

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) prepared this Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the PG&E proposed Shepherd Substation Project. This Final IS/MND includes comments received on the Draft IS/MND and responses to those comments. Revisions are indicated in the text of this Final IS/MND with ~~strikeout~~ for deletions of text and in underline for new text. It is noted that the California Department of Fish and Game effective January 1, 2013 is called the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Throughout this Final IS/MND the agency is still referenced as California Department of Fish and Game. All references to California Department of Fish and Game are synonymous with California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The comments received and the responses to those comments did not introduce significant new information that was not addressed or evaluated in the Draft IS/MND. No substantial revisions that would merit recirculation of the Draft IS/MND were made to the project or analyses after public comment.

1.2 PROPOSED PROJECT OVERVIEW

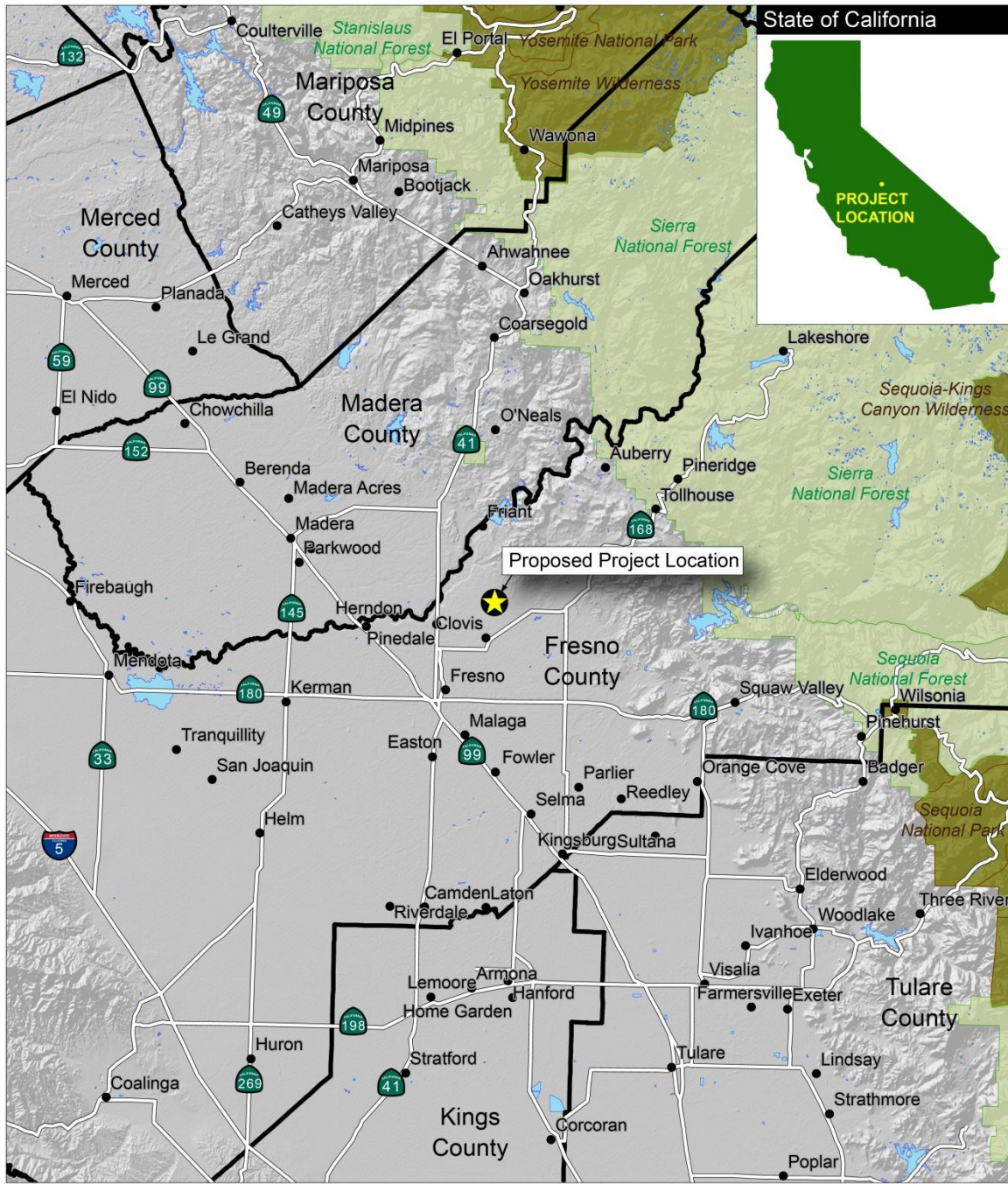
Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), a regulated California utility, filed an application with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on December 8, 2010, for a Permit to Construct (PTC) the Shepherd Substation Project (project). PG&E filed an amendment to the application for a PTC with CPUC on December 2, 2011. The proposed project includes:

- A 115/21-kilovolt (kV) electrical substation
- Approximately 1.5 miles of 115-kV power line
- Extension of an existing distribution line
- Three ~~Two~~ new underground distribution lines
- ~~Reconductoring of an overhead distribution line~~

The proposed electrical substation, power line, and distribution lines are located in an unincorporated area of Fresno County, California, north of the City of Clovis (Figure 1.1-1).

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Figure 1.1-1: Proposed Project Location

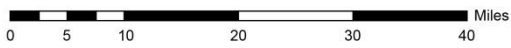


SOURCE: ESRI 2012, PG&E 2012, and Panorama Environmental 2012

Scale: 1:1,000,000

LEGEND

- Proposed Project Location
- Interstate Highway
- State Route



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1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

1.3.1 CEQA Process

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

All potentially significant impacts associated with the project can be mitigated to a level below significance; therefore, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) can be adopted by the CPUC in accordance with CEQA Public Resource Code §21080.

1.3.2 CEQA Lead Agency

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

1.3.3 Initial Study

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

Construction activities could have direct and indirect impacts on the environment. The following environmental parameters are addressed in the IS, based on the potential for the proposed project to have effects on the environment:

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

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The IS has been organized into the following sections:

- Chapter 1: Introduction. Provides an introduction and overview of the proposed project and the CEQA process, and identifies key areas of environmental analysis.
- Chapter 2: Project Description. Presents the project objectives and provides an in-depth description of the proposed project, including construction details and methods.
- Chapter 3: Environmental Setting and Environmental Impacts. Includes a description of the existing conditions and analysis of the proposed project's potential environmental impacts, and identifies mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels.
- Chapter 4: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. Identifies the monitoring requirements for APMs, AMMs, and mitigation measures
- Chapter 5: Comments and Responses to Comments. Presents the comments and responses to the comments on the Draft IS received during and shortly after the public comment period.
- Chapter 6: References. Lists the sources of information used to prepare the IS.
- Chapter 7: Report Preparation. Lists the preparers of the IS and identifies public agencies that were consulted during preparation of the document.