



**Variance Request Form**  
**PG&E Hollister 115 kV Power Line Reconductoring Project**

Variance Request No.: 13

**CONTRACTOR SECTION**

Request Prepared By: Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)    Photos?     Yes     No

Landowner: Not Applicable (NA)    Attachments?     Yes     No

Current Land Use: Agriculture

**Permit Measure or Specification:**

- California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) Project Description
  - Deviation from the project description to allow hauling of excess excavated soil by truck, providing it to Earthbound Farms (EBF) or other landowners within the project area, and/or disposing of it at an approved waste facility.

**Detailed Description of Variance:**

PG&E is requesting authorization from the CPUC to allow PG&E to haul and remove excess soil (e.g. spoil) from tower and pole excavations with dump trucks using previously-approved access routes or other existing roads. As part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review, the MND for the Hollister 115 Kilovolt Power Line Reconductoring Project (project) states that excess soil would be spread at the construction sites. The MND also states that excavated soils would be transported in and out of the construction areas by helicopter, although the MND does not identify the location where the transported soil would be delivered.

PG&E has received requests from some landowners that the spoils not be spread over adjacent topsoil. Spoil from excavations contain subsoil from depths up to 20 feet deep that, if placed on topsoil, could decrease the value of the soil on agricultural and ranch lands. In addition, use of these subsurface spoils may hinder PG&E's restoration efforts at disturbed areas. The spoils that cannot be spread in work areas are currently being temporarily stockpiled at the pole locations while this variance is under consideration. The variance would allow the existing temporarily stockpiled spoils to be transported to the EBF Staging Area approved as part of Variance Request #6, consolidated, and stockpiled for later use. It should be noted that on February 2 spoils from the excavation of poles 13/15 through 13/19 were hauled to the EBF property at the request of the landowner. This action resulted in the recordation of a Minor Problem by the Lead Environmental Inspector on February 2. The spoils stockpiled at the EBF Staging Area would be characterized and subsequently disposed of as fill by EBF or hauled to the nearest authorized facility licensed to handle the spoils. In the future, excess spoil would be (1) hauled by truck to the EBF Staging Area, (2) provided to other landowners within the project area who request it, or (3) hauled to the nearest authorized facility licensed to handle the spoils. The disposition of all spoils not spread at work areas will be documented by PG&E and will be made available to the CPUC upon request.

PG&E estimates that each tubular steel pole excavation will produce approximately 24 cubic yards of spoils, each light-duty steel pole excavation will produce approximately 5 cubic yards of spoils, and each tower excavation will produce approximately 7 cubic yards of spoils, for a total of approximately 1,650 cubic yards. As noted in the MND, a portion of these spoils will be used to backfill excavations created for the original poles, and a portion spread over work areas. But in some cases, if the work areas are adjacent to sensitive habitats, or if the landowner has requested that the material not be spread on their property, it is preferable to dispose of the spoils using one of the three methods described above. PG&E estimates that approximately 500 cubic yards of the total spoils may be disposed of in one of these three ways.

**Variance Justification:**

PG&E is requesting this variance because at least one, and potentially other landowners of agricultural and ranch lands do not want subsoil from excavations spread over the topsoil in the work areas because it may decrease the productivity of the land. In addition, PG&E is concerned that spreading the subsurface spoils may hinder restoration of any sensitive areas disturbed during construction. Hauling away the spoils will reduce potential impacts to agriculture by preserving the topsoil, but will result in additional truck trips. If the excess spoil cannot be hauled away using a dump truck, then all of it would have to be hauled away using a helicopter, which would result in impacts from hazards and noise comparable to or greater than hauling by truck. (PG&E has assumed to this point that removal of spoils by helicopter will only be required at those work areas where there is no road access.) Potential impacts associated with this variance request are consistent with those evaluated during the CEQA review for the project and will not result in any new significant impacts. Environmental protection measures will be



## Variance Request Form

### PG&E Hollister 115 kV Power Line Reconductoring Project

implemented as described in the MND and other project permits. Please see the following table for more detail about impacts that will result from this project change.

<b>PG&amp;E ENVIRONMENTAL SECTION</b>		
<b>RESOURCE EVALUATION</b>		
The proposed variance was analyzed to verify that the project change would not introduce new significant impacts and that any potential impacts were fully analyzed in the MND. The following table provides a brief summary of each resource area analyzed in the MND.		
CEQA SECTION	Applicable	(Y) Define Potential Impact or (N) Briefly Explain Why CEQA Section is Not Applicable
Aesthetics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> No new sources of light or glare will be introduced to the area from hauling spoils by truck, since impacts from truck traffic were considered in the MND, and spoil hauling will not increase traffic beyond the 200 construction-related vehicle trips per day analyzed in the MND. The use of trucks to haul spoils will not substantially degrade the quality of the site and its surroundings because hauling of other construction materials using a dump truck was already analyzed as part of the MND. In addition, views of the trucks will be of short duration and construction is relatively short term. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create significant additional impacts to aesthetics.</p>
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>Net Benefit.</i> Spoil hauling will reduce impacts to agriculture, compared to spreading soil as analyzed in the MND, because less subsoil than previously anticipated will be placed on topsoil in agricultural and grazing areas, which could degrade the quality of the soil. In addition, spoil hauling will not result in impacts to forestry resources because it will not require additional tree trimming or removal. Spoil hauling will not conflict with Williamson Act contracts or existing zoning because it will not result in any changes to existing land uses. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create significant additional impacts to agriculture or forestry resources.</p>
Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> The MND analyzed 200 construction-related vehicle trips per day within the project area, as well as construction-related equipment. Although additional trips will be required to haul spoils, traffic will not increase beyond the estimated 200 construction-related vehicle trips per day that were analyzed in the MND. In addition, the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not substantially increase the amount or use of heavy equipment on the project and, therefore, will not increase emissions, including fugitive dust, beyond what was analyzed in the MND. The truck routes will not be closer to residences or sensitive receptors; therefore, pollutant concentrations and objectionable odors will not increase beyond those described in the MND. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create significant additional impacts to air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.</p>



## Variance Request Form

### PG&E Hollister 115 kV Power Line Reconductoring Project

Biological Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No change.</i> Trucks for spoil hauling will use existing access routes to the construction areas and will not result in any new construction areas; therefore, no new significant impacts to habitats and special status species will result. Access routes were included in the 500-foot survey buffer evaluated in the MND. Hauling spoils instead of spreading them in sensitive areas that require restoration will increase the feasibility of the proposed restoration efforts. Furthermore, in accordance with Applicant-Proposed Measures (APMs) and mitigation measures in the MND, surveys for California tiger salamander (<i>Ambystoma californiense</i>), California red-legged frog (<i>Rana draytonii</i>), and western pond turtle (<i>Actinemys marmorata</i>) will be conducted immediately prior to construction. In addition, pre-construction wildlife surveys for American badger (<i>Taxidea taxus</i>), San Joaquin kit fox (<i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i>), and western burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>) will be conducted within 30 days prior to construction. A report describing the survey results will be submitted to the CPUC. If work is initiated during the nesting season, nesting bird surveys will be conducted. If any special-status species or nesting birds are observed, the appropriate and required construction buffers will be implemented as described in the MND and project permits. The use of trucks for spoil hauling will not require any additional tree trimming or removal beyond what was analyzed in the MND. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND and other project permits. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create significant additional impacts to biological resources.</p>
Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> PG&amp;E prepared a Historic Properties Inventory Report, which included an evaluation for cultural resources in the project area, including access routes, and a 500-foot buffer. Trucks for spoil hauling will use existing access routes to the construction areas and will not result in any new construction areas; therefore, no new significant impacts to cultural resources will result. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND and other project permits. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create significant additional impacts to cultural resources.</p>
Geology, Soils, and Seismicity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> Trucks for spoil hauling will use existing access routes, which were included in the evaluation of geology, soils, and seismicity in the project area, and will not result in new construction areas. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create significant additional geology, soils, or seismicity impacts.</p>
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> Trucks for spoil hauling will use existing access routes to the construction areas and will not result in any new construction areas and, therefore, will not create new significant hazards or require new hazardous materials. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create significant additional impacts from hazards and hazardous materials.</p>



## Variance Request Form

### PG&E Hollister 115 kV Power Line Reconductoring Project

Hydrology and Water Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> Trucks for spoil hauling will use existing access routes and will not require new construction areas; therefore, no new significant impacts to hydrology and water quality will result. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND and other project permits. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create significant additional impacts to hydrology and water quality.</p>
Land Use and Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> Trucks for spoil hauling will use existing access routes and will not require new construction areas; therefore, no new significant impacts to land use will result. The current land use will not be converted because the use of the access routes will be temporary. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create significant additional impacts to land use and planning.</p>
Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> Trucks for spoil hauling will use existing access routes and will not require new construction areas. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create additional significant impacts to mineral resources.</p>
Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> Trucks for spoil hauling will use existing access routes and will not require new construction areas; therefore, no new significant impacts to noise will result. Although additional trips will be required to haul spoils, traffic will not increase beyond the estimated 200 construction-related vehicle trips per day that were analyzed in the MND. In addition, impacts to noise as a result of dump truck trips to haul other construction materials were analyzed in the MND and dump truck trips to haul spoils will have the same impacts. The use of existing access routes will not be located closer to sensitive receptors described in the MND; therefore, truck spoil hauling will not expose sensitive receptors to significant additional noise. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create additional significant impacts from noise.</p>
Population and Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> Trucks for spoil hauling will use existing roads and will not be closer to residences described in the MND. Hauling spoils by truck will not require new construction areas. The use of trucks for spoil hauling will not induce population growth or displace existing housing or people. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create additional significant impacts to population and housing.</p>
Public Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> The use of trucks spoil hauling will not result in a substantial increase on the demand for public services because spoil hauling will be temporary. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create additional significant impacts to public services.</p>



## Variance Request Form

### PG&E Hollister 115 kV Power Line Reconductoring Project

Recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> Impacts to recreational resources will not increase substantially beyond those identified in the MND because the dump trucks used to haul spoils will use existing access routes that were previously analyzed in the MND and use of the trucks in this area will be of relatively short duration. In addition, use of trucks for spoil hauling will not increase local population or housing and, therefore, will not increase demand for recreational facilities. In accordance with APM REC-1 in the MND, construction within the immediate vicinity of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail will be limited to weekdays or as otherwise permitted by the National Parks Service. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create additional significant impacts to recreation.</p>
Transportation and Traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> Trucks for spoil hauling will use existing access routes and will not require new construction areas. Impacts to traffic will be short term because spoil hauling by truck will be temporary. In the MND, PG&amp;E estimated that construction will generate over 200 vehicle trips per day within the project area. Although additional trips will be required to haul spoils, traffic will not increase beyond the estimated 200 construction-related vehicle trips per day that were analyzed in the MND. In addition, use of trucks for spoil hauling will not result in significant new impacts to public transit, bicycle and pedestrian transportation, airports, or rail service because trucks will use the access routes previously identified in the MND. Environmental protection measures will be implemented as described in the MND. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create additional significant impacts to transportation and traffic.</p>
Utilities and Service Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N	<p><i>No Change.</i> The use of trucks for spoil hauling will not result in any impacts to existing utilities or service systems. Therefore, potential impacts are consistent with those evaluated in the MND, and the use of trucks for spoil hauling will not create additional significant impacts to utility or service systems.</p>
Other Variance Conditions Attached: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		



## Variance Request Form

### PG&E Hollister 115 kV Power Line Reconductoring Project

PG&E Approval					
Title	Name	Approval Initials	Date	Conditions (see attached)	
Henkels & McCoy Project Manager (if applicable)	Craig Smithey	CM	02/17/12	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Henkels & McCoy Field Foreman (if applicable)	James Panter	JP	02/17/12	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Henkels & McCoy Env. Field Lead (if applicable)	Duke Sonderegger			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Environmental Compliance Supervisor	Kevin Kilpatrick	KK	02/17/12	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Lead Environmental Inspector	Nick Fisher	NF	02/17/12	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PG&E Project Biologist (if applicable)	Andrea Henke	AH	02/17/12	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PG&E Project Archaeologist (if applicable)	Wendy Nettles			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PG&E Storm Water Program Manager (if applicable)	Hugo Jurado	HJ	02/17/12	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PG&E Environmental Compliance Lead	Andy Smith	AS	02/17/12	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PG&E Project Manager (if applicable)	Rod Parame	RP	02/17/12	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Landowner Approval (if needed)					
Landowner Name	Approval Signature	Date			
NA	NA	NA			
Resource Agency Approvals					
Determine required agency approvals based on the following:					
Will biological resources/habitats be affected? NO	If yes, obtain CDFG and USFWS approval				
Is this a variance from a permit? NO	If yes, obtain permitting agency approval				
Will wetlands or waters of the U.S. be affected? NO	If yes, obtain U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approval				
Will riparian areas or drainages be affected? NO	If yes, obtain CDFG approval – may require a permit				
Will surface or groundwater be affected? NO	If yes, obtain RWQCB approval				
Resource Agency	Name	Approval Initials	Date	Conditions (see attached)	
USFWS		NA		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
CDFG		NA		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
USACE		NA		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
RWQCB		NA		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No



**Variance Request Form**  
**PG&E Hollister 115 kV Power Line Reconductoring Project**

<b>CPUC and CPUC CONSULTANT SECTION</b>		
Variance Approved: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b>AFFECTED RESOURCE(s) and APPLICABLE MITIGATION MEASURES</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality:	<input type="checkbox"/> Soils:	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise:
<input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials:	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation and Traffic:	
Other Variance Conditions Attached: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b>REQUIRED APPROVAL SIGNATURES</b>		
Consultant Environmental Monitor:		(Note: signature signifies review only)
Consultant Project Manager: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 Verbal Approval
CPUC Project Manager: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 Verbal Approval
<i>Level 1 variances require only verbal approval from CPUC Project Manager and Consultant Project Manager. Level 2 variances require signatures.</i>		



**Variance Request Form**  
**PG&E Hollister 115 kV Power Line Reconductoring Project**

**VARIANCE CONDITIONS**

<b>Condition Name:</b>	
<b>Conditions:</b>	
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<b>Condition Name:</b>	
<b>Conditions:</b>	