. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the changes. Refer to response to comment UT1-26 for more details.

UT1-31 The comment concerns the description of electric and magnetic fields (EMF) from power lines, including alternating current (AC) and direct current (DC) lines. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the changes.

> AC power lines, like electrical wiring and equipment, produce electromagnetic fields (EMFs) at a frequency of 60 Hz (OSHA, 2025). In contrast, DC power lines generate static electric and magnetic fields, reflecting the constant, unidirectional flow of current.

UT1-32 The comment concerns the date of publication of the NOP for the Project. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

UT1-33 The comment concerns the language of Mitigation Measure 3.1-2, which the commenter asserts is essentially identical to APM BIO-7. The commenter recommends deleting MM 3.1-2 since APM BIO-7 already addresses concerns regarding outdoor lighting and this would reduce confusion between the two measures. The commenter also asserts that the use of photocell and motion detection-controlled lighting is not technically feasible during nighttime construction where continuous lighting is needed for safety. If MM 3.1-2 is retained, the commenter requests the reference to photocell and motion detection-controlled lighting be removed.

Mitigation Measure 3.1-2 differs from APM BIO-7 in that it is appropriately more proscriptive regarding the use of outdoor lighting. For example, Mitigation Measure 3.1-2 requires the Project to selectively place and shield light and limits the number of nighttime limits to those only necessary to accomplish work completely and safely. With this said, APM BIO-7 differs from Mitigation Measure 3.1-2 as it seems to rely on local municipalities' authority to dictate the occurrence of transmission line construction (e.g., requiring nighttime work as some areas along the Project alignment may experience high levels of conflicting activities during the daytime).

Mitigation Measure 3.1-2 requires the use of photocell and motion detection-controlled lighting in the context of site-specific safety (for workers and members of the public) and sensitive species protection requirements. However, text has been added to use these technologies to the maximum extent feasible in the context of site-specific safety:

> The use of outdoor lighting shall be minimized during construction, operation, and maintenance. Photocell and motion detection-controlled lighting shall be provided, to the maximum extent feasible, at a level sufficient to provide safe entry and exit to the Project work sites and to ensure the security of the sites. All lighting shall be selectively placed, shielded, and directed to minimize fugitive light. Portable lights shall be operated at the lowest feasible wattage and height. The number of nighttime lights used shall be limited to those necessary to accomplish the task.

UT1-34 The commenter states that "Development of the Grove Terminal site would result in a permanent conversion of 7.4 acres of the 13.6-acre parcel, of which 10.3 acres are designated as Prime Farmland. Please note that the remaining 6.2 acres of the parcel would still be available for future agricultural use. As such, compensatory mitigation should only apply the permanent conversion of Prime Farmland and not include any temporary impacts to agricultural uses."

While the entire 13.6-acre parcel may not be used for development of the Project, the project description states that the entire parcel is being taken out of its current agricultural use, and use of the remaining 6.2 acres is not proposed for conservation as agricultural land in the project description. Mitigation should still be provided for the acreage that will be converted to non-agricultural use.

UT1-35 The commenter notes that "The text of MM 3.2-1 should be revised to clarify that this mitigation measure applies only to alternatives that impact Prime or Unique Farmland."

The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

UT1-36 The comment concerns Mitigation Measure 3.2-1, which states: "LSPGC shall provide a financial donation or purchase an agricultural conservation easement to protect and restore farmland in Santa Clara County, subject to review and approval of the Santa Clara County Agricultural Commissioner and Santa Clara County Open Space Authority. The ratio of mitigation shall be equivalent to 1:1 as compensation for Project Prime Farmland removed from agricultural productivity. The conservation mitigation shall be paid to the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority or other appropriate agricultural land trust operating in Santa Clara County for the purposes of reclaiming, restoring, and/or conserving Prime Farmland in Santa Clara County."

The commenter asserts that "As written, this measure does not provide ratepayers with sufficient cost protection and may effectively provide the Santa Clara County Agricultural Commissioner and the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority with veto power over the Project." As such, we recommend the following revisions to ensure that

CPUC maintains an appropriate level of oversight over the Project: "…subject to review and approval of CPUC Energy Division staff, in consultation with the Santa Clara County Agricultural Commissioner and Santa Clara County Open Space Authority."

The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

UT1-37 The comment concerns the Draft EIR's statement that "Given the relatively large scope of ground disturbance that would occur under the Project, implementing only the basic BMPs could result in a potentially significant impact per BAAQMD's recommended approach for evaluation of fugitive dust emissions." The commenter notes that "While the Project as a whole includes a large area of disturbance, most of the disturbance areas associated with transmission line construction are located within paved and landscaped areas which do not generate high levels of fugitive dust. Utilization of standard dust control Best Management Practices (BMPs), as outlined in APM AQ-2, would be sufficient to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level."

While the commenter is correct that the majority of Project construction will take place in paved and landscaped areas, disturbance of these areas may still result in large amounts of fugitive dust. In addition, the depths of excavation and soil stockpiling needed along the proposed underground transmission lines could also generate fugitive dust. There would be other ground disturbance areas associated with the construction staging areas, terminal sites, etc., that may not be paved or landscaped and would therefore be susceptible to the generation of fugitive dust. In addition, as described in Project Description Table 2-6, *Summary of Grading, Excavation, and Material Removal*, approximately 246,000 cubic yards of cut and fill material would be handled mostly at paved and landscaped areas during construction of the Project (see Draft EIR page 2-54), which could also result in the generation of fugitive dust. Therefore, measures above and beyond the APMs and BMPs are required.

Given the relatively large scope of ground disturbance and material handling that would occur during construction of the Project, implementation of the applicable BAAQMD enhanced best management practices to control construction-related fugitive dust emissions would be required to reduce the potentially significant fugitive dust impact to a less-than-significant level. LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.3-2c is required to replace LSPGC Applicant Proposed Measure (APM) AQ-2 to ensure that fugitive dust emissions associated with LSPGC's Project components would be controlled with basic and enhanced dust control measures. For clarifying revisions made to some of the LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.3-2c dust control measures, refer to response to Comment 39, below.

UT1-38 The comment concerns the requirement that "An initial listing that identifies each off-road unit's certified tier specification to be operated for the Project shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval before the start of construction activities. Construction activities shall not begin until the equipment listing has been submitted to and approved by the CPUC." The commenter requests that the requirement to provide documentation

for new or replacement construction equipment to be approved before use on the project be eliminated as this is logistically difficult to implement without causing significant construction delays. Additionally, the commenter requests that the Tier 4 requirement be only applicable to the Grove HVDC Terminal site. LSPGC's response to Data Request 3 (Attachment B Updated Air Quality Emissions) includes the following statement:

> LSPGC shall ensure that at least 75 percent of all off-road construction equipment includes Tier 4 interim or Tier 4 final emissions controls for all construction locations with the exception of the Grove terminal. Due to the close proximity of homes to the Grove terminal, LS Power shall ensure that 100 percent of all off-road construction is Tier 4 interim or Final.

In response to this comment, the second paragraph of Final EIR LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.3-2a has been revised as shown below to allow for documentation of new or replacement construction equipment on the Project to be submitted to the CPUC as a component of the tracking tool to be submitted monthly. This revision would allow for flexibility in implementation while maintaining the intent of providing CPUC with reporting and documentation to substantiate adequate implementation of the mitigation measure.

> As LSPGC requires new or replacement construction equipment on the Project, LSPGC shall document verification of the certified engine tier and provide such documentation to the CPUC ~~for approval before its use on Project sites~~ as a component of the tracking tool to be submitted on a monthly basis.

Regarding LSPGC's request that the LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.3-2a Tier 4 requirement be only applicable to the Grove HVDC Terminal site, based on the emissions modeling output provided in Draft EIR Appendix B, Tier 4 Final equipment emissions controls for construction of the HVDC terminals and transmission lines would be required for the impact to be reduced to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the Tier 4 Final requirements identified in LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.3-2a remain applicable to construction of both terminal sites and the transmission lines.

UT1-39 The comment concerns the requirements to implement best management practices to reduce emissions of PM2.5 and PM10. The commenter states that "The intent of the BAAQMD fugitive dust mitigation measures is to ensure that visible fugitive dust emissions do not cross property lines. As such, we request that the language of MM 3.3-2c be revised to reflect this and to prevent unreasonable and unnecessary requirements."

Additionally, the commenter requests changes in the language of the BMPs referenced in Mitigation Measure 3.3-2b as follows:

> "All trucks and equipment, including their tires, shall be washed off or otherwise cleaned prior to leaving the site." We request that this condition not apply to Project locations in developed/paved areas.

> "All excavation, grading, and/or demolition activities shall be suspended when average wind speeds exceed 20 mph." We request that this condition not apply to Project locations in developed/paved areas.
>
> "All exposed surfaces (e.g., parking areas, staging areas, soil piles, graded areas, and unpaved access roads) shall be watered two times per day." Please add that this requirement may be adjusted during rain events as needed (similar to the APM AQ-2).
>
> "Install wind breaks (e.g., trees, fences) on the windward side(s) of actively disturbed areas of construction. Wind breaks should have a maximum of 50 percent air porosity." This measure can be implemented at the terminal sites and staging yards but is not feasible for the linear Project components. As such, we suggest limiting this measure to only terminal sites and staging yards.

The following changes to LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.3-2c have been based on consideration of the proposed LSPGC construction activities and disturbance areas. These changes offer flexibility in implementation while maintaining the effectiveness of the mitigation measure.

- All exposed surfaces (e.g., parking areas, staging areas, soil piles, graded areas, and unpaved access roads) shall be watered two times per day unless exposed surfaces are saturated from a rain event.
- All trucks and equipment, including their tires, shall be washed off prior to leaving ~~the~~ an unpaved site.
- Install wind breaks (e.g., trees, fences) on the windward side(s) of actively disturbed areas of construction at the terminal sites and staging areas. Wind breaks should have a maximum of 50 percent air porosity.

Underground transmission line open-cut trenching and installation of trenchless sending and receiving pits would occur in developed and paved areas. These activities would involve materials handling, such as spoils excavation and loading, that would be susceptible to increased generation of fugitive dust during periods with high wind speeds. Therefore, the requirement in LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.3-2c for all excavation, grading, and/or demolition activities be suspended when average wind speeds exceed 20 mph shall still apply to developed and paved areas.

CPUC would determine whether LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.3-2c requirements involving erosion control and revegetation would be superseded by Project stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) requirements.

UT1-40 The comment concerns the requirement of Mitigation Measure 3.3-2c to post publicly visible signs during construction with contact information. The commenter notes that the measure does not indicate where such signs should be posted and suggests posting them at the terminal site locations and staging yards.

The comment is noted and changes reflected in the Final EIR.

UT1-41 The comment concerns a revision to Section 3.4.2.2 of the Draft EIR regarding fish and wildlife species identified with a moderate or higher potential to occur in the Project area.

The comment is noted and changes reflected in the Final EIR.

~~The following f~~Fish and wildlife species ~~were identified~~ with a moderate or higher potential to occur are listed below.

UT1-42 The comment concerns the requirements of Mitigation Measure 3.4-1 involving rare plants encountered during Project construction. The commenter points out that utilities are exempt from provisions of section 1913 of the Fish and Game Code, which require an incidental take permit (ITP) from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in the event rare plants are encountered during construction.

The commenter is correct that utilities are not subject to CDFW's ITP requirements. Section 3.4.3, *Regulatory Setting*, has been revised to include the utilities exemption. However, language in Mitigation Measure 3.4-1 regarding coordination with CDFW and/or USFWS to establish appropriate avoidance and minimization measure for federally or State listed rare plant species remains applicable to address Criterion a) of the Biological Resources impact assessment.

UT1-43 The comment concerns the language of Mitigation Measure 3.4-4, which states: "At least 30 days before the completion of Project activities, the Applicant shall submit a restoration plan to CDFW for review and written approval. No restoration activities shall commence until the restoration plan has been approved by CDFW in writing…" The commenter requests that this measure be modified "to only be required for areas of construction that would be in delineated State or Federal jurisdictional waters. As currently written, this measure as written may delay the start of construction activities in upland and disturbed/developed habitats."

The commenter requests that the measure be revised to read: "Before construction in areas containing waters of the U.S. and/or State, the applicant shall obtain all required environmental permits…" and "At least 30 days before the scheduled commencement of Project activities within waters of the U.S. and/or State, the applicant shall submit…"

As written, Mitigation Measure 3.4-4 concerns the restoration plan that must be submitted to CDFW before the end of Project construction activities and would involve only those areas that must be restored to pre-construction conditions. For clarity on the applicability and timeline of implementation, the first and second paragraphs of Mitigation Measure 3.4-4 have been revised as follows:

LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.4-4: Habitat Restoration and Monitoring

Before construction in areas containing waters of the U.S. and/or State, the Applicant shall obtain all required environmental permits, including Clean Water

Act water quality certification for federal and State jurisdictional wetlands (Section 401), permits for federal jurisdictional wetlands (Section 404), and CDFW Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (Section 1600). The Applicant shall adhere to the conditions of each permit.

~~At least 30 days before~~ Before construction activities within waters of the U.S. and/or State conclude, the Applicant shall submit a restoration plan to CDFW for review and written approval. No restoration activities shall commence until the restoration plan has been approved by CDFW in writing. The plan shall detail compensation for permanent impacts on riparian and wetland habitat in the form of restoration or enhancement of habitat on-site, or off-site as close to the Project site as feasibly possible. The plan shall also describe the on-site restoration of temporary impacts on riparian and wetland habitat, as applicable, and shall include monitoring requirements and success criteria. The restoration plan shall be implemented within the same calendar year as the completion of Project activities unless otherwise approved in writing by CDFW. More than one plan may be necessary for restoration activities in different locations.

UT1-44 The comment concerns the requirements of Mitigation Measure 3.4-5 that the removal of street trees within the jurisdictional limits of the City of San José and Santa Clara County shall be coordinated with the responsible department in each jurisdiction. The commenter requests that this measure be revised to apply only to ministerial tree removal permits. The commenter states "Per GO 131-D, LSPGC is exempt from local discretionary approvals issued pursuant to local authority (including discretionary tree removal permits)."

The comment is noted. General Order 131-D (GO 131-D), Section XI.B, states that "Local jurisdictions acting pursuant to local authority are preempted from regulating electric power line projects, distribution lines, substations, or electric facilities constructed by public utilities subject to the Commission's jurisdiction. However, in locating such projects, the public utilities shall consult with local agencies regarding land use matters." Consequently, public utilities are directed to consider local regulations and consult with local agencies.

The measure has been revised as proposed:

All removal of street trees within the jurisdictional limits of the City of San José and Santa Clara County shall be coordinated with the responsible department in each jurisdiction (see Section 3.4.3) to obtain any necessary ministerial tree removal permits. LSPGC shall comply with all permit conditions, including tree replanting and monitoring to ensure successful replanting. LSPGC shall provide copies of the approved permits from the applicable jurisdictions before the start of construction.

UT1-45 The comment concerns the language of Mitigation Measure 3.4-5, which states that "…LSPGC shall provide copies of the approved permits from the applicable jurisdictions before the start of construction."

The commenter suggests the following change: "LSPGC shall provide copies of the approved permits from the applicable jurisdictions before the start of construction in the vicinity of a street tree being coordinated."

It is unclear if the commenter intended the additional language to read "in the vicinity of a street tree being *removed*." As the change would not alter the meaning or effectiveness of the mitigation measure, the revision is accepted and reflected in the Final EIR.

UT1-46 The comment concerns a reference to the Power the South Bay Project. The comment is noted, and Section 3.4.8 of the Final EIR has been corrected to reflect the changes.

UT1-47 The commenter states that P-43-000571 is mischaracterized in the Cultural Resources section of the environmental document and provides suggested edits to address this mischaracterization.

PG&E has provided additional information on this resource that is not yet included in the site record documentation. The characterization of P-43-000571 in the Draft EIR is consistent with the types of materials and eligibility of the resource based on the findings presented to CPUC from PG&E.

UT1-48 The commenter states that Table 3.5-1 incorrectly identifies resources as within the Project Area, when in fact, they are within Alternatives. Counts of resources within the Project Area, based on errors in Table 3.5-1, are carried throughout the section. The commenter is correct, Table 3.5-1 and resource counts in the Cultural Resources section have been revised to state which alternatives each component is associated with.

UT1-49 The commenter notes that APM CUL-4 is inconsistent with the revised measure as per Deficiency Response #1. APM CUL-4 has been revised to match the text of the APM in Deficiency Response #1.

To address this comment, APM CUL-4 has been revised to match the text of the APM in Deficiency Response #1. This has been reflected in the Final EIR throughout Chapter 2, *Project Description*, Section 3.5, *Cultural Resources*, and the MMCRP. The revised text is as follows:

> **APM CUL-4: Cultural Resources Inventory.** The temporary construction staging areas shall be surveyed prior to construction. If additional proposed facilities and ground-disturbing activities move outside the previously surveyed acreage, the new areas shall be subjected to a cultural resources inventory to ensure that any newly identified cultural resources are either avoided by project redesign or evaluated and treated.
>
> Cultural resource inventory of temporary construction staging areas and/or new areas shall consist of a pedestrian archaeological survey conducted at 10-meter or

less transects. If cultural resources are encountered, LS Power's qualified archaeologist shall inspect the discovery and determine whether further investigation is required. If the discovery can be avoided and no further impacts shall occur, the resource shall be documented on State of California Department of Parks and Recreation cultural resource records, and no further effort shall be required. If the resource cannot be avoided and may be subject to further impact, LS Power's qualified archaeologist shall evaluate the significance and CRHR eligibility of the resources and, in consultation with the CPUC, determine appropriate treatment measures. Consistent with CEQA Section 15126.4(b)(3), if it is demonstrated that resources cannot be feasibly avoided, LS Power's qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the CPUC and, if the resource is prehistoric or Native American in nature, the Tribal representative, shall develop additional treatment measures, such as data recovery consistent with CEQA Guidelines 15126.4(b)(3)(C)-(D). Archaeological materials recovered during any investigation shall be curated at an accredited curation facility or transferred to the appropriate Tribal organization.

UT1-50 The commenter suggests revisions to the description and count of cultural resources that are in Table 3.5-1 and in resource counts associated with the Project and Alternatives. The commenter suggests that implementation of the APMs and Mitigation Measures included in the Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources section are sufficient to mitigate impacts to Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources to less than significant.

The Draft EIR Table 3.5-1 and other counts have been revised to show if they are within the Proposed Project and/or any of the Alternative Combinations. While the majority of resource P-43-000189 is outside of the Project area, the resource does intersect the Project area. A new extension of this resource was identified by PanGIS (2024) within the Project area; therefore, it may be impacted by the Project. In addition, resource P-43-000499 may not be present within the Project area, but subsurface testing has not been completed to confirm or deny this. Therefore, it is assumed that this resource is present and will be treated as eligible since it has not been tested or evaluated. CPUC finds that the Project alignment and its alternatives have a high potential to encounter significant cultural resources.

While the impacts to significant resources will be lessened by the APMs and Mitigation Measures, this impact will still be significant and unavoidable. However, due to the nature and location of tribal cultural resources, information on which was provided by PG&E, the impact of the Project and Alternative Combinations on tribal cultural resources is significant and unavoidable. Data recovery of archaeological material addresses impacts to cultural resources that are eligible under National Register/California Register Criterion D/4 but does not adequately mitigate impacts to impacts to the significance of cultural resources that are eligible under other Criterion. It also does not address or minimize impacts on the significance of a tribal cultural resource, in fact, data recovery may increase impacts on the tribal cultural resources. CPUC suggests that LSPGC's qualified archaeological consultant contact and coordinate with PG&E's cultural resources staff for more information on these resources when working adjacent to PG&E project components.

UT1-51 The comment concerns cross-references to Mitigation Measure 3.13-1a in the Draft EIR Section 3.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*. The comment is noted and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the corrections.

UT1-52 The comment concerns the commenter's proposed revisions APM WQ-1 to revise the language and commitment to contain recovered groundwater on-site.

To address this comment, APM WQ-1 has been revised to remove the commitment to contain recovered groundwater. This has been reflected in the Final EIR throughout Chapter 2, *Project Description*, Section 3.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, and the MMCRP. The revised text is as follows:

> Recovered groundwater shall be ~~contained on-site and~~ tested prior to discharge;

Although the proposed modification to APM WQ-1 removes the commitment to contain recovered groundwater, it does not remove the requirements to adhere to all applicable regulations and conditions in the acquired permits. The proposed revisions to APM WQ-1 have been added in the Final EIR Section 3.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*.

UT1-53 The comment concerns the requirements of APM WQ-1 to contain recovered groundwater on site and test it before discharge. The commenter requests that the requirement to contain groundwater on site be removed. The comment is acknowledged, and the following changes in the Final EIR Section 3.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, have been added:

FEIR Page 3.18-29:

> Among the directives in LSPGC APM WQ-1 is the requirement that during dewatering activities, the Project shall ~~contain~~ test the recovered groundwater ~~on-site and test it~~ before discharge.

UT1-54 The comment concerns an error regarding the location of noise-sensitive receptors near the proposed Skyline Terminal.

The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, the first sentence of the third paragraph on Draft EIR page 3.13-8 has been revised as follows:

> Noise-sensitive receptors near the site of the proposed Skyline HVDC Terminal are multifamily residential units approximately 200 feet to the east, across SR 87 on ~~Coleman Avenue~~ Ryland Street.

UT1-55 The comment concerns language regarding construction activity and time-of-day restrictions. The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, the following sentence in the first paragraph on Draft EIR page 3.13-23 has been deleted as shown below:

> ~~All Project construction activity would be consistent with the time-of-day restrictions established by local ordinances, as discussed above~~.

UT1-56 The comment concerns Table 3.13-9, which identifies the typical construction equipment noise levels expressed as the instantaneous maximum noise level (L_{max}) (the loudest noise level measured during a period of interest) in units of A-weighted decibels (dBA). The commenter notes that "Distances listed in Table 3.13-10 in reference to the Grove Terminal site represent worst case scenarios, occurring when construction equipment would be active nearest these receptors. However, it should be noted that the Grove Terminal site is large in relation to these receptors, and as such construction equipment's distance from receptors will vary by construction phase, and day-to-day within a given construction phase. This is misleading as construction equipment will most often be located further from these receptors, resulting in lower noise levels."

Table 3.13-9 identifies noise levels of construction equipment as experienced by a receptor at 50 feet. It is acknowledged that distances to residences from the Grove Terminal site listed in Draft EIR Table 3.13-10 represent the worst-case scenario, occurring when construction equipment would be active at the closest point to those receptors. However, this is not misleading because the purpose of Table 3.13-10 is to present the maximum construction noise levels that would occur at the closest sensitive receptor locations. Therefore, no revisions are necessary to address this comment.

UT1-57 The comment concerns construction noise levels in the event sheet piling would be utilized. The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, the following revisions have been made to the first sentence of the second paragraph on Draft EIR page 3.13-34 to acknowledge that sheet piling could occur as opposed to would occur.

> In addition to the transmission line construction noise levels presented in Table 3.13-10, construction noise for driving of sheet piles during transmission line construction ~~would~~ could occur for shoring of trenchless installation pits.

UT1-58 The commenter asserts that because of the directive contained in GO 131-D that "local jurisdictions acting pursuant to local authority are preempted from regulating electric power line projects, distribution lines, substations, or electric facilities constructed by public utilities subject to the Commission's jurisdiction," Mitigation Measure 3.13-1a should be revised to delete the requirement that "The plan shall include documentation that a variance from the municipal code of the applicable local jurisdiction (i.e., the City of San José or Santa Clara County) has been received."

As discussed in the Draft EIR Project Description Section 2.9.5, Construction Schedule, LSPGC anticipates that local municipalities may require that transmission line construction occur at night within certain areas of the Project, if it is determined that work would be necessary outside the allowed periods. The subject bullet point of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-1a requires documentation that LSPGC's commitment to obtain approval from the applicable local jurisdiction (i.e., the City of San José or Santa Clara County) is secured as proposed by LSPGC if nighttime construction work

is determined to be necessary. For additional clarity on this requirement, the first bullet in LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-1a has been revised as follows:

> The plan shall include documentation that ~~a variance from the municipal code of~~ approval from the applicable local jurisdiction (i.e., the City of San José or Santa Clara County) has been received, to the extent applicable or required.

UT1-59 The commenter asserts that submitting a Nighttime Construction Noise Plan at least 30 days prior to the start of construction may not always be possible and could result in construction delays and suggests revising Mitigation Measure 3.13-1a to instead require that Nighttime Construction Noise Plans must be approved by the CPUC prior to commencement of applicable construction activities.

The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, the third sentence of Draft EIR LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-1a has been revised as follows to offer LSPGC flexibility for implementation while maintaining the intent of the requirement:

> Each plan shall describe the proposed nighttime construction activities in detail and explain why such activities cannot be conducted during daytime hours, and shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval. ~~at least 30 days~~ CPUC approval must be granted before the start of the subject nighttime construction activities.

UT1-60 The commenter suggests revising Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b to read "LSPGC and/or its contractors shall develop a construction noise reduction and logistics plan for residences within 500 feet of the Grove HVDC Terminal site perimeter wall," due to construction noise at the Grove Terminal occurring predominantly inside the Grove terminal's perimeter wall, rather than at the property's boundary.

The Grove Terminal site/property boundary and the perimeter wall within the site boundary are both illustrated on Draft EIR Figure 2-5, Grove Terminal. As described in Figure 2-5, the property site boundary also represents the proposed limits of construction. Part of the intent for LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b is to be applicable to all residences within 500 feet of construction activities that would be associated with the Grove HVDC Terminal site. Since the Grove Terminal site also represents the proposed limits of construction, some construction activities would occur outside of the perimeter wall. Therefore, for LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b to cover all Grove HVDC Terminal construction activities within 500 feet of residences, the measure must be applicable to the limits of construction, and the suggested revision has not been incorporated.

UT1-61 The comment concerns the requirement for a Construction Noise Reduction and Logistics Plan.

The LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b requirement for preparation of a *Construction Noise Reduction and Logistics Plan* for residences within 500 feet of trenchless installation pits in unincorporated Santa Clara County is based on shoring or impact

boring activities that would generate temporary noise levels of 77 dBA L_{eq} at the nearest sensitive receptor (see the last sentence of the second paragraph, under the *Transmission Line* discussion on Draft EIR page 3-13-25). Other typical construction activities at the trenchless installation pit would not be expected to result in noise levels that would result in a significant impact that would require mitigation. Therefore, the first sentence of Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b has been revised as follows to clarify the mitigation applicability is related to sheet pile driving and impact hammer boring activities.

> LSPGC and/or its contractors shall develop a construction noise reduction and logistics plan for residences within 500 feet of the Grove HVDC Terminal site, for residences within 500 feet of trenchless installation pits in unincorporated Santa Clara County <u>if driving sheet piles for installation pit shoring is required or if impact boring is required</u>, and for unincorporated Santa Clara County commercial uses within 40 feet of transmission line construction activities.

UT1-62 The commenter asserts that submittal of the Construction Noise Reduction and Logistics Plan at least 60 days prior to the start of construction at the Grove HVDC Terminal is not possible without causing potential construction delays. The commenter suggests that Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b be revised to require that the Construction Noise Reduction and Logistics Plan must be approved by the CPUC prior to commencement of applicable construction activities.

The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, the second to last sentence of the first paragraph of Final EIR LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b has been revised as follows to offer LSPGC flexibility for implementation while maintaining the intent of the requirement:

> The plan shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval ~~at least 60 days~~. <u>CPUC approval must be granted</u> before the start of construction activities <u>at the Grove HVDC Terminal site</u>. The plan shall include but not be limited to the following measures for construction activities: …

UT1-63 The comment concerns the proposed perimeter wall at the Grove Terminal site. The construction noise impact of the Grove HVDC Terminal would be significant at the residences to the west of the site. LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b includes a requirement that the proposed perimeter wall at the Grove HVDC Terminal be installed as part of the first phase of construction activities at the site. However, since the significant construction noise impact would only occur at the residences to the west of the site, the following revision has been made to the fifth bullet of Draft EIR LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-1b to offer LSPGC flexibility for the installation schedule of the perimeter wall while maintaining the intent of the requirement to attenuate construction noise levels at the residences to the west of the site:

> The <u>northwestern and southwestern portions of the</u> proposed perimeter wall at the Grove HVDC Terminal shall be installed as part of the first phase of construction activities at the terminal site.

UT1-64 The commenter states: "Table 3.13-12 does not appear to account for any noise reduction from the terminal perimeter wall. However, Draft EIR Appendix E2 does include a noise reduction factor for the terminal perimeter wall. The absence of this noise reduction factor affects the severity of noise impacts associated with operation of the Grove Terminal. While implementation of MM 3.13-2 will ultimately demonstrate the operation noise emissions, Table 3.13-12 overstates impacts. LSPGC requests that Table 3.13-12 be updated to also include estimate noise levels with the perimeter noise wall reduction factor, as calculated in Appendix E2."

As described on Draft EIR page 3.13-30, it is not clear whether the proposed perimeter wall for the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal would be designed for noise control or would otherwise be of sufficient height to block the line of sight between the terminal operational noise sources and the nearby residences, and no evidence has been provided that suggests that such designs are proposed, which would be required in order to achieve attenuated noise levels. Therefore, the calculations used to estimate the noise levels presented in Draft EIR Table 3.13-12 do not include incorporation of an additional noise attenuation factor to account for the proposed perimeter walls.

UT1-65 The comment concerns the requirements of Mitigation Measure 3.13-2. The comment is acknowledged. To clarify that LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-2 would only be applicable if the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site is included as part of a CPUC Approved Project, the first sentence of the mitigation measure has been revised as follows:

> <u>If the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site is included as part of a CPUC Approved Project,</u> LSPGC shall retain an acoustical engineer/specialist to prepare a noise characterization and reduction report.

UT1-66 The comment concerns the requirement of Mitigation Measure 3.13-2 that "The noise characterization and reduction plan shall be submitted to the City, County, and the CPUC for review and approval." The commenter asserts that local agency involvement should be limited to review and comment, with potentially discretionary approvals being limited to the CPUC and requests that the City and County component of approval is deleted from this measure as the CPUC Is the lead agency under CEQA and is responsible for compliance during construction and operations.

Local agency approval for the noise characterization and reduction plan must still be obtained and reviewed by the CPUC (refer to response to Comment U1-58). To clarify that City and County approval of the Grove HVDC Terminal Noise Characterization and Reduction Plan would not be required, the third sentence of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-2 has been revised as follows:

> The noise characterization and reduction plan shall be submitted to the City~~,~~ <u>and</u> County <u>for review and comment</u>, and <u>to</u> the CPUC for review and approval.

UT1-67 The comment concerns language regarding vibration levels during Project construction. The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, the following revision has been made to the first sentence of the second paragraph after Table 3.13-13 on Draft EIR

page 3.13-33 to acknowledge that impact pile driving to install sheet piles *could* occur as opposed to *would likely* occur:

> The highest vibration levels during Project construction would ~~likely~~ be generated by the use of a vibratory or impact pile driver to install sheet piles in support of trenchless construction installation pits for the proposed transmission lines.

UT1-68 The comment concerns vibration impacts in the event pipe ramming or similar machinery is utilized for horizontal borings. The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, the second sentence of the second paragraph after Table 3.13-13 on Draft EIR page 3.13-33 shown below has been deleted because the Draft EIR sources used for reference construction equipment vibration levels (i.e., FTA 2018 and Caltrans 2020) do not identify typical vibration levels for jack and boring or micro-tunneling equipment that would substantiate the statement. Also, refer to responses to Comments UT1-67 and UT1-69.

> ~~Horizontal boring activities could also generate vibration at levels similar to those of a vibratory or impact pile driver.~~

UT1-69 The comment concerns vibration impacts that could be felt by the San José Marriott. The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, the second paragraph on Draft EIR page 3.13-34 has been revised as shown below to clarify that the San José Marriott could be exposed to the stated vibration level if a vibratory or impact pile driver is used to install sheet piles.

> The San José Marriott ~~would~~ could be exposed to a vibration level of 0.23 to 0.65 in/sec PPV, which is equivalent to 95–104 VdB, if a vibratory or impact pile driver is needed to install sheet piles. At this distance, vibratory or impact pile driver vibration levels would exceed the building damage threshold (0.20 in/sec PPV), the human-annoyance threshold of 75 VdB for infrequent (construction-related) events at residential receptors where people sleep, and the expected ambient vibration levels if closer than 50 feet.

UT1-70 The comment concerns trenchless construction activities within 50 feet of structures. The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, the third paragraph on Draft EIR page 3.13-34 has been revised as shown below to acknowledge that the potentially significant impact would be associated with vibratory or impact pile driving and that LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-3 would supplement LSPGC APM NOI-1 if vibratory or impact pile driving is determined to be necessary.

> LSPGC APM NOI-1 would be implemented for the use of high vibratory equipment such as vibratory and/or impact pile drivers, vibratory rollers, and bulldozers. However, LSPGC APM NOI-1 is only applicable to vibration-inducing construction activities that would occur within 25 feet of existing structures; and as identified above, trenchless construction activities associated with vibratory or impact pile driving within 50 feet of structures would exceed

the vibration level significance thresholds. In addition, City of San José General Plan Policy EC-2.3 discourages the use of impact pile drivers within 125 feet of any buildings. Therefore, the vibration impact from trenchless construction activities associated with vibratory or impact pile driving would be potentially significant. Implementation of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-3 is required to ~~replace~~ supplement LSPGC APM NOI-1 for vibratory or impact pile driving activities and would reduce the significant construction vibration impact to a **less-than-significant** level.

UT1-71 The comment concerns the provisions of Mitigation Measure 3.13-3 and its requirements to conduct a site survey along segments of the proposed transmission line alignments where trenchless construction techniques may occur within 50 feet of existing structures. The measure requires vibration monitoring and the implementation of a high-vibratory equipment contingency plan. The commenter asserts that LSPGC plans to implement slide rails or other non-pile-driven methods for shoring of bore pits and that therefore trenchless construction within 50 feet of structures may or may not exceed thresholds. The commenter further asserts that because the "trigger for such potentially significant impacts is the type of equipment utilized, not the trenchless construction itself," Mitigation Measure 3.13-3 should be revised to clarify that a site survey is not required unless high vibratory equipment is planned to be used.

In response to this comment, the first paragraph of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-3 has been revised as follows to clarify that that the site survey and vibration monitoring for the high-vibratory equipment contingency plan would be applicable only to trenchless construction techniques that would involve vibratory or impact pile driving activities.

> LSPGC and/or its construction contractors shall conduct a site survey along segments of the proposed transmission line alignments where trenchless construction techniques that involve vibratory or impact pile driving activities may occur within 50 feet of existing structures. If construction with high vibratory equipment (i.e., vibratory pile drivers or impact pile drivers) occurs within 50 feet of structures, a vibration monitoring for high-vibratory equipment contingency plan shall be implemented. The plan shall include the following measures, as necessary, to prevent vibration damage to vibration-sensitive structures: …

UT1-72 The comment concerns edits to the language of Mitigation Measure 3.13-3. The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, the first sentence of the last bullet of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-3 has been revised as shown below to clarify that the results of all vibration monitoring shall be limited to activities that involve vibratory pile driving or impact pile driving.

> The results of all vibration monitoring shall be summarized and submitted in a report shortly after substantial completion of trenchless construction that involves vibratory or impact pile driving activity that occurs within 50 feet of structures.

UT1-73 The comment concerns the requirements of Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a that the applicant coordinate with Project proponents, contractors, and local agencies, as applicable, for other construction projects in the Project vicinity that may temporally overlap with Project construction and prepare and implement a traffic control plan (TCP) for roadways adjacent to and directly affected by the Project. The commenter asserts that the Project and other nearby projects will be subject to encroachment permitting through the affected municipalities prior to beginning work that requires traffic control plans, stating that the requirement to prepare a coordinated traffic control plan would be duplicative and requesting that the mitigation measure be removed and APM TRA-1 not be superseded.

As explained in the EIR, the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a, which is proposed to supersede APM TRA-1, is intended to provide additional mitigation of impacts beyond APM TRA-1. Additionally, as stated in the EIR, the measure would require compliance with the policies outlined in the Santa Clara County General Plan, such as C-TR 3 (management of congestion levels), C-TR 10 (requiring maximum operating efficiency of the transportation system), and C-TR 35 and C-TR 36 (safe bicycle and pedestrian travel and a safe transit system), as well as with *Envision San José 2040 General Plan* Policy TR-6.1 (minimizing potential conflicts between trucks and pedestrians, bicycle, transit, and vehicle access, and circulation) and would require LSPGC to consult with Caltrans to reduce Project construction traffic impacts on the State transportation network, in accordance with Caltrans' regulatory requirements and guidance. The additional mitigation measures outlined in Chapter 3.17 of the EIR are intended to enhance the protections already proposed by the applicant. However, the 30-day requirement has been removed as follows:

> **LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a: Implement Coordinated Traffic Control Plan.**
>
> LSPGC shall coordinate with Project proponents, contractors, and local agencies, as applicable, for other construction projects in the Project vicinity that may temporally overlap with Project construction, such as projects identified as potentially contributing to cumulative effects. ~~In consideration of these coordination efforts, at least 30 days before the issuance of construction or building permits,~~ LSPGC shall prepare and implement a traffic control plan for roadways adjacent to and directly affected by the Project. The traffic control plan shall address the transportation impact(s) of the temporally overlapping construction projects within the Project vicinity. The traffic control plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following requirements:

UT1-74 The commenter requests that the requirement of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a directing LSPGC to submit a TCP with proof of coordination to the CPUC at least 30 days before the start of construction be removed and revised to require that proof of coordination be submitted to the CPUC prior to the commencement of applicable construction activities.

See response to UT1-73. In addition, in response to this comment, the last paragraph of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1a has been revised as follows:

> LSPGC's traffic control plan, with proof of coordination, shall be submitted to the CPUC ~~30 days~~ before the start of ~~construction~~ applicable construction activities.

UT1-75 The comment concerns the requirements of Mitigation Measure 3.17-1b, which the commenter asserts provides "an identical level of assurance regarding infrastructure repair" as APM TRA-3. The comment is noted. LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.17-1b is intended to enhance the protections already proposed by the applicant; therefore, this measure and its requirements shall remain as written.

UT1-76 The commenter notes that APM TCR-2 is inconsistent with the revised measure as per Deficiency Response #1. The commenter is correct. To address this comment, APM TCR-2 has been revised to match the text of the APM in the Deficiency Response #1 throughout Chapter 2.0, Project Description, Chapter 3.18, Tribal Cultural Resources, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Compliance Reporting Program (MMCRP). The revised text is as follows:

> **APM TCR-2: ~~Native American~~ Cultural Resources Monitoring.** Native American and archaeological monitoring shall be conducted during ground disturbance associated with the Project when within 100 feet (30 meters) of previously recorded prehistoric, ethnohistoric, or tribal cultural resources. Prehistoric and/or ethnohistoric archaeological sites have been recorded within the Proposed Project area, and the SLF search and tribal outreach indicates that lands sacred to the Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area, the Ohlone Indian Tribe, the Tamien Nation, and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band are present within the Proposed Project search area. A Native American monitor determined during Tribal consultation shall be retained by LSPGC to monitor excavation associated with the Proposed Project to ensure that there is no impact to any significant unanticipated prehistoric, ethnohistoric, or tribal cultural resource. Prior to construction, LSPGC shall confer with a designated tribal representative on the appropriate course of action to be taken should unanticipated cultural materials~~, and specifically human remains,~~ be discovered during construction. Native American monitoring requirements established in this APM may be superseded by government-to-government consultation conducted between the CPUC and tribal organizations as part of the AB 52 process or otherwise.

UT1-77 The commenter rejects the argument that APM TCR-2 is contradictory to legal requirements regarding the treatment of human remains (pages 3.18-8 to 3.18-9 of Draft EIR). The comment is acknowledged. In response to this comment, the statement regarding APM TCR-2 has been removed, as follows:

> Although APM TCR-1 and APM TCR-2 would potentially reduce impacts on tribal cultural resources through proactive awareness and avoidance, APM TCR-2 does not adequately address impacts to known cultural resources with human remains that are assumed to be tribal cultural resources that would be impacted by the Project. Impacts to tribal cultural resources cannot be guaranteed to be

mitigated to less than significant, particularly when the extent and nature of the tribal cultural resource will not be known unless or until it is impacted by the Project. ~~contradicts the legal requirements regarding the treatment of human remains under PRC Sections 5097.98 and 5097.99, as well as Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, because the treatment plan in the event of human remains is determined by the Most Likely Descendant (MLD), who is designated by the NAHC following the discovery of Native American human remains. It is not possible to determine who the MLD will be for human remains identified during Project construction before a discovery is made.~~ Therefore, impacts related to this criterion could be potentially significant.

UT1-78 The commenter requests that the requirement of APM UTIL-1 be revised to require marking of existing underground utilities along the length of the proposed Project without the current required 14-day timeframe in which to do so, as Mitigation Measure 3.19-5 requires notification of all municipalities, companies, and other public and private entities owning and maintaining utilities within or crossing the right-of-way of the Project at least 90 days prior to the start of construction.

The proposed revision is accepted. In response to this comment, APM UTIL-1 has been revised as follows:

> **APM UTIL-1: Coordination with Utilities.** LS Power shall notify all utility companies with utilities located within or crossing the Proposed Project ROW to locate and mark existing underground utilities along the entire length of the Proposed Project. Due to the linear nature of transmission line construction, utilities shall be marked in short segments ~~at least 14 days~~ prior to construction within said segments. No subsurface work shall be conducted that would conflict with (i.e., directly impact or compromise the integrity of) a buried utility. In the event of a conflict, areas of subsurface excavation shall be realigned vertically and/or horizontally, as appropriate, to avoid other utilities and provide adequate operational and safety buffering or relocation of the existing utility shall be coordinated with each utility owner/operator. LS Power shall coordinate with third-party utilities and shall submit the intended construction methodology to the owner of the third-party utility for review and coordination. Construction methods shall be adjusted as necessary to ensure that the integrity of existing utility lines is not compromised.

UT1-79 The comment concerns the industry standard from Section 6.2 of the National Association of Corrosion Engineers SP21525- 2018 Alternating Current Corrosion on Cathodically Protected Pipelines: Risk Assessment, Mitigation and Monitoring. The comment is acknowledged. The Final EIR has been updated in response to this comment.

UT1-80 The comment concerns the language of Mitigation Measure 3.19-5. While the Mitigation Measure will remain in the Final EIR, it has been updated to reflect the requested changes, as follows:

> ~~No less than 60 days~~ Prior to the start of construction of a Project segment containing an underground utility or utilities identified to be materially affected by accelerated corrosion caused by the Project, LSPGC shall submit the ~~full~~

induction study for such Project segment, including the AC mitigation component, to the CPUC for review and concurrence. Once the CPUC concurrence is secured, LSPGC shall implement the AC mitigation system prior to energization of the Project, phased into the construction process as appropriate.

UT1-81 The comment concerns Figure 3.20-1. To address this comment, Figure 3.20-1 has been updated to identify the orange hatched area west of the Metcalf substation.

UT1-82 The comment concerns the publication date of the Project's NOP. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the correction.

UT1-83 The comment concerns details regarding the High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) Alternative. The comment is noted, and Chapter 4 of the EIR has been updated to reflect the suggested changes. To address this comment, language regarding the High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) Alternative in Section 4.5.1.1, *Description*, of the Final EIR has been revised. The revised text is as follows:

> The High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) Alternative would connect the existing PG&E Metcalf and PG&E San Jose B substations with an alternating current (AC) transmission line in which the current reverses direction periodically, as opposed to a ~~single~~ direct current (DC) line which carries electricity in a single, constant direction. An AC system, in which high voltages are carried long distances and then stepped down near end-users, typically includes three-phase generators, step-up and step-down transformers, circuit breakers, and devices such as capacitor banks or reactors to help manage voltage and reactive power. The HVAC Alternative would reduce potentially significant impacts associated with construction and operation of the proposed HVDC terminals because HVDC terminals would not be required for this alternative. However, the HVAC transmission line would be less efficient than a DC transmission line over long distances and would result in greater capacitive losses. The HVAC transmission line would not provide power flow control or dynamic voltage support. The HVAC transmission line would also require larger duct banks and splice vaults ~~wider rights-of-way and less precise control of power flow~~ compared to the Project.

UT1-84 The comment concerns the language describing the effectiveness of the HVAC Alternative. The comment is noted, and Chapter 4.0 of the EIR has been updated to reflect the suggested changes. To address this comment, language regarding the effectiveness of the HVAC Alternative in the first paragraph of Section 4.5.1.2, *Rationale for Rejection*, of the Final EIR has been revised. The revised text is as follows:

> Therefore, the HVAC Alternative would be less effective than the HVDC Alternative in improving transmission of ~~not improve transmission of~~ energy from existing and proposed renewable generation projects to the Greater San Francisco Bay Area (Greater Bay Area).

UT1-85 The comment concerns the description of the existing and proposed transmission system. The comment is noted, and Chapter 4.0 of the EIR has been updated to reflect the suggested changes. To address this comment, language regarding the existing and proposed transmission system in Section 4.5.2.1, *Rationale for Rejection*, of the Final EIR has been revised. The revised text is as follows:

> This alternative would involve installation of utility-scale energy storage facilities that would be charged from the existing ~~230 kV~~ San José electric transmission system. There would be two battery energy storage systems (BESS) installed for this alternative; one would be installed at the proposed Skyline high- voltage direct current (HVDC) Terminal site, and one would be installed at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site. A 500 kV transmission line would connect the Grove Terminal BESS to the existing PG&E Metcalf Substation and a ~~230~~ 115 kV transmission line would connect the Skyline Terminal BESS to the existing San Jose B Substation.

UT1-86 The comment concerns Figure 4-2. The commenter suggests updating the Grove Alternative 3 area shown Figure 4-2 to reflect all or none of the horizontal directional drilling (HDD) crossings. The comment is noted, and Figure 4-2 of the EIR has been updated to include all of the HDD crossings in the area. Additionally, the Grove Terminal Alternative 3 and the Metcalf Substation Modification Area polygons have been updated to incorporate the most recent data. The legend heading has been revised to read "Grover Terminal Alternatives Project Components." An additional horizontal bore location was added on the brown line southeast of Coyote Ranch Road at the Coyote Creek crossing about 0.2 mile northwest of the "Grove HVDC Terminal" label. Another horizontal bore location was added on the blue line (on Monterey Road) at Fisher Creek, which is about 0.25 mile northwest of the northern corner of the Grove Terminal Alternative 4 polygon.

UT1-87 The comment concerns the language describing trenchless crossings required for the Grove to Skyline 320 kV Transmission Line and the Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line. The comments are noted, and Chapter 4 of the EIR has been updated to reflect the suggested changes. To address this comment, language describing trenchless crossings required for the Grove 320 kV Transmission Line and the Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line has been revised in Final FEIR Section 4.5.5.1, *Description*. The revised text is as follows:

> The Grove to Skyline 320 ~~Metcalf to Grove 500~~ kV Transmission Line would require a trenchless crossing (e.g., jack-and-bore or horizontal directional drill [HDD]) of the existing railroad and the Metcalf to Grove 500 ~~Grove to Skyline 320~~ kV Transmission Line would require a trenchless crossing of the existing railroad and Coyote Creek to reach the GTA-4 property.

UT1-88 The comment concerns the language describing the Metcalf to Grove Transmission Line Alignment Alternative 2. The comment is noted, and Chapter 4 of the EIR has been updated to reflect the suggested changes. To address this comment, the language

describing the Metcalf to Grove Transmission Line Alignment Alternative 2 in Section 4.5.7.1, *Description*, has been revised in the Final EIR. The revised text is as follows:

> The Metcalf to Grove Transmission Line Alignment Alternative 2 would exit the proposed Grove Terminal underground toward the southwest, then follow Monterey Road for approximately 0.4 mile before turning northeast (see Figure 4-3) and crossing over Coyote Creek attached to a new vehicular road bridge. ~~South of Coyote Creek the transmission line would transition to an overhead configuration and would be attached to the bottom of a new vehicular road bridge to cross the creek.~~ The vehicular road bridge would also replace the existing failing culverts within the main and secondary Coyote Creek channels. The transmission line would then transition back underground and continue northeast, then northwest within Coyote Ranch Road until reaching the proposed PG&E Metcalf Substation modification area. This alternative would be approximately 1.3 miles in length and would be located underground except for the road bridge segment crossing Coyote Creek.

UT1-89 The comment concerns the description of the area where special-status species have the potential to occur. The comment is noted, and Chapter 4.0 of the EIR has been updated to reflect the suggested changes. To address this comment, the language describing the area where special-status species have the potential to occur has been revised in Final EIR Section, 4.5.9.2, *Rationale for Rejection*. The revised text is as follows:

> The area is designated as critical habitat for steelhead trout, and the California red- legged frog and western pond turtle have the potential to occur in the vicinity of the ~~bridge~~ new above ground structure locations where suitable habitat exists.

UT1-90 The comment concerns Figure 4-4b. The comment is noted, and Figure 4-4b of the EIR has been updated to reflect the suggested changes. The blue Grove to Skyline 320 kV DC transmission line (underground) was removed from the map and legend. Where the blue line previously existed along Monterey Road within the limits of construction, the extension of purple line was added, extending northwest off of the map. After the purple Grove to Skyline 320 kV DC transmission line in the key, "(underground)" was added.

UT1-91 The comment concerns the length of the Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line connection to the existing PG&E Metcalf substation. The comment is noted, and Chapter 4 of the EIR has been updated to reflect the suggested changes. To address this comment, the length of the Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line connection to the existing PG&E Metcalf substation has been revised on Final EIR Section, 4.6.2.4, *Environmental Impacts*. The revised text is as follows:

> Finally, constructing the Grove HVDC Terminal at the GTA-3 site would substantially shorten the length of the Metcalf to Grove 500 kV Transmission Line connection to the existing PG&E Metcalf Substation, from approximately

1.2 miles if the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site were selected, to approximately 200 feet ~~100 feet or less~~ using the GTA-3 site.

UT1-92 The comment concerns the description of the impacts of GTA-3. The comment is noted, and Chapter 4 of the EIR has been updated to reflect the corrected changes, with potential impacts occurring along Julian Street instead of Market Street.

The first sentence of the last paragraph in Draft EIR Section 4.6.2.4 has been revised as shown below to clarify that the cultural resources impacts associated with GTA-3 would be similar to those of the Project as described in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources.

~~As~~ Similar to as discussed for the Project in Section 3.5, *Cultural Resources*, GTA-3 would have similar impacts related to cultural resources impacts, which would be ~~reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation.~~ remain as significant and unavoidable.

See Response to Comment UT1-50 for clarification regarding the Project's cultural resources Impact 3.5-1, which is significant and unavoidable.

UT1-93 The comment concerns the description of the impacts of Alternative Combination 4. The comment is noted. Section 4.6.5.2 of the Final EIR has been updated as follows, indicating potentially sensitive cultural resources occurring along Julian Street instead of Market Street.

However, while impacts associated with utilities could be reduced, installation of the Grove to Skyline 320 kV Transmission Line under this alternative could increase impacts on cultural resources and tribal cultural as there could be potentially sensitive cultural resources along ~~Market Street~~ Julian Street (e.g., potential unrecorded subsurface archaeological materials).

UT1-94 The comment concerns the description of the impacts of Alternative Combination 5. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the revisions, indicating potentially sensitive cultural resources occurring along Julian Street instead of Market Street.

However, while impacts associated with utilities could be reduced, installation of the Grove to Skyline 320 kV Transmission Line under this alternative could increase impacts on cultural resources and tribal cultural as there could be potentially sensitive cultural resources along ~~Market Street~~ Julian Street (e.g., potential unrecorded subsurface archaeological materials).

UT1-95 The comment concerns the total acreage of vegetation communities that would be permanently disturbed by the Project. The acreage information cited in the Draft EIR Chapter 5, page 5-2 is based on the disturbance data listed on Table 3.4-2, Impacts by Vegetation Community The text has been changed as follows:

Furthermore, construction of the Project would result in ~~19~~ 0.9 acre~~s~~ of permanent disturbance on vegetation communities (i.e., annual grassland and hardwood woodland) associated with the proposed transmission lines, proposed HVDC terminals, proposed modifications to the existing PG&E substations, and temporary staging areas. However, as evaluated in Section 3.4, *Biological Resources*, while the Project would impact biological resources, with implementation of LSPGC APMs, PG&E BMPs and FPs, and mitigation measures, impacts to biological resources would be reduced to less than significant.

UT1-96 The comment concerns the language describing the Project's contribution of energy to the grid. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the suggested changes.

UT1-97 The comment concerns the Project's impact on archaeological resources. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the suggested changes.

UT1-98 The comment concerns suggested editorial changes to the Draft EIR. The comment is noted, and the Final EIR has been updated to reflect the suggested changes.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

David Thomas
SENIOR LAND PLANNER
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

PG&E GENERAL OFFICE
300 LAKESIDE DRIVE
OAKLAND, CA 94612

August 25, 2025

Via Electronic Mail
Tharon Wright
CPUC Project Manager
Power Santa Clara Valley Project
Attn. V. Nez c/o Environmental Science Associates
575 Market Street, Suite 3700
San Francisco, CA 94105
E-mail: PowerSCV@esassoc.com

Re: **Power Santa Clara Valley Project, A. 24-04-017**

Dear Ms. Wright:

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) prepared by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project (PSCVP). LS Power Grid California, LLC (LS Power) has applied to the CPUC for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) to build the PSCVP.

As explained in the DEIR, PG&E is an interested party to the proceeding due to its obligation to interconnect LS Power's proposed HVDC transmission line to the electric grid. However, PG&E is not an applicant in the CEQA process, and its interconnection facilities are not being permitted in this proceeding. Rather, PG&E is subject to the CPUC's General Order (GO) 131-D (or its successor, GO 131-E) and will separately comply with those permitting requirements. UT2-1

General Comments:

PG&E supports approval of Grove Terminal Alternative 3 (GTA-3), which is the environmentally superior alternative that includes siting LS Power's southern terminal on land that is currently part of PG&E's Metcalf Substation property. PG&E and LS Power engineers have confirmed that the Metcalf Substation site can accommodate PG&E's remaining existing and planned uses along with LS Power's southern terminal following relocation of PG&E's existing CRESS yard, thereby avoiding LS Power's construction in Coyote Valley.

The DEIR has proposed three Mitigation Measures (MMs) to apply to PG&E's construction at San Jose B and Metcalf substations. Any provisions in these proposed measures requiring pre-construction approvals for work at San Jose B Substation would be problematic given that construction on the substation expansion is set to begin before the EIR is certified. MM 3.3-2b also purports to apply to "any other work PG&E will complete under the Project" even though some of this work has already taken place or is ongoing, and none of this "other work" requires permitting or CEQA review by the CPUC.

The MMs raise other issues of concern. For example, MM 3.3-2b requires a listing of construction equipment to be submitted for CPUC review and approval before construction can begin. Not only is this infeasible for work at San Jose B, but pre-approval of Tier 4 construction equipment is wholly unnecessary in any case. The equipment either is or is not

Tier 4, and tracking should be sufficient. If there are any issues, consultation with the CPUC team would be more appropriate than a blanket requirement to have all construction equipment in a list to be "reviewed and approved" by the CPUC. Even more questionable is the requirement to delay ongoing construction while the CPUC reviews and approves any newly-added equipment. UT2-1 (cont.)

PG&E also shares concerns with LS Power about MM 3.3-2d because it is unnecessarily inflexible and seems to miss the overarching purpose of the fugitive dust control requirements.

Specific Comments:

Executive Summary:

PG&E's proposed revisions to PG&E Mitigation Measure 3.3-2b, 3.3-2d, and 3.5-1 in Table ES-3 are attached in Exhibit A.

Chapter 2:

The start dates for work at and adjacent to San Jose B and Metcalf substations are incorrect in Table 2-7 and Table 2-10. In order to meet the CAISO-assigned in-service for the LS Power project, construction on PG&E's interconnection facilities at San Jose B must begin prior to LS Power's CPCN approval or certification of the EIR in that proceeding (in which, as the DEIR repeatedly recognizes, PG&E is not an applicant). PG&E is seeking separate approval of that work in Advice Letter (AL) 7391-E, currently awaiting disposition at the CPUC. The Santa Clara Valley Open Space District (OSA) has withdrawn its protest and has joined PG&E in supporting approval of GTA-3 as the environmentally superior alternative, as well as prompt approval of AL 7391-E. UT2-2

PG&E requests the following revisions to Table 2-7 concerning target construction dates.

> Page 2-77, PG&E Metcalf Modifications and 115 kV Connection Start Date: This work must precede LS Powers construction at Metcalf, so will likely occur earlier. Delete October 2026, add January 2026.
>
> Page 2-77, PG&E San Jose B Modifications and 115 kV Connection Start Date: Original start date for this work was June 2025; it has been delayed but, if AL 7391-E is approved, construction will start in late August 2025. Delete June 2026, add August 2025.
>
> Page 2-79, PG&E Distribution Removal at Metcalf Substation (Grove): This work must precede LS Power's construction at Metcalf, so will likely occur earlier. Delete July 2026, add January 2026.

PG&E requests the following revisions to Table 2-10, concerning target construction schedule.

> Page 2-84, Preliminary Construction Schedule, Existing Substation Upgrades:
> Metcalf Substation, start date January 2026, end date December 2027
> San Jose B Substation, start date August 2025.

Chapter 3-18:

PG&E disagrees with the broad-brush conclusion in Chapter 3-18, Tribal Cultural Resources, that both PG&E substation components of the interconnection will have Significant and Unavoidable Impacts (SUIs) on Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs). At San Jose B Substation, the most sensitive area for potential TCRs is along Guadalupe River Trail and Guadalupe Parkway, which is an area recently disturbed by ongoing construction on underground distribution facilities. After two weeks of archaeological monitoring of ground disturbance, and consistent with professional best practices (and proposed MM 3.5-1), PG&E's cultural expert concluded that no further monitoring was necessary. Although ground disturbance was sufficient to uncover an underground storage tank during the construction, no TCRs or other evidence of cultural resources were discovered. Since the substation improvements needed at and adjacent to San Jose B to interconnect the new transmission facilities are further from this most sensitive area, PG&E believes it highly unlikely that Significant and Unavoidable Impacts could occur from PG&E's transmission-related interconnection work at San Jose B Substation.

Furthermore, the requirement that a Cultural Resources Treatment Plan (CRTP) must be reviewed and approved by the CPUC prior to construction at San Jose B Substation must be deleted. Such a requirement could significantly delay start of construction and, consequently, the project in-service date. Moreover, the legitimacy of imposing such a requirement on a non-applicant before the EIR is certified would be questionable. PG&E agrees to incorporate the substantive provisions of MM 3.5-1 if TRCs are discovered, but asks that the conclusion of SUI at San Jose B and the requirement for pre-approval of the CRTP be deleted. PG&E will work with the CPUC to address any remaining concerns.

As to Metcalf Substation, construction will be covered by PG&E's Cultural Resources Treatment Plan, a copy of which can be submitted to the CPUC prior to construction. Although technically non-applicants would not be subject to MMs requiring CPUC approval, PG&E has no objection to the CPUC reviewing and approving this CRTP unless doing so would cause construction delays. Note that the CPUC's CEQA review may not be completed before CRTP submittal, and it is recommended that the approval requirement be deleted. UT2-3

PG&E recognizes the challenges presented by CEQA review over a non-applicant on a different schedule and is committed to working with the CPUC and LS Power to address any concerns and ensure that any impacts from its interconnection work remain less than significant.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Sincerely,

David Thomas

David Thomas
Senior Land Planner
DLTg@pge.com

Attachment:
Exhibit A

EXHIBIT A

Table ES-3 (excerpted):

PG&E Mitigation Measure 3.3-2b: Construction Fleet Minimum Requirements and Tracking – PG&E Tier 4 Final Emissions Controls

PG&E shall ensure that all off-road construction equipment used to complete the San José B Substation expansion~~,~~ and the Metcalf Substation modification~~, and any other work PG&E will complete under the Project~~ includes Tier 4 Final emissions controls. ~~An initial listing that identifies each off-road unit's certified tier specification to be operated for each substation and any other work to be completed under the direction of PG&E shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval before the start of construction activities. Construction activities shall not begin until the equipment listing has been submitted to and approved by the CPUC. As PG&E requires new or replacement construction equipment on the Project,~~ PG&E shall document verification of the certified engine tier and provide such documentation to CPUC upon request. ~~for approval before its use on Project sites.~~

UT2-4

PG&E Mitigation Measure 3.3-2d: Use Best Management Practices for Construction-Related Fugitive Dust Emissions

PG&E shall implement ~~all of~~ the following best management practices as needed to ensure that visible fugitive dust emissions do not cross property lines, ~~which would~~ thereby reduc~~e~~ing fugitive PM10 and PM2.5 emissions:

- All exposed surfaces (e.g., parking areas, staging areas, soil piles, graded areas, and unpaved access roads) shall be watered two times per day in dry weather.
- All haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose material off-site shall be covered.
- All visible mud or dirt track-out onto adjacent public roads shall be removed using wet power vacuum street sweepers at least once per day. The use of dry power sweeping is prohibited.
- All vehicle speeds on unpaved roads shall be limited to 15 mph.
- All roadways, driveways, and sidewalks to be paved shall be completed as soon as possible once mobilization begins. Building pads shall be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used.

UT2-5

• All excavation, grading, and/or demolition activities shall be suspended when average wind speeds exceed 20 mph.

• When working outside of paved or developed areas, a~~A~~ll trucks and equipment, including their tires, shall be washed off prior to leaving the site as needed to prevent off-site tracking.

• Unpaved roads providing access to sites located 100 feet or farther from a paved road shall be treated with a 6- to 12-inch layer of compacted layer of wood chips, mulch, or gravel.

• Post a publicly visible sign with the telephone number and person to contact at the lead agency regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours of receiving a complaint. BAAQMD's phone number shall also be visible to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.

• Limit the simultaneous occurrence of excavation, grading, and ground-disturbing construction activities.

• Install wind breaks (e.g., trees, fences) on the windward side(s) of actively disturbed areas of construction. Wind breaks should have a maximum of 50 percent air porosity.

• Plant vegetative ground cover (e.g., fast-germinating native grass seed) in disturbed areas as soon as possible and water appropriately until vegetation is established.

• Install sandbags or other erosion control measures to prevent silt runoff to public roadways from sites with a slope greater than one percent.

• Minimize the amount of excavated material or waste materials stored at the site.

• Hydroseed or apply non-toxic soil stabilizers to construction areas, including previously graded areas, that are inactive for at least 10 calendar days.

UT2-5
(cont.)

PG&E Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Cultural Resources Treatment Plan (CRTP).

• CPUC, PG&E, consulting Native American representative(s), and a Secretary of the Interior– qualified archaeologist shall determine whether preservation in place of significant cultural resources is feasible. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(3), this may be accomplished by planning construction to avoid the resource; incorporating the resource within open space; capping and covering the resource; or deeding the site into a permanent conservation easement. If it is determined that

UT2-6

preservation in place is not feasible, data recovery through archaeological investigations shall be completed.

• PG&E shall retain a Secretary of the Interior–qualified archaeologist, in consultation with consulting Native American representative(s), to prepare and implement a Cultural Resources Treatment Plan (CRTP). The CRTP shall include a plan to treat all cultural materials identified during construction that are contributing constituents of historical resources. The purpose of the treatment program will be to identify the procedures to follow in the event that cultural materials associated with historical archaeological resources are identified, define the tribal engagement procedures, and identify a place for cultural resources to be safely stored, if needed, until they can be reburied or treated in accordance with the tribe(s) recommendations, if the materials are Native American, in accordance with all applicable laws. Treatment could consist of (but would not be limited to) sample excavation, artifact collection, site documentation, and historical research, with the aim of targeting the recovery of important data contained in the portion of the significant resource to be affected by the Project. The methods of treatment would be determined in consultation with the consulting Native American representative(s). The CRTP shall include provisions for analysis of data in a regional context; reporting of results in a timely manner and subject to review and comments by the consulting Native American representative(s); disposition of resources acceptable to the consulting Native American representative(s); and dissemination of final confidential reports to the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System.

UT2-6 (Cont.)

• The CRTP will also include a monitoring plan. The monitoring plan will specifically identify:

– the location(s) where monitoring will be completed based on soil types, geology, distance to known sites, and other factors;

– the person(s) responsible for conducting monitoring activities, including consulting Native American representative(s);

– the method for conducting the monitoring and the required format and content of monitoring reports;

– the schedule for submittal of monitoring reports and person(s) responsible for review and approval of monitoring reports;

– the protocol for notifications in case of encountering cultural resources, as well as methods of managing the encountered resources (e.g., collection, identification, curation, repatriation);

– and the methods to ensure security of cultural resources sites.

• During the course of the monitoring, the archaeologist and consulting Native American representative(s) may adjust the frequency of the monitoring from continuous to intermittent based on the conditions and professional judgment of the archaeologist and Native American representative(s) regarding the potential to affect cultural resources.

• The PG&E CRTP for Metcalf Substation will be submitted to the CPUC ~~for approval~~ before implementation. ~~Similarly, a~~All subsequent reports, plans, and resource documentation resulting from implementation of the CRTP will be submitted to the CPUC upon request ~~for approval~~.

UT2-6 (Cont.)

Letter UT2: Pacific Gas and Electric Company

UT2-1 The comment concerns PG&E's general comments on permitting requirements, approval of Grove Terminal Alternative 3, proposed revisions to mitigation measures that apply to PG&E's San Jose B and Metcalf substations modifications.

Please see responses to specific comments UT2-4, UT2-5, and UT2-6 below.

UT2-2 The comment concerns updates to Chapter 2 of the EIR to correct the start dates for work at and adjacent to San Jose B and Metcalf substations.

Comment noted. Construction dates have been corrected in Table 2-7 and Table 2-10 of the Final EIR.

UT2-3 The comment concerns Chapter 3.18, regarding the impact analysis on Tribal Cultural Resources.

CPUC analyzes the whole of the action in its EIR for the project. The Proposed Project as a whole, as well as certain alternatives analyzed in the EIR, would result in significant and unavoidable impacts on cultural resources. This finding means that mitigation measures required for the project as a whole cannot fully reduce impacts to a less than significant level. However, mitigation measures can and will be tailored to address impacts associated with particular parts of the project that result in significant impacts. See responses to comment UT2-6 to address specific comments on PG&E Mitigation Measure 3.5-1.

UT2-4 The comment concerns proposed revisions to PG&E Mitigation Measure 3.3-2b: Construction Fleet Minimum Requirements and Tracking – PG&E Tier 4 Final Emissions Controls.

CPUC accepts PG&E's proposed revisions to reflect the revised timing of construction activities.

> **PG&E Mitigation Measure 3.3-2b: Construction Fleet Minimum Requirements and Tracking – PG&E Tier 4 Final Emissions Controls.**
>
> PG&E shall ensure that all off-road construction equipment used to complete the San Jose B Substation expansion~~,~~ and the Metcalf Substation modification~~, and any other work PG&E will complete under the Project~~ includes Tier 4 Final emissions controls. ~~An initial listing that identifies each off-road unit's certified tier specification to be operated for each substation and any other work to be completed under the direction of PG&E shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval before the start of construction activities. Construction activities shall not begin until the equipment listing has been submitted to and approved by the CPUC. As PG&E requires new or replacement construction equipment on the Project,~~ PG&E shall document verification of the certified engine tier and provide such documentation to the CPUC ~~for approval before its use on Project sites.~~upon request.

UT2-5 The comment concerns proposed revisions to PG&E Mitigation Measure 3.3-2d: Use Best Management Practices for Construction-Related Dust Emissions.

CPUC has revised dust control mitigation measures for both PG&E and LSPGC to ensure they match each other. They have been revised to more appropriately address proposed construction activities and anticipated conditions in the field.

PG&E Mitigation Measure 3.3-2d: Use Best Management Practices for Construction-Related Fugitive Dust Emissions.

PG&E shall implement all of the following best management practices~~, which would~~ as needed to ensure that visible fugitive dust emissions do not cross property lines, thereby reduc~~e~~ing fugitive PM10 and PM2.5 emissions:

- All exposed surfaces (e.g., parking areas, staging areas, soil piles, graded areas, and unpaved access roads) shall be watered two times per day in dry weather.
- All haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose material off-site shall be covered.
- All visible mud or dirt track-out onto adjacent public roads shall be removed using wet power vacuum street sweepers at least once per day. The use of dry power sweeping is prohibited.
- All vehicle speeds on unpaved roads shall be limited to 15 mph.
- All roadways, driveways, and sidewalks to be paved shall be completed as soon as possible once mobilization begins. Building pads shall be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used.
- All excavation, grading, and/or demolition activities shall be suspended when average wind speeds exceed 20 mph.
- When working outside of paved or developed area, ~~A~~all trucks and equipment, including their tires, shall be washed off prior to leaving the site as needed to prevent off-site tracking.
- Unpaved roads providing access to sites located 100 feet or farther from a paved road shall be treated with a 6- to 12-inch layer of compacted layer of wood chips, mulch, or gravel.
- Post a publicly visible sign with the telephone number and person to contact at the lead agency regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours of receiving a complaint. BAAQMD's phone number shall also be visible to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.
- Limit the simultaneous occurrence of excavation, grading, and ground-disturbing construction activities.
- Install wind breaks (e.g., trees, fences) on the windward side(s) of actively disturbed areas of construction. Wind breaks should have a maximum of 50 percent air porosity.

- Plant vegetative ground cover (e.g., fast-germinating native grass seed) in disturbed areas as soon as possible and water appropriately until vegetation is established.
- Install sandbags or other erosion control measures to prevent silt runoff to public roadways from sites with a slope greater than one percent.
- Minimize the amount of excavated material or waste materials stored at the site.
- Hydroseed or apply non-toxic soil stabilizers to construction areas, including previously graded areas, that are inactive for at least 10 calendar days.

UT2-6 The comment concerns proposed revisions to PG&E Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Cultural Resources Treatment Plan (CRTP).

CPUC accepts PG&E's proposed revisions to the mitigation measure to clarify that the Cultural Resources Treatment Plan (CRTP) prepared by PG&E would apply only to project activities at the Metcalf substation.

- The PG&E CRTP for Metcalf Substation will be submitted to the CPUC ~~for approval~~ before implementation. ~~Similarly, a~~All subsequent reports, plans, and resource documentation resulting from implementation of the CRTP will be submitted to the CPUC upon request ~~for approval.~~

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August 25, 2025

Via E-Mail

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Power Santa Clara Valley Project; Attn. V. Nez
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PowerSCV@esassoc.com

Re: Power Santa Clara Valley Draft Environmental Impact Report
SCH # 2024090200

Dear Ms. Wright:

On behalf of the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority ("OSA"), we submit the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR") for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project ("Project"). OSA has serious concerns about the environmental impacts of the Project as currently proposed. The DEIR substantially understates, and fails to adequately analyze or mitigate, the severity and extent of significant project-related effects on biological and agricultural resources. The environmental documentation for the Project is thus inadequate and violates the minimum standards set forth under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA")[1] and the CEQA Guidelines.[2]

For the reasons stated in more detail below, the Commission cannot lawfully certify this EIR or approve the Project as proposed. Instead, OSA strongly urges the Commission to adopt Alternative Combination 1, which the DEIR identifies as the environmentally superior alternative. Compared to the Project, this alternative will avoid or reduce every environmental impact analyzed in the DEIR. Critically, it will avoid the specific impacts to biological and agricultural resources identified in this letter. Further,

O1-1

[1] Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq.

[2] California Code of Regulations, title 14, § 15000 et seq.

the DEIR establishes that this alternative is just as feasible, if not more feasible, to build than the proposed Project. In fact, PG&E itself has expressed support for co-location. In March, 2025, PG&E represented to the San José City Council that "PG&E, LS Power, and OSA are pursuing all available options to protect Coyote Valley and allow LS Power to use land at PG&E's Metcalf Station to build the switching station required as part of its Power Santa Clara Valley Project currently pending before the CPUC."[3] Under these circumstances, CEQA requires the Commission to adopt this alternative instead of the Project.[4] O1-1 cont.

We submit these comments along a report prepared by Tanya Diamond, Wildlife Ecologist, Pathways for Wildlife, Attachment A ("Pathways Report") and a literature review prepared by H. T. Harvey & Associates, Attachment B ("Harvey Report") in association with Peninsula Open Space Trust ("POST"). We refer the Commission to these reports, both here and throughout these comments, for further detail and discussion of the DEIR's inadequacies. We request that the Commission reply to each of the comments in this letter and to each of the comments in the Pathways Report.

I. The DEIR fails to adequately analyze impacts to biological resources.

The DEIR identifies seven thresholds to aid its significance determinations.[5] The Project will have significant impacts under three of these thresholds, but the DEIR fails to properly disclose, analyze or mitigate impacts under the following thresholds:[6] O1-2

1. The "Special-Status Species Threshold": whether the Project will "[h]ave a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species . . . by CDFW"

The DEIR ignores impacts to mountain lions in the area, despite their known presence and status as a candidate species for listing under the California Endangered Species Act ("CESA"). If the Commission moves forward with the proposed

[3] City of San José, CA, *City Council Special Meeting: San José Municipal Electric Utility Exploration*, at 52:01 (YouTube, Mar. 21, 2025), https://www.youtube.com/live/zNwORsr_s1c?si=5IHy1_A0sFEyqpoC&t=3121.

[4] Pub. Res. Code §§ 21002, 21081(a).

[5] DEIR 3.4-40.

[6] *Id.*

Grove Terminal site, it must revise the DEIR to analyze impacts to this special-status species. O1-2 cont.

2. The "Wildlife Movement Threshold": whether the Project will "[i]nterfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory . . . wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors"; and

The DEIR improperly concludes that impacts under the Wildlife Movement Threshold are less than significant because the Project will locate the Grove Terminal on the site of an orchard surrounded by allegedly impermeable fencing.[7] But contrary to the DEIR's assertion, the fencing around the orchard is permeable. Bobcats and other fauna could very well use the orchard for hunting or shelter. Indeed, ample data shows that at least one bobcat has regularly traversed the property in the past. Further, the DEIR fails to consider impacts on wildlife moving just outside the confines of the property. Coyote Creek, which runs just behind the proposed Grove Terminal site, is an active wildlife corridor. Although it is highly fragmented, Coyote Valley is a functioning and critical wildlife corridor. As a result, even small disturbances in this area could have significant impacts on wildlife movement. Increased exposure to artificial light and noise may alter the timing and ability of wildlife to forage, hunt, and breed in the area around the Project.[8] The DEIR fails to analyze these impacts. O1-3 O1-4

In addition to the wildlife corridor, a known blue heron rookery exists immediately behind the proposed Grove Terminal site. The DEIR fails to acknowledge the rookery's presence, analyze the inevitable impacts that construction noise will have on this rookery, or propose mitigations to lessen those impacts. O1-5

The DEIR also fails to adequately analyze the Project's cumulative impacts on wildlife movement. The Grove Terminal will occupy a space in close proximity to three wildlife crossings planned by the California High Speed Rail Authority as mitigation for its own project's impacts on wildlife movement. In particular, the Grove Terminal is within hundreds of feet of a wildlife undercrossing planned as part of the High Speed Rail project at Emado Avenue. Converting the existing orchard to industrial uses could very well render this animal crossing useless and deter wildlife movement along Coyote Creek. It may also make it less likely that wildlife would find and use other wildlife crossing locations planned by High Speed Rail north of the Project site, including O1-6

[7] DEIR at 3.4-55–3.4-57.

[8] Attachment B, at 2, 5.

at Fisher Creek and south of Metcalf Road at the base of Tulare Hill. Because this Project could defeat the measures designed to mitigate impacts to wildlife movement caused by the High Speed Rail project, the combined effect of impacts caused by both projects is cumulatively considerable. The DEIR's failure to consider those cumulative impacts is unlawful. O1-6 cont.

3. The "Local Policy Conflict Threshold"—whether the Project will "[c]onflict with any local policies . . . protecting biological resources."

The DEIR fails to consider the Project's conflicts with state plans and policies. California Assembly Bill 2344, passed in 2024, requires Caltrans, in consultation with CDFW and other appropriate agencies, to establish an inventory of wildlife connectivity needs on the state highway system where the implementation of wildlife passage features could reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions or enhance wildlife connectivity.[9] In 2024, Caltrans released its Wildlife Connectivity Program Report, which identifies US 101 in Coyote Valley as a priority wildlife connectivity barrier remediation location.[10] CDFW's Wildlife Movement Barriers Priority List includes US 101 and Monterey Road in Coyote Valley as barriers to wildlife movement requiring remediation.[11] Additionally, California Assembly Bill 1889 "Room to Roam Act" requires cities and counties to update their general plans to include considerations regarding wildlife movement within or around a proposed project area upon the next update of the local government's general plan that occurs on or after January 1, 2028.[12] O1-7

Given abundant studies and plans identifying Coyote Valley's value as a landscape linkage, the proposed Project should consider wildlife movement impacts in the context of AB 1889's implementation. Consistent with these policies, the proposed O1-8

[9] Assem. Bill 2344, 2021-22 Reg. Sess. (Cal. 2022).

[10] Caltrans, *Caltrans Wildlife Connectivity Program Report* (July 1, 2024), at 27, https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/env/caltrans-wildlife-connectivity-report-ally.pdf.

[11] California Dep't of Fish and Wildlife, *Terrestrial Wildlife Connectivity Barriers Data*, https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Wildlife/Connectivity/Barriers/Data (last visited Aug. 20, 2025).

[12] Nossaman LLP, *Room to Roam Act Becomes Law* (Oct. 3, 2024), https://www.endangeredspecieslawandpolicy.com/gov-newsom-signs-californias-room-to-roam-act-into-law-requiring-wildlife-connectivity-considerations-in-land-use-planning.

site for the Grove Terminal should be opened up to allow wildlife more freedom to move throughout the area, not converted into an industrial site that will further fragment Coyote Valley.

For these reasons, the DEIR both understates the severity of the potential harm to biological resources within and adjacent to the proposed Project site and fails to identify sufficient mitigation to minimize these impacts. Given that analysis and mitigation of such impacts are at the heart of CEQA, these serious deficiencies must be remedied.[13]

O1-8 cont.

A. The DEIR fails to analyze impacts to mountain lions, a special-status species present in the Project area.

As explained in the Pathways for Wildlife Report, the Central Coast North population of mountain lions is present in both the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range.[14] They are also present in Coyote Valley, which serves to connect the wildlife populations in both mountain ranges.[15] As shown in Figure 1 below, wildlife camera traps, roadkill documentation, and other observation data show that mountain lions traverse the area close to the proposed Grove Terminal site and utilize Fisher Creek and Coyote Creek as movement corridors. For example, a mountain lion was killed less than a mile away from the proposed Grove Terminal site near Highway 101 and Bailey Avenue.[16] Also, in 2023, a juvenile mountain lion was killed on Santa Teresa Boulevard near the North Coyote Valley Conservation Area, which lies directly across Monterey Road from the proposed Grove Terminal site.[17]

O1-9

[13] *See Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino* (1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296, 311 ("CEQA places the burden of environmental investigation on government rather than the public.").

[14] Attachment A, at 5.

[15] *Id.*; Santa Clara Valley Open Space Auth. & Conservation Biology Inst., *Coyote Valley Landscape Linkage* (Dec. 2017) ("Linkage Report"), at 7, https://www.openspaceauthority.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/Coyote%20Valley%20Landscape%20Linkage%20Report_Final_lowres.pdf.

[16] Linkage Report at 18.

[17] CBS News Bay Area, *Mountain Lion Found Dead in Conservation Area in South San José* (July 13, 2023), https://www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/mountain-lion-found-dead-in-conservation-area-in-south-san-jose/.

The Central Coast North population of mountain lions are a candidate for listing as a state-threatened species under CESA.[18] A statewide study of mountain lions in 2018 found the species to be dangerously low in genetic diversity.[19] The study noted that mountain lions in the Santa Cruz Mountains have an effective population size of only 16; whereas, an effective population size of 50 is required to prevent inbreeding depression.[20]

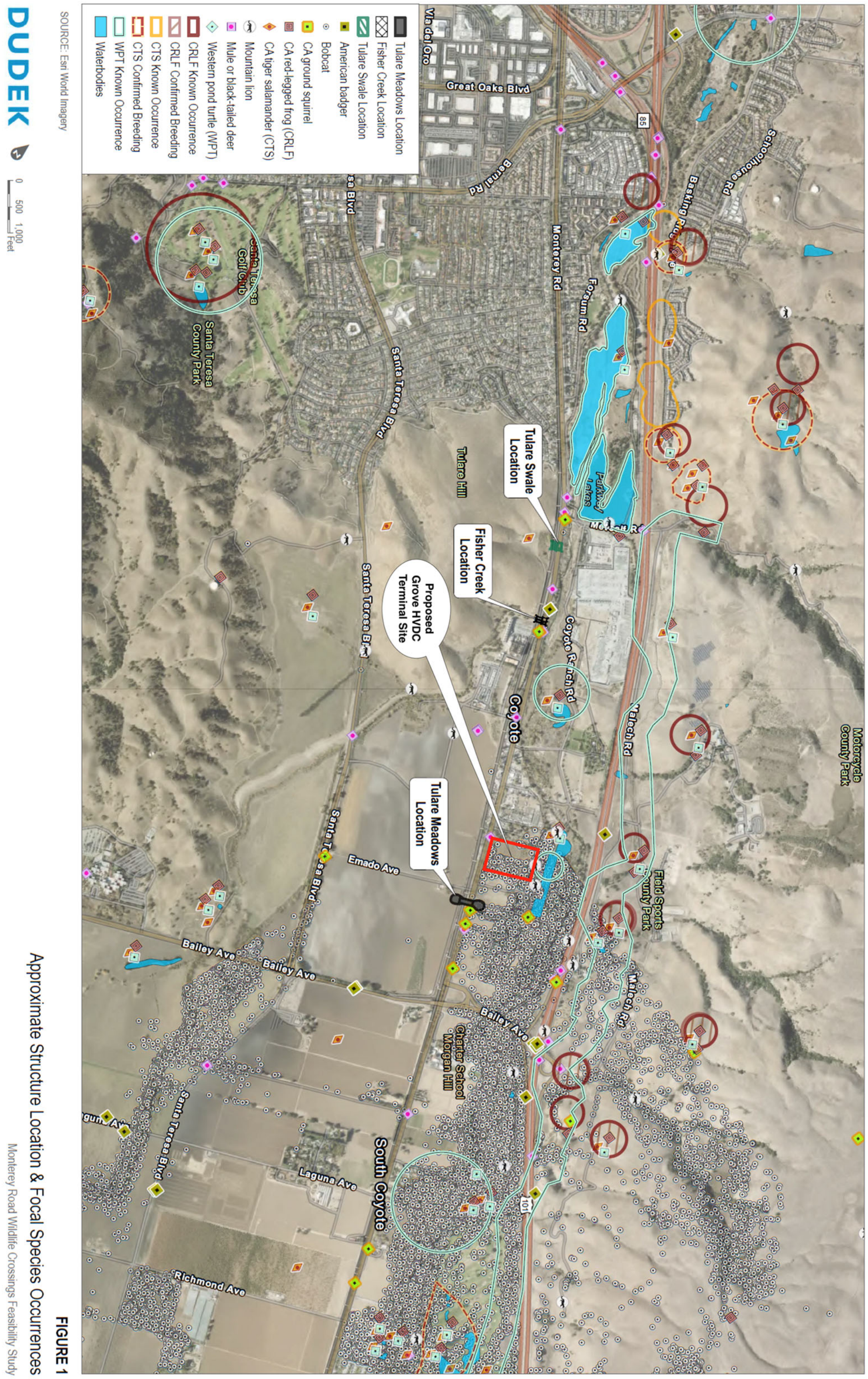
O1-9 cont.

[18] Attachment A, at 5-6.

[19] *Id.*

[20] *Id.*

Figure 1: Focal Species Occurrences in the Vicinity of the Project
(Source: RFP S25096: US 101/Monterey Road Wildlife Crossings, Appendix B1—Feasibility Plan and Report for Monterey Road Connectivity Improvements (June 12, 2025), at 4, https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/vta/projects/171738/downloads.)



O1-9 cont.

Under CEQA, if an EIR does not accurately describe the existing environmental setting, it cannot accurately represent how the Project would impact biological resources in that area.[21] Here, the DEIR fails to acknowledge the existence of mountain lions within the vicinity of the Grove Terminal site, despite their known presence in the area. As a result, the DEIR does not analyze the Project's impacts on mountain lions at all. This deficiency renders the DEIR inadequate as a matter of law.

O1-9 cont.

The DEIR also fails to evaluate the significance of the Project's impacts by its own thresholds of significance. Under the Special-Status Species Threshold, the DEIR was required to look at impacts to any species identified as a candidate species for listing by CDFW.[22] As stated above, CDFW has designated the Central Coast North population of mountain lions as a candidate species for listing under the California Endangered Species Act.[23] The DEIR therefore must analyze impacts to mountain lions under its chosen threshold of significance. Further, given that the status of the Central Coast North population of mountain lions is in such dire straits, any impacts on an individual lion, the species' foraging and dispersal habitat, ability to hunt, and ability to travel to linkages connecting to preserved open space could be detrimental to the species' survival.[24]

The DEIR is unlawful because it fails to apply the Special-Status Species Threshold to the Project's impacts on mountain lions at all. As a result, the DEIR improperly forecloses its analysis of the Project's significant environmental impacts and it fails to provide substantial evidence to support its determination that the Project will not have significant impacts on special status species.[25]

O1-10

[21] *See* CEQA Guidelines § 15125 (EIR "must include a description of the environment in the vicinity of the project, from both a local and a regional perspective"); *EPIC,* 131 Cal.App.3d at 354.

[22] DEIR at 3.4-40.

[23] Attachment A, at 5-6.

[24] *See* CEQA Guidelines § 15065(a)(1) (noting that a lead agency must find a significant impact if a project will cause "a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels"); *Kings County Farm Bureau v. City of Hanford* (1990) 221 Cal.App.3d 692, 718 (explaining that even relatively small changes caused by a project could be potentially significant if existing conditions show that conditions are already dire).

[25] *East Sacramento Partnerships for a Livable City v. City of Sacramento* (2016) 5 Cal.App.5th 281, 300, 303.

B. The DEIR's conclusions regarding the Project's impacts on wildlife movement are contrary to law and not supported by substantial evidence.

Coyote Valley ranks as one of the most important conservation areas in the United States.[26] Scientists consider the Valley to be irreplaceable.[27] Large undeveloped tracts of land in Coyote Valley provide habitat for a wide variety of species to move between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range, supporting healthy wildlife populations.[28]

Unfortunately, agricultural and urban development in the Valley have caused precipitous habitat loss and fragmentation, which in turn has threatened the endemic populations of numerous rare animals and other wildlife.[29] These include mountain lions, Tule elk, black-tailed deer, American badgers, coyotes, gray foxes, and bobcats.[30] Clear scientific evidence shows that species are becoming isolated in the Santa Cruz Mountains due to the lack of connectivity, which increases the risk of inbreeding and could lead to physical abnormalities and ultimately extinction within their range.[31]

O1-11

Since most of the connections for wildlife between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range have been severed due to development, maintaining existing remnant connections for wildlife between the two areas is critical to sustaining the health of wildlife populations.[32] The Project threatens to further fragment the Valley's remaining wildlife connectivity areas.

The proposed Grove Terminal site occupies a critical area for wildlife movement in Coyote Valley. CDFW has designated the area along Monterey Road that

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[26] Linkage Report at 7.

[27] *Id.*

[28] Tanya Diamond & Ahiga Roger Snyder, *Coyote Valley Linkage Assessment Study Final Report 2015-2016* (Mar. 1, 2016) ("Linkage Assessment"), at 5, https://www.pfwildlife.com/_files/ugd/fa05b5_eb65e7ab46e2464d95cc84568e03d70c.pdf.

[29] Linkage Report at 7-8.

[30] *Id.*

[31] Linkage Assessment at 8.

[32] *Id.* at 8-9.

includes the proposed Grove Terminal site as an Essential Connectivity Area.[33] Coyote Creek, which runs just behind the proposed Grove Terminal site between Monterey Road and Highway 101, also serves as a critical wildlife movement corridor.[34] As shown in Figure 1 and in the Pathways Report, species such as bobcat and mountain lion frequent this area.[35] Evidence of black-tailed deer, coyote, and several other species killed along the stretch of Monterey Road near the proposed Grove Terminal site also shows that animals regularly use this area.[36]

O1-11 cont.

1. The DEIR applies the Wildlife Movement Threshold in a way that ignores potentially significant impacts.

The DEIR considers impacts to be significant under the Wildlife Movement Threshold if "a wildlife movement corridor would be interrupted by a feature that would physically block movement" or if "a suitable habitat . . . would be directly removed during construction or indirectly affected by construction noise or dust."[37] Because the Grove Terminal would be constructed entirely within the footprint of an existing fenced orchard, the DEIR concludes that the Project will have less than significant impacts on wildlife movement.[38] This approach ignores impacts to wildlife that do not traverse the orchard property itself, but instead use the corridor along Coyote Creek in close proximity to the proposed Grove Terminal site.

O1-12

Agencies cannot choose a threshold of significance that forecloses consideration of potentially significant environmental impacts.[39] Here, the DEIR's chosen threshold for analyzing impacts looks only at whether a Project feature will directly block wildlife movement, whether construction would physically remove suitable

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[33] DEIR at 3.4-22.

[34] Linkage Assessment at 20.

[35] *See* Laurel E.K. Serieys & Christopher Wilmers, *Coyote Valley Bobcat Habitat Preference and Connectivity Report* (June 2019), at 9-10, https://www.openspaceauthority.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/COVA_FinalReport_05072019_sm.pdf.

[36] Linkage Report at 18.

[37] DEIR at 3.4-55.

[38] DEIR at 3.4-56–3.4.-57.

[39] *Sierra Watch v. County of Placer* (2021) 69 Cal.App.5th 86, 107; *Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency* (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th 1099, 1109.

habitat, or whether construction noise or dust would indirectly affect suitable habitat.[40] But this limited approach ignores potentially significant impacts on wildlife movement in the vicinity of the Grove Terminal site that can occur in numerous other ways.

For example, the Grove Terminal site is currently an orchard, a natural space with no industrial activity. Converting the site from an orchard to industrial use will inevitably result in increased human activity on and around the property, resulting in potential impacts to animals that traverse through the Coyote Creek wildlife corridor. The noise and light generated during construction, along with operational noise and light following the installation of the terminal, will also have an impact that extends beyond the boundaries of the property.[41] For example, wildlife studies have shown that mountain lions and other wildlife reacted strongly when exposed to recordings of human noise, and mountain lions give a wide berth to types of human development that provide a consistent source of human interference.[42]

Wildlife movement in the Coyote Creek corridor, as discussed above, is already significantly constricted by development. Under CEQA, the significance of an activity "depends upon the setting," and any additional minor impacts to an already-stressed area may still be significant.[43] Even small changes in the environment could have significant impacts on Coyote Valley.

The DEIR thus violates CEQA because it applies a threshold that ignores these potentially significant impacts on wildlife movement.

O1-12 cont.

2. The DEIR's conclusion of less than significant impacts on wildlife movement lacks substantial evidentiary support.

Even using the DEIR's chosen methodology, substantial evidence does not support a conclusion of less than significant impacts on wildlife movement.[44]

O1-13

[40] DEIR at 3.4-55.

[41] Attachment A, at 9-10.

[42] Attachment B, at 6; Attachment A, at 9-10.

[43] *Kings County Farm Bureau v. City of Hanford* (1990) 221 Cal.App.3d 692, 718.

[44] *Protect the Historic Amador Waterways,* 116 Cal.App.4th at 1106 (holding that an agency EIR was inadequate under the substantial evidence test because it failed to adequately explain why a project did not constitute a significant effect on biological resources or hydrology).

The DEIR alleges that the existing fencing around the orchard where the Grove Terminal will be built does not allow wildlife to move throughout the property.[45] Substantial evidence does not support that assertion.

Substantial evidence requires "facts, reasonable assumptions predicated upon facts, and expert opinion supported by facts," but not "[a]rgument, speculation, unsubstantiated opinion, [or] clearly erroneous" evidence.[46] Here, the EIR's assertion that the existing fencing around the orchard property is impermeable is "clearly erroneous" and speculative.

A review of the fencing around the orchard property found a significant hole in the fencing.[47] Animals could easily make their way through this hole in the fence and utilize the orchard area for hunting, breeding, or shelter. In addition, telemetry data shows that at least one bobcat has been present within the fence lines of the orchard.[48]

Since substantial evidence does not support the conclusion that the existing fencing around the orchard is impermeable, the DEIR's conclusion is inadequate and violates CEQA.

O1-13 cont.

3. The DEIR ignores the Project's potentially significant noise impacts on the neighboring blue heron rookery.

In addition to wildlife movement concerns, the DEIR fails to acknowledge the presence of a blue heron rookery and the impacts that construction noise will have on their nesting habitat. The blue heron rookery is within 600 feet of the proposed Grove Terminal site.[49]

Under CEQA, if an EIR does not accurately describe the existing environmental setting, it cannot accurately represent how the Project would impact biological resources in that area.[50] Here, the DEIR fails to acknowledge the existence of

O1-14

[45] DEIR at 3.4-57.

[46] CEQA Guidelines § 15384(a), (b).

[47] Attachment A, at 4.

[48] Attachment A, at 3.

[49] Attachment A, at 14.

[50] *See* CEQA Guidelines § 15125 (EIR "must include a description of the environment in the vicinity of the project, from both a local and a regional perspective"); *EPIC,* 131 Cal.App.3d at 354.

the blue heron rookery within the vicinity of the Grove Terminal site, despite its known presence in the area. As a result, the DEIR does not analyze the Project's impacts on the rookery at all. This deficiency renders the DEIR inadequate as a matter of law. O1-14 cont.

This failure to describe the environmental setting means that there is a failure to describe potential impacts to the blue heron population. Here, impacts on the blue heron rookery from noise will cause significant impacts.[51] A significant increase in noise can disrupt the breeding and nesting habits of the herons, displacing them from the nearby habitat.[52] A failure to consider these impacts renders the DEIR invalid as a matter of law. O1-15 O1-16

If the Project moves forward with the proposed Grove Terminal as planned, the Project must mitigate impacts by halting construction during the heron's nesting and breeding season to reduce impacts to less than significant levels.[53]

4. The DEIR fails to properly consider the Project's cumulative impacts.

The DEIR does not consider the cumulative impact of the Project combined with the High-Speed Rail Authority project to install new rail lines in the area and its mitigation strategy.

A cumulative impact is one "created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts."[54] For a specific project, it is the "change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects."[55] O1-17

Environmental impacts of probable future projects must be analyzed because "consideration of the effects of a project or projects as if no others existed would encourage the piecemeal approval of several projects that, taken together, could overwhelm the natural environment and disastrously overburden the man-made

[51] Attachment A, at 14.

[52] *Id.*

[53] *Id.*

[54] CEQA Guidelines § 15130(a)(1)

[55] *Id.* § 15355(b).

infrastructure and vital community services. This would effectively defeat CEQA's mandate to review the actual effect of the projects upon the environment."[56]

The High Speed Rail Authority's San José to Merced Project Section will provide high speed rail service from San José to Merced, and is an instrumental part of California's plan to provide intercity, high-speed service on more than 800 miles of track throughout the state.[57] The High Speed Rail alignments would follow the Monterey Road and Highway 101 transportation corridor to a dedicated rail station in Gilroy, including passing through the Coyote Valley.[58] As a part of the mitigation strategy, the High Speed Rail Authority committed to designing "wildlife crossings to facilitate wildlife movement" in coordination with wildlife agencies and local stakeholders, including OSA and POST.[59]

As a result of this coordination, the High Speed Rail Authority ("HSRA") has developed plans to place a wildlife crossing within a few hundred feet of the Grove Terminal location.[60] This wildlife crossing for the HSRA project would increase wildlife traffic within the immediate vicinity of the Grove Terminal, and its success is directly tied to the ability of wildlife to freely use the corridor.

The DEIR ignores the Project's impacts on the wildlife crossing for the High Speed Rail project, even though the proposed location of the Grove Terminal will effectively nullify the key purpose of this crossing—to attract wildlife and ensure their safe transit across the High Speed Rail Corridor and Highway 101. Even apparently small impacts from the Grove Terminal location will be magnified by the Project's proximity to the wildlife crossing. For example, construction noise, lighting and ongoing operations at the site will discourage wildlife from traversing the area in the vicinity of the Grove Terminal and would effectively nullify essential mitigation measures for the High Speed

O1-17 cont.

[56] *Golden Door Properties, LLC v. County of San Diego* (2020) 50 Cal.App.5th 467, 527 (quoting *Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation v. County of Los Angeles* (1986) 177 Cal.App.3d 300, 306).

[57] California High-Speed Rail Authority, *San José to Merced Project Section: Final Environmental Impact Report* (Feb. 2022) ("HSRA FEIR"), at S-3, https://hsr.ca.gov/programs/environmental-planning/project-section-environmental-documents-tier-2/san-jose-to-merced-project-section-final-environmental-impact-report-environmental-impact-statement/.

[58] *Id.* at 1-11.

[59] *Id.* at 3.7-195–3.7-196.

[60] HSRA FEIR at 3.7-195.

Rail project. The DEIR also fails to recognize the combined impacts of the High Speed Rail project and the Grove Terminal location, even though both will affect wildlife movement.

The DEIR's failure to consider the combined effect of these projects together violates CEQA. Since the DEIR did not include "sufficient detail to enable those who did not participate in its preparation to understand and to consider meaningfully the issues the proposed project raises," the DEIR violates CEQA.[61]

O1-17 cont.

C. The DEIR conflicts with numerous local policies designed to protect and enhance the Coyote Valley wildlife corridor.

The DEIR concludes that the Project does not significantly conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.[62] However, the DEIR only addresses potential inconsistencies with the City of San José General Plan, Santa Clara County General Plan, and local tree ordinances.[63] It fails to acknowledge important legislative enactments and projects that are designed to support wildlife linkages and protect biological resources in the area.

In 2019, Governor Newsom signed AB 948 and recognized the Coyote Valley as a "resource of statewide significance."[64] The Act declared that the valley "is in need of restoration, conservation, and enhancement."[65] The Legislature highlighted the importance of the region for wildlife, noting that "Coyote Valley provides a critical corridor for wildlife migrating between the Santa Cruz Mountains and Diablo Range."[66] The area is also in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Movement Barriers Priority List and listed as a priority remediation location by Caltrans, indicating that it is a critical barrier to wildlife connectivity.[67]

O1-18

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[61] *Sierra Club v. County of Fresno* (2018) 6 Cal. 5th 502, 510.

[62] DEIR at 3.4-57.

[63] *Id.* at 3.4-57–3.4.58.

[64] Public Resources Code § 35180.

[65] *Id.* § 35182(b)

[66] *Id.* § 35182(d).

[67] California Dep't of Fish and Wildlife, *Restoring California's Wildlife Connectivity* 2022 (Dec. 2022), at 4, https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=204648&inline; Caltrans,

In support of the powers granted by AB 948, the Coyote Valley Wildlife Connectivity Planning Project ("CVWCPP"), being led by POST, has identified potential wildlife crossings and other wildlife corridor enhancements along Monterey Road and Highway 101.[68] The CVWCPP has secured a $5M planning grant from the California Wildlife Conservation Board to design and environmentally clear one or more wildlife crossings in Coyote Valley.[69] The CVWCPP has completed a feasibility study for the Monterey Road and Rail Corridor and is advancing planning for a wildlife crossing at the Fisher Creek/Coyote Creek confluence. The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority ("VTA") is the project delivery partner for the project, leading planning and eventual construction for the wildlife crossing and future crossings. In addition to POST and VTA, the CVWCPP team includes multiple government and non-profit organizations, including the City of San José, Caltrans, California High-Speed Rail Authority, OSA, and others.

O1-18 cont.

The CVWCPP work is already underway. POST and other organizations have coordinated multiple studies and assessments to support additional wildlife linkages in Coyote Valley, and wildlife crossing locations have been identified.[70] The DEIR fails to disclose how the Project may negatively impact the WCPP, a critical initiative that furthers local policies.

Since the DEIR did not include "sufficient detail to enable those who did not participate in its preparation to understand and to consider meaningfully the issues the proposed project raises," the DEIR is unlawful.[71]

Caltrans Wildlife Connectivity Program Report (July 1, 2024), at 27, https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/env/caltrans-wildlife-connectivity-report-ally.pdf.

[68] Marian Vernon, *Restoring Wildlife Connectivity in Coyote Valley*, POST (Aug. 22, 2023), https://www.scv-habitatagency.org/DocumentCenter/View/1880.

[69] California Grants Portal, *Wildlife Corridor and Fish Passage*, https://www.grants.ca.gov/grants/wildlife-corridor-and-fish-passage/ (last updated June 11, 2024).

[70] *See, e.g.*, RFP S25096: US 101/Monterey Road Wildlife Crossings, Appendix B1—Feasibility Plan and Report for Monterey Road Connectivity Improvements (June 12, 2025), at 4, https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/vta/projects/171738/downloads.

[71] *Sierra Club,* 6 Cal. 5th at 510.

II. The DEIR fails to disclose significant agricultural impacts.

Santa Clara County has seen substantial conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses since the 1950s.[72] Just in the last 20 years, farmland has declined by 45 percent.[73] Half of the county's remaining farmland is at risk of conversion over the next 30 years.[74]

The Legislature has repeatedly recognized agricultural lands' value to food production, open space, and California's economic health[75] and has particularly emphasized CEQA's importance to mitigating the loss of agricultural land.[76] Under CEQA, a project will cause a significant impact if it converts farmland to non-agricultural uses.[77] Here, the DEIR discloses that the Project will convert approximately 14 acres of Prime Farmland at the Grove Terminal site to non-agricultural uses.[78] The DEIR concludes, however, that LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.2-1, which calls for LS Power to provide a financial donation to purchase agricultural conservation easements in Santa Clara County, will reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.[79]

O1-19

This analysis violates CEQA. Agricultural easements, "operating by themselves, . . . do not replace the converted [agricultural] land or otherwise result in no net loss of agricultural land."[80] As the court explained in *King & Gardiner Farms, LLC v. County of Kern*, "entering into a binding agricultural conservation easement does not create new agricultural land to replace the agricultural land being converted to other uses."[81] A conservation easement prevents the future conversion of the agricultural land subject to the easement, but it does not make up for the loss caused by the project itself.[82]

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[72] *See* DEIR at 3.2-1.

[73] DEIR at 3.2-2.

[74] *Id.*

[75] Gov. Code § 51220; Civ. Code §§ 815; Pub. Resources Code §§ 10201, 10331.

[76] Stats. 1993, ch. 812, § 1, p. 4428.

[77] CEQA Guidelines, Appx. G, § II(a); *see* DEIR at 3.2-15.

[78] DEIR at 3.2-16. Prime Farmland is "[f]armland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production." DEIR at 3.2-7.

[79] DEIR 3.2-17.

[80] *V Lions Farming, LLC v. County of Kern* (2024) 100 Cal.App.5th 412, 437.

[81] (2020) 45 Cal.App.5th 814, 875,

[82] *Id.*

Thus, LS Power's purchase of agricultural easements cannot reduce the Project's impacts to less than significant levels. The DEIR thus fails as an informational document because it fails to disclose the significant agricultural impacts that the Project will continue to have, even after implementation of LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.2-1.[83] O1-19 cont.

III. The Commission should adopt Alternative Combination 1, which will reduce or avoid every environmental impact compared to the proposed Project.

Under CEQA, public agencies may not approve projects if there are feasible alternatives that would substantially lessen the project's significant environmental effects.[84] For this reason, the discussion of alternatives lies at "[t]he core of an EIR" and "must contain analysis sufficient to allow informed decision making."[85] Moreover, an agency must support its rejection of an alternative both by an "explanation . . . sufficient to enable meaningful public participation and criticism" and by substantial evidence in the record.[86] O1-20

Here, the DEIR identifies three feasible alternatives to the proposed Project that meet most basic Project objectives and avoid or substantially reduce one or more significant environmental impacts.[87] The first of these alternatives—Grove Terminal Alternative 3—would co-locate the Grove Terminal at PG&E's Metcalf Substation, rather than locating the terminal south of Metcalf Substation in the middle of an active wildlife movement area on Prime Farmland.[88] The other two alternatives would change the alignment of the proposed 320 kV transmission line connecting the Skyline and Grove terminals.[89] The DEIR also considers combinations of these three alternatives.[90] The alternative identified as Alternative Combination 1 combines the Project's proposed alignment for the 320 kV transmission line connecting Skyline and Grove terminals with

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[83] *See King & Gardiner Farms*, 45 Cal.App.5th at 876.

[84] Pub. Res. Code §§ 21002, 21081(a).

[85] *Citizens of Goleta Valley v. Board of Supervisors* (1990) 52 Cal.3d 553, 564; *Laurel Heights Improvement Assn. v. Regents of University of California* (1988) 47 Cal.3d 376, 380.

[86] *Save Round Valley Alliance v. County of Inyo* (2007) 157 Cal.App.4th 1437, 1458, 1461-62.

[87] *See* DEIR at 4-5, 4-21–4-29.

[88] *Id.* at 4-22.

[89] *Id.* at 4-27–4-28.

[90] *Id.* at 4-29–4-31.

Grove Terminal Alternative 3.[91] The DEIR identifies Alternative Combination 1 as the environmentally superior alternative.[92]

The DEIR does not identify a single environmental impact for which Alternative Combination 1 will cause more environmental harm than the proposed Project. The DEIR acknowledges that Alternative Combination 1 would eliminate or reduce the Project's potentially significant impacts on aesthetics, agricultural and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, energy, geology, soils, and paleontological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, recreation, transportation, utilities, and wildfire.[93] And it states that Alternative Combination 1 would have the same impact as the proposed Project on cultural resources, tribal cultural resources, and utilities.[94]

Critically, Alternative Combination 1 will entirely avoid the significant environmental impacts to biological and agricultural resources identified in this letter. Studies have shown that one of the most effective ways to minimize light and noise impacts to wildlife is to "focus development where infrastructure is already present."[95] Because this alternative would locate the Grove Terminal at PG&E's Metcalf Substation, the Grove Terminal would not interfere with the planned wildlife crossing over Monterey Road in close proximity to the proposed site south of Metcalf Substation. It would also not disturb the blue heron nesting site immediately to the east of the proposed Grove terminal site. Further, because Metcalf Substation is already an industrial site, locating the Grove Terminal there would not convert any farmland to non-agricultural uses.[96]

The DEIR contains several inconsistent statements regarding certain environmental impacts for Alternative Combination 1, which must be corrected. The DEIR first states that Alternative Combination 1 "would potentially result in greater environmental impacts related to cultural resources, tribal cultural resources, and

O1-20 cont.

[91] *Id.* at 4-29. Alternative Combination 1 is therefore functionally identical to Grove Terminal Alternative 3. The DEIR's analysis and conclusions for Grove Terminal Alternative 3 apply equally to Alternative Combination 1.

[92] *Id.* at 4-32–4-33.

[93] *Id.* at 4-32.

[94] *Id.*

[95] Attachment B, at 9.

[96] DEIR at 4-32.

utilities."[97] However, the DEIR later acknowledges that Alternative Combination 1 would have similar impacts for all tribal cultural resources and utilities.[98]

In fact, with respect to cultural and tribal cultural resources, the DEIR states that constructing the Grove Terminal at Metcalf Substation carries the same risk of uncovering tribal human remains as constructing this terminal at the proposed site south of the substation.[99] By the DEIR's own terms, the impacts of the Project and Alternative Combination 1 are therefore functionally the same with respect to cultural and tribal cultural resources. With respect to utilities, Alternative Combination 1 will have *lesser* impacts because, by placing the Grove Terminal at Metcalf Substation, this alternative would result in shorter lengths for both the 320 kV Grove to Skyline and 500 kV Metcalf to Grove transmission lines.[100]

For this same reason, Alternative Combination 1 should also have lesser impacts on tribal cultural resources. This alternative will completely eliminate the 1.2 miles of trenching required to underground the 500 kV Metcalf to Grove transmission line.[101] It would similarly reduce the length of the Grove to Skyline 320 kV transmission line by 1.2 miles. Alternative Combination 1 will thus require less trenching and excavation, which means less risk of uncovering human remains that may be present in the area. The DEIR should be updated to reflect this analysis and conclusion.

O1-20 cont.

In addition to reducing or avoiding every environmental impact identified in the DEIR, Alternative Combination 1 is eminently feasible to implement. Construction for this alternative will take approximately the same time to complete as the Project.[102] This alternative would also require significantly less material to be excavated and disposed of than the Project.[103] PG&E would need to relocate the existing "yard" at Metcalf Substation where the Grove Terminal would be located under Alternative Combination 1.[104] But PG&E has already identified two properties that could replace the

O1-21

[97] *Id.*

[98] *See id* ("[Alternative Combination 1] would have *similar* impacts related to tribal cultural resources . . . and to utilities as the Project." (emphasis added)).

[99] *See id.* 4-40, 4-54.

[100] *See id.* at 4-54–4-55.

[101] DEIR at 4-22.

[102] DEIR at 4-25.

[103] *Id.*

[104] *Id.*

yard—a 3.5-acre site in South San José and a roughly 8-acre site in Gilroy.[105] In fact, PG&E recently procured the 3.5-acre site in South San José.[106]

In sum, Alternative Combination 1 would avoid or reduce every type of environmental impact analyzed in the DEIR. Further, the record shows that this alternative is just as feasible, if not more feasible, to build than the Project. Under CEQA, the Commission must therefore adopt this alternative.[107]

O1-21 cont.

IV. Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, the DEIR violates CEQA in numerous respects, and the Project cannot be approved as proposed. OSA urges the Commission to instead approve Alternative Combination 1, the environmentally superior alternative, which will avoid the significant impacts detailed in this letter and reduce or avoid every other impact identified in the EIR. This sensible alternative will allow Santa Clara County to fulfill its power needs while continuing to preserve Coyote Valley as a critical ecological resource connecting millions of acres of core habitat and natural areas in the Santa Cruz and Diablo Range mountains.

Very truly yours,

SHUTE, MIHALY & WEINBERGER LLP

Ellison Folk

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[105] *Id.*

[106] *See* George Avalos, *PG&E Buys San José Building to Bolster South Bay Operations*, SiliconValley.com (July 29, 2025), https://www.siliconvalley.com/2025/07/23/san-jose-pge-property-economy-build-electric-gas-energy-real-estate/ (discussing PG&E's purchase of the 3.5-acre property at 1851 South Seventh Street in San José).

[107] Pub. Res. Code §§ 21002, 21081(a).

ATTACHMENT A

Tanya Diamond, Co-Owner & Wildlife Ecologist.

MS in Conservation Biology and Ecology.

Contact info: tanya@pfwildlife.com

Phone: (408) 891-9833.

Letter of Regarding: LS Power Grid California's Power Santa Clara Project DEIR.

Date: August 21, 2025

To: Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP

From: Tanya Diamond, co-owner and wildlife ecologist at Pathways for Wildlife.

Below are our comments regarding statements within the LS Power Grid California's Power Santa Clara Project DEIR about the impacts on wildlife connectivity in the proposed project area and the impacts of the proposed project within the regional Santa Cruz Mountains to Diablo Range: Coyote Valley Wildlife Corridor/Linkage.

Main issue #1: The DEIR states that the Impact 3.4-4: The Project would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.

Comment #1: The statement is incorrect and the claim that the project would not interfere with wildlife movement or impact migratory corridors is false. From 2017-2019, Pathways for Wildlife conducted the Coyote Valley Bobcat and Gray Fox Habitat Use and Connectivity Study with the UCSC Puma Project. We conducted a bobcat telemetry study in which we collared 26 bobcats with GPS collars to monitor and record their movement to identify habitats being used as wildlife corridors/habitat linkages along with identifying which routes various species were using to travel across the landscape (Serieys, L. E. K., & Wilmers, C. (2019), Coyote Valley Linkage Assessment Study 2015-2016 Annual Report).

This data collection resulted in a comprehensive understanding of the regional corridor/linkage that wildlife are utilizing to travel across the valley floor. A critical part of this wildlife corridor/ linkage is Coyote Creek County Park and adjacent properties, such as the Grove Terminal location, which is currently an orchard. In Figure 1, we recorded 7 bobcats routinely traveling along Coyote Creek and adjacent habitats. **A collared bobcat,**

B23M, traveled within the proposed development area at the Grove Terminal location (Figure 1). Furthermore, multiple species of wildlife have also been recorded on Monterey Road at the Grove Terminal location (Figure 1).

This is why we claim that the statement: Project would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites, is false. Wildlife have been documented utilizing the proposed development habitat at the Grove Terminal and routinely are traveling through Coyote Creek and adjacent habitats, which are critical components of the cross-valley wildlife corridor for multiple species.

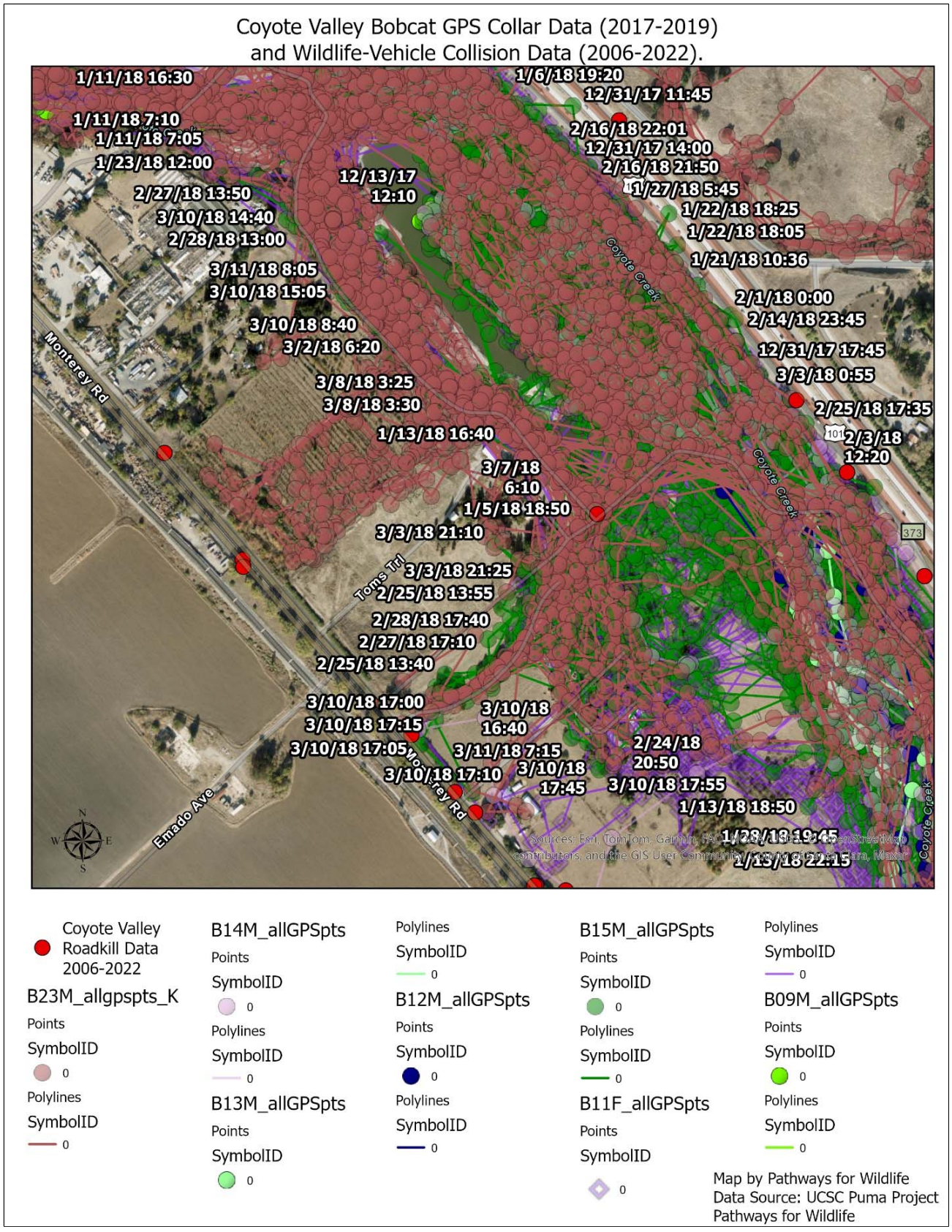

Figure 1: Bobcat GPS collar data within the vicinity of the Grove terminal location.

The DEIR states that the property is impermeable to wildlife movement because of a chain link fence that is set up along the entire perimeter of the property. However, upon inspection in August 2025, there is a large hole in the fence line.

Comment 2: From 2021-2022, Pathways for Wildlife conducted the North Coyote Valley Road Ecology Study. We monitored multiple fence lines along Santa Teresa Blvd. and Bailey Ave. in Coyote Valley. **The camera data documented that multiple species, including deer, were traveling through a hole in the chain link fence at Santa Teresa Blvd. by Fisher Creek (Figure 2).**

Question 1 & 2 regarding the fencing: How did the DEIR come to the conclusion that chain link fencing is acting as an impediment? What data were collected to support this conclusion?

Comment 3: We have documented wildlife movement through fences using camera data, see wildlife movement through chain link fence at Fisher Creek at Santa Teresa Blvd. in Coyote Valley in Figure 2. These are the type of data that need to be documented to warrant or prove the comment that the fencing is an impediment.

Question 3: Will the final DEIR include adequate wildlife surveys to make the statement that the fence is impermeable to wildlife movement?

Figure 2. Deer traveling through a hole in the chain link fence at Santa Teresa Blvd. by Fisher Creek.

Mountain lion candidate listing

Currently the Central Coast North population of mountain lions is under review as a candidate species for listing. **With this candidate review, mountain lions have all the protections of a listed species and all environmental impact reports (DEIR/FEIRs) created for proposed developments, must include the impacts to mountain lions along with an impact analysis.**

Comment 4: The DEIR did not include an impact analysis or impacts on mountain lion movement or loss of habitat. All DEIRs must treat mountain lions as a listed species and include a CEQA analysis of impacts on mountain lion habitat loss and impacts to the population during this candidacy listing period.

The Central Coast North population consists of Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties (Figure 3). In 2018, a publication revealed that the Santa Cruz Mountain lion population has an effective population size of 16.6, while an effective population of 50 is needed to prevent inbreeding depression in the short term (Figure 4). The loss of wildlife corridor habitat at the Grove Terminal location will further constrain the Santa Cruz Mountains-Diablo Range linkage as an impact to regional wildlife connectivity.

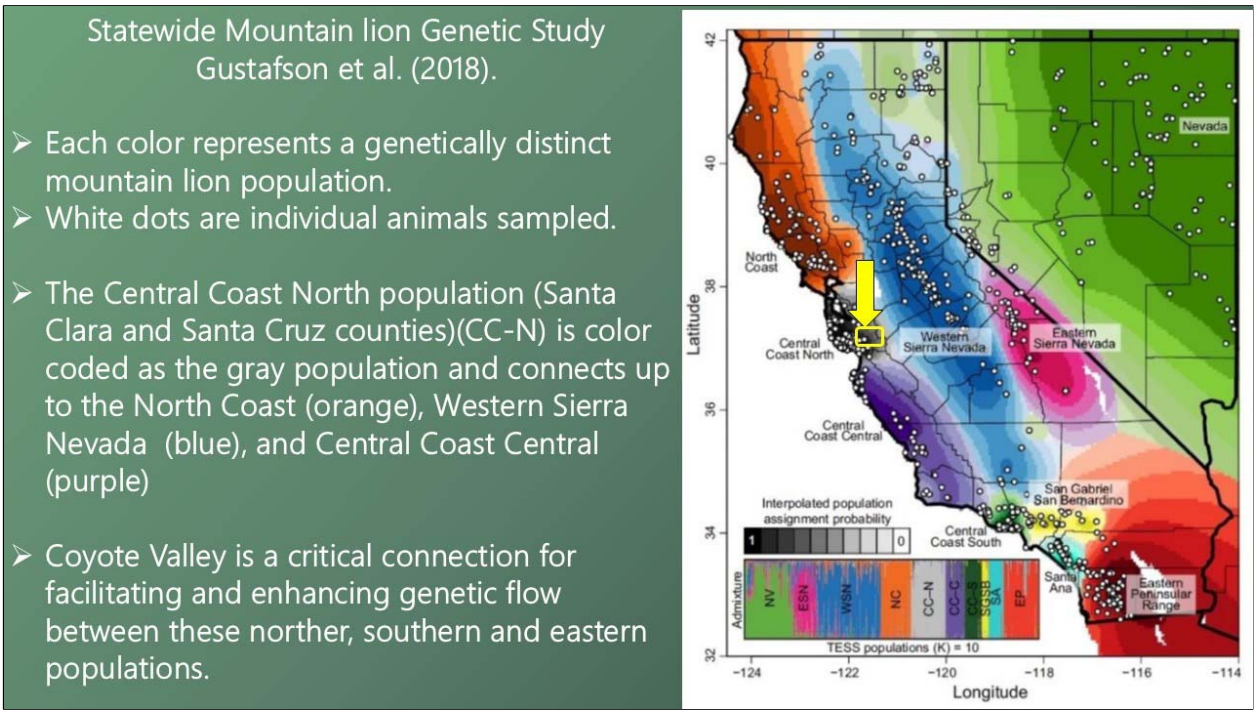

Figure 3. Coyote Valley Wildlife Corridor in relation to mountain lion genetics and regional connectivity.

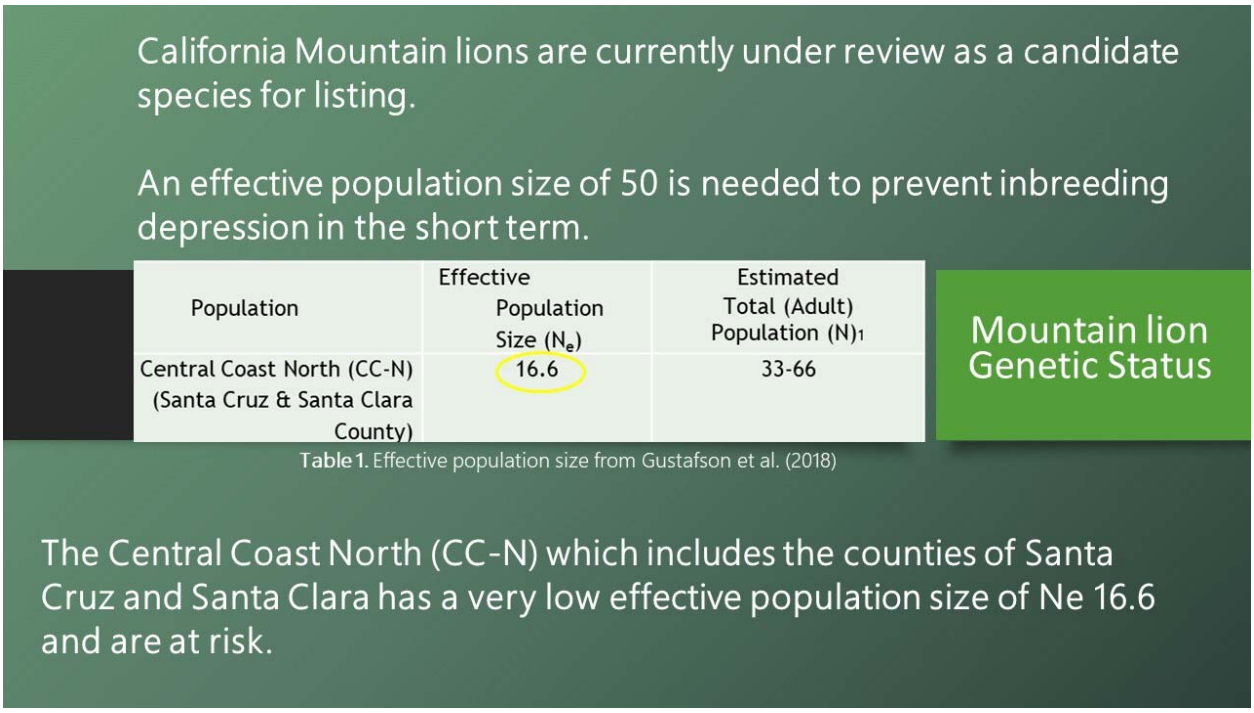

Figure 4. Mountain lion candidate listing and Santa Clara County genetic status information.

As a candidate for listing under the California Endangered Species Act, mountain lions in the Central Coast will require additional consideration and mitigation to adequately mitigate proposed development project impacts on this species, which is vulnerable to population declines due to reduced genetic diversity as a result of habitat fragmentation (Gustafson et al. 2018, Yap, TA, et al. 2019).

It is critical to provide connectivity between the Santa Cruz Mountains and within the Diablo Range to facilitate gene flow for mountain lions and other species to keep the greater metapopulations intact and healthy.

Impacts to Mountain lion movement by the proposed Grove Terminal site.

The location of the Grove Terminal is within the core of the Santa Cruz Mountains to the Diablo Linkage within Coyote Valley (Figure 5). At this location, there have been three records of mountain lions traveling adjacent to the Grove Terminal location (Figure 6). These data document mountain lion use of this section of the wildlife corridor.

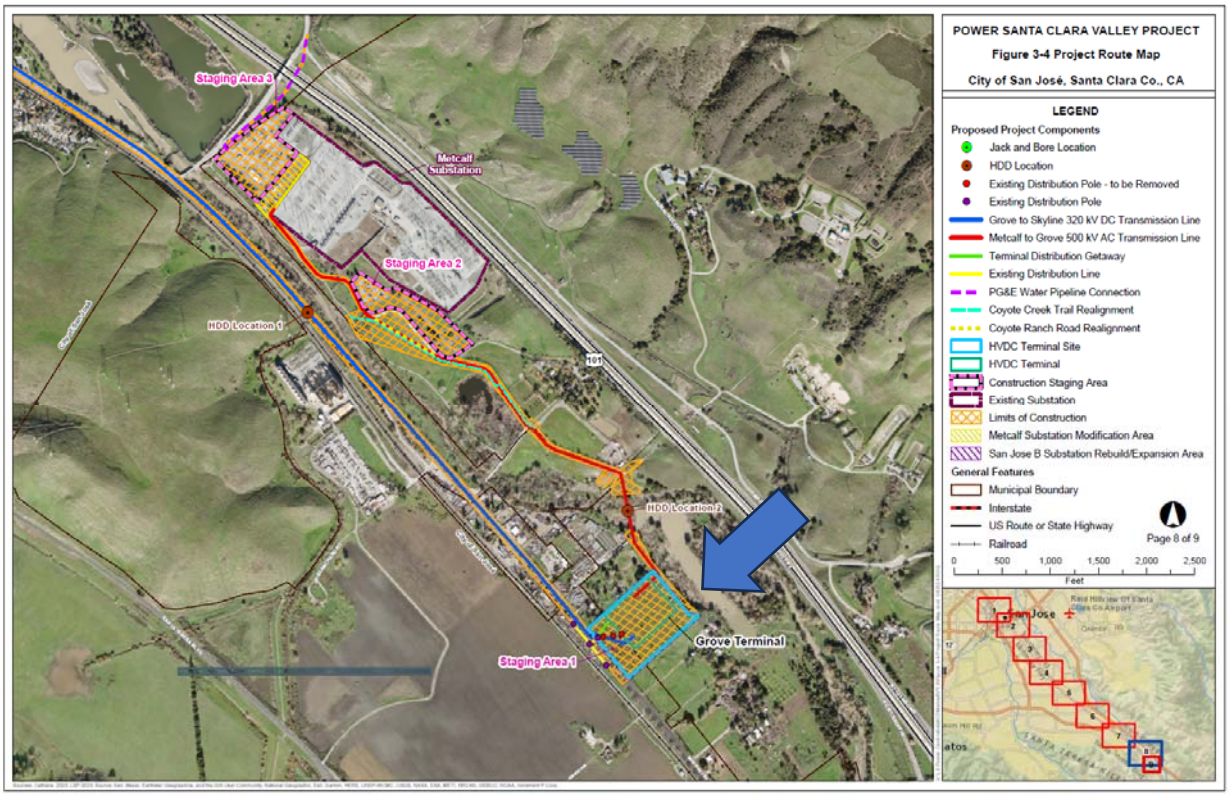

Figure 5. Grove Terminal location within the proposed LS Power Grid California's Power development footprint.

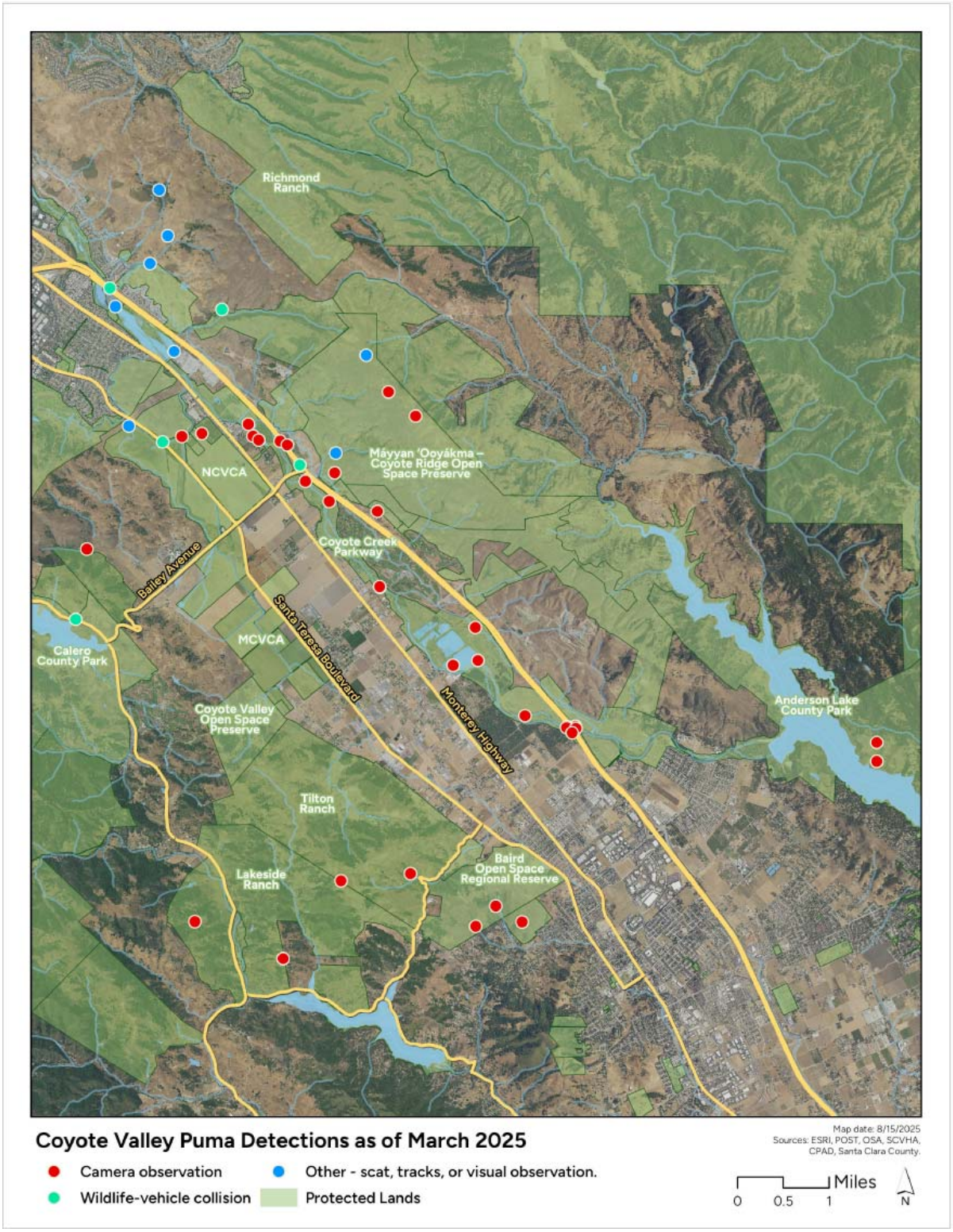

Figure 6. Aggregated mountain lion occurrences in southern Santa Clara County, specific to the Coyote Valley region. Occurrences include camera trap, wildlife-vehicle collision, wildlife sign (scat/tracks), or visual observation from multiple studies and other verified sources.

Comment 5: The DEIR states that: Impact 3.13-1: Project construction would generate a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance.

The mitigation measures only include modification of evening and nighttime work to reduce construction noise. However, we have recorded mountain lions traveling during the day through Coyote Creek (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Mountain lion in Coyote Creek County Park by Golf Course Drive on 7-25-18.

Mountain lions have been documented to be sensitive to noise and light and will avoid human disturbance (Suraci et al. 2019). Studies also show that mountain lions are sensitive to human disturbance, including both human development and human activity, and may adjust their behavior in response. A study conducted in the Santa Cruz Mountains found that mountain lions avoided human voices and moved more cautiously when hearing humans, suggesting that passive recreation as well as human development may impact mountain lion behavior (Suraci et al. 2019). This study included employing playback of human and frog sounds, Suraci et al. (2019) found that mountain lions avoided entering the 1 km2 study site when human voices were broadcast from a grid of speakers at 80 dB at 1m.

Another study suggested that reproductive behaviors (communications and denning) require a buffer from human development at least four times larger than non-reproductive behaviors (movement and feeding), and mountain lions give a wide berth to types of human development that provide a consistent source of human interference, such as neighborhoods (Wilmers et al. 2013).

Lastly, a study conducted in the Santa Cruz mountains quantified the energetic cost of movement using GPS collars mounted with accelerometers and found that animals expend more energy moving near human development. More specifically, they found pumas moving through identical physical terrain in moderately developed exurban habitat would spend 13% more calories than if moving through the same terrain in wildland habitat (Nickel et al. 2021).

The dynamic between larger predators and prey may be altered by artificial light at night (ALAN). In an analysis of GPS data collected from mountain lions (Puma concolor) across the Sierra Nevada and Great Basin, Ditmer et al. (2021) found that mule deer (Odocoileus hemionus) were more active at night in areas where ALAN was greater compared to areas where it was less prevalent. Although mountain lions still hunted deer within areas of high ALAN, they preferentially selected to make kills in the darkest parts of those areas (Light, Noise, and Development Impacts on Wildlife Literature Review and Recommendations, prepared by HT Harvey for POST, 2024).

The impact of ALAN, noise, and development may vary depending upon the level of exposure over time. Acute but temporary exposure may result in strong momentary responses, whereas consistent exposure may cause more permanent changes in behavior, including temporal shifts in when wildlife use habitat, habituation, increased alertness, or avoidance (Light, Noise, and Development Impacts on Wildlife Literature Review and Recommendations, prepared by HT Harvey for POST, 2024).

Question 4: Will there be mitigations included for reducing daytime construction noise levels that will not impact mountain lion movement through Coyote Creek, which is adjacent to the Grove terminal location, where mountain lions have been documented traveling along (Figure 6)?

The High Speed Rail (HSR) DEIR also did not include an impact analysis on mountain lions. With the mountain lion candidacy review for listing, HSR then had to do an additional DEIR and CEQA analysis for mountain lions.

The CA Department of Fish & Wildlife wrote a comment letter, which includes the following information, that applies to this proposed development and DEIR and comments that the proposed project might anticipate receiving from CDFW regarding the impacts to mountain lions:

1. CDFW offers the following comments and recommendations to assist the HSR Authority in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the Project's significant, or potentially significant, direct and indirect impacts on mountain lions.

2. The RDEIR/SDEIS does not address the Project related impacts of potentially worsening gene flow disruption between these subpopulations, nor does it address how impacts to the population genetic source would impact the subpopulations.

3. Highway 101 is a significant barrier for mountain lion movement between the CC-N and CC-C subpopulations and the Project will very likely further compound this issue absent conservation strategies to ensure mountain lion movement opportunities. Opportunities for the Project to enhance other nearby areas and facilitate, design, and fund movement opportunities and wildlife corridor repairs or enhancement should be pursued as mitigation strategies.

4. Because the RDEIR/SDEIS identifies the potential for mountain lion to occur within the Project footprint, CDFW recommends conducting the following evaluation of the Project, updating the RDEIR/SDEIS to include the following measures, and that these measures be made conditions of approval for the Project. CDFW recommends quantitative and enforceable measures that will reduce the impacts to less than significant levels. (Please see comment letter for these measures).

5. CDFW believes the proposed ratios of 2:1 for permanent impacts on breeding/foraging habitat and high priority foraging and dispersal habitat; and 1:1 for low priority foraging and dispersal habitat do not sufficiently account for loss of habitat and is not well supported based on the RDEIR/SDEIS analysis of the impacts, which was a coarse level spatial modeling exercise. Overall, the analysis of direct, indirect, permanent, and temporal impacts appears to be underestimated, including the impact to loss of gene flow between subpopulations and impacts to ESUs due to the loss of connectivity.

6. Comment 42: APPENDIX 3.7-F: SUPPLEMENTAL ARTIFICIAL LIGHT ANALYSIS ON TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE SPECIES 1.5

Question 5: Will the final FEIR include an adequate analysis of the proposed development impacts on mountain lion connectivity within Coyote Valley along with the impacts to regional mountain lion corridor habitat?

Comment 6: Furthermore, Monterey Road has been identified by the CA Department of Fish & Game as a Terrestrial Wildlife Connectivity Barrier (Figure 8). Caltrans has also identified US 101 in Coyote Valley as a wildlife connectivity barrier . The state awarded WCB funds to POST to conduct a planning project to determine the best locations for installing wildlife crossings along these two barriers and to plan, design, and environmentally clear one or more crossing structures.

Through this analysis, the project area is within close vicinity to where multiple wildlife crossings are proposed to help address and mitigate the high rate of wildlife-vehicle collisions on this stretch of Monterey Road by Tulare Meadows, including at Tulare Meadows (within a couple hundred feet of the Grove Terminal location), Fisher Creek, and the base of Tulare Hill near Metcalf Rd (Monterey Road Feasibility and Existing Conditions Report, produced by Dudek 2025). POST is moving forward with planning, engineering design, and environmental review for a wildlife crossing at the Fisher Creek/Coyote Creek confluence at Monterey Rd, which is within a mile of the Grove Terminal location.

The Grove Terminal location would increase traffic volumes along Monterey Road, which could result in increasing wildlife vehicle collisions on this stretch of Monterey Road. The Grove Terminal location could also deter wildlife from using a future wildlife crossing at Tulare Meadows and deter wildlife from moving along Coyote Creek to access the planned wildlife crossing at Fisher Creek.

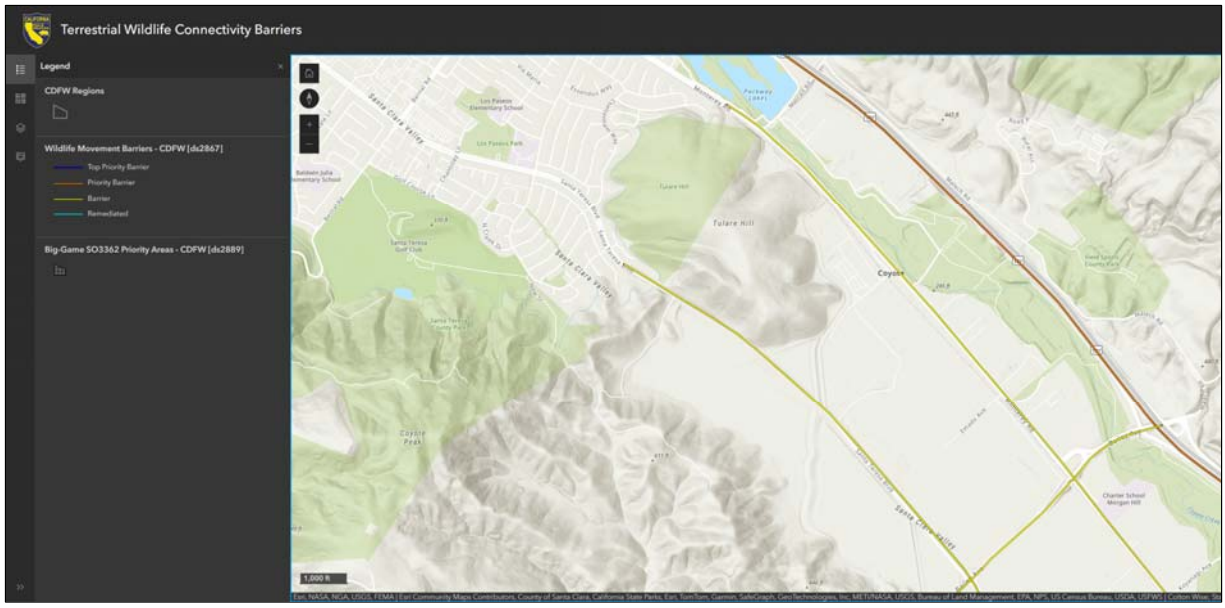

Figure 8. CA Department of Fish & Game as a Terrestrial Wildlife Connectivity Barrier map for Coyote Valley. https://cdfw.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=c4017d600c06489aa115b6c8196975c0

Question 6: Will the final FEIR include an adequate analysis and mitigation for the increased traffic volume along Monterey Road that could result in increasing wildlife-vehicle collisions?

Question 7: Will the final FEIR include an adequate analysis and mitigation for potentially negatively impacting a wildlife crossing and wildlife use of the crossing at the Grove Terminal location?

Comment 7: In summary, the proposed project will impact this functional part of the linkage in which multiple species of wildlife have been documented to travel through. The DIER has done no analysis and provided no mitigation measures for these impacts that have been included in this comment letter. This wildlife corridor has been well documented, heavily studied, and millions of dollars have been invested into protecting this wildlife linkage, included funding from the City of San Jose.

Question 8: Why were there no mitigation measures or impact analyses conducted for the wildlife corridor. Will the FDEIR include a proper analysis of the impacts to multiple species movement by the proposed development?

Comment 8: There is a blue heron rookery very close to the proposed Grove terminal property, located on the other side of Coyote Creek on the backside of the property as shown below in blue in Figure 9. The construction noise would affect this rookery. Mitigation measures to avoid impacting this rookery should include that construction at the Grove terminal site should not occur during the blue heron nesting season from approximately January 15 through the end of August.

Figure 9. Blue heron rookery circled in blue in relation to the Grove Terminal, circled in red.

Comment 9: We highly recommend avoiding development and conversion of the orchard at the Grove Terminal site and moving the proposed development to the already existing PG&E substation to significantly reduce impacts on the wildlife corridor.

Sincerely,

Tanya Diamond
Pathways for Wildlife

Literature Cited

Serieys, L. E. K., & Wilmers, C. (2019). Coyote Valley bobcat habitat preference and connectivity report. *Santa Cruz, California*.

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North Coyote Valley Road Ecology Study 2021-2022, produced by Pathways for Wildlife for the CA Department of Fish & Wildlife, POST, and the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency.

Monterey Road Feasibility and Existing Conditions Report, produced by Dudek 2025.

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Yap, TA, JP Rose, and B Cummings. 2019. *A petition to list the southern California/central coast evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) of mountain lions as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA).* Center for Biological Diversity, Tucson, AZ and the Mountain Lion Foundation, Sacramento, CA.

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ATTACHMENT B

H. T. HARVEY & ASSOCIATES

Ecological Consultants

50 years of field notes, exploration, and excellence

Light, Noise, and Development Impacts on Wildlife
Literature Review and Recommendations

Project #4842-01

Prepared for:
Peninsula Open Space Trust
222 High Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Prepared by:

H. T. Harvey & Associates

July 2, 2024

983 University Avenue, Building D • Los Gatos, CA 95032 • Ph: 408.458.3200 • F: 408.458.3210

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Ben Pearl, M.S., Project Manager/Senior Wildlife Ecologist

Dani Christensen, B.S., Wildlife Ecologist

Section 1. Introduction

H. T. Harvey & Associates has prepared this literature review for the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) to summarize existing information on issues related to wildlife-compatible land use. POST's Wildlife Linkages Program is working to create a network of resilient, connected ecosystems that enable wildlife to move, adapt, and thrive in the midst of a changing landscape and climate, using strategies such as land protection, habitat restoration, wildlife crossing structures, and compatible land use. The need to accommodate future human growth while meeting the needs of wildlife necessitates an understanding of how development might impact terrestrial wildlife species, whether some land uses might be compatible with wildlife, and best management practices to guide land use adjacent to or within areas of core wildlife habitat and wildlife movement corridors.

We have synthesized the scientific literature regarding the impacts of developed land uses, including built structures and associated light, noise, and human activity, on different mammal, amphibian, and reptile species. Based on this synthesis, we have prepared a summary of best management practices that would reduce such impacts.

Section 2. Light and Noise Impacts from Built Structures

2.1 Impacts of Artificial Light on Wildlife

Wildlife exposure to artificial light at night (ALAN), whether temporary or chronic, can have physiological impacts. ALAN may impair nocturnal mammals to varying degrees, with loss of vision being most severe in smaller mammals. Exposure to ALAN may also disrupt the circadian rhythm of wildlife, causing alterations in the hormone cycle of amphibians and mammals that may both alter the timing and ability of wildlife to forage and breed.

Exposure to ALAN may also cause altered foraging behavior and changes to predator-prey dynamics. Some altered foraging may benefit ambush predators (e.g., snakes) such as when small mammals avoid foraging in ALAN. In other cases, small mammals may seek out light as a tradeoff between predation risk from ambush predators in darker areas and active nocturnal predators (e.g., owls) in lighter areas. Larger mammals may also seek out ALAN to lower predation risk, forcing nocturnal predators to hunt in lighter conditions than preferred. ALAN-induced changes in foraging behavior may also result in increased risk of roadway mortality.

2.1.1 Physiological Impacts of Light

2.1.1.1 Impaired Vision for Nocturnal Animals

Wildlife have evolved with, and are adapted to, a specific suite of habitat and environmental conditions, including photoperiod, the time each day during which an organism receives illumination. When photoperiod is disrupted by ALAN, this can cause a range of physiological impacts to wildlife, including impacts to vision. Nocturnal mammals such as bats and rodents have very few cones, which provide high resolution imagery during daylight, but make up for it with many rods in their eyes, allowing them high sensitivity to light at night (Beier 2006). While this adaptation is critical to their ability to forage and evade predators at night, the lack of cones is problematic for them in an environment filled with artificial lights, as cone-poor animals may experience temporary blindness when exposed to artificial light (Beier 2006). Some nocturnal species may mediate this effect by narrowing pupils, but this does not completely eliminate the impacts (Perlman and Normann 1998). The absolute size of the retinal image is more important than the relative size of the image in adapting to artificial light, and therefore smaller nocturnal mammals may be physically unable to adapt to artificial light at night (Beier 2006).

In mammals that have "24-hour vision", such as ungulates and medium and large carnivores, their retina has a large amount of rods for night vision, but also enough cones to adjust to artificial night lights within approximately 2 seconds of exposure (Perlmann and Normann 1998). In contrast, most diurnal mammals have an abundance of cones specialized for high-quality vision during the day (Beir 2006). In the case of smaller mammals such as squirrels, they are nearly blind at night, while larger mammals, including humans, have moderate vision at night due to a larger retinal image. When animals transition back to darkness after being

exposed to ALAN, rod sensitivity and function may increase by up to 100 fold within 10 minutes, with up to an additional 10 fold increase in sensitivity after 40 minutes of transitioning (Lythgoe 1979). However, for as long as animals remain exposed to any level of light and are not in full darkness, rods will not regain their full function. As such, smaller nocturnal animals that rely upon rods for nighttime vision may suffer impaired vision for an extended amount of time wherever ALAN is present.

2.1.1.2 Disrupted Endocrine System and Circadian Rhythm

Photoperiod plays an important role in vertebrates adapting to changing conditions on a daily and annual cycle, providing cues for the endocrine and metabolic systems (Hazlerigg and Wagner 2006). Amphibians are largely nocturnal, and due to their mode of transportation and need for moisture, may be unable to avoid ALAN. Anthropogenic breeding habitat, such as roadside ditches and artificial ponds, may expose them to continuous ALAN from cars, streetlights, security lighting, sports complexes, roadway lighting, illuminated signs, and other sources (Buchanan 2006). As with many other species, amphibians rely upon seasonal photoperiod cues for both development and to adapt to changing conditions throughout the year (Wise 2007). These cues trigger hormonal changes that aid in adaptation, but constant exposure to ALAN disrupts the timing of hormonal changes, affecting amphibian's ability to survive throughout the year (Buchanan 2006; Wise 2007).

Even a small amount of light as perceived by humans may result in a major shift in ambient conditions. For instance, Buchanan (2006) found that 1 lux (the equivalent of 1 lumen/m^2) projected into a marsh in New York from adjacent roadway lighting resulted in illumination conditions 100,000 to 1 million times greater than ambient conditions. ALAN can have profound impacts on breeding cycles as well. Many animals rely upon natural cues from seasonal photoperiod changes to time breeding to coincide with favorable conditions for foraging and parental care. Robert et al. (2015) found that ALAN can disrupt these cues in a nocturnal marsupial, resulting in suppressed melatonin levels, delayed breeding, and potentially reduced breeding success.

2.1.2 Behavioral Impacts of Light

2.1.2.1 Altered Foraging and Predator-Prey Dynamics

ALAN may provide extended foraging opportunities for reptiles; however, this advantage may be mitigated by prey reducing or altering activity in response. Kotler (1984) found that several species of mice, which serve as prey for a variety of snakes and other predators, in the Mojave Desert decreased foraging on seeds in response to the presence of a camping lantern when cover was unavailable. ALAN may also increase predation risk and decrease foraging success for reptiles (Perry and Fisher 2006). In a study of interactions between two species of kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys* spp.) and sidewinder (*Crotalus cerastes*) in the Mojave Desert, Bouskila (1995) found that sidewinders adjusted their ambush sites at night depending upon the intensity of moonlight to reduce predation risk from owls and mammals, and were most effective in catching kangaroo rats on dark nights. Thus, increased ALAN may reduce the hunting success of sidewinders and expose them to greater predation risk, impacting their population dynamics in those two important ways.

Amphibians may be attracted to ALAN, particularly streetlights where insects often congregate, but this may also increase the likelihood that they are run over by cars. Farhig et al. (1995) found that the density of amphibians was greatly reduced due to roadway mortality, with the density decreasing with increasing traffic intensity.

The dynamic between larger predators and prey may be similarly altered by ALAN. In an analysis of GPS data collected from mountain lions (*Puma concolor*) across the Sierra Nevada and Great Basin, Ditmer et al. (2021) found that mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) were more active at night in areas where ALAN was greater compared to areas where it was less prevalent. Although mountain lions still hunted deer within areas of high ALAN, they preferentially selected to make kills in the darkest parts of those areas.

2.1.2.2 Variation in Impacts of ALAN by Intensity and Distance

The intensity at which ALAN impacts wildlife can vary depending upon the species. In a study of wildlife use of a wildlife crossing structure (WCS), Bliss-Ketchum et al. (2016) found that the intensity of ALAN impacted species' willingness to use the WCS, with reactions varying by species. Using experimental manipulation of three light intensities (High=172 lux; Low=54 lux; and Zero=<1 lux) in a crossing structure at the wildland-urban interface of Portland, Oregon, they found that Columbia black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*) were sensitive to all intensities of light, deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) were sensitive to both low and high intensities, and opossums (*Didelphis virginiana*) were sensitive to high-intensity lighting. Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), striped skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*), and Pacific tree frogs (*Pseudacris regilla*), which are all well adapted to the anthropogenic environment, did not show a response to any of the light intensities. Another study of the impact of ALAN on wildlife use of crossing structures was less definitive. Shilling et al. (2018) analyzed camera trap data and measured light intensity using a wide-angle lens and software to measure total illumination and light frequency at 8 locations in the Bay Area and Sierra Nevada. Although the data suggested that increasing total illumination resulted in reduced species richness, there was no significant effect observed.

The distance at which wildlife avoid ALAN may also depend upon the intensity of the light. In an experiment conducted in southwestern Riverside County, Stephens kangaroo rats (*Dipodomys stephensi*) were found to avoid foraging in ALAN (Shier et al. 2020). Three linear resource patches with three levels of light (high intensity floodlight, low intensity bug light, and control new moon light) were monitored, showing that the Stephens kangaroo rat depleted less of the resource patches near the artificial lights. In addition, they foraged a greater amount near the bug light compared to the floodlight, indicating that the intensity of ALAN may influence the behavior of foraging individuals. Perhaps most importantly, Stephens kangaroo rat foraging behavior was impacted beyond the detectable reach of the artificial light (25 m), indicating that ALAN has impacts beyond the light spectrum visible to humans.

2.2 Impacts of Noise on Wildlife

Wildlife exposed to high levels of anthropogenic noise in the short term may experience increased stress responses that impact their ability to conduct routine behaviors, while wildlife exposed to similarly loud noises

repeatedly may experience permanent impairment and possibly loss of hearing. Animals may alter their behavior due to anthropogenic noise, becoming more vigilant of predators where sounds are masked and reducing time spent foraging and hunting in areas due to fear of encountering humans.

2.2.1 Characteristics of Anthropogenic Noise

In the same way that wildlife has evolved with certain photoperiods, animals are also adapted to the natural sounds in their environment. Sounds in the natural environment, either from abiotic (e.g., wind, rain) or biotic (other animals) sources, provide information to wildlife to assess threats, find food, locate mates, and navigate terrain. Wildlife are adapted to these natural sounds, but are not as well-adapted to anthropogenic noise (Blickley and Patricelli 2010). Anthropogenic noise (i.e., sounds produced by human activity or the operation of human-made devices) is often in lower frequencies (under 250 Hz) than natural sounds, meaning it can travel farther through the environment before dissipating (McKenna et al. 2016; Blickley and Patricelli 2010). The following sections discuss the effects of anthropogenic noise, often simply referred to as "noise", on the physiology and behavior of reptiles, amphibians, and terrestrial mammals.

2.2.2 Physiological Impacts

Noise pollution at or above 85 decibels (dB) can have direct, adverse effects on the physiology of wildlife. Exposure at these levels may result in hearing loss, temporary or permanent threshold shift (change in hearing sensitivity), impaired or eliminated ability to hear environmental cues, and increased heart rate and breathing (Arcangeli et al. 2023; Dooling and Popper 2007). Wistar rats (*Rattus norvegicus domestica*) experimentally exposed to 100 dB of frequencies ranging from 0-20 Hz of noise daily showed increased stress hormones, decreased motor coordination, memory and cognitive impairment, and potentially even cell-damage and cell-death (Akefe et al. 2020).

The average ambient decibel level at a turbine site in the Altamont Pass, CA was between 93 and 118 dB, well above the threshold at which noise can cause physical impacts (Rabin et al. 2006). California ground squirrels (*Spermophilus beecheyi*) exposed to this noise displayed higher levels of vigilance, leading researchers to conclude that they may have suffered partial hearing loss (Rabin et al. 2006). Although the squirrels appeared to have some hearing ability based upon responses to playback of squirrel alarm calls, their tendency to move closer to the burrow and post (the most vigilant behavior in the experiment) may have been an attempt to mediate a reduced ability to detect the sounds of approaching terrestrial predators. Other forms of energy production and storage may have lower levels of noise emission, but depending upon the system, may still cause physiological issues. For instance, a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Tennessee emits a maximum noise of 75 dB at 10 feet (ft), similar to the level of a vacuum cleaner or average radio volume (Tennessee Valley Authority 2018). The loudest components of the BESS are the inverters, which reach 75 dB, while the transformers (55.5 dB) and HVAC systems (67.1 dB) are often quieter (Tennessee Valley Authority 2018). By comparison, other BESS may have louder operational noise. It was estimated that a BESS planned in Morro Bay could have noise emissions of approximately 85 dBA from generator step-up units at a distance of three ft from the unit, and 80 dBA from power conversion system units at a distance of three ft from the unit (City of Morro Bay 2024).

Therefore, without implementation of noise reduction techniques, this BESS may result in impaired hearing for surrounding wildlife.

2.2.3 Behavioral Impacts of Noise

The presence of noise can have an impact on an animal's typical behaviors such as foraging, vigilance, vocalizations, anti-predatory reactions, movement patterns, and food storage (Arcangeli et al. 2023; Petric and Kalcounis-Rueppell 2023). High noise levels may mask the ability of animals to hear important cues in their environment, such as obscuring the sound of arthropods from foraging bats, leading to changes in foraging behavior and use of habitat (Schaub et al. 2008). Furthermore, while amphibians and reptiles may have a more limited range of hearing than mammals, many species are very sensitive to vibrations (Bowles 1995). Noise at lower frequencies then has an increased risk of having a negative impact on those species sensitive to vibrations in the environment, such as amphibians and reptiles.

Smith et al. (2017) study within Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and San Mateo counties found that mountain lions reacted in a significantly stronger way when experimentally exposed to recordings of human noise compared to recordings of Pacific tree frog while feeding on a carcass. Mountain lions fled the kill site 10 out of 12 times when first exposed to human noise, compared to only one out of 12 times when first exposed to tree frog noise. They returned to the kill site less often when exposed to human noise, and if they did return, took much longer to do so (human noise median = 20 min; frog noise median = 2 min). Even once they returned, they were more vigilant overall, spending less than half as much time feeding after hearing human noise compared to frog noise. In another experiment in the Santa Cruz Mountains employing playback of human and frog sounds, Suraci et al. (2019) found that mountain lions avoided entering the 1 km^2 study site when human voices were broadcast from a grid of speakers at 80 dB at 1m.

A study of deer mice and woodland jumping mice (*Napaeozapus insignis*) in North Carolina found that these small rodents will take more time to begin foraging in a new area with anthropogenic noise versus natural noise and will also spend less time foraging in such areas (Petric and Kalcounis-Rueppell 2023). Though the number of seeds consumed in areas with anthropogenic noise was overall similar to areas with natural noises, the mice left fewer husks in the feeding areas with anthropogenic noise, indicating they were less likely to linger in these areas to eat and preferred to take their food elsewhere. In the same study, researchers also found that broadcasted noise (i.e., played from a speaker), whether it was anthropogenic or natural sounds, caused the mice to produce fewer ultrasonic (frequency >20,000 Hz) vocalizations. The response to anthropogenic noise was not identical between species, either, as jumping mice were more likely than deer mice to initiate foraging in a new area with anthropogenic noise. Wistar rats in a laboratory setting showed a significant decrease in exploration of their environment when exposed to noise as a result of increased anxiety (Akefe et al. 2020).

In the Altamont Pass area of California, California ground squirrels showed higher levels of vigilance, or alertness, at turbine sites than control sites without turbine noise (Rabin et al. 2006). The ambient decibel level and frequency of noise was higher at turbine sites; however, the lower-frequency squirrel anti-predator vocalizations overlapped with the turbine spectral band between 100 Hz and 6 Hz, resulting in a loss of hearing

efficacy near turbines. This resulted in increased time spent near burrows and posting due to perceived greater predation risk at turbine sites. The squirrels appeared to be unable to hear approaching mammals as well and became more visually vigilant to compensate.

Road noise and traffic volume can have a major impact on species richness and use of WCS, as indicated by a Shilling et al. (2018) study of camera trap and sound data at 20 WCS located on I-5, I-80, I-280, I-680, and SR-65. The data showed that species sensitive to disturbance, including mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, grey fox, and several others, were less abundant at underpasses with higher maximum noise levels and traffic volume. Traffic noise also had an impact on species diversity, which was found to be lower at the openings of crossing structures than in adjacent habitats. A slight negative correlation was observed between the maximum noise level and species richness, indicating that the most sensitive species may avoid high noise areas. Noise from roads can also impact wildlife in adjacent habitats. For example, the federally endangered Mt. Graham red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus grahamensis*), a small tree squirrel, is more likely to occupy middens (i.e., stores of food in pine trees) farther from roads due to the decrease in traffic noise (Chen & Koprowski 2015). Generally, there is a lower diversity of birds, reptiles, and amphibians near roads due to avoidance behavior (Blickley and Patricelli 2010). Large ungulates such as elk (*Cervus canadensis*) will venture closer to roads during times of less disturbance such as on weekends, when busy logging roads are less used (Edge and Marcum 1985).

2.3 Temporal Differences In Species Response to Noise, Light, and Development

The impact of ALAN, noise, and development may vary depending upon the level of exposure over time. Acute but temporary exposure may result in strong momentary responses, whereas consistent exposure may cause more permanent changes in behavior, including temporal shifts in when wildlife use habitat, habituation, increased alertness, or avoidance.

Consistent ALAN exposure can cause niche shifts that alter temporal overlap between species, leading to reduction and homogenization of temporal niches (Sanders et al. 2023). When this occurs, a small number of synanthropic species with 24-hour vision may take advantage of the expanded opportunities, outcompeting more specialized species and resulting in the loss of biodiversity. Wildlife may respond differently to noise depending upon whether it is a sudden loud noise or chronic exposure to loud noise, as Collins et al. (2022) found during a camera trap study of mule deer and coyote (*Canis latrans*) behavior at 10 crossing structures in California. Both species shared the same rate of entering the crossing structure (82%) and were more prone to a flight response when exposed to acute loud noises. However, with chronic noise exposure deer reduced anti-predator behavior and were attracted to forage more in the area of the structure, whereas chronic exposure caused coyotes to alter their behavior from alertness to running through the structure.

Human presence in developed areas and near wildlands may result in temporal niche shifts for some species, while other species may be unable to alter their behavior significantly. Lovell et al. (2022) found that although both European badger (*Meles meles*) and red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) were able to exploit resources in urban edges and

adjacent wildlands, European badger activity was significantly negatively affected by human presence, resulting in a 22% reduction in activity per one human at cameras sites per day. Conversely, red fox were more active earlier in the evening and later in the morning, indicating that they were better able to adjust their behavior to avoid humans. Similarly, Beasley et al. (2023) found that European hedgehogs (*Erinaceaus europeaus*) shifted their foraging behavior to avoid humans in developed areas.

2.4 Appropriate Buffer Distances Between ALAN and Noise Impacts and Wildlife Habitat Areas

The distance at which wildlife are impacted by ALAN may differ by species and guild, and thus these differences must be taken into account when determining appropriate buffers to reduce impacts. Small mammal species may require relatively small buffers (15-25 m) from detectable ALAN to allow them to utilize habitat for foraging, whereas larger mammal species, especially carnivores such as mountain lions, may require much larger buffers (500 m) with limited amounts of ALAN. The buffer needed to reduce the impacts of sound on wildlife habitat areas is more consistent among both small and large terrestrial mammals, with appropriate buffers in the range of 140-145 m from trails and roadways.

In a study of Santa Rosa beach mice (*Peromyscus polionotus leucocephalus*) in Florida, Bird et al. (2004) found that beach mouse foraging behavior was impacted within 10 meters (m) of low-intensity light. The researchers noted that the study area had a higher amount of vegetative cover than is typically found in Santa Rosa beach mouse habitat and acknowledged that the increased presence of cover may have reduced their perceived predation risk and response to ALAN. Shier et al. (2020), in an experimental study of Stephen's kangaroos rat foraging near ALAN, found that their foraging behavior was impacted 40 m from low-intensity light and 50-m from high intensity light, whereas each light source only emitted measureable irradiance up to 25 m. Therefore, depending upon the intensity of light, buffer distances to reduce impacts of ALAN on small mammals may need to be at least 15-25 m beyond the edge of measurable light.

For larger mammals, particularly carnivores that rely upon concealment to kill prey, much larger buffers may be required. Through analysis of several different data sets of radio-collared mountain lions in Southern California, it was found that mountain lions selected for areas with a lower amount of ALAN within 500 m compared to random areas within their territory (Barrientos et al. 2023). Although implementing a buffer distance this large may be difficult to achieve in many areas, understanding that ALAN may impact mountain lion behavior at such large distances allows for informed decisions on how to conserve habitat quality at the landscape level.

Suraci et al. (2019) found that when mountain lions were exposed to human voices broadcast at approximately 80 db at 1 m, they displayed avoidance behavior on average at approximately 145 m from the nearest speaker and reduced their movement speed by 34%. Although in some cases mountain lions also displayed avoidance behavior of frog noise, it was at a lesser distance of approximately 112 m. Mountain lions also entered the experimental site where speakers were located 30% less frequently when exposed to human noise compared to

frog noise, indicating that fear of humans prompted a much stronger response. As such, a buffer greater than 145 m between areas of human noise and mountain lion habitat may be appropriate to avoid altered behavior.

Chen and Koprowski (2015) found that traffic noise did not dissipate (i.e., return to baseline levels) until at least 165 m from the road, and as a result, middens of Mount Graham squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus grahamensis*) were found on average 140 m from roads. Furthermore, midden occupancy decreased to <50% when traffic noise was continuously over 43 dB in an area. In a study of prairie dogs (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) in Colorado, Shannon et al. (2016) found that the animals showed a greater response to disturbance when pre-recorded sound from a highway was played. As a result, prairie dogs became alert and initiated flight 4-5 m earlier compared to during control trials. Foraging bats avoided areas as close as 10-15 m to traffic noise, and were likely to avoid areas as far as 50 m away from traffic sources (Schaub 2008). In examining the response of various wildlife to noise, it is apparent that the buffer required to minimize noise impacts on wildlife areas must be tailored by project based on the species that may be affected and the intensity of noise.

Although regulations on noise levels typically pertain only to impacts to human receptors (and mostly in residential areas), they can provide a starting framework for creating appropriate wildlife noise avoidance buffers (Teff-Seker et al. 2022). The sound level at 50 ft from a typical highway with cars and trucks traveling at 55 mph is approximately 90 dBA (Bentrup 2008). For comparison, 55-60 dBA is acceptable for daytime residential areas, 60-65 dBA for outdoor conversation (Bentrup 2008), and 85 dBA for over 8 hours can cause permanent hearing loss in humans (NIDCD 2024). It is worth noting that this measurement, dBA, is different from dB, in that it is weighted for frequencies detectable by human ears. Despite these measurements being weighted for human hearing, these thresholds are often derived from experiments with laboratory animals such as rats, mice, and cats, and therefore can still be relevant to terrestrial wildlife (Bowles 1995). Without use of a constructed berm or dense vegetation to reduce noise, it would take a buffer of 450 ft for noise level to decrease from 90 dBA to 65 dBA (Bentrup 2008).

2.5 Best Management Practices to Reduce Impacts of ALAN and Noise on Wildlife

There are a number of best management practices that can reduce, though not eliminate, the impacts of ALAN. One of the most effective ways to minimize ALAN impacts is to focus development where infrastructure is already present so that impacts are concentrated in highly developed areas rather than spread across the landscape (North Carolina Resources Commission 2016). Classifying areas into environmental lighting zones in a range from natural darkness to urban city center brightness may help to guide development in such a way that ALAN is concentrated in dense urban areas and minimized in rural, exurban, and suburban areas (Jägerband and Bouroussis 2021). When development occurs in areas with little to no previous development, minimizing the footprint will help to reduce the overall impacts of ALAN. In addition, refraining from lighting roads and interchanges will eliminate a constant source of ALAN. As large of a buffer as possible between development and wildlands should be retained, and dense native vegetation should be installed within parking lots to block headlights from projecting directly into wildlands (North Carolina Resources Commission 2016).

When determining the amount of light that is needed for a development, working backwards from complete darkness and only adding in lights for specific purposes is advised (Australian Government Department of Environment and Energy 2020). The lowest possible intensity of light necessary for the task should be selected. Warm-appearing bulbs, including low-pressure sodium (LPS), high-pressure sodium (HPS), and amber light-emitting diode (LED) with correlated color temperature (CCT) ≤3,000 k should be prioritized (DarkSky 2023; Jägerbrand and Bouroussis 2021; North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission 2016). CCT within this range avoids blue, a critical step to reduce ALAN impacts since blue light has the greatest potential to reset circadian rhythm and alter movement behavior (DarkSky 2023). Where outdoor lights have been installed, they should be as low to the ground as feasible for the purpose, pointed down, and have full cutoff baffles or shields installed (DarkSky 2023, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission 2006, Australian Government Department of Environment and Energy 2020). Doing so will minimize the dispersal of light into adjacent wildlands. Lastly, adaptive light controls and sensors should be used to manage light timing and intensity both inside and outside of buildings.

There are some simple measures that can help to reduce noise impacts on wildlife. Limiting the amount of noise projected into wildland-urban interfaces and wildlands from concerts, sports games, and other outdoor events may help to reduce the impact of noise on sensitive species at night. Approaches to WCS's may be made darker and quieter through a combination of excavation to lower the approach in relation to the roadway and installation of berms and concrete walls (Shilling et al. 2022). The combination of these measures that is most effective will depend upon the topography of the approach, but together, these measures can create relatively dark paths with noise levels less than 65 dBA.

Installing various types of landforms may also reduce noise to wildlife from stationary sources. A BESS project in Morro Bay is planning to install berms that are 10-12 ft above grade of the project site to provide an acoustic shield from high noise emission (City of Morro Bay 2024). Although the amount of noise reduction may vary with each project, they estimated that the berms would reduce noise by approximately 8-9 dBA. Planting dense vegetation along roads in a 100-foot buffer can also reduce noise from cars and trucks traveling at 55mph to 50-55 dBA at 450 ft from the roadway (Bentrup 2008). Without a buffer, the noise at 450 ft would be at 65 dBA. The installation of a landform (such as a cement wall or berm) measuring at least 12-foot high can increase the efficacy of this sound buffer, reducing truck noise to 60 dBA at 150 ft and 55 dBA at 450 ft. When noise is emitted from a point source, such as a BESS, an acoustic enclosure could be installed to greatly reduce the level of sound emitted. Using thick acoustic metamaterials designed to attenuate low frequency noise may also be effective (Yao et al. 2014).

Section 3. Impacts of Development, Infrastructure, Recreation, and Human Presence on Wildlife

3.1 Response to Development

With increasing development in wildland-urban interfaces and exurban areas, wildlife have been forced to adapt to the presence of human structures, infrastructures, and presence on the landscape. Some species may avoid areas of higher residential development and human presence, while other species that are better adapted to urban areas may seek these areas out. The complex landscape may pose barriers to wildlife movement, foraging, and breeding, resulting in reduced breeding success and density. Within species, different sexes may respond differently, such as in mountain lions where females may be less averse to hunting in high density residential areas as they focus on feeding young, while males may avoid these areas as they are more focused on defending territories and finding mates.

3.1.1 Variability among Species

The extent of development within wildland-urban interfaces and exurban areas in the Santa Cruz Mountains, where nearly three million people live in the counties of Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and San Mateo, has made navigating the landscape especially complicated for wildlife (U.S. Department of Commerce 2020). Extensive research has been conducted in the Santa Cruz Mountains on how mammals navigate this complex landscape. Wang et al. (2015) conducted a camera trap study near roads and trails in these three counties, finding that mammal use of these areas varied by species. The top model from the data showed that mountain lions avoided areas of higher residential development, especially where human activity was highest, but made some use of these areas when they bordered open space. The probability of occupancy for raccoon and striped skunk, two species that are well adapted to urban areas, was positively influenced by development in the model, whereas the opposite was true of coyote and bobcat (*Lynx rufus*). Serieys et al. (2021) found that bobcat occurrence was positively associated with a low building density (≤1 house/hectare) in Coyote Valley, above which they were decreasingly likely to use the area. Nickel et al. (2020) also found that responses to development and human presence in the Santa Cruz Mountains differed between medium and large mammals. The top model developed from their camera trap study, conducted within a 1400 km^2 grid, found that coyote, striped skunk, and opossum probability of presence was strongly positively associated with increasing building presence. Mountain lions, bobcats, and gray foxes avoided areas of high human use (i.e., recreational trails) during peak activity, but were otherwise positively associated with these areas, indicating that they were able to adjust their behavior to avoid humans in areas that otherwise provided good quality habitat. Conversely, these species intensity of use was negatively associated with increasing building presence, indicating that buildings represent a permanent impact to habitat use for these species. Wilmers et al. (2013) also found that mountain lions showed a negative response to increasing housing density, as well as identified their likelihood of various behaviors within high-density residential areas. The most likely behavior by mountain lions in high-density residential areas was to feed, followed closely by movement. They were much less likely to communicate in these areas, and very unlikely to

den in higher-density residential areas. The likelihood of movement in higher-density residential areas was mediated if on a slope, perhaps indicating that slopes reduced mountain lions' perceived risk of encountering humans. In addition, mountain lions showed a slight avoidance of dense housing near water, possibly due to increased human presence in these areas. Although Nickel et al. (2020) found that gray fox likelihood of occurrence was negatively associated with building presence, Harrison (1997) found that gray foxes in New Mexico avoided use of residential developed areas that exceeded 125 houses/km^2 but appeared to benefit from lower housing densities due to a concentration of prey resources such as small rodents and birds that were attracted to development.

The impacts of development, infrastructure, and human disturbance may create barriers to effective foraging and reduce the availability and viability of breeding sites. Collectively, these impacts can result in reduced reproductive success (Skinner et al. 1991) and lower breeding density (Schley et al. 2004), as has been observed in the European badger. Human disturbance, especially when combined with the presence of dogs, may result in wildlife adjusting the times that they forage to avoid contact, as Beasley et al. (2023) found with European hedgehog.

3.1.2 Variability within Species

Species may also respond differently to development depending upon sex. Wilmers et al. (2013) found that female mountain lions were less averse to movement near higher-density residential areas, most likely due to their need to care for cubs. Conversely, males showed greater aversion to development, possibly due to their routine of altering between searching for mates and communicating, two behaviors that would both attract more human attention. Smith et al. (2015) found that female mountain lions significantly increased the amount of time spent hunting in response to increasing housing density. Due to disturbance, females ate less of each kill and spent more time hunting for the next kill in areas of higher housing density. Because males have larger home ranges and can more easily avoid development, their kill rate remained constant across the wildlands, rural, exurban, and suburban areas.

3.2 Impacts of Roads

Although roads may not pose a significant threat to wildlife in rural areas, in urban and suburban areas they exert a strong influence on the way wildlife move through the landscape and establish a home range. Species such as mountain lions may seek out higher quality habitats that are sparse in the landscape, resulting in higher rates of road crossing and associated mortality. Other species such as American badger (*Taxidea taxus*) may avoid crossing roads, resulting in heavily restricted burrow locations and home ranges.

Roads combine the impacts of the built environment (ALAN, noise, and human disturbance) in a concentrated area, forming sharp boundaries between habitats and altering wildlife movement and foraging behavior. Kautz et al. (2021) found that large carnivores responded to the presence of roads in different ways. In a study of GPS collared animals in the western upper peninsula of Michigan, they found that black bears (*Ursus americanus*) avoided roads, bobcats and coyotes were neutral to the presence of paved 1-lane and 2-lane roads, and gray

wolves (*Canis lupus*) selected for roads. All of these species selected roads for travelling at night, but they reduced use of roads during day to avoid human contact. Wolves and black bears altered their behavior to be 1.3 times more nocturnal when their home ranges included a high density of roads, indicating that they sought to reduce human interactions.

Roads and development can determine the size and shape of home ranges, and in doing so may heavily impact the fitness and survival of wildlife. In a study of GPS collared mountain lions in Southern California, Burdett et al. (2010) found that they used oak woodlands, riparian areas, higher elevations, steep and rugged terrain, and public protected lands more than expected based upon availability, while grasslands, scrublands, exurban development, and urban/suburban development areas were used less than expected based upon availability. Some of these areas were selected because they supported ample vegetation and hosted higher concentrations of mule deer, while selection against exurban development was an important factor that lowered the risk of mortality compared to those that selected for or showed a neutral response to it. Among the 16 mountain lions that selected for or showed a neutral response to exurban development, 11 died during the study: three were taken by depredation permits related to human-mountain lion conflict, two were struck by vehicles, one died due to intraspecific aggression, one died during a capture attempt, and the cause of mortality for four individuals was unknown.

Roads were also shown to heavily impact the movement of radio collared American badgers in Ontario, Canada. Sunga et al. (2017) found that badgers avoided crossing roads significantly more than expected within their home range, particularly busy highways. Because of the avoidance of busy highways, home ranges and burrow locations were somewhat restricted. Avoidance was warranted, as three of the nine radio collared badger were killed by vehicle strikes during the study. Interestingly, another study of American badger in British Columbia found that they were positively associated with highways, roads, and power lines and negatively associated with heavily vegetated areas (Apps et al. 2002). American badgers preferred habitat includes open canopy, which highways and roads provide in a landscape where it is limited. Due to forest fire suppression, open canopy has become increasingly unavailable as forest in-growth eliminated open areas (Newhouse and Kinley 2000).

3.3 Impacts of Recreation

Recreation may further restrict wildlife use of habitat, as depending upon species, wildlife may avoid recreational trails at distances ranging from 100-400 m for birds and 40-1,000 m for mammals. There is some evidence that wildlife respond to varying degrees depending upon the type of recreation activity, but additional research is needed to determine if these varying responses are significant. Large mammals elicit strong responses to motorized recreation, with the strength of the response determined by the size of the herd and the herd's distance from the trail or road.

Wildlife have been shown to avoid areas where human recreation occurs, including mountain lions in the Santa Cruz Mountains (Suraci et al. 2019). The impact of trails themselves, which result in habitat modification and fragmentation, may lead mountain lions to develop a negative association with trails (Baker and Leberg 2018).

Trails that allow dogs may also cause additional avoidance of recreation areas, as Reilly et al (2016) found in both mountain lions and opossums. Recreation can result in a range of responses by wildlife depending upon the species. Through a meta-analysis of wildlife threshold to response distances, Dertien et al. (2021) found that body mass and bird group play an important role in determining the distance at which birds respond to recreational disturbance. Wading and passerine birds showed the lowest sensitivity to disturbance, with a mean threshold of < 100 m until a response was elicited, whereas raptors elicited a response at a mean threshold of > 400 m. Among both groups, increasing body mass resulted in an increasing threshold response distance, likely due to the longer time needed for heavier and larger birds to take flight. The study also found a wide disparity in response among two mammal groups, with rodents threshold to response ranging from 50-100 m while ungulates response ranged from 40-1,000 m. Designing trail systems to have gaps of at least 250 m between trails systems and preventing social trails will provide undisturbed areas for many of these species (Dertien et al. 2021).

Although hiking appeared to be the recreation activity with the lowest threshold to response distance and motorized recreation the highest, there was no statistically significant difference between activities (Dertien et al. 2021). Similarly, significant differences in the response of mule deer to mountain biking and hiking have been observed in some studies (Naidoo and Burton 2020) and not observed in others (Taylor and Knight 2003), highlighting the need for additional studies evaluating wildlife response to recreation.

Motorized recreational activities have been shown to exhibit strong responses in large mammals. Borkowski et al. (2006) study of American bison (*Bison bison*) and elk (*Cervus elaphus*) response to over snow vehicles found that both increasing herd size and distance of the closest animal to the road resulted in an increased threshold to response distance. In addition, direct human approaches made bison and elk 15 and 7 times more likely to elicit a response. Wildlife may become more sensitive to recreation and elicit a response from farther away when it is a frequent disturbance, as Preisler et al. 2005 found with elk in the Rocky Mountains. Elk were 7-13 times more likely to elicit a response when within 20 m of a route regularly used by ATVs compared to within 500 m of an ATV route.

3.4 Buffer Distances between Development and Wildlife Habitat Areas

Because species' responses to development can vary widely, and in fact some species may benefit from a certain level of development, there are a range of buffer distances that should be considered between development and wildlife habitat areas. Along riparian corridors, research in the Appalachian Mountains found that buffers of 330 ft, which included both the riparian area and adjacent upland areas, were large enough to allow for the persistence of North American river otter (*Lontra canadensis*) and provide a movement corridor for black bear, bobcat, red fox, and deer (The Nature Conservancy 2015). Buffers of approximately 300-540 ft for amphibians and reptiles may help to connect the various habitats that herpetofauna may need throughout their life history, including breeding ponds and overwintering upland habitat for amphibians and riparian foraging areas and upland nesting areas for reptiles (The Nature Conservancy 2015). In Southern California, Poessel et al. (2014)

found that GPS collared bobcats avoided both highways and high-capacity local roads when moving within their home range. Although there was some variation between the three study sites, the minimum distance that bobcats avoided highways was 395 m, while the minimum distance that they avoided high-capacity local roads was 1033 m. Forty percent of home ranges did not include either highways or high-capacity local roads, and 90% of tracked movement paths did not cross these highways or roads.

3.5 Best Management Practices to Reduce Impacts of Built Structures on Wildlife

Built structures and associated human disturbance have both direct impacts via loss of habitat and indirect impacts via fragmentation of remaining habitat into small, degraded, and disconnected parcels that provide low-quality habitat, restrict movement to and from other habitats, and provide sources for anthropogenic disturbance (Theobald et al. 1997). The installation of impermeable fencing within landscapes, which may restrict the movement of animals, reduce breeding success, and affect the survival of both individuals and populations as whole, should be avoided where feasible (Jakes et al. 2018), except where directional fencing is installed to reduce road mortality and direct animals to safe road crossings. Concentrating development within a small footprint also helps to minimize impacts. Furthermore, high-density development should be focused in locations where development has already resulted in avoidance by mountain lions and bobcats so that the habitat is not further fragmented, although mountain lion avoidance may be mediated somewhat if the development occurs on slopes (Wilmers et al. 2013). Although higher-density development will likely cause mountain lions, bobcats, and possibly coyotes to avoid these areas (Wang et al. 2015; Nickel et al. 2020; Serieys et al. 2021), concentrating development will help to ensure that there are larger, contiguous areas of habitat where development does not cause significant avoidance and behavioral changes for these species.

Another approach to reduce the impact of development is to alter where and when humans recreate to allow for greater movement of wildlife during key times. Avoiding nighttime recreation and human activities within wildland-urban interfaces and wildlands will allow species that avoid these areas during the day, when humans are present, to utilize them at night. Reducing human access to key sections of riparian corridors, which mountain lions in Southern California use preferentially (Burdett et al. 2010), may allow for mountain lions to more effectively navigate the landscape. Where there are built structures, providing a mosaic of native complex vegetation in adjacent areas may help species that rely upon cover for movement, such as bobcat and mountain lion, to find their way to higher quality habitat (Serieys et al. 2021). Complex vegetation in Coyote Valley and Aromas, even if sparse, was found to be more highly selected for by bobcats compared to dense orchards and other monocrops. Incorporating complex vegetation at the edges of developed areas where structures are present may thus aid in reducing impacts to bobcats and other medium-sized carnivores.

Section 4. Development and Land Use Planning

4.1.1 Best Management Practices for Development Near Important Wildlife Habitat and Movement Areas

The best way to prevent development-related impacts to important wildlife habitat and movement areas is to avoid development in these areas (Beier et al. 2008). However, recognizing that development can and will occur in these areas, guiding development and associated infrastructure in such a way that it allows wildlife to continue using movement corridors is critical. As discussed in Section 3.1.5 above, concentrating development into a small footprint, in areas that are already developed or subject to human disturbance, would reduce impacts of development on wildlife. Avoiding development near WCS, including siting ALAN sources more than 500 m and noise sources more than 145 m from WCS, may be most conducive to allowing mountain lions to use WCS. Where these distances cannot be achieved due to existing constraints, installing fencing to deter human use of the approaches to the WCS and the crossing itself, and managing vegetation in the area to allow mountain lions to see the crossing well, may promote use of the crossing by both mountain lions and their prey.

Where roads already exist or must be built, focused studies should identify wildlife species that may need to cross so that appropriate WCS types can be installed. There is extensive literature regarding determining appropriate WCS for various wildlife species; we did not attempt to synthesize wildlife crossing literature, but we do provide a few examples. In a literature review of various species' preferences with respect to WCS characteristics, Beier et al. (2008) found that ungulates prefer vegetated overpasses or open terrain below high underpasses that provided high visibility, carnivores such as mountain lion and black bear prefer concrete box culverts that provide a dark path, and rodents prefer pipes and small culverts (Beier et al. 2008). Because species have varying and sometimes conflicting preferences, providing larger structures that incorporate as many of these elements as possible may help facilitate a greater number of species using WCS. The number of crossing structures installed must consider the species in question home range size. Smaller animals (i.e., reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals) have smaller home ranges and thus require crossing structures at an interval of approximately 150-300m (Clevenger et al. 2001). Conversely, larger wildlife may require crossing structures at larger intervals (approximately 0.94 miles). Development should consider where crossing structures are located and minimize impacts to their efficacy by restricting human activity near structures, especially at night (Clevenger and Waltho 2005).

Newly built or improved roadways within or adjacent to important wildlife habitat and movement areas should be designed to minimize the ability of wildlife to access the road. Mountain lions (Burdett et al. 2010), American badgers (Newhouse and Kinley 2000), rodents (González-Gallina et al. 2013), amphibians (Fahrig et al. 1995), and many other species have been shown to have high levels of road mortality. Raising roads above the surrounding topography has been shown to greatly reduce road mortality for all vertebrate taxa (Clevenger et al. 2003, Dodd et al. 2004). In conjunction, installing tall barrier walls and/or fences with outriggers (extension

on top at a right angle) facing away from the roadway along roadways among a network of appropriate placed crossing structures is a key component to direct wildlife to safe passage and away from new development.

Section 5. Best Management Practices to Reduce the Impacts of ALAN, Noise, and Disturbance on Wildlife

Below is a list of key points that planners, land owners, and managers can use to create a landscape that accommodates sensible development while reducing the impacts of ALAN, noise, and disturbance on wildlife movement, use of habitat, and population health.

- Minimize or eliminate lighting along roads and interchanges
- Work backwards from complete darkness and add lights only for specific purposes
- Install lights as low to the ground as possible, pointed down, and with full cutoff baffles or shields installed
- Utilize motion sensors and timers to reduce the amount of time ALAN emitted
- Site high-density residential and recreational areas in urban and suburban areas, while limiting development at urban-wildland interfaces, wildlands, riparian areas, lakes, and ponds
- Site lighting to prevent ALAN from reaching ponds, lakes, and streams
- Use the lowest possible light intensity needed for the purpose
- Use LPS, HPS, or amber LED bulbs with CCT ≤3,000 k
- Excavate land, install berms or walls, and/or plant dense native vegetation to reduce ALAN and noise projection into wildlife habitat areas, including approaches to WCS
- Buffer distances of 15-25 m beyond the edge of measurable ALAN are optimal to reduce behavioral impacts to small mammals
- Buffer distances of up to 500 m with a low amount of ALAN are most conducive to supporting mountain lion movement through the landscape
- Buffer distances of 145-150 m from noise sources may reduce both physical and behavioral impacts to mammals
- Limit outdoor nighttime activities that introduce a large amount of ALAN and noise to important wildlife areas
- Design trails to have gaps of at least 250 m between them to provide undisturbed habitat for most species
- Limit use of motorized vehicles to specific areas to reduce systemic avoidance of areas by large mammals
- Avoid installing impermeable fences that limit wildlife movement within the middle of landscapes and habitat areas

- Install impermeable fences or walls along roadways fitted with outriggers to reduce wildlife access to roadways and to direct wildlife to WCS
- Install WCS that provide the appropriate features for target wildlife species; larger WCS may accommodate a greater diversity of species using the crossing
- Install WCS at the appropriate distance apart from each other by accounting for the home range of target species.

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Letter O1: Open Space Authority

O1-1 The commenter asks that the Commission adopt Alternative Combination 1, the environmentally superior alternative, asserting that CEQA "requires the Commission to adopt this alternative instead of the Project." The comment is noted. However, CEQA does not require a lead agency to adopt the identified environmentally superior alternative. Section 21081 of the Public Resources Code requires that an agency may not approve a proposed project if feasible alternatives exist that would substantially lessen its significant environmental effects, but an agency may reject alternatives if economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations make the alternatives infeasible (Pub. Resources Code § 21081, subd. (a)(3).) "[P]otentially feasible alternatives 'are suggestions which may or may not be adopted by the decisionmakers'" (California Native Plant Society v. City of Santa Cruz (2009) 177 Cal.App.4th 957, 999, citing No Slo Transit, Inc. v. City of Long Beach (1987) 197 Cal.App.3d 241, 256).

Ultimately, the selection of the Proposed Project or an alternative will be up to the CPUC's decisionmakers who will consider the support expressed for Alternative Combination 1 in reaching their final decision. Please also see Master Response 2: Alternatives.

O1-2 The commenter states that the Draft EIR fails to analyze impacts to special-status species by not discussing mountain lions, a state candidate species.

The commenter is correct that mountain lion (*Puma concolor*), a state candidate species, has been recorded in the vicinity of the Project site. This species has been added to the Potential-to-Occur table in Appendix C (Potential to Occur Table) as low potential. As noted in the comment, mountain lion has been recorded within the biological study area in transit; however, the Project site lacks suitable denning or foraging habitat for this species, which is typically found in mountains, forests, or brushlands, with range sizes up to 300 to 500 square miles.[3] Mountain lion would be unlikely to transit the Project site during construction. Section 3.4 of the Final EIR has been revised to note potential for this species.

O1-3 The commenter states that the Draft EIR's conclusion for impacts to wildlife movement is incorrect, noting that the fencing around the orchard is permeable and has been crossed by at least one bobcat. Please see Master Response 1 on Wildlife Connectivity. As explained in detail there, the existing orchard fence, though not impermeable, still serves as a barrier to wildlife crossing.

O1-4 The commenter notes the location of Coyote Creek behind the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site and that noise and light from the substation could adversely impact wildlife moving north-south along the creek. The comment is noted. Please see Master Response 1 on Wildlife Connectivity. As explained in detail in this Master Response, indirect impacts, including noise and light disturbance, on wildlife moving north-south

[3] CDFW. https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Mountain-Lion

along Coyote Creek are considered less than significant because similar impacts occur under existing conditions and the implementation of mitigation measures.

O1-5 The commenter states that a great blue heron rookery is present immediately behind the proposed Grove HDVC Terminal site and the EIR should analyze impacts to this protected nesting colony.

The commenter is correct that a great blue heron nesting colony was recorded in riparian habitat in 1991 along Coyote Creek offsite, which is adjacent to the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal location (CDFW 2025). This colony has been added to Appendix C (Potential-to-Occur table) with moderate potential to occur within the study area, but there is no suitable colonial nesting habitat within the Project site itself. If present, actively nesting herons, along with other nesting birds, would receive protections under APMs BIO-9, BIO-12, BIO-13, and BIO-14, as well as PG&E BMP BIO-3, as discussed in the Draft EIR Impact 3.4-1 (pp. 3.4-47-48), during construction of the Project.

Operation and maintenance are also not expected to impact nesting great blue herons because the Project would implement LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.13-2, which would limit construction noise within 500 feet of residences, and apply noise-reducing barriers in areas within 200 feet of sensitive receptors, which may also protect wildlife, and LSPGC Mitigation Measure 3.1-2, which would minimize lighting and direct it away from sensitive species habitat, and BIO-7 to minimize outdoor lighting. Additionally, nesting birds (including great blue herons), if present, are currently exposed to noise and light from the nearby PG&E Metcalf Substation, commercial buildings, and residences; these effects are expected to be similar at the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal.

O1-6 The commenter notes that California High-Speed Rail plans three mitigation wildlife crossings, one of which is located near the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site, which should be analyzed as part of cumulative effects in the EIR. Please see Master Response 1 on Wildlife Connectivity. As explained in detail in this Master Response, the Project would not impair use of the proposed mitigation wildlife crossings.

O1-7 The commenter states that the Draft EIR fails to consider state plans and policies related to wildlife movement, specifically Caltrans *Wildlife Connectivity Program Report* (2024), CDFW Wildlife Movement Barriers, and city and county General Plans. The Draft EIR setting discusses wildlife connectivity plans for the Coyote Valley on pages 3.4-22-23, including CDFW (2024b). Draft EIR Section 3.4.2, Regulatory setting (pp. 3.4-27-31) discusses wildlife conservation and connectivity policies of city and county general plans. Page 3.4-23 of the Final EIR has been revised to include the Caltrans plan[4] (Caltrans 2024) as a reference that also identified Coyote Valley as a priority wildlife connectivity location (see below). Please also see Master Response 1 on Wildlife Connectivity for additional details.

[4] Caltrans. 2024. Wildlife Connectivity Program Report. California Department of Transportation Headquarters Division of Environmental Analysis. Office of Fish and Wildlife Connectivity. July 1.

Caltrans (2024) also identified Coyote Valley as a priority wildlife connectivity location.

O1-8 The commenter states that CA Assembly Bill (AB) 1889 promoting wildlife connectivity implies that the Project should not develop the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site, so that it is available for wildlife crossing. The comment is noted. AB 1889 mandates that connectivity be included in the conservation elements of future general plans in California. It is not applicable to the Project, which is not a plan. Please see Master Response 1 on Wildlife Connectivity for additional details.

O1-9 The commenter cites sources indicating the presence of mountain lions in the vicinity of the Project site and requests their consideration in the EIR. As stated in the response to O1-2, mountain lion has been added to Appendix C of the Final EIR as special-status species with low potential to occur in the Project area. If a mountain lion were to be present in transit across the Project site, APMs and Mitigation Measures provided in Impact 3.4-4 would be implemented for protection of this species.

O1-10 The commenter notes that the mountain lion is a state candidate species for listing under CESA and thus should be considered as a special-status species. As noted in the response to comment O1-9, mountain lion has been added in Appendix C of the Final EIR and has low potential to occur in transit. If a mountain lion were to be present crossing the Project site during construction, APMs and Mitigation Measures provided in Impact 3.4-4 would be implemented for protection of this species.

O1-11 The commenter emphasizes the importance of Coyote Valley as a wildlife corridor, and notes that CDFW has designated the area as an Essential Connectivity Area, and roadkill and other reporting indicate that numerous wildlife transit in this area. Please see Master Response 1 on Wildlife Connectivity. As explained in detail in this Master Response, the Draf EIR discusses the importance of Coyote Valley as a wildlife corridor (pp. 3.4-22-23).

O1-12 The commenter states that the Draft EIR mischaracterizes the Project's potential impact on wildlife connectivity by applying an improper threshold of significance that does not consider the effects on passing wildlife along Coyote Creek corridor and wildlife passing in the vicinity of the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal, which the comment characterizes as industrial use of the property. The DEIR applied Appendix G biological resources criterion (d) for wildlife movement, which was the correct threshold of significance. Please see Master Response 1 on Wildlife Connectivity for discussion of the effects of Project construction and operations on wildlife using the Coyote Creek corridor or passing near the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal. These effects were found to be less than significant; thus, this comment would not trigger recirculation of the Draft EIR.

O1-13 The commenter argues that fencing at the orchard is not a barrier to wildlife movement due to an observed hole in the fence, and records of one bobcat crossing the property. Please see Master Response 1 on Wildlife Connectivity. As explained in detail in this Master Response, the orchard fence, though not impermeable, presents a barrier to wildlife movement under current conditions.

O1-14 The commenter states that a great blue heron rookery is located on Coyote Creek behind the proposed substation site and should be included in the EIR setting and assessed in the impact discussion. As stated in the response to comment O1-5, the great blue heron nesting colony record has been added to Appendix C of the Final EIR.

O1-15 The commenter states that noise would cause significant impacts to the heron rookery and may disrupt the breeding and nesting habits of the herons, potentially resulting in nest abandonment. The commenter indicates that cessation of construction during heron breeding season would be required mitigation.

The recorded great blue heron nesting colony, if present, may be sensitive to construction disturbances such as noise and lighting. Adherence to APMs BIO-9, BIO-12, BIO-13, and BIO-14, and PG&E BMP BIO-3, as discussed under Impact 3.4-1 (Draft EIR pp. 3.4-47-48), would provide protection to this nesting colony along with other actively nesting birds, reducing this impact to a less-than-significant level.

O1-16 The commenter discusses the cumulative impact of the Project with the California High-Speed Rail project which plans "wildlife crossings to facilitate wildlife movement" in coordination with wildlife agencies and local stakeholders, including the Open Space Authority (OSA) and the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), one of which is located within a few hundred feet of the proposed Grove HDVC Terminal location. The commenter requests analysis of the Project's impact on the wildlife crossing for the High-Speed Rail project and suggests the proposed location of the Grove Terminal would nullify the purpose of this proposed crossing.

The cumulative impacts of the Project—when considered alongside other cumulative projects, including the High-Speed Rail project—on wildlife movement were analyzed and found to be less than significant with the implementation of LSPGC Mitigation Measures 3.4-2 and 3.4-4. (see Draft EIR pp. 3-17, 3.4-71-73.) Please see Master Response on Wildlife Connectivity for additional details.

O1-17 The commenter discusses the cumulative impact of the Project with the California High-Speed Rail project which plans "wildlife crossings to facilitate wildlife movement" in coordination with wildlife agencies and local stakeholders, including the Open Space Authority (OSA) and the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), one of which is located within a few hundred feet of the proposed Grove HDVC Terminal location. The commenter requests analysis of the Project's impact on the wildlife crossing for the High-Speed Rail project and suggests the proposed location of the Grove Terminal would nullify the purpose of this proposed crossing.

The cumulative impacts of the Project—when considered alongside other cumulative projects, including the High-Speed Rail project—on wildlife movement were analyzed and found to be less than significant with the implementation of LSPGC Mitigation Measures 3.4-2 and 3.4-4. (see Draft EIR pp. 3-17, 3.4-71-73.) Please see Master Response on Wildlife Connectivity for additional details.

O1-18 The commenter notes that the Peninsula Open Space Trust and the Coyote Valley Wildlife Connectivity Planning Project support open space and connectivity in the Coyote Valley, and that these initiatives should have been considered under the CEQA criterion for local policies and ordinances.

The Peninsula Open Space Trust Coyote Valley Wildlife Connectivity Planning Project is discussed on page 3.4-23 of the Draft EIR. This planning project does not constitute a policy or ordinance; however, its goals and objectives were incorporated in the discussion of the potential impact of the Project on wildlife connectivity under Impact 3.4-4 (see Draft EIR pp.3.4-55-57).

O1-19 The commenter asserts that the purchase of an agricultural conservation easement (ACE) violates CEQA because ACEs, "operating by themselves, . . . do not replace the converted [agricultural] land or otherwise result in no net loss of agricultural land" (citing *V Lions Farming, LLC v. County of Kern* (2024) 100 Cal.App.5th 412, 437 (*V Lions*)). The comment fails to acknowledge the entire holding of that case, which found that ACEs do, in fact, advance the purpose of CEQA. Specifically, the court in *V Lions* considered the language of Section 15370 (e) of the CEQA Guidelines, which states that "mitigation" of an impact includes "[c]ompensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments, including through permanent protection of such resources in the form of conservation easements" (Guidelines § 15370, subd. (e)). The court concluded that "the phrase 'providing substitute resources' (Guidelines, § 15370, subd. (e)) includes preserving (i.e., permanently protecting) existing agricultural land. Consequently, ACEs are a type of compensatory mitigation for the conversion of agricultural [land]" (*Ibid*.).

O1-20 The commenter states that the CPUC should adopt Alternative Combination 1 to reduce or avoid environmental impacts. Specifically, the commenter states that the alternatives analysis is inconsistent with the level of impact on tribal cultural resources and that Alternative Combination 1 has a lesser impact on tribal cultural resources than the Project or other alternatives.

Alternative Combination 1 does include less trenching than the other Alternative Combinations and the Proposed Project. However, due to the location and nature of known tribal cultural resources, the Proposed Project and all Alternative Combinations would have a significant and unavoidable impact on tribal cultural resources.

Please see Master Response 2: Alternatives and response to Comment O1-1.

O1-21 The commenter reiterates earlier comments regarding a preference for and the feasibility of Alternative Combination 1. Please see Master Response 2: Alternatives and response to Comments O1-1 and O1-20.

From: moises@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Moises Mena <moises@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 23, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Subject: Please choose the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the Power Santa Clara Valley project

Dear California Public Utilities Commission,

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project identified Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1), which locates the Grove terminal at the PG&E Metcalf Substation, as the Environmentally Superior Alternative. The CPUC should choose AC-1 as the preferred path forward for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project.

Locating the Grove terminal at the Metcalf Substation instead of on an orchard in Coyote Valley would significantly reduce the environmental impacts of the project. There is no reason to bulldoze an orchard, dig a trench along nearly a mile of the Coyote Creek Trail, and bore a tunnel underneath Coyote Creek for the additional 1.2-mile-long transmission line that will be needed if the terminal is built on the site under the project as proposed. All of this would increase the cost of the overall project – a cost that would be passed on to the public. O2-1

Coyote Valley forms a critical landscape linkage for wildlife to migrate between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range. Numerous scientific studies support conserving all of Coyote Valley as protected open space to ensure the environmental and economic vitality of the greater San José area. Santa Clara County voters agree and have consistently and overwhelmingly demonstrated their support for conservation of Coyote Valley.

The Coyote Valley orchard that would be the site for the terminal under the project as proposed is right next to Coyote Creek, which is the backbone of the wildlife corridor through Coyote Valley. Animals that depend on the creek corridor to be able to migrate from the Santa Cruz Mountains to the Diablo Range would be subjected to noise, nighttime lighting, human activity, and other disturbances from the construction and operation of the energy facility. O2-2

Monterey Road, where this orchard site is located, is already a wildlife roadkill hotspot. The highest incidence of bobcats, badgers, coyotes, deer, and other animals being killed by cars is right around this location, proving that animals are desperately trying to get across Monterey Road to the safety of Coyote Creek on the other side. Putting a 6-acre energy facility in the path of these animals will only make this problem worse.

Please choose AC-1 as the preferred path forward for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project. O2-3

Sincerely,
Moises Mena
159 S Morrison Ave Apt 2 San Jose, CA 95126-3015 moises@greenfoothills.org

Letter O2: Green Foothills

O2-1 The commenter states preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1).

The Draft EIR Chapter 4 analyzes Project alternatives considered and rejected. Under this analysis, the Proposed Alignment and Grove Terminal Alternative 3 (Alternative Combination 1) was analyzed. Although this comment does not raise "significant environmental issues" for purposes of CEQA (Public Resources Code section 21091[d][2][B]; CEQA Guidelines sections 15088[c], 15132[d], 15204[a]), the CPUC has received and reviewed it and has included it in the record for consideration by decision-makers separate from the CEQA process. Please see Master Response 2: Alternatives for more details.

O2-2 The commenter states that Coyote Valley serves as an important wildlife corridor between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range open lands, providing a critical linkage for east-west wildlife migration. They note the area is recommended in local and regional plans, such as the Peninsula Open Space Trust Coyote Valley Wildlife Connectivity Planning Project, for preservation as protected open space. Noting that Monterey Road is already a trouble spot for roadkill, the comment suggests that development of the existing orchard as the Grove HVDC Terminal could add an additional impediment to wildlife trying to access Coyote Creek and open lands to east and west of the Project.

Please see Master Response 1: Wildlife Connectivity.

O2-3 The commenter reiterates preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). Please refer to response to Comment O2-1.

From: nora.tiny@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Nora Carino <nora.tiny@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 3, 2025 7:53 PM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Subject: Please choose the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the Power Santa Clara Valley project

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear California Public Utilities Commission,

Hello, my name is Nora Carino, and I'm a member of Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action's San Jose team.
I'm urging the California Public Utility Commission to select Alternative Combination 1, which places the Grove terminal at the existing PG&E Metcalf Substation. O3-1

The CPUC's own Draft Environmental Impact Report confirms this is the environmentally superior option. In contrast, the orchard site would replace six acres of trees with concrete, tear up nearly a mile of the Coyote Creek Trail, and require tunneling under the creek which is right through a critical wildlife corridor.

Building next to Coyote Creek would bring noise and light into a fragile migration path. And the site is near a high-conflict wildlife crossing which would put more animals at risk of being hit by cars.
On top of that, adding over a mile of new infrastructure makes the project more expensive, and those costs will fall on the public. O3-2

Please do the right thing and continue to protect Coyote Creek, an integral ecosystem of the Santa Clara Valley. It is important for the diverse wildlife that is inhabited there and the community it supports. AC-1 is the clear, responsible choice. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Nora Carino
3642 Springbrook Ave San Jose, CA 95148-3131 nora.tiny@gmail.com

Letter O3: Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action

O3-1 The commenter states preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1).

The Draft EIR Chapter 4 analyzes Project alternatives considered and rejected. Under this analysis, the Proposed Alignment and Grove Terminal Alternative 3 (Alternative Combination 1) was analyzed. Although this comment does not raise "significant environmental issues" for purposes of CEQA (Public Resources Code section 21091[d][2][B]; CEQA Guidelines sections 15088[c], 15132[d], 15204[a]), the CPUC has received and reviewed it and has included it in the record for consideration by decision-makers separate from the CEQA process. Please see Master Response 2 on Alternatives for more details.

O3-2 The commenter states that development of the existing orchard as the Grove HVDC Terminal could add an additional impediment to wildlife trying to access Coyote Creek. It also notes that the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal site is near a high conflict would put more animals at risk of being hit by cars.

Please see Master Response 1: Wildlife Connectivity for a detailed response.

From: gracewangb085@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Grace Wang <gracewangb085@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 3, 2025 7:44 PM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Subject: Please choose the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the Power Santa Clara Valley project

Dear California Public Utilities Commission,

Hello, my name is Grace Wang, and I'm a member of Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action's San Jose team.

The CPUC should choose AC-1 as the preferred path forward for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project. It's the less costly, more environmentally friendly option. Building in Coyote Valley instead would require an entire orchard to be bulldozed, and close a section of the Coyote Creek Trail. This area is a critical migration path for many animals, and destroying it will have heavy impacts on wildlife.

Numerous scientific studies support conserving all of Coyote Valley as protected open space to ensure the environmental and economic vitality of the greater San José area. Santa Clara County voters agree and have consistently and overwhelmingly demonstrated their support for conservation of Coyote Valley.

Please choose AC-1 as the preferred path forward for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project. Thank you.

O4-1

Sincerely,
Grace Wang
5303 Elrose Ave San Jose, CA 95124-5612 gracewangb085@gmail.com

Letter O4: Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action

O4-1 The commenter states preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1) and concerns related to Project siting and wildlife connectivity.

Please see Master Responses 1 and 2 for details on wildlife connectivity and alternatives. The Master Response on Wildlife Connectivity provides additional response to the commenters' concerns about the proposed Grove HVDC Terminal siting.

3.4.3 Comment Letters by Individuals

This section presents the comment letters received from individuals on the Project, as well as the CPUC's coded responses to those comments. The individuals who provided the 11 comment letters are listed below in **Table 3-3**.

TABLE 3-3
LIST OF COMMENT LETTERS BY INDIVIDUALS

Letter	Commenter	Date
I1	Mila Heally	July 24, 2025
I2	Mila Heally	July 24, 2025
I3	Mila Heally	July 25, 2025
I4	Mila Heally	July 25, 2025
I5	Rambod Hakhamaneshi	July 23, 2025
I6	Brandon Coker	July 24, 2025
I7	Judith Chamberlin	July 25, 2025
I8	Carol Wilson	July 25, 2025
I9	Katy Ullmann	July 29, 2025
I10	Sarah Yang	August 3, 2025
I11	Karen Uyeda	August 6, 2025

To: Silvia Yanez
Cc: Rosalind Searle
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Question about Metcalf project

From: Mila CLNA <mila1.clna@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 9:17 AM
To: Wright, Tharon <Tharon.Wright@cpuc.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Question about Metcalf project

Hi Tharon,

What happened to that alternative locations that are not in Coyote Valley for this project?

Is there any mapping of routes for these pipelines that would not require digging under the bike trail or Coyote creek?

What's the cost difference for project if it goes together with the PG&E station or the alternative locations nearby?

Did any outreach happened in the neighborhood or neighborhood associations to invite people to come to the meetings?

Is it ever going to San Jose council for voting?

I1-1

Thank you,

Mila

Letter I1: Mila Heally

I1-1 The commenter asks for more information on the Project alternatives, including maps, costs, outreach, and decision-making process.

The CPUC responded to this comment through email communication dated July 25, 2025. The Draft EIR Chapter 4 describes potentially feasible alternatives to the Project to inform CPUC's decision-making. This chapter describes how alternatives were identified and screened to develop a list of alternatives for analysis. This chapter also compares the environmental impact of the Project with the alternatives carried forward. In compliance with CEQA, the comparison of alternatives conducted in the CPUC's CEQA environmental review process focuses on potential environmental impacts only. A separate and concurrent need and cost review for the Project is conducted by CPUC as part of the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity proceeding. More information about these concurrent reviews is available here: https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/files/legacyfiles/e/2184-eirstepbystep-august-2008.pdf.

To: Silvia Yanez
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Support for Alternative Grove 3 – A Smarter, Lower-Impact Location

From: Mila CLNA <mila1.clna@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 1:22 PM
To: Wright, Tharon <Tharon.Wright@cpuc.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Support for Alternative Grove 3 – A Smarter, Lower-Impact Location

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Mila CLNA** <mila1.clna@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jul 24, 2025 at 1:15 PM
Subject: Support for Alternative Grove 3 – A Smarter, Lower-Impact Location
To: Mila CLNA <mila1.clna@gmail.com>
CC: San Jose ACTION! <sanjoseaction@googlegroups.com>, Campos, Pamela <pamela.campos@sanjoseca.gov>, Mahan, Matt <matt.mahan@sanjoseca.gov>, Ramirez, Lucas <Lucas.ramirez@sanjoseca.gov>, Dang, Tara <Tara.Dang@sanjoseca.gov>, Maguire, Jennifer <jennifer.maguire@sanjoseca.gov>, John Leipelt <john558@icloud.com>, <wanday.wong@gmail.com>, darryl ospring <darryly2k@sbcglobal.net>, <bestseller2005@yahoo.com>

Dear CPUC Commissioners,

I'm writing to urge you to adopt Alternative Grove 3 as the preferred site for the LS Power Grid California, LLC's Power Santa Clara Valley Project (Application 24-04-017).

Alternative Grove 3, located at PG&E's existing Metcalf Substation, is clearly the most responsible and community-friendly option. It meets the technical needs of the project while significantly reducing environmental and community impacts compared to building a new terminal in Coyote Valley.

https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/pscv/pdfs/07_PG&E_No2.pdf

I2-1

As a community member, I'm especially concerned about:

- Preserving Coyote Valley's sensitive ecosystems and wildlife corridors
- Avoiding disruption of Coyote Creek and nearby trails
- Minimizing noise, construction traffic, and air pollution in residential areas

Alternative Grove 3 would eliminate the need for trenching through creeks and open space and instead use a short, overhead 500kV connection from the new terminal to Metcalf Substation. According to PG&E's own response, this option is feasible, and they are working cooperatively with LS Power on logistics.

I2-1 cont.

This solution protects nature, respects the community, and still achieves the energy goals of the project. I respectfully request that the CPUC prioritize the long-term environmental health and quality of life of our region by selecting Alternative Grove 3.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering the voices of local residents.

Sincerely,

Mila H.

District 2 San Jose

Letter I2: Mila Heally

I2-1 The commenter states a preference for Grove Terminal Alternative 3 (GTA-3) due to the lack of trenching through creeks and open space the Alternative would require.

The Draft EIR Chapter 4 analyzes Project alternatives considered and rejected. Under this analysis, the Grove Terminal Alternative 3 (GTA-3) was analyzed and will be considered by decision-makers. Although this comment does not raise "significant environmental issues" for purposes of CEQA (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21091[d][2][B]; CEQA Guidelines Sections 15088[c], 15132[d], 15204[a]), CPUC has received and reviewed it and included it in the record for consideration by decision-makers separate from the CEQA process.

From: Mila CLNA <mila1.clna@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 25, 2025 8:04 AM
To: Wright, Tharon
Cc: Power Santa Clara Valley
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Power Santa Clara Valley Project, A.24-04-017

Mila H.
Calpine Dr
San Jose, CA95123
Mila1.clna@gmail.com
408-250-9413

I3-1

On Fri, Jul 25, 2025 at 6:37 AM Wright, Tharon <Tharon.Wright@cpuc.ca.gov> wrote:

> Dear Ms. Mila H.,
>
> Thank you for your email. The CPUC acknowledges receipt of your comment on the Power Santa Clara Valley Project Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR). To fully include your comment in the Draft EIR public review record, please provide the reference to the Power Santa Clara Valley Project, A.24-04-017, in the email subject line and include your name, address, and phone number or email address.
>
> Kindly,
>
> **Tharon Wright (she/her)**
>
> Public Utilities Regulatory Analyst IV
>
> CEQA and Energy Permitting Section, CEQA and FERC Branch
>
> Energy Division, California Public Utilities Commission
>
> 916-594-4699 | tharon.wright@cpuc.ca.gov
>
> www.cpuc.ca.gov | Facebook | Twitter | Instagram | YouTube | LinkedIn

From: Mila CLNA <mila1.clna@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 1:22 PM
To: Wright, Tharon <Tharon.Wright@cpuc.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Support for Alternative Grove 3 – A Smarter, Lower-Impact Location

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Mila CLNA** <mila1.clna@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jul 24, 2025 at 1:15 PM
Subject: Support for Alternative Grove 3 – A Smarter, Lower-Impact Location
To: Mila CLNA <mila1.clna@gmail.com>
CC: San Jose ACTION! <sanjoseaction@googlegroups.com>, Campos, Pamela <pamela.campos@sanjoseca.gov>, Mahan, Matt <matt.mahan@sanjoseca.gov>, Ramirez, Lucas <Lucas.ramirez@sanjoseca.gov>, Dang, Tara <Tara.Dang@sanjoseca.gov>, Maguire, Jennifer <jennifer.maguire@sanjoseca.gov>, John Leipelt <john558@icloud.com>, <wanday.wong@gmail.com>, darryl ospring <darryly2k@sbcglobal.net>, <bestseller2005@yahoo.com>

Dear CPUC Commissioners,

I'm writing to urge you to adopt Alternative Grove 3 as the preferred site for the LS Power Grid California, LLC's Power Santa Clara Valley Project (Application 24-04-017).

Alternative Grove 3, located at PG&E's existing Metcalf Substation, is clearly the most responsible and community-friendly option. It meets the technical needs of the project while significantly reducing environmental and community impacts compared to building a new terminal in Coyote Valley.

https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/pscv/pdfs/07_PG&E_No2.pdf

As a community member, I'm especially concerned about:

- Preserving Coyote Valley's sensitive ecosystems and wildlife corridors
- Avoiding disruption of Coyote Creek and nearby trails
- Minimizing noise, construction traffic, and air pollution in residential areas

Alternative Grove 3 would eliminate the need for trenching through creeks and open space and instead use a short, overhead 500kV connection from the new terminal to Metcalf Substation. According to PG&E's own response, this option is feasible, and they are working cooperatively with LS Power on logistics.

This solution protects nature, respects the community, and still achieves the energy goals of the project. I respectfully request that the CPUC prioritize the long-term environmental health and quality of life of our region by selecting Alternative Grove 3.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering the voices of local residents.

Sincerely,

Mila H.

District 2 San Jose

Letter I3: Mila Heally

I3-1 The commenter provides their contact information to complement their previous comment letter. The comment is noted.

From: Mila CLNA <mila1.clna@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 25, 2025 8:00 AM
To: Wright, Tharon
Cc: Power Santa Clara Valley
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Question about Metcalf project

Hi Tharon,

Thanks for the clarification!

I4-1

Thank you,
Mila

On Fri, Jul 25, 2025 at 6:35 AM Wright, Tharon <Tharon.Wright@cpuc.ca.gov> wrote:

> Dear Ms. Mila,
>
> Thank you for sharing your questions on the Power Santa Clara Valley Project Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR). The CPUC welcomes public comments on the Draft EIR throughout the 45-day public review process, which ends on August 25, 2025. Public participation includes providing oral comments at the upcoming public meeting (scheduled on August 5th) and providing written comments on the Draft EIR. Formal responses to public comments will be provided by the CPUC in the Final EIR.
>
> Chapter 4 of the Draft EIR, Alternatives, describes potentially feasible alternatives to the Project that will foster informed CPUC's decision-making and public participation in the environmental review process. This chapter describes how these alternatives were identified and screened to develop a list of alternatives for analysis. This chapter also compares the environmental impacts of the Project with the alternatives carried forward. In compliance with CEQA, the comparison of alternatives conducted in the CPUC's CEQA environmental review process focuses on potential environmental impacts only. A separate and concurrent need and cost review for the Project is conducted by CPUC as part of the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity proceeding. More information about these concurrent reviews is available here: Microsoft Word - EIR Step-by-Step_August_2008.
>
> Following the CEQA Guidelines on public notice and outreach, a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EIR (including invitation for a public informational meeting) was posted on July 10, 2025, at the State Clearinghouse, the Santa Clara County Clerk's office, and a local newspaper of major distribution in the Project area. Additionally, the CPUC mailed the NOA to residents located within

300 feet of the Project. Printed copies of the Draft EIR are also available at the Tully, Rose Garden, Santa Teresa, and Edenvale public libraries.

The Power Santa Clara Valley Project is subject to CPUC's regulatory authority. Interested persons may submit written comments on the Draft EIR within the specified public comment period (July 10 – August 25). Written comments should reference the Power Santa Clara Valley Project, A. 24-04-017. Please include your name, address, and phone number or email address so we may contact you fo clarification if necessary.

Kindly,

Tharon Wright (she/her)

Public Utilities Regulatory Analyst IV

CEQA and Energy Permitting Section, CEQA and FERC Branch

Energy Division, California Public Utilities Commission

916-594-4699 | tharon.wright@cpuc.ca.gov

www.cpuc.ca.gov | Facebook | Twitter | Instagram | YouTube | LinkedIn

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From: Mila CLNA <mila1.clna@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 9:17 AM
To: Wright, Tharon <Tharon.Wright@cpuc.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Question about Metcalf project

Hi Tharon,

What happened to that alternative locations that are not in Coyote Valley for this project?

Is there any mapping of routes for these pipelines that would not require digging under the bike trail or Coyote creek?

What's the cost difference for project if it goes together with the PG&E station or the alternative locations nearby?

Did any outreach happened in the neighborhood or neighborhood associations to invite people to come to the meetings?

Is it ever going to San Jose council for voting?

Thank you,

Mila

Letter I4: Mila Heally

I4-1 The commenter provided a follow up response to CPUC on clarifications provided in Comment I-1. The comment is noted.

From: Rambod Hakhamaneshi <rambod59@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 23, 2025 11:57 AM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Cc: Rambod Hakhamaneshi
Subject: Comment on Draft EIR – Power Santa Clara Valley Project (A.24-04-017)

Dear Mr. Wright,

I am a property owner in East and South San Jose and am writing to express concern about the potential impact of the Power Santa Clara Valley Project (Application No. A.24-04-017) on nearby residential property values.

I own the following properties:

- 142 Harriet Avenue, San Jose, CA 95127
- 1871 Margaret Street, San Jose, CA 95116
- 598 Genine Drive, San Jose, CA 95127
- 5332 Monterey Highway, Apt 5, San Jose, CA 95111
- 948 Steinway Avenue, Campbell, CA 95008

I5-1

While I understand the project is primarily focused in southern San Jose, I would appreciate confirmation that none of the proposed HVDC terminals, underground or overhead transmission lines, or construction staging areas will be located near these addresses. I am particularly concerned about potential construction-related impacts, future easement implications, and long-term perception issues that could negatively affect my property values.

Please include this comment in the public record and provide clarification if available.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rambod Hakhamaneshi

rambod59@gmail.com

4089030745

Letter I5: Rambod Hakhamaneshi

I5-1 The commenter expresses concern about the potential impact of the Project on nearby residential property values.

CEQA requires an analysis of physical impacts on the environment; it does not require analysis of social and economic impacts. Under CEQA, "an economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment" (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15131 and 15382). CEQA requires an analysis only of impacts where there is "substantial evidence" that the project would have a significant effect on the environment. Under CEQA, substantial evidence does not include "evidence of social or economic impacts that do not contribute to, or are not caused by, physical impacts on the environment" (PRC Section 21080[e][2]). Property value loss, including changes to property values, in and of themselves are not physical impacts required to be included in a CEQA analysis and is not encompassed in a resource topic that is included in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. There is no evidence that potentially significant changes to the physical environment would result from economic effects of the Project or alternatives. Therefore, the comments raise issues that are considered outside the scope of analysis required by CEQA.

From: brandonc@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of brandon coker <brandonc@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 4:38 AM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Subject: Please choose the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the Power Santa Clara Valley project

Dear California Public Utilities Commission,

I support more energy facilities and the area proposed is fine. People don't understand we can't put this stuff out in a far away land one can see. I6-1

Sincerely,
brandon coker
2325 Shadow Mist Ct San Jose, CA 95138-2461 brandonc@missionbayinc.com

Letter I6: Brandon Coker

I6-1 The commenter expresses support for the Project. The comment is noted. Although this comment does not raise "significant environmental issues" for purposes of CEQA (PRC Section 21091[d][2][B]; CEQA Guidelines Sections 15088[c], 15132[d], 15204[a]), CPUC has received and reviewed it and included it in the record for consideration by decision-makers separate from the CEQA process.

From: judycham@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Judith Chamberlin <judycham@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Friday, July 25, 2025 9:04 AM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Subject: Please choose the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the Power Santa Clara Valley project

Dear California Public Utilities Commission,

I have worked for a number of years with various organizations to keep Coyote Valley open space and especially to protect wildlife habitat as well as other natural features. I oppose disturbing an orchard and digging a trench to connect to the Metcalf Station. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project identified Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1), which locates the Grove terminal at the PG&E Metcalf Substation, as the Environmentally Superior Alternative. The CPUC should choose AC-1 as the preferred path forward for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project. I7-1

Numerous scientific studies support conserving all of Coyote Valley as protected open space to ensure the environmental and economic vitality of the greater San José area. Santa Clara County voters agree and have consistently and overwhelmingly demonstrated their support for conservation of Coyote Valley. I7-2

I write to you today, as a resident who lives close to Coyote Valley, to choose AC-1 as the preferred path forward for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project. I7-3

Sincerely,
Judith Chamberlin
1117 Olive Branch Ln San Jose, CA 95120-5411 judycham@aol.com

Letter I7: Judith Chamberlin

I7-1 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives.

I7-2 The commenter notes scientific studies and community support for conservation of Coyote Valley as protected open space. The comment is noted. Please refer to the Master Response for Wildlife Connectivity.

I7-3 The commenter reinstates support for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives.

From: carollinney@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Carol Wilson <carollinney@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Friday, July 25, 2025 6:16 PM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Subject: Please choose the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the Power Santa Clara Valley project

Dear California Public Utilities Commission,

Please protect one of the last orchards in San Jose. Do not allow a power plant to destroy yet another orchard. There is a ready alternative. Build at the existing power plant. I8-1

Sincerely,
Carol Wilson
carollinney@gmail.com

Sincerely,
Carol Wilson
1560 De Anza Way San Jose, CA 95125-4435 carollinney@gmail.com

Letter I8: Carol Wilson

I8-1 The commenter states a preference for an alternative site for the proposed Grove high-voltage direct current (HVDC) terminal. The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives.

From: katyullmann@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Katy Ullmann <katyullmann@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 1:31 PM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Subject: Please choose the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the Power Santa Clara Valley project

Dear California Public Utilities Commission,

I strongly urge the CPUC to select the Metcalf substation as the location for the LS Power energy facility instead of the orchard site in Coyote Valley. Coyote Valley is a critical wildlife corridor, and building the facility there would destroy habitat, increase roadkill, and permanently harm the environment. The CPUC's own Environmental Impact Report found the substation to be the environmentally superior option, and PG&E has indicated they can create space for it. Please protect Coyote Valley by choosing the Metcalf substation. I9-1

Sincerely,
Katy Ullmann
18260 Serra Pl Morgan Hill, CA 95037-2982 katyullmann@gmail.com

Letter I9: Katy Ullmann

I9-1 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives.

From: sarahyang2028@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Sarah Yang <sarahyang2028@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 3, 2025 7:51 PM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Subject: Please choose the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the Power Santa Clara Valley project

Dear California Public Utilities Commission,

Hi, I'm Sarah, a high school student at Lynbrook High School in San Jose. Coyote Valley is an incredibly special and beautiful part of the Bay Area. It safeguards our water resources and serves as a vital habitat for local wildlife. As someone who grew up on this very soil, I care deeply about preserving its natural beauty and ecological importance. I10-1

It breaks my heart to see Mother Nature being torn down before our eyes, and we can't just stand by and let that happen. Please choose AC-1 for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project and protect Coyote Valley for the generations to come. I10-2

Sincerely,
Sarah Yang
1477 Elka Ave San Jose, CA 95129-3825
sarahyang2028@gmail.com

Letter I10: Sarah Yang

I10-1 The commenter highlights environmental and scenic values of Coyote Valley. The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 1: Wildlife Connectivity.

I10-2 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to the Master Response 2: Alternatives.

From: Karen Uyeda <ktuyeda@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 6, 2025 9:42 PM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Cc: Karen Uyeda
Subject: CPUC Santa Clara Valley Power Project - Draft EIR

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello,

I arrived at the August 5, 2025 public information meeting after the presentation ended. I was informed that the presentation will be posted.

I would like to review the presentation before I look at the draft EIR. Can you please advise when and where the presentation will be posted? I11-1

Best regards,
Karen

Letter I11: Karen Uyeda

I11-1 The commenter requested a copy of the Draft EIR Public Meeting Presentation. Thank you for your comment. CPUC responded to this comment through email communications dated August 13, 2025. Copies of the Draft EIR Public Meeting Presentation, meeting recording, and transcript are available at the CPUC Project website: https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/pscv/index.html.

3.4.4 Form Letter 1

CPUC received 270 comment letters during the public review period, most of which followed the same general template emphasizing concerns about wildlife connectivity and support for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). Of these, seven comment letters included an additional personalized message; however, no new issues were raised. Therefore, this section presents only one form letter, F1, as representative for all 270 form letters received. The individuals who provided the 270 comment letters are listed below in **Table 3-4**.

TABLE 3-4
LIST OF COMMENT LETTERS USING FORM LETTER 1 STRUCTURE

Letter	Commenter	Date Submitted
F1	Deborah Kalb	7/23/2025
F2	Mila Heally	7/23/2025
F3	John Leipelt	7/23/2025
F4	Wanda Wong	7/23/2025
F5	Candise Canto	7/24/2025
F6	Kelsey Colson	7/24/2025
F7	William Wolf	7/24/2025
F8	Deborah St Julien	7/25/2025
F9	Cathleen Guzman	7/25/2025
F10	Niki Lamb	7/25/2025
F11	Chris Hauck	7/25/2025
F12	Divya Pari	7/25/2025
F13	Audrey Doocy	7/25/2025
F14	Anthony Flores	7/25/2025
F15	Rene Sp	7/25/2025
F16	Lily Wong	7/25/2025
F17	Kathy Oneal	7/25/2025
F18	Kathleen Gardner	7/25/2025
F19	Cynthia Boman	7/25/2025
F20	Linda Matsuhiro	7/25/2025
F21	Rebecca Schoenenberger	7/25/2025
F22	Denis O'Neal	7/25/2025
F23	Leon Tate	7/25/2025
F24	Karl Schilling	7/25/2025
F25	Alie Victorine	7/25/2025
F26	Theresa Sherman	7/25/2025
F27	Dave Clare	7/25/2025
F28	Chris Loo	7/25/2025
F29	Trudy LaFrance	7/25/2025
F30	Maximilian Spring	7/25/2025

TABLE 3-4
LIST OF COMMENT LETTERS USING FORM LETTER 1 STRUCTURE

Letter	Commenter	Date Submitted
F31	Laurie Alaimo	7/25/2025
F32	James Petkiewicz	7/25/2025
F33	Jennifer Krenzin	7/25/2025
F34	Arlette Mena	7/25/2025
F35	Patty Linder	7/25/2025
F36	Carolyn Straub	7/25/2025
F37	Margaret Tritton	7/25/2025
F38	Debra Ullmann	7/25/2025
F39	Barbara Canup	7/25/2025
F40	Stephen McHenry	7/25/2025
F41	Cindy Ahola	7/25/2025
F42	Brian Carr	7/25/2025
F43	Geoffrey Ullmann	7/25/2025
F44	Susan Trivisonno	7/25/2025
F45	Christine Nagel	7/25/2025
F46	Jeanine Crider	7/25/2025
F47	Karen Andersen-Lattin	7/25/2025
F48	Ginabeth Castillo-Alpers	7/25/2025
F49	Lisa Burton	7/25/2025
F50	David Stolowitz	7/25/2025
F51	Cynthia Leeder	7/25/2025
F52	Teresa Pureco	7/25/2025
F53	Angela McCarren	7/25/2025
F54	Kelly Graham	7/25/2025
F55	Neal Weinstein	7/25/2025
F56	Kevin Golden	7/25/2025
F57	LeAnn Pickering	7/25/2025
F58	Barbara Coleman	7/25/2025
F59	Christal Niederer	7/25/2025
F60	Gustavo Baldrich	7/25/2025
F61	Alan Chan	7/25/2025
F62	Colleen Hamilton	7/25/2025
F63	Katja Irvin	7/25/2025
F64	Sharon Zohar	7/25/2025
F65	Donald Chamberlin	7/25/2025
F66	Michele Young	7/25/2025
F67	Lisa Curran	7/25/2025
F68	Bryan Whitton	7/25/2025

TABLE 3-4
LIST OF COMMENT LETTERS USING FORM LETTER 1 STRUCTURE

Letter	Commenter	Date Submitted
F69	Mario Guzman	7/25/2025
F70	Deborah Taylor	7/25/2025
F71	Christopher Kangas	7/25/2025
F72	James Eggers	7/25/2025
F73	John Ryan	7/25/2025
F74	Kathryn Zeidenstein	7/25/2025
F75	Marguerite Wilhelm-Safian	7/25/2025
F76	Lorraine Myers	7/25/2025
F77	Megan Fluke	7/25/2025
F78	Sim Park	7/25/2025
F79	Mark Gion	7/25/2025
F80	Samuel Graham	7/25/2025
F81	Peggy Hennessee	7/25/2025
F82	Rosa Valenzuela	7/25/2025
F83	Chloe T	7/25/2025
F84	Mary Lindemuth	7/25/2025
F85	Annette McMillan	7/25/2025
F86	Bree Haskell	7/25/2025
F87	Phyllis McIntosh	7/25/2025
F88	Michael Kutilek	7/25/2025
F89	Elisabeth Lubliner	7/25/2025
F90	Sylvan Adams	7/25/2025
F91	Socorro Montano	7/25/2025
F92	Pamela Oliverio	7/25/2025
F93	Marilynn Smith	7/25/2025
F94	Nick Trivisonno	7/25/2025
F95	Susan LeClair	7/25/2025
F96	Linda Reis	7/25/2025
F97	Jenna Perez	7/25/2025
F98	Nina Wouk	7/25/2025
F99	Nabeel Al-Shamma	7/25/2025
F100	Rick Home	7/25/2025
F101	David Coleman	7/25/2025
F102	Julia Howlett	7/25/2025
F103	Eric Ware	7/25/2025
F104	Rick Shrum	7/25/2025
F105	Lucinda Evanston	7/25/2025
F106	Greg Haskell	7/25/2025

TABLE 3-4
LIST OF COMMENT LETTERS USING FORM LETTER 1 STRUCTURE

Letter	Commenter	Date Submitted
F107	Diane Palacio	7/25/2025
F108	Raymond Grzan	7/25/2025
F109	Christine Pielenz	7/25/2025
F110	Margaret Petkiewicz	7/25/2025
F111	Carlin Black	7/25/2025
F112	Freda Hofland	7/25/2025
F113	Ed Von Runnen	7/25/2025
F114	Ed Von Runnen	7/25/2025
F115	Sam Naifeh	7/25/2025
F116	Carla Holmes	7/25/2025
F117	Elizabeth Karolczak	7/25/2025
F118	Dr. Tracy Ferea	7/25/2025
F119	Jennifer Mutch	7/25/2025
F120	Elizabeth Taylor	7/25/2025
F121	Carole Foster	7/25/2025
F122	Charlene Henley	7/25/2025
F123	Patricia Blevins	7/25/2025
F124	Cindy Stein	7/25/2025
F125	Alice Smith	7/25/2025
F126	Gary Bailey	7/25/2025
F127	Chris Loo	7/25/2025
F128	Kit Odoherty	7/25/2025
F129	Michele Nihipali	7/25/2025
F130	Zhenda MA	7/25/2025
F131	Andrea Reid	7/25/2025
F132	Singih Tan	7/25/2025
F133	Russell Weisz	7/25/2025
F134	Andria Ventura	7/25/2025
F135	Renee Gardner	7/25/2025
F136	Carlyn Clement	7/25/2025
F137	Richard Paradies	7/25/2025
F138	John Oda	7/25/2025
F139	Patrice Steiner	7/25/2025
F140	Christina Medina	7/25/2025
F141	Wendy Hafkenshiel	7/25/2025
F142	Audra Gardner	7/25/2025
F143	Connie Rogers	7/25/2025
F144	Charles Hammerstad	7/25/2025

TABLE 3-4
LIST OF COMMENT LETTERS USING FORM LETTER 1 STRUCTURE

Letter	Commenter	Date Submitted
F145	Katherine Gilmur	7/25/2025
F146	JL Angell	7/25/2025
F147	Gloria Grotjan	7/25/2025
F148	Mark Rauscher	7/25/2025
F149	Virginia Smedberg	7/25/2025
F150	Rose Amaru	7/25/2025
F151	Jonathan Gottlieb	7/25/2025
F152	Allan Campbell	7/25/2025
F153	Julie Beer	7/25/2025
F154	Rhys Atkinson	7/26/2025
F155	Vickie Rozell	7/26/2025
F156	Rosemary Lojo	7/26/2025
F157	Denise Acomb	7/26/2025
F158	Dawn Jorgensen	7/26/2025
F159	Dawn Jorgensen	7/26/2025
F160	Carol Drake	7/26/2025
F161	Annie Bien	7/26/2025
F162	Cynthia Boman	7/26/2025
F163	Mike Beggs	7/26/2025
F164	Katlyn Leonardich	7/26/2025
F165	Aaron Brinkerhoff	7/26/2025
F166	Michelle Waters	7/26/2025
F167	Joan Freed	7/26/2025
F168	William Henzel	7/26/2025
F169	William Henzel	7/26/2025
F170	Winter Dellenbach	7/26/2025
F171	Denise Stephens	7/26/2025
F172	Gloria Carmoma	7/26/2025
F173	Christina Quintana	7/26/2025
F174	Laurie Goodman	7/26/2025
F175	Deborah Lynn Hoag	7/26/2025
F176	Hannah Laszlo-Rath	7/26/2025
F177	Gregory Ullmann	7/26/2025
F178	Mario Guzman	7/26/2025
F179	Pat Lang	7/26/2025
F180	Robin Shepherd	7/26/2025
F181	Liza Morell	7/26/2025
F182	R. Zierikzee	7/26/2025

TABLE 3-4
LIST OF COMMENT LETTERS USING FORM LETTER 1 STRUCTURE

Letter	Commenter	Date Submitted
F183	Gordon Foster	7/26/2025
F184	Robert Chavez	7/26/2025
F185	Phil Braverman	7/26/2025
F186	Thomas Carlino	7/26/2025
F187	James Pearson	7/26/2025
F188	Jenne Marie Sindoni	7/26/2025
F189	Linda Reis	7/26/2025
F190	Laurie Winslow	7/26/2025
F191	Harry Oberhelman	7/26/2025
F192	Max Mikles	7/26/2025
F193	Victoia Kojola	7/26/2025
F194	Krista Dana	7/26/2025
F195	David Marancik	7/26/2025
F196	Tatyana Filippova-Miller	7/26/2025
F197	Brent Wooden	7/26/2025
F198	Rena Zahorsky	7/26/2025
F199	Rebecca Lee	7/26/2025
F200	M. K. Russell	7/26/2025
F201	Smita Patel	7/26/2025
F202	Elizabeth Polland	7/26/2025
F203	Cheryl Herms	7/26/2025
F204	Danielle DeRome	7/26/2025
F205	Patricia Crespo	7/26/2025
F206	Sam Naifeh	7/27/2025
F207	Davy Davidson	7/27/2025
F208	Melissa Abe	7/26/2025
F209	Chantilly Gaudy	7/27/2025
F210	Janet Burchinal	7/27/2025
F211	Stephen Rosenblum	7/27/2025
F212	J Stuart	7/27/2025
F213	Peter Klein	7/27/2025
F214	Jennie Phillips	7/27/2025
F215	Janet Fiore	7/27/2025
F216	Dennis Uyeno	7/27/2025
F217	Sue Ellen Tomasic	7/27/2025
F218	John Fensterwald	7/27/2025
F219	Mark Luiso	7/27/2025
F220	Gina White	7/27/2025

TABLE 3-4
LIST OF COMMENT LETTERS USING FORM LETTER 1 STRUCTURE

Letter	Commenter	Date Submitted
F221	Mark Luiso	7/27/2025
F222	Deborah Taylor	7/27/2025
F223	Greg Armanino	7/27/2025
F224	Cheryl Weiden	7/27/2025
F225	Kimberly Teppo	7/28/2025
F226	Rhonda Lakatos	7/28/2025
F227	Christine Zack	7/28/2025
F228	Phillip Carr	7/28/2025
F229	Stephanie Vargas	7/28/2025
F230	Susan Butler-Graham	7/28/2025
F231	James Marshall	7/28/2025
F232	Beth Barstow	7/28/2025
F233	Gayle Boesch	7/28/2025
F234	Amy Wright	7/28/2025
F235	Teresa Ponikvar	7/28/2025
F236	Abe Camarillo	7/28/2025
F237	Carol Adamski	7/28/2025
F238	Mark Anderton	7/28/2025
F239	Janet Burchinal	7/28/2025
F240	William Benson	7/29/2025
F241	Elizabeth Bacon	7/29/2025
F242	Alejandra Bellavance	7/29/2025
F243	Ari Turrentine	7/29/2025
F244	Robert Hall	7/29/2025
F245	Judith Russo	7/29/2025
F246	Stephanie Brooks	7/30/2025
F247	James Haskell	7/30/2025
F248	Lynn Buck	7/30/2025
F249	John Fioretta	7/30/2025
F250	Connie Lyons	7/31/2025
F251	Jackie Latham	7/31/2025
F252	Laila Noori	7/31/2025
F253	Duane Barrett	8/1/2025
F254	Bob Berends	8/1/2025
F255	Monica Donovan	8/2/2025
F256	Jeffer Razai	8/2/2025
F257	Kayla Ngo	8/3/2025
F258	Maya Soman	8/3/2025

TABLE 3-4
LIST OF COMMENT LETTERS USING FORM LETTER 1 STRUCTURE

Letter	Commenter	Date Submitted
F259	Clement Koh	8/3/2025
F260	Khushee Desai	8/3/2025
F261	Kanika Rawat	8/3/2025
F262	Luca Barchietto	8/3/2025
F263	Allegra Watson	8/4/2025
F264	Gina White	8/5/2025
F265	Amy Yu	8/5/2025
F266	Gina White	8/5/2025
F267	Aahaan Jain	8/10/2025
F268	Amari Sims	8/10/2025
F269	Celine Sims	8/10/2025
F270	Utkarsh Nath	8/18/2025

Form Letter F1

From: dkalbmiller@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Deborah Kalb <dkalbmiller@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 23, 2025 6:00 PM
To: Power Santa Clara Valley
Subject: Please choose the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the Power Santa Clara Valley project

Dear California Public Utilities Commission,

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project identified Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1), which locates the Grove terminal at the PG&E Metcalf Substation, as the Environmentally Superior Alternative. The CPUC should choose AC-1 as the preferred path forward for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project.

Locating the Grove terminal at the Metcalf Substation instead of on an orchard in Coyote Valley would significantly reduce the environmental impacts of the project. There is no reason to bulldoze an orchard, dig a trench along nearly a mile of the Coyote Creek Trail, and bore a tunnel underneath Coyote Creek for the additional 1.2-mile-long transmission line that will be needed if the terminal is built on the site under the project as proposed. All of this would increase the cost of the overall project – a cost that would be passed on to the public. F1-1

Coyote Valley forms a critical landscape linkage for wildlife to migrate between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range. Numerous scientific studies support conserving all of Coyote Valley as protected open space to ensure the environmental and economic vitality of the greater San José area. Santa Clara County voters agree and have consistently and overwhelmingly demonstrated their support for conservation of Coyote Valley.

The Coyote Valley orchard that would be the site for the terminal under the project as proposed is right next to Coyote Creek, which is the backbone of the wildlife corridor through Coyote Valley. Animals that depend on the creek corridor to be able to migrate from the Santa Cruz Mountains to the Diablo Range would be subjected to noise, nighttime lighting, human activity, and other disturbances from the construction and operation of the energy facility. F1-2

Monterey Road, where this orchard site is located, is already a wildlife roadkill hotspot. The highest incidence of bobcats, badgers, coyotes, deer, and other animals being killed by cars is right around this location, proving that animals are desperately trying to get across Monterey Road to the safety of Coyote Creek on the other side. Putting a 6-acre energy facility in the path of these animals will only make this problem worse.

Please choose AC-1 as the preferred path forward for the Power Santa Clara Valley Project. F1-3

Sincerely,
Deborah Kalb
5875 Marshwell Way San Jose, CA 95138-1807 dkalbmiller@gmail.com

Letter F1: Deborah Kalb

F1-1 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 1: Alternatives for a detailed response.

F1-2 The commenter notes scientific studies and community support for conservation of Coyote Valley as protected open space. The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 1: Wildlife Connectivity for more details.

F1-3 The commenter states a preference for Alternative Combination 1 (AC-1). The comment is noted. Please refer to Master Response 2: Alternatives for more details.

3.5 References

Caltrans. 2024. Wildlife Connectivity Program Report. California Department of Transportation Headquarters Division of Environmental Analysis. Office of Fish and Wildlife Connectivity. July 1.

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). 2025. Data Request #2 LS Power Grid California's Power Santa Clara Valley Project (Application 24-04-017). February 4.

LS Power Grid California (LSPGC). 2025. Response to Project Description Data Request No. 2 for LS Power Grid California, LLC's Power Santa Clara Valley Project (Application 24-04-017). February 11.