

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Consumer Protection and Safety Division
Utilities Safety and Reliability Branch

San Francisco, California
Date: May 7, 2009
Resolution USRB-2

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION USRB-2, ORDER GRANTING PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY A VARIANCE FROM GENERAL ORDER 95, RULE 34, BY ALLOWING GOVERNMENT-OWNED CAMERAS AND GUN SHOT DETECTORS TO BE TREATED AS PERMANENT ATTACHMENTS TO ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION POLES AND BOTH OVERHEAD AND UNDERGROUND STREET LIGHTS POLES.

SUMMARY

1. By letter of October 1, 2007, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) petitioned the Commission to allow Government-Owned cameras (cameras) as permanent attachments under General Order (GO) 95, Rule 34. PG&E subsequently requested that Government-Owned gun-shot detectors (detectors) also be included in the request.
2. Whereas GO 95, Rule 34 requires permanent attachments that are foreign to the purposes of overhead electric line construction be approved by the Commission.
3. This resolution authorizes PG&E to treat cameras and detectors as permanent attachments under GO 95 Rule 34.

BACKGROUND

Currently, third-party attachments to PG&E’s electric distribution poles and overhead and underground street lights are limited in scope to electrical supply and communication systems. Increasingly, PG&E has received requests from various governmental agencies to provide space on distribution poles and street lights to support cameras and detectors to be used for security and crime prevention. PG&E proposes to authorize such third-party use of its distribution poles and street lights as permanent attachments in accordance with all applicable rules of GO 95 and PG&E’s construction standards. This resolution will allow PG&E the flexibility to offer governmental agencies the ability to maintain such attachments on PG&E poles and street lights for periods in excess of one year.

Under GO 95 Rule 34, an attachment is considered permanent where the duration of the attachment is estimated to be one year or more. Rule 34 requires that all permanent attachments be approved by the Commission and the pole owner(s) involved. In contrast,

GO 95 Rule 34 provides that temporary attachments may be authorized by a utility, provided that the installation is restricted to a period of one year or less.

PG&E anticipates that requests for attachment of cameras and detectors will normally exceed one year. For this reason, PG&E requested the Commission for approval to treat such installations as permanent attachments. In the case of a proposed attachment to a jointly-owned distribution pole, PG&E intends to obtain the approval of the affected joint pole owner(s) in accordance with the existing procedures of the Northern California Joint Pole Association. Approval of this request will allow PG&E to enter into license agreements authorizing such attachments to PG&E's poles and street lights in accordance with the provisions of GO 69-C. As a condition to any such license, PG&E will require that the attachments be installed in accordance with all applicable construction rules in GO 95.

DISCUSSION

The Consumer Protection and Safety Division's Utilities Safety and Reliability Branch (USRB) evaluated this variance request taking into consideration its impact on public and worker safety. Factors influencing the USRB's evaluation included the cameras and detectors effect on climbing and/or working space as well as maintenance of the cameras and detectors. PG&E stated that to minimize the impact on public and worker safety the following safety measures shall be done:

- Prior to the installation of a camera or a detector, PG&E will ensure that the safety factor of the pole will not be reduced below the required value, and will ensure approval of such installation from the joint pole owners.
- The cameras and detectors will be treated as Communication Equipment and meet all requirements of such.
- Antennas associated with either a camera or a detector installed on a Joint-Use Pole (as defined by GO 95, Rule 21.8) shall meet all requirements of GO 95 Rule 94.
- Antennas associated with either a camera or a detector installed on overhead or underground streetlight only poles shall be treated as Communication Equipment, and as such shall meet all requirements for Communication Equipment.
- If and when PG&E becomes aware of any GO 95 violations of a camera or a detector, it will document the violations and notify the owner to correct the violations.

The USRB recommends that PG&E's request be approved, contingent on the safety measures proposed by PG&E as described previously.

COMMENTS ON DRAFT RESOLUTION

The Draft Resolution of the Commission's Consumer Protection and Safety Division, Utilities Safety and Reliability Branch in this matter was mailed to the parties in interest on April 1, 2009, in accordance with Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 311(g). No comments or protests were filed.

FINDINGS

1. PG&E petitioned the Commission by letter on October 1, 2007 to allow cameras as permanent attachments under General Order 95 (GO 95), Rule 34.
2. PG&E subsequently requested that detectors also be included in the request.
3. The requested variance applies only to cameras and detectors installed on poles in which PG&E is either the sole or partial owner.
4. PG&E proposed the following safety measures shall be done in order to minimize the impact on public and worker safety:
 - Prior to the installation of a camera or a detector, PG&E will ensure that the safety factor of the pole will not be reduced below the required value, and will ensure approval of such installation from the joint pole owners.
 - The cameras and detectors will be treated as Communication Equipment and meet all requirements of such.
 - Antennas associated with either a camera or a detector installed on a Joint-Use Pole (as defined by GO 95, Rule 21.8) shall meet all requirements of GO 95 Rule 94.
 - Antennas associated with either a camera or a detector installed on overhead or underground streetlight only poles shall be treated as Communication Equipment, and as such shall meet all requirements for Communication Equipment.
 - If and when PG&E becomes aware of any GO 95 violations of a camera or a detector, it will document the violations and notify the owner to correct the violations.
5. USRB recommends that this request be approved, subject to the safety measures proposed by PG&E.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. The Pacific Gas and Electric Company shall be allowed to treat Government-Owned cameras and gun-shot detectors as permanent attachments to distribution poles and street light poles.

2. In the case of a proposed attachment to a jointly-owned distribution pole, PG&E shall obtain the approval of the affected joint pole owner(s) in accordance with the existing procedures of the Northern California Joint Pole Association.
3. The approval of PG&E's requested variance is subject to the safety measures proposed by PG&E (see Finding No. 4).
4. This resolution shall be effective immediately.

I hereby certify that this Resolution was adopted by the California Public Utilities Commission at its regular meeting on May 7, 2009. The following Commissioners approved it:

Paul Clanon
Executive Director