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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Order Instituting Rulemaking to Implement
Commission Regulations Relating to the
Safety of Electric Utility Substations.

Rulemaking 10-09-001
(Filed September 2, 2010)

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE'S RULING
REQUESTING INFORMATION FROM RESPONDENT UTILITIES**

Summary

This ruling requests information from PacifiCorp, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, Sierra Pacific Power Company and San Diego Gas & Electric Company (Respondent Utilities) in support of a proposed general order entitled "Rules for Electric Substations."¹ This ruling also provides an opportunity for non-respondent parties to comment on the information requested. The information requested is in the form of answers to seven questions as described below.

Responses from Respondent Utilities to this ruling are due by February 21, 2011. Comments from non-respondent parties, if filed, are also due by February 21, 2011. All parties may file reply comments to the February 21, 2011 responses. Reply comments, if filed, are due by March 3, 2011.

¹ The proposed general order is attached as Attachment B to Rulemaking (R.) 10-09-001.

Background

Rulemaking (R.) 10-09-001 describes a series of events on Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) facilities that led to Investigation 05-03-011, which resulted in Decision (D.) 06-02-003 adopting a settlement agreement. One of the provisions of the settlement agreement was a PG&E shareholder contribution of \$500,000 to the State's General Fund to enable the Commission's Consumer Protection and Safety Division (CPSD) to develop an electric utility substation inspection program.² R.10-09-001 was initiated "to address the need for regulations governing how utilities operate and maintain their substations."³ The rulemaking states that current General Orders (GO) which address aspects of electric service and safety, including GO 98, 128 and 165, do not give guidance as to how utilities operate and maintain their substations. The proposed GO outlines a program for a substation inspection program and provides for an annual summary of substation inspections by each utility.

In response to R.10-09-001, comments were received from PG&E, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, PacifiCorp, and Sierra Pacific Power Company (Joint comments) (IOUs), CPSD, the California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA), Engineers and Scientists of California, Local 20 (ESC), and The Northern California Power Agency (NCPA) on October 8, 2010. Mountain Utilities filed comments on October 20, 2010. Reply comments were received from the IOUs (joint), NCPA, CMUA,

² R.10-09-001, at 1 and 7.

³ *Id.*, at 1.

CPSD, and the City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) on October 25, 2010. Sur-Reply comments⁴ were filed by the IOUs on November 5, 2010.

In their comments, NCPA and CMUA raise issues concerning Commission jurisdiction over publicly owned utilities (POU), while CCSF and ESC propose certain modifications to the proposed GO. The IOUs and CPSD indicate their support for the GO as proposed.

Information Requested

Apart from questions of Commission jurisdiction over POUs, and whether the GO should include additional provisions, parties agree that the purpose of the proposed GO is to establish a utilities' substation inspection program. However, the substation inspection program as proposed assumes that current utilities' inspection programs are adequate for the purposes of operating and maintaining substations. As described in the proposed GO the substation inspection program outlines minimal requirements for a reporting program, but does not detail the inspection methods to be used by utilities. Although the proposed GO may be adequate for its intended purposes, additional explanation and support is necessary. Therefore, IOUs shall provide answers to the following:

1. How does the proposed substation GO comply with D.06-02-003 to establish a substation inspection program?
2. How does the Commission determine that the current utilities' substation inspection programs are adequate?

⁴ An Administrative Law Judge's Ruling on November 9, 2010, granted a November 5, 2010 IOU motion to file Sur-Reply comments to CCSF's reply comments.

3. R.10-09-001 references other GOs including GO 95, 128 and 165, which include significant details (GO 95 and 128) or identify maximum inspection cycles (GO 165). Why is it not necessary for the proposed substation GO to include similar or additional details?
4. How does the purpose (see Rule 10) of the GO lead to “uniform requirements for substation inspection programs” if each utility follows its own substation inspection requirements?
5. Rule 12 states that these rules are not intended as complete specification, but embody only minimum requirements. Under what circumstances would there be greater specificity added to the GO, and thus more requirements in the GO?
6. Under what circumstances would the Commission change any of the provisions of the rules in the GO? (See Rule 13.)
7. Will the Annual Summary of Inspections (Rule 40.2) include a summary of corrective actions (Rule 33.1) which are past the scheduled date for the corrective actions? If the answer is no, why not?

IT IS RULED that:

1. Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, PacifiCorp, and Sierra Pacific Power Company shall file and serve responses to the seven questions described above by February 21, 2011.

2. Other parties may provide comments to the seven questions described above by February 21, 2011.

3. All parties may file and serve reply comments to the responses or comments of other parties by March 3, 2011.

Dated January 21, 2011, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ BRUCE DEBERRY

Bruce DeBerry
Administrative Law Judge

INFORMATION REGARDING SERVICE

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Upon confirmation of this document's acceptance for filing, I will cause a Notice of Availability of the filed document to be served upon the service list to this proceeding by U.S. mail. The service list I will use to serve the Notice of Availability of the filed document is current as of today's date.

Dated January 21, 2011, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ JEANNIE CHANG

Jeannie Chang

N O T I C E

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