



# California Public Utilities Commission

November 18, 2021

## Notice of Availability of Recirculated Portions of the Draft Environmental Impact Report Regarding the Proposed Estrella Substation and Paso Robles Area Reinforcement Project

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CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
505 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102-3238

1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), as the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for review of the proposed Estrella Substation and Paso Robles Area Reinforcement Project (Proposed Project), is recirculating portions of the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The draft EIR for the Proposed Project was originally circulated for public review on December 8, 2020 and the public review and comment period lasted until February 22, 2021. CPUC received a large number of public comments on the draft EIR, including a comment letter from Horizon West Transmission (HWT, one of two Project Applicants) identifying substantive changes to the Proposed Project. CPUC also received comments from Adams Broadwell Joseph & Cardozo (Adams Broadwell), on behalf of California Unions for Reliable Energy (CURE), regarding the draft EIR's air quality analysis, as well as comments from Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E, the other Project Applicant). All comments previously received as part of the draft EIR comment and review period will be responded to as part of the final EIR.

In accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21092.1 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5, CPUC has determined that significant new information brought to light by HWT, Adams Broadwell, and PG&E merits recirculation of portions of the draft EIR. Specifically, the following portions of the draft EIR are being recirculated:

- Chapter 2, *Project Description*;
- Section 4.2, "Agricultural Resources;" and
- Section 4.3, "Air Quality."



The revisions made to Chapter 2, *Project Description* reflect changes to the Proposed Project identified by HWT and PG&E. Most notably, HWT would acquire an additional 5 acres of land as part of the Estrella Substation parcel (for a total of 20 acres compared to the 15 acres described in the draft EIR).

Revisions to Section 4.2, “Agricultural Resources,” disclose Proposed Project impacts to the additional 5-acre area, which is currently used for agricultural production and is largely designated as Unique Farmland. This land would be removed from an existing Williamson Act contract and could be converted to non-agricultural uses. Since Proposed Project impacts on agricultural resources were identified as significant and unavoidable in the original draft EIR, these revisions would not change significance conclusions under Impact AG-1 (Conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance) or Impact AG-2 (Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract), however, the impacts affect more acreage than discussed in the draft EIR. Review of updated data on Williamson Act contracts shows that the Bonel Ranch Substation Site (Alternative SS-1) is under Williamson Act contract (the draft EIR had stated that it was not under contract); this has been corrected in the revised Section 4.2 and the significance conclusion related to conflicts with Williamson Act contracts for Alternative SS-1 has been changed to significant and unavoidable.

Revisions to Section 4.3, “Air Quality,” were made in response to comments submitted on the draft EIR by Adams Broadwell, including a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) prepared by a consultant. The section was revised to disclose additional potential significant impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives related to human health from construction-related emissions and from potential exposure to Valley Fever. The significance conclusion for the Proposed Project under Impact AQ-3 (Potential to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations) has been changed to significant and unavoidable, as have the conclusions for the Alternatives SS-1, PLR-1A, PLR-1C, SE-1A, and SE-PLR-2 under the same significance criterion.

CPUC hereby invites comments on the adequacy and completeness of the environmental analyses presented in recirculated portions of the draft EIR only and requests that reviewers limit their comments to the revised portions of the draft EIR. Comments submitted during this review period on portions of the EIR that are not part of the recirculated draft EIR (i.e., comments on



chapters or sections of the EIR that have not been revised) will not be considered by the CPUC at this time. This recirculated draft EIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (as amended) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] title 14, section 15000 et seq.).

2. Project Title & Application Number: Estrella Substation and Paso Robles Area Reinforcement Project (A.17-01-023)
3. Property Owner(s): Various
4. Contact Person: Trevor Pratt; [estrellaproject@horizonh2o.com](mailto:estrellaproject@horizonh2o.com)
5. Project Location: unincorporated portions of San Luis Obispo County and the City of Paso Robles (See attached figure)

Project APNs: Various

6. General Plan designation: Various
7. Zoning: Various
8. Brief Description of the Project: The Proposed Project involves the construction of a 230 kV/70 kV substation, a 230 kV transmission line interconnection, a new 70 kV double-circuit powerline between the new 70 kV substation and the existing San Miguel-Paso Robles 70 kV power line, and reconductoring of the existing San Miguel-Paso Robles 70 kV power line.
9. Project Alternatives: The draft EIR evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and nine project alternatives: the No Project Alternative, Bonel Ranch Substation Site (SS-1), Estrella Route to Estrella Substation (PLR-1A), Estrella Route to Bonel Ranch (PLR-1C, Option 1), Strategic Undergrounding, Option 1 & 2 (PLR-3), Templeton Substation Expansion (SE-1A), Templeton-Paso Robles South River Road Route (SE-PLR-2), Battery Storage to Address the Distribution Objective (BS-2), and Behind-the-Meter Solar and Battery Storage (BS-3).
10. The Proposed Project site is not located on the lists enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code, including, but not limited to lists of hazardous waste facilities.



11. Copies of recirculated portions of the draft EIR, and all documents referenced in those recirculated portions, are available for review online at the CPUC's project website:

[www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/horizonh2o/estrella/index.html](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/horizonh2o/estrella/index.html)

12. Public Meetings: No public meetings are currently scheduled related to the Proposed Project.

November 18, 2021

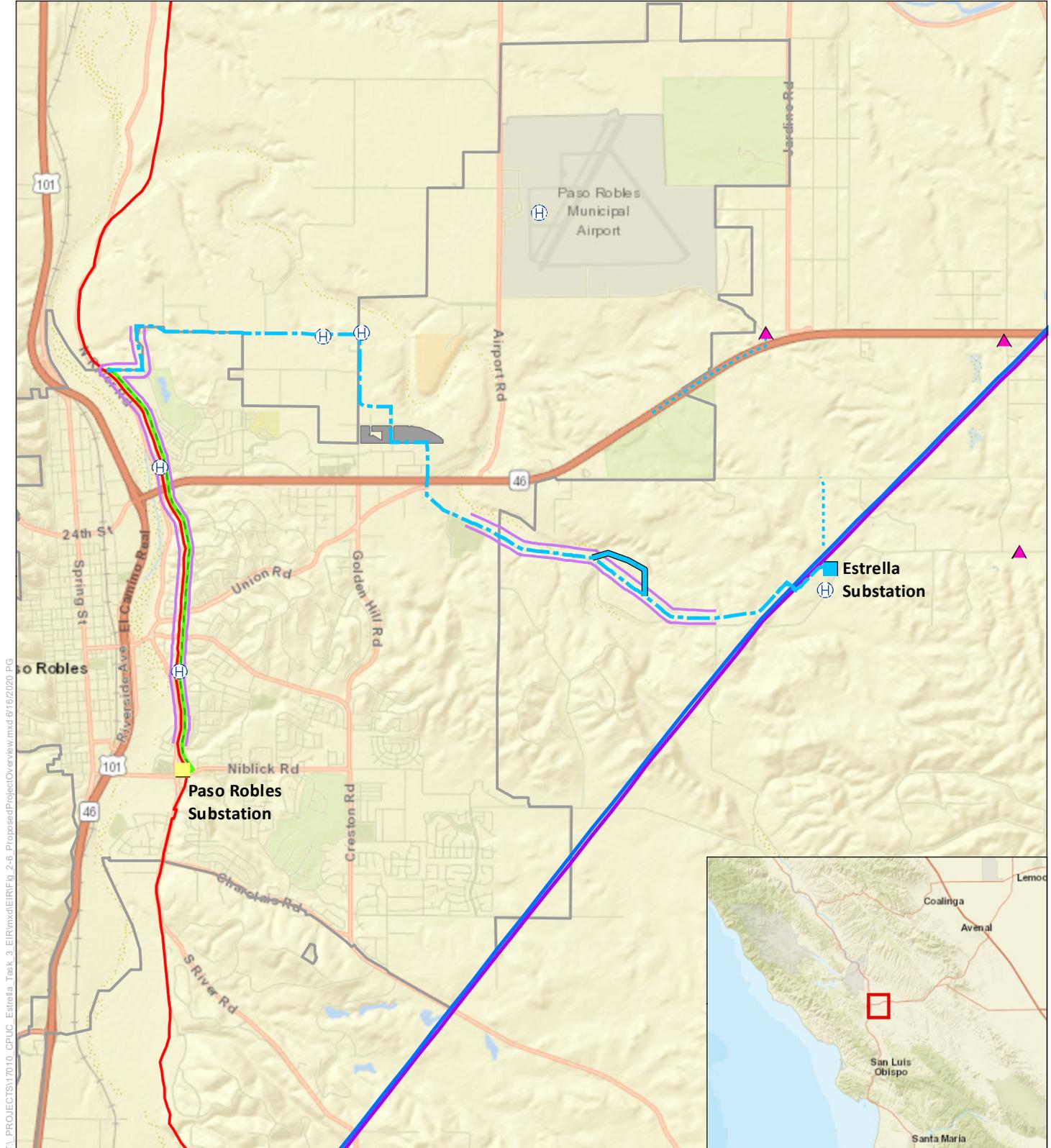
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DATE OF THIS NOTICE

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BY: Trevor Pratt, CPUC

**WRITTEN COMMENT PERIOD: NOVEMBER 18, 2021 TO JANUARY 12, 2022. COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 PM ON JANUARY 12, 2021.**

*Please send written comments to the attention of Trevor Pratt, c/o Tom Engels at Horizon Water and Environment, 266 Grand Avenue, Suite 210, Oakland, CA 94610, or via e-mail to [estrellaproject@horizonh2o.com](mailto:estrellaproject@horizonh2o.com).*





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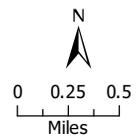
**Proposed Project**

- Estrella Substation
- - - 70kV Route
- ⋯ New Distribution Line Segments
- 70 kV Minor Route Variation 1
- Reconductoring Segment
- Distribution Underbuild
- Power Line Staging Areas
- Helicopter Landing Zones

**Existing Infrastructure**

- Existing 500 kV Transmission Line
- Existing 230 kV Transmission Line
- Existing 70 kV Power Line
- Existing Substations

- ▲ Additional 21/12 kV Pad-Mounted Transformer
- Paso Robles city limits



Source: ESRI 2020, NEET West and PG&E 2017

**Figure**  
Proposed Project  
Location and Overview

Estrella Substation and  
Paso Robles Area  
Reinforcement Project