

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared by the California State Lands Commission (CSLC), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), to analyze and disclose the environmental effects associated with the proposed Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) Rio Dell Feeder 35239524 Project (Project). PG&E (Applicant) proposes the Project to install two 20-inch-diameter conduit casings using the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) technique to carry the Applicant's electric line and connect to the existing distribution lines and the existing Rio Dell Substation.

The CSLC prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) because it determined that the Initial Study (IS) identified potentially significant impacts related to the Project, and mitigation measures incorporated into the Project (and agreed to by the Applicant) would avoid or mitigate those impacts to a point where no significant impacts occur.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The Project site is located in the City of Rio Dell, California, in Humboldt County. The Project site is to the north and south of, and underneath, the Eel River. The Project site would consist of three separate work areas: the Southern Work Area; Northern Work Area; and Staging and Laydown Area. The Southern Work Area would be in a residential area to the north of the intersection between North Pacific Avenue and Eeloa Avenue; the Northern Work Area would be in riparian habitat and on an unnamed dirt road extending eastward of the bend near agriculture fields where Northwestern Avenue turns to the north; and the Staging and Laydown Area would be on a paved parcel located at 725 Northwestern Avenue.

The Project would involve installation of 20-inch-diameter conduit casings within two separate and parallel HDD routes drilled underneath the Eel River (Western HDD Conduit Casing and Eastern HDD Conduit Casing). The Project objective is to carry the Applicant's electric line through the Western HDD Conduit Casing and connect to the existing distribution lines and the existing Rio Dell Substation. The Eastern HDD Conduit Casing would be capped and left empty for a future distribution line, which has not been planned yet. Two No. 7 Boxes, which are precast concrete underground utility enclosures, would be installed: one within the Southern Work Area and one within the Northern Work Area. The No. 7 Boxes

would connect the electric line to the existing distribution lines at the north and south of the Eel River via linear trenching.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

The resources noted below have the potential to be affected by the Project and have at least one impact that would be “potentially significant.” The Applicant has agreed to implementation of mitigation measures that would reduce the potential impacts to “less than significant with mitigation,” as detailed in Chapter 3, *Environmental Checklist and Analysis*, of this IS/MND. Appendix I, *Mitigation Monitoring Program*, outlines the proposed mitigation measures designed to reduce or avoid potentially significant impacts. With implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, all Project-related impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

Environmental Issues with Potentially Significant Impacts:

- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Cultural Resources – Tribal
- Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

Summary of Proposed Project Mitigation Measures:

Biological Resources

- MM BIO-1: Site Restoration Plan
- MM BIO-2: Worker Environmental Awareness Training
- MM BIO-3: Western Bumble Bee
- MM BIO-4: Special Status Amphibian and Reptile Species
- MM BIO-5: Species Relocation
- MM BIO-6: Nesting Birds (including special status birds)

- MM BIO-7: Roosting Bats (including special status bats)
- MM-BIO-8: Sonoma Tree Vole, Fisher, and Humboldt Marten
- MM BIO-9: Sensitive Natural Community Tree Protection Zone

Cultural Resources and Cultural Resources – Tribal

- MM-CUL-1/TCR-1: Unanticipated Discovery of Cultural/Tribal Cultural Resources
- MM-CUL-2/TCR-2: Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains

Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources

- MM-GEO-1: Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
- MM-GEO-2: Worker's Environmental Awareness Training
- MM GEO-3. Unanticipated Potential Paleontological Resources

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- MM-HAZ-1: Spill Response and Contingency Plan

Hydrology and Water Quality

- MM-HYD-1: Inadvertent Release Contingency Plan