

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ASSISTANT CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
ZITA KLINE, in attendance

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE MARIA SOTERO, presiding

Application of Pacific Gas and Electric	)	PREHEARING
Company (U39E) for a Certificate of	)	CONFERENCE
Public Convenience and Necessity	)	
Authorizing the Construction of the	)	Application
S-238 Hinkley Compressor Station	)	25-04-004
Electrical Upgrades Project.	)	

REPORTERS' TRANSCRIPT
Virtual Proceeding
November 3, 2025
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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION, STATE OF CALIFORNIA
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VIRTUAL PROCEEDING

NOVEMBER 3, 2025 - 1:00 P.M.

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ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE SOTERO: We will go on the record. The Commission will please come to order.

Good afternoon, everyone. This is the prehearing conference, or PHC, for Application A.25-04-004. It is November 3, 2025, at 1:01 p.m.

This application was filed by Pacific Gas and Electric Company, or PG&E, for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, or CPCN, Authorizing the Construction of the S-238 Hinkley Compressor Station Electrical Upgrades Project.

My name is Maria Sotero. I am the administrative law judge assigned to this proceeding. My pronouns are she/her. The assigned commissioner is Matthew Baker. Commissioner Baker could not be here today, but I am working closely with his office on this proceeding.

Can we go off the record just for a moment.

(Off the record.)

ALJ SOTERO: We are back on the record. We had a brief audio issue.

The purpose of a prehearing conference is to take appearances of the parties and to discuss the scope

1 and schedule of the proceeding. So my agenda for today
2 is to first go over some housekeeping items, the service
3 list and party appearances, then discuss categorization,
4 next I will turn to the scope of issues, and finally the
5 need for hearings and the schedule.

6 None of these matters will be decided today.
7 Based on the discussion at this PHC, I will make
8 recommendations to Commissioner Baker, and a final
9 determination on these matters will be made in his
10 scoping memo and ruling.

11 I also will just note about this case that this
12 is a CEQA case, and a draft mitigated negative
13 declaration, or MND, was issued last month. We are
14 expecting, if things go on track, finalization of that
15 document in January.

16 Okay. Moving to housekeeping. So our
17 conversation today is only going to be as good as the
18 transcript, so to support the court reporter, I'm asking
19 all the parties to do the following:

20 Do not speak unless I call on you. I will
21 direct the traffic of the various questions.

22 If I ask for a show of hands, you can use
23 either the Webex feature or your human hand.

24 Speak slowly and clearly, and do not speak over
25 each other.

1 Each time you speak, please start by stating
2 your name.

3 Use headphones or earbuds to ensure best audio
4 quality, and don't use the speaker phone.

5 When you are not speaking, mute yourself.

6 If you are representing a party, you should
7 leave your camera on. Those who are not speaking today
8 should have theirs off.

9 Now, it may be necessary for myself or the
10 court reporter to interrupt a speaker if something is
11 not understandable. The reporter will also be inserting
12 the word "inaudible" in the transcript if they cannot
13 confirm what was said.

14 Anyone who wants a transcript of today's PHC
15 may request one by emailing our court reporter at
16 reporting@cpuc.ca.gov. I noted that an expedited
17 transcript has already been requested, so thank you for
18 that.

19 The first order of business is to develop a
20 service list and take appearances. There will be one
21 representative listed for each party and others will be
22 listed as "Information Only."

23 I'm now going to ask the party representatives
24 to state their name spelling their last name, state
25 their title and indicate the party they are representing

1 for the record.

2 I will turn first to PG&E, Mr. Gambelin.

3 MR. GAMBELIN: Yes. Thank you. Darrin
4 Gambelin, G-a-m-b-e-l-i-n, chief counsel at PG&E.

5 ALJ SOTERO: Thank you.

6 Cal Advocates.

7 MR. BAWA: Yes, your Honor, Niki Bawa, N-i-k-i
8 B-a-w-a, representing the Public Advocates Office at the
9 California Public Utilities Commission or Cal Advocates.

10 ALJ SOTERO: Thank you.

11 And then to TURN.

12 MR. HAWIGER: Thank you, your Honor, Marcel
13 Hawiger. That's M-a-r-c-e-l, last name H-a-w-i-g-e-r,
14 representing TURN, or The Utility Reform Network.

15 ALJ SOTERO: Thank you, Mr. Hawiger. I'm going
16 to remind you to mute yourself when you are not
17 speaking. We were getting a little bit of feedback
18 before. Thank you.

19 Is there anyone in the virtual room who wishes
20 to become a party to this proceeding?

21 (No response.)

22 ALJ SOTERO: I will note for the record that no
23 one has indicated they wish to become a party;
24 therefore, the service list is complete.

25 As you may know, the Commission encourages

1 electronic service and requires all documents served
2 electronically to go to everyone on the service list.
3 That includes those who are listed as "Information
4 Only." I will note, and I'm going to recommend that the
5 scoping memo include a direction to parties to just file
6 documents electronically. Heads up on that.

7 Okay. Next, to categorization. PG&E in its
8 application recommended that this be categorized as
9 ratesetting. No party objected to that categorization.
10 I agree as well, and I will recommend to Commissioner
11 Baker that the categorization be ratesetting. This
12 means that ex parte rules, as described in Article 8 of
13 the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, will
14 apply.

15 In consideration of those rules, any
16 communications with me about procedural matters only
17 should be directed to me via email and include the
18 service list. I will now ask if anyone has anything to
19 say about categorization specifically. You can raise
20 your hand.

21 (No response.)

22 ALJ SOTERO: Since no one raised their hand, I
23 will move on to scope. So I'm going to go through
24 issues in scope in a very intentional way. First, I'm
25 going to ask all the parties about issues as they were

1 proposed and as raised in protest. We're going to talk
2 about each issue separately. You don't need to restate
3 what was said in the application for PG&E or protests of
4 the other parties, but this is a chance to say if your
5 thinking has changed or to highlight what you think is
6 most important.

7 So I will ask about issues identified by PG&E
8 and party views on those, then about cost issues, and
9 then I will turn to a specific issue that's being raised
10 in protests and reply, which is the issue of whether the
11 project is reasonable in light of California's
12 decarbonization efforts and projected declining gas
13 demand and concerns about the project leading to
14 stranded assets. So let's call that the stranded assets
15 issues. We're going to get to that last in our
16 discussion of issues in scope.

17 Let's see. I want to pause and just note for
18 you that -- how I want this to go. First, so we have a
19 very clear transcript, please just try to answer the
20 question that is asked. I like to go through each
21 subject and not skip ahead. I will be very sure to come
22 back to everyone to give you a chance to add whatever
23 you need to add, including responses to things that
24 other parties say. Okay. So first I will turn to
25 issues in scope as raised by PG&E.

1 Mr. Gambelin, can you point me to the specific
2 place in the application where PG&E identifies the
3 issues it proposes to be in scope. I do see the relief
4 being requested, which is you want the CPCN to be
5 granted, the environmental document to be certified, and
6 then the other authority as we determine necessary.

7 So that, in my mind, tracks with what you're
8 proposing for scope or is it somewhere else also, and do
9 you have anything you want to add?

10 Go ahead, Mr. Gambelin.

11 MR. GAMBELIN: Thank you, your Honor. No.
12 That is the scope we've -- that is the only scope we've
13 identified.

14 ALJ SOTERO: Thank you.

15 Next I will turn to Cal Advocates. Mr. Bawa,
16 the protest filed by Cal Advocates lists six issues
17 you're recommending to be included in scope. One
18 relates to stranded assets, which we will get to. The
19 other five relate to cost.

20 I want to go deeper into the cost issues you
21 raised individually. But first, can you confirm if you
22 have anything to add to those issues? And then also I
23 noted that you don't propose including whether or not to
24 grant the CPCN in your list. Can I assume this means
25 your issues are in addition to PG&E's issues, and can

1 you clarify that? So go ahead.

2 MR. BAWA: Yes, your Honor. I can clarify that
3 the issues we recommended were in addition to the issues
4 brought up by PG&E.

5 ALJ SOTERO: And you have nothing to add to
6 those issues?

7 MR. BAWA: We do not have anything to add to
8 those issues. I can clarify, though, from
9 Cal Advocates' perspective that affordability is a
10 serious concern for California ratepayers and the
11 Commission. For that reason, we would like to have cost
12 as an issue because overall this is an unusual
13 proceeding due to the fact that the CPCN is being
14 requested prior to costs being adopted in the GRC.

15 Due to the fact that this is a significant
16 cost, we would like to have certainty that costs would
17 be reviewed. And we do feel that under GO 177 where the
18 GO -- one of the purposes of the GO is a need to review
19 significant investments in gas infrastructure, so we do
20 feel that costs can be reviewed in the current GRC -- I
21 mean in the current proceeding.

22 But at the same time, whether this is decided
23 in the current proceeding, through a future GRC, or
24 through a memorandum account or some other venue, it is
25 at least an issue that we feel should be discussed.

1 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you.

2 Now I will turn to TURN. Mr. Hawiger, I don't
3 see in TURN's protest a specific list of issues that
4 TURN is proposing to add to the scope. Can I take this
5 to mean you are okay with the issues as proposed by
6 PG&E? Do you have anything else you want to be included
7 in the scope?

8 MR. HAWIGER: Sorry, your Honor. I was just
9 looking for the unmute button. I will try to stay
10 narrow to your question as your Honor requested, but I
11 confess it's slightly difficult because our position and
12 view of the scope has changed considerably.

13 To answer your specific question, in our
14 original protest, we did identify two issues. One was
15 that deficiency in the application as provided with
16 respect to basic engineering facts, and the second was
17 the issue of the size of the project related to gas
18 demand.

19 I confess, however, your Honor, that we are
20 withdrawing both of those issues as presented. I,
21 instead, would like to focus on sort of two different
22 issues that are one which was raised by Cal Advocates
23 and one has not been, I think, teed up explicitly. So
24 whenever is convenient for your Honor to do that, I'm
25 happy to do that.

1 ALJ SOTERO: Why don't you go ahead since now
2 is the time for folks to speak what else they want to
3 have considered in scope. So why don't you go ahead and
4 let me know what those issues are.

5 MR. HAWIGER: Okay. I'll just try to
6 summarize. One, with respect to the cost of the
7 project, we agree with Cal Advocates. However, we also
8 believe that the need, not just the cost, but the size
9 of the project related to the need should be an issue,
10 which is a separate issue from the size related to any
11 potential future gas demand decline.

12 So, yeah, basically, do they need to do all the
13 work in order to meet the need that they've identified,
14 and that's certainly related to cost. There are some
15 details about that which I could go into now or later
16 because PG&E has responded to that in their reply to
17 protests. Would you like me to go ahead?

18 ALJ SOTERO: No. Let's hold on that.

19 MR. HAWIGER: Okay.

20 ALJ SOTERO: I have a couple questions about
21 the cost issues. I'm just going to go to those now. So
22 before I open up to responses to other parties,
23 Cal Advocates proposed we consider whether PG&E's cost
24 estimate is reasonable and whether PG&E already received
25 cost recovery in its last GRC.

1 Mr. Bawa, it seems to me like Cal Advocates
2 agrees that cost recovery authorization is not an issue
3 here. PG&E is not asking for cost recovery
4 authorization. But can you clarify then how you want us
5 to assess the reasonableness of their cost estimate.

6 MR. BAWA: So I guess I would interpret that
7 differently, your Honor. We do think that cost can be
8 an issue that is determined within this proceeding, and
9 we would like to evaluate those costs. Overall, that
10 would be Cal Advocates' primary position.

11 However, we do understand that there may be
12 certain reason as to why costs may be decided in
13 separate venue. The overall goal of Cal Advocates,
14 however, is because of the size of the costs, because of
15 the issues that have been presented, we feel that costs
16 at least should be an issue in this proceeding, and we
17 should at least have a minimum determination whether
18 those costs are reasonable, whether those costs will be
19 determined as reasonable here or in a future GRC or
20 through some other venue.

21 ALJ SOTERO: So to restate, you would be okay
22 with including in the scope of this proceeding whether
23 or not to approve cost recovery and to what extent,
24 et cetera; is that correct?

25 MR. BAWA: Yes, your Honor. Because of the

1 unusual nature of the CPCN where the costs have not yet
2 been adopted at a GRC, and yet we are providing -- or
3 applicant is coming to the Commission to seek a CPCN, we
4 do feel that costs should at least be a significant part
5 in choosing this proceeding.

6 We do feel that there is authority under
7 GO 177, which states that one of the purpose of the
8 general order is the need to review significant
9 investments, which we feel would include the
10 \$93.7 million that is being requested here.

11 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Mr. Gambelin, I will turn
12 to you now. What do you think of including either cost
13 recovery overall or other cost issues -- and/or other
14 cost issues here such as how reasonable is your cost
15 estimate, et cetera? So please go ahead.]

16 MR. GAMBELIN: Thank you, your Honor. So we --
17 we -- in our reading of GO 177, we draw that distinction
18 that you laid out that in -- and our position we think
19 GO 177 supports this is that cost recovery is not part
20 of the GO 177 CPCN review. And we did -- in our
21 application, we've not requested cost recovery, and we
22 believe that is best heard and decided in the GRC rate
23 proceedings.

24 The purpose in GO 177 we were required to
25 provide cost information, and GO 177 mentions that that

1 is for providing a cost cap for the project, kind of,
2 what, you know, the reasonable cost cap for which
3 project should not exceed and the Commission's benefit
4 in reviewing the general reasonableness of the project
5 and the -- you know, also to be able to evaluate
6 alternatives in the stranded assets, which I think you
7 mentioned earlier.

8 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. And I want to be very
9 clear, Mr. Gambelin. What is PG&E's position on whether
10 to include -- I assume you do not want to include cost
11 recovery here, but it would be acceptable to look at
12 other aspects of cost; is that correct?

13 MR. GAMBELIN: Yes, that's correct. We -- no
14 cost recovery issues. We don't believe those should be
15 in here, but the cost we see that as a reasonable part
16 of 177.

17 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thanks.

18 Mr. Hawiger, would you like to weigh in on this
19 issue?

20 MR. HAWIGER: Thank you, your Honor. TURN does
21 not take a specific position on whether cost recovery is
22 authorized in this case or put off to some other case.

23 But really what we want to avoid is a potential
24 chicken-and-egg problem, and I think what PG&E just said
25 may have solved that, but I'd just like to clarify

1 because I think what -- in PG&E's application and reply
2 to protest, I've heard a different message.

3 So in the application, PG&E proposed that this
4 project was authorized in a prior rate case and so would
5 automatically go into rates whenever it is completed.
6 That was in section -- well, in page 13 of the
7 application.

8 However, in its reply to protest -- to the
9 protest, PG&E stated at page 8 that cost recovery is
10 beyond the scope and is being addressed by the
11 Commission elsewhere.

12 And lastly PG&E claimed that there is no
13 problem if the Commission determines need in this
14 proceeding but could authorize a smaller project
15 sometime in the future.

16 However, we have found in the past when CEQA
17 projects that the Commission has in at least one case
18 determined that if CEQA does not evaluate a smaller
19 project, then the Commission cannot authorize a smaller
20 project in the future. So there is this chicken-and-egg
21 problem.

22 And I want to be clear. In this case, this
23 need and size of the project are unrelated, as PG&E
24 explained in its reply, to gas demand; and any smaller
25 project at the compressor station with the electrical

1 gear would obviously not entail any additional
2 environmental problems and have already been addressed
3 in the mitigated negative declaration.

4 So I'm -- I just want -- I do believe that the
5 Commission needs to review the scope of the work and
6 therefore the associated cost including the -- whether
7 all the work needs to be done or not to meet the need
8 and, therefore, what should be the cost authorized for
9 this project.

10 Whether that is done in this proceeding that
11 would be perfectly fine, and I think that's, I believe,
12 what I've heard both Cal Advocates and PG&E just state
13 that that could be done in this proceeding.

14 If cost recovery is then authorized in some
15 future rate case based on the results, that's totally
16 fine. I just don't want a situation where there's some
17 CEQA evaluation of the project as scoped and in some
18 future proceeding -- but no cost recovery is
19 authorized -- and in some future proceeding PG&E comes
20 in and claims the Commission cannot authorize a smaller
21 project at a lower cost.

22 Thank you.

23 ALJ SOTERO: Thank you.

24 Mr. Gambelin, can you address this question of
25 whether PG&E already received authorization in its last

1 GRC, and otherwise can you correct or respond to
2 anything that Mr. Hawiger just said?

3 MR. GAMBELIN: Yes, your Honor. So the -- and
4 this project was a -- somewhat unique due to it's -- due
5 to the timing with the adoption of GO 177.

6 Let's just say that -- as background that this
7 project was proposed several years ago and was included
8 in the 2023 GRC and it was planned -- I think in the
9 schedule in the 2023 GRC, it was planned to be completed
10 around this timeframe. There was -- there were delay
11 and then the GO 177 came online, which required us to,
12 kind of, put the brakes on the project and come back for
13 CPCN approval. So that's -- that's how that happens.

14 So there was money -- there was cost recovery
15 requested for and granted in the 2023 GRC for that
16 reason that the look -- because it's a forward looking
17 document and the project was supposed to be completed
18 around this timeframe. So that -- that is, kind of, the
19 answer to that question.

20 ALJ SOTERO: So I want --

21 MR. HAWIGER: Your Honor?

22 ALJ SOTERO: -- very clear.

23 Mr. Hawiger, I will get to you.

24 MR. HAWIGER: Thank you.

25 ALJ SOTERO: I want to have this be very clear.

1 Is it PG&E's understanding that the Commission has
2 already authorized recovery of this project in rates?
3 The cost -- already authorized the funds for this
4 project?

5 MR. GAMBELIN: It authorized recovery of some
6 of the -- partially -- of partial -- partial cost for
7 this project. It did not authorize the project. It
8 authorized, you know, under -- a CPCN has not been
9 granted for this project, but there was funding for this
10 project authorized within the 2023 general rate case.

11 ALJ SOTERO: Okay.

12 Mr. Hawiger, I'll let you go next if you can
13 briefly -- whatever it is that you would like to say.

14 MR. HAWIGER: Briefly I believe what
15 Mr. Gambelin is saying is contradicted by the discovery
16 we have received and by the testimonies in their rate
17 cases.

18 PG&E provided us discovery showing that it was
19 authorized in the last rate case \$6 -- \$6 million for
20 2023, 2024, and -- for four years in that 76-P, which is
21 my understanding based on their testimony in this
22 rate -- the present rate case for needs (inaudible) to
23 electrical work on the compressor turbine itself.

24 I am not -- I do not -- it's not appeared to
25 me, although it's not crystal clear, that any of the

1 \$24 million authorized previously relates to the switch
2 gear and the Motor Control Centers that are described as
3 the project in this case.

4 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you.

5 I don't think that we need to continue too much
6 farther on this particular question since whether or not
7 the project has already been authorized is -- I don't
8 have any questions about how we would scope that if we
9 were to scope that. So let's move on from there.

10 Mr. Hawiger, is that a new hand or?

11 MR. HAWIGER: Sorry, your Honor.

12 ALJ SOTERO: No problem.

13 Okay. My next question I think we've already
14 addressed, so I will just go around one more time and
15 see if anyone has anything to add regarding either the
16 issues proposed by parties to be in scope other than the
17 one related to stranded assets, because we're coming to
18 that next; and two, the cost issues as discussed today
19 or generally.

20 So, Mr. Bawa, I'm going to go to you first
21 since we did not hear from you on that last round. Was
22 there anything on what we've just discussed you would
23 like to weigh in on?

24 MR. BAWA: Just to say, Judge, that we also
25 have conducted discovery and shared the same concerns

1 that TURN had just brought up and are having the same
2 type of issues that were mentioned. And, again, we feel
3 that the fact that costs are such complicated issue is
4 another reason why it should be part of the scope of
5 this current proceeding.

6 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you.

7 Mr. Gambelin, anything final to add at this
8 point?

9 MR. GAMBELIN: Nothing further, your Honor.

10 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Mr. Hawiger, anything else
11 from you at the moment?

12 MR. HAWIGER: No. Thank you, your Honor.

13 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. All right. So I'm going to
14 move next to this question of looking at the project in
15 light of declining gas demand.

16 So both Cal Advocates and TURN raised concerns
17 and questions in their protests about whether the
18 project is reasonable in light of California's
19 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and forecasted
20 future declines in gas demand. As I understand their
21 positions, these two parties are concerned about this
22 investment because it is not clear to them that it will
23 be necessary.

24 PG&E's reply to sum up in part in my mind just
25 says that the project is not related to the throughput

1 or capacity of the -- (indecipherable). So my interest
2 here is in figuring out how to address this in the
3 scope. I have a few questions and a couple of ideas,
4 but first I want to give you a chance to correct me if I
5 mischaracterized your position at a high level and state
6 also whether your views on the issue have changed since
7 filing protests and replies. So maybe discovery or
8 further review has changed views on this stranded assets
9 question.

10 So I am going to turn to the intervenors first
11 since they raised this question.

12 Mr. Bawa, do you want to clarify Cal Advocates'
13 position on the stranded assets issue? Has anything
14 changed since your protest or anything else on that
15 right now?

16 MR. BAWA: No, your Honor. We're still
17 conducting discovery, but we still have the same
18 concerns as expressed in our protest about the 40-year
19 project life and how that conflicts with California's
20 greenhouse gas reduction goal.

21 ALJ SOTERO: Mr. Hawiger, do you want to
22 clarify TURN's position on this issue? Has anything
23 changed since your protest?

24 MR. HAWIGER: Yes, your Honor, our position has
25 changed. In our protest, we suggested that the project

1 could perhaps be scoped as a smaller project due to
2 declining gas demand. We have been convinced by
3 discussions with PG&E and discovery and their reply that
4 the nature of this particular project concerning the
5 electrical gear is unrelated to the throughput, gas
6 throughput, in their compressor station. So we no
7 longer have that issue.

8 ALJ SOTERO: Thank you.

9 Mr. Gambelin, do you want to clarify PG&E's
10 position on this issue? Has anything changed since your
11 application?

12 MR. GAMBELIN: No. I would just add you
13 summarized it well, but I would say that the -- our
14 position remains that this project is needed for -- it
15 does not affect the capacity of the station and it's
16 needed in the near term to keep the station operable in
17 the very near term. So the stranded asset question is
18 important to us because it is needed, you know,
19 immediately.

20 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you.

21 Now, I have a few things to share. First is
22 that I am not an engineer and I'm not an expert in gas
23 compressor station equipment but no one should need to
24 be to determine whether the proposed project is
25 necessary and it was not clear to me based on reading

1 the application and the Proponent's Environmental
2 Assessment, or "PEA," that there is zero relationship
3 between the project and the station's capacity for
4 compressing gas.

5 So if this is in fact the case, then I think I
6 need clearer information showing that; and once more if
7 we can establish facts relating to this connection, then
8 I'm not sure some of these other issues need to be
9 included in scope; or even if they are included in
10 scope, may not need to be addressed.

11 So I will give you brief example of what I
12 wanted to be clearer. On page 3-2 of the PEA, PG&E
13 states that the MCCs, or Motor Control Centers, quote,
14 "Connect and control the flow of electricity to station
15 equipment such as fans, pumps, and auxiliary loads
16 associated cooling towers, water softener, jacket water
17 cooler, and other equipment operating within the
18 station," end quote.

19 So to me it is easy to imagine that fans and
20 pumps and other equipment in the station might operate
21 more or less and use more or less electricity if the
22 volume of gas went up or down but I don't know that for
23 sure and I could not find the answer in the record as it
24 is right now.

25 If the equipment subject to this project does

1 operate more or less based on throughput, that to me
2 would indicate a connection between the project and the
3 overall capacity and throughput of the station but to
4 what extent? Would it go so far as to make the project
5 unnecessary, especially since peak demand may take
6 longer to decline than overall demand? So I just don't
7 know, and I can't determine the answer without your
8 help.

9 So I have a suggestion that is related to how
10 the proceeding would be scoped and could affect
11 schedule. I am thinking of directing PG&E to file
12 additional information. Table 3-1 in the PEA already
13 lists all the equipment that is going to be installed or
14 replaced.

15 I'm essentially thinking that what we need
16 would be a few more columns here that list the purpose
17 of the equipment and whether and how and to what extent
18 there is a correlation between that investment and how
19 much the -- how much gas is going through the station.
20 So I want to stress that I do think we need something
21 more to make the record more clear on this point.

22 I think the record needs to show at the end
23 what the relationship is between the project and the
24 capacity of the station to compress gas.

25 But before directing anything else which would

1 come in a ruling not today, I want to discuss with you
2 whether you think this would be useful is if there is
3 another way that is better to determine this or to make
4 this clearer and I would want to discuss exactly what
5 the ruling should ask for.

6 I will also note that this is something we
7 could be working on before the CEQA process concludes so
8 in the interest of keeping things moving.

9 Finally before I let you weigh in, I will say I
10 want to determine whether you think this is a threshold
11 matter for addressing some of the issues being raised by
12 intervenors. What I mean by that is: I see parties
13 arguing about risk of stranded assets et cetera. It
14 sounds like TURN no longer has some of those concerns.

15 These larger concerns hinge in my mind on this
16 factual question of whether and to what extent the
17 project affects or is affected by the station's
18 capacity. So is it a -- is it a threshold question?

19 Okay. So I will turn first to PG&E. What do
20 you think about my idea of filing some additional
21 information on this nexus? Is it helpful and
22 appropriate to set this up as a threshold question to
23 whether we address the broader stranded assets
24 questions, any other input you would like to give?]

25 MR. GAMBELIN: Yes. Thank you, your Honor.

1 We're amenable to filing additional information on that
2 issue. We understand it's a difficult, complicated
3 engineering question that would benefit from additional
4 explanation as I think -- as we've -- as TURN has
5 mentioned here, that they -- we've had discussions with
6 them, kind of technical -- additional technical
7 questions, and they've -- they've come to another -- a
8 different understanding than the original understanding,
9 so we'd be happy to provide that for the benefit of the
10 CPUC.

11 As far as whether this is a threshold issue, I
12 believe it is because I believe our -- when we -- if
13 given the opportunity to provide more information, it
14 will become more clear that this is -- that the -- it is
15 not tied -- the project at hand is not tied at all to
16 capacity of the station. It is tied to really basic
17 operation of the station, whether the station can
18 operate or not at the -- there's different equipment at
19 the station that is out of the scope of this project
20 that fully controls the amount of gas throughput through
21 the station, and that equipment isn't impacted at all by
22 this project.

23 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. I will turn next to TURN,
24 and I will first note that perhaps what would address
25 what I'm asking for is if whatever it is that PG&E

1 provided to you was in the formal record -- basically,
2 would that address this question, whatever it is that
3 you saw, should we all see it?

4 So go ahead, Mr. Hawiger.

5 MR. HAWIGER: Thank you, your Honor. As I sit
6 here, I don't recollect exactly whether there were
7 discovery responses or whether this was more contained
8 in the meeting and conversation we had between
9 experts -- between our expert and PG&E's expert.

10 But I agree with Mr. Gambelin, that the result
11 was we concluded the same, that most of the -- that the
12 work here was more about the operation of the station
13 but not directly related to changes in gas in the
14 compressor capacity or gas throughput, though obviously
15 it is essential for -- if the system failed, gas
16 throughput would presumably go down or go to zero.

17 But I don't -- as I sit here, I will
18 certainly -- I'm happy to go back and look at our
19 discovery. And if there are anything that seems
20 directly on point, I would be happy to provide that
21 through a motion in the next week or so, your Honor.

22 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you.

23 Mr. Bawa, I will turn next to you. Do you
24 have --

25 MR. BAWA: Just --

1 ALJ SOTERO: Go ahead.

2 MR. BAWA: I too, to my parents'
3 disappointment, am not an engineer. I chose a different
4 path. But I guess -- so I may need a little more
5 clarification, your Honor. When you -- to say that the
6 threshold question will be if the equipment operates
7 more or less due to throughput, that if the conclusion
8 is yes, then the need for the project will be
9 determined -- then the project will be determined to be
10 not needed.

11 Is that -- is that the threshold question that
12 we are referring to or is the threshold question a yes
13 or a no and, if yes, the project will go through or
14 other issues will then become a part of the proceeding?
15 I'm just trying to get clarification on what is meant --
16 what we are encompassing when we discuss threshold
17 issues.

18 ALJ SOTERO: So I would ask you to speak a
19 little more slowly. I think that will help us. But in
20 response to your question, what I see is -- what I was
21 proposing was a threshold question is this factual issue
22 of whether and to what extent aspects of the project
23 that are being proposed here are affected by throughput
24 or capacity such as maybe they used more electricity or
25 more wear and tear, et cetera.

1 So that is what I'm proposing as a threshold
2 question because if we can show and everyone agrees that
3 these fans are going to run and the pumps are going to
4 operate, et cetera, the same, regardless of capacity,
5 then the idea of whether we need to consider the
6 question of future declines in gas demands and
7 decarbonization, et cetera, kind of become moot.

8 So that is what I was suggesting and asking
9 about. But I think I understood -- maybe I'll briefly
10 give you the chance again to summarize your position if
11 my input helped.

12 MR. BAWA: So if the equipment operates more or
13 less due to throughput, then the idea is that there is a
14 need to address -- would there still be a need to
15 address the size of a project or determine if a smaller
16 project could be approved. Is that your thinking?

17 ALJ SOTERO: I think so, yes.

18 MR. BAWA: Then yes, Cal Advocates -- yeah, Cal
19 Advocates, I think -- (speaker audio failure.)

20 (Reporter clarification.)

21 MR. BAWA: -- that Cal Advocates would be
22 supportive.

23 ALJ SOTERO: Thank you. I'm just gathering my
24 thoughts for a moment. Mr. Gambelin, can you -- do
25 you -- maybe I will say again the examples of what I was

1 thinking so that when we leave here, you have a clear
2 understanding of what would address my questions. And
3 maybe it is already stuff that has been discussed or
4 provided to TURN.

5 But I was essentially thinking the list of
6 equipment, the aspects of everything included in the
7 project and showing for each the purpose of that
8 equipment, for example, runs a cooling tower. And then
9 also next showing does that change based on the capacity
10 or throughput of gas going through the station. So is
11 that clear what I'm getting at?

12 MR. GAMBELIN: Yes. And we may -- I think if
13 you were to -- and it may not -- just fixing -- just
14 adding the extra column to your table may not get what
15 you need. It may -- in some ways it may make it more
16 complicated if we get into real detail on some of
17 what -- what some of the equipment does.

18 But I think we can provide that in addition
19 to more of a -- it sounds like you may need a higher
20 level discussion of how the -- how the station operates,
21 how it moves gas and what other kind of ancillary
22 equipment, as we've called it, that is being powered by
23 the portions of this project that we're going to work
24 on, how they dumped ultimately affect the capacity of
25 the station. But, yeah, I think I understand what you

1 need, and I think we can provide that.

2 ALJ SOTERO: And what would you suggest the
3 outcome for today be that you would like me to tell you
4 officially what to file -- or Mr. Hawiger mentioned
5 filing a motion with the information they have received.
6 Perhaps the two of you could work together and, you
7 know, PG&E files a motion asking for -- to admit
8 additional details. So I guess I'm asking what do you
9 suggest the procedural mechanism be?

10 MR. GAMBELIN: I would suggest that allow us to
11 file a motion to submit this additional information. I
12 think that may be more beneficial than asking you to
13 tell us what exactly you want. I think we know what --
14 I have a good idea of what you need to look at, and I
15 think we could craft something for you.

16 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you.

17 I will go around again. Mr. Hawiger, I see
18 your hand. Why don't you go ahead.

19 MR. HAWIGER: Thank you, your Honor. I just
20 wanted to add I did look back and found that in our
21 first data request, TURN had asked a number of questions
22 related to the potential size of the project, equipment
23 replacements, and gas throughput. But subsequent to a
24 meet-and-confer with PG&E, we withdrew all of those
25 questions. So there's nothing that we have that would

1 help add to the record. But I certainly think your
2 approach is correct. PG&E, I hope, can submit something
3 that explains how this project is or -- and is not
4 related to any gas throughput.

5 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you.

6 Mr. Bawa, I will let you add anything else in
7 just a moment. And also I'm wondering what is the most
8 efficient way for Cal Advocates to see all the same
9 things that TURN saw, and I'm curious as to whether that
10 has happened or whether Cal Advocates will have the same
11 position or perhaps be satisfied as was TURN. So go
12 ahead and provide any input you have here. Thank you.

13 MR. BAWA: Yes, your Honor. We are in the
14 process of sharing data request responses with TURN.
15 One clarification I would like is to make sure that as
16 we follow the procedure for this threshold issue, that
17 discovery for other areas that we had highlighted in our
18 protests are not precluded during that timeline.
19 Cal Advocates can continue to, under statute -- under
20 our statutory authority continue to seek discovery.

21 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Mr. Hawiger, go ahead.

22 MR. HAWIGER: I just wanted, just to be crystal
23 clear, add one more thing. While we are satisfied that
24 the nature of this project is not directly related to
25 gas throughput, I do want to just say that this issue of

1 stranded costs is also slightly different. It also
2 includes this notion of should we make large capital
3 investments in long-term assets when, you know, if there
4 are cheaper alternatives if those assets will become
5 less needed as a whole. I mean this is part of a
6 compressor station.

7 So it's a slight nuance, and I'm not
8 necessarily suggesting it be scoped separately, but I
9 just wanted to, you know, clarify that that is sort of
10 a concern -- stranded assets concern that may be out
11 there.

12 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you.

13 So that was all my questions about scope of
14 issues. Does anyone have anything final before we move
15 to schedule?

16 Mr. Hawiger, you still have a hand up. You
17 could just lower it if that's an old hand.

18 MR. HAWIGER: I'm sorry.

19 ALJ SOTERO: It's all right.

20 So any new hands regarding issues in scope or
21 shall we move on?

22 (No response.)

23 ALJ SOTERO: Let's move to the schedule and
24 need for hearings. So as I said earlier, we anticipate
25 that the MND CEQA document would be finalized in

1 January, but that is not certain. And I don't have a
2 schedule for it right now that is solid. So we're at a
3 point where there's some uncertainty regarding next
4 steps and the schedule and dates for filings.

5 I'm willing to discuss the specifics, but I
6 think a little more so than usual there might be a need
7 for change, and I want to be sure we use our time
8 constructively.

9 We have, I think, an agreement on the issue we
10 just discussed about stranded assets and determining --
11 getting clarity on the parts of the project that have a
12 correlation to capacity or not, and I am expecting a
13 motion from PG&E with details on that. So that is
14 something that we can address in the near term.

15 And if a motion were filed before the scoping
16 memo is issued, then the scoping memo can provide
17 additional direction and milestones for how to get party
18 responses to that, et cetera.

19 So before I turn to you, my final point on the
20 schedule that Commissioner Baker and I wanted to
21 emphasize, Mr. Baker in particular, is that we are very
22 interested in encouraging settlement discussions. And I
23 do intend to direct parties to have a settlement
24 conference and file a joint case management statement
25 about the status of those discussions.

1 So I want to ask a few things. First, do you
2 want testimony, hearings, and briefs? What schedule do
3 you recommend, assuming the CEQA document is finished in
4 January? And what do you suggest we do with it? So
5 that was a lot, but I will turn to you each in order
6 starting with PG&E.

7 MR. GAMBELIN: PG&E wanted to raise an issue
8 regarding the schedule that since -- and I've brought
9 this up with the other co-counsel previously -- since
10 we've turned in the application back in April of this
11 year, there's been a number of issues at the plant -- at
12 the station with the equipment that is scheduled to be
13 replaced in this proposed project to where we are -- our
14 engineering team is currently evaluating the status, and
15 particularly the status of the station as we head into
16 the winter, which is the high gas usage season. And due
17 to the importance of the station, they're looking very
18 closely at it.

19 I raise that now just to, one, request that the
20 schedule for this proceeding is as expeditious as
21 possible so that we can get, you know, a ruling out of
22 this as soon as possible so that the project may be
23 started to avoid issues -- reliability issues -- that
24 could stem from the station going -- having continued
25 issues and going down.

1 Also I just want to raise the issue that the --
2 that it could eventually, based on the evaluation of the
3 equipment or other issues that arise, it could -- we
4 could be forced into looking at the emergency status
5 under GO 177, which provides an exemption to the CPCN
6 under -- for emergency conditions.]

7 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you. And I assume
8 based on that, that I can go off of your application in
9 terms of schedule --

10 MR. GAMBELIN: Yes.

11 ALJ SOTERO: -- et cetera.

12 MR. GAMBELIN: Yeah, yeah. We would -- we
13 would ask that you stick as close to our -- what we
14 request in the application as possible.

15 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. I will turn next to
16 Mr. Bawa.

17 MR. BAWA: Yes, your Honor. So there are a
18 couple of things that PG&E brought up. Firstly, we do
19 feel that the myriad of issues that have been stated in
20 the protests and during this PG&E (sic) bring up a lot
21 of issues that we feel need the opportunity to -- for
22 review from Cal Advocates' standpoint.

23 So before we decide on an expedited schedule,
24 we feel that -- we feel that expedited schedules are not
25 necessary. Let me clarify. Sorry.

1 There is, as PG&E has mentioned, safety
2 protections such as the emergency exemptions for
3 situations where emergency equipment replacement,
4 repairs, upgrades, and replacements, and restorations
5 are allowed under GO 177. So we feel that is enough of
6 protections for PG&E.

7 In addition to that, we also are concerned that
8 PG&E has let its equipment deteriorate to the point
9 where it could essentially, as PG&E just stated, cease
10 to function. So we would like a little more information
11 about this equipment.

12 And under the emergency exemption, we'd like to
13 know whether the emergency exemption is something that
14 PG&E intends to use for the entire project, whether it
15 is just for part the project, that if there is an issue
16 with the equipment functioning as its required to
17 function whether -- what will in fact needs replacing or
18 may need replacing.

19 And we also are concerned because PGE
20 developed -- PG&E developed its Topock and Hinkley
21 project cost in 2021 for its 2023 GRC; and if no work
22 had been -- has been conducted since then and PG&E is
23 now approaching the Commission with a CPCN application,
24 then we are concerned about PG&E's natural gas backbone
25 reliability and whether PG&E has prudently been managing

1 its equipment in the first place to the point where it
2 does eventually require an emergency exemption.

3 So those are all of the concerns we have
4 regarding the emergency exemptions; and because of the
5 nature of all the issues that have been brought up in
6 this PG -- PHC and protest, we don't feel that an
7 expedited proceeding is necessary especially when the
8 proposal that Cal Advocates has stated would see a final
9 decision somewhere in 2026 depending on when -- when a
10 scoping memo is issued.

11 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you.

12 Mr. Hawiger, would you like to weigh in on
13 schedule?

14 MR. HAWIGER: Thank you, Judge Sotero. I --
15 TURN sees two possibilities with respect to schedule
16 depending on the scope that your Honor and the
17 commissioner adopt for this proceeding.

18 First, if this proceeding ends up being only
19 about whether the project complies with CEQA and with
20 GO 177, then TURN has no opinion on the schedule; but as
21 I mentioned before, TURN strongly seeks clarification
22 that any decision in this proceeding on those issues
23 does not foreclose a future Commission decision
24 rejecting the scope of the project or approving a
25 smaller project in a cost recovery proceeding.

1 However, second, if the scope of this project
2 includes authorizing a forecast cost based on a forecast
3 scope of work, then TURN basically supports the schedule
4 as proposed in the protest of Cal Advocates who I
5 believe requested approximately four months from this
6 prehearing conference for a testimony due date, which
7 would be early March.

8 I think that is also necessary because we have
9 PG&E's rate case testimony due on February 13, and we
10 have the same expert working on gas issues and
11 engineering in that case as well as in this one. So my
12 request would be for intervenor testimony no earlier
13 than the first week of March.

14 ALJ SOTERO: Let's go off the record for a
15 moment.

16 (Off the record.)

17 ALJ SOTERO: Let's go back on the record.

18 While we were off the record, I just checked to
19 see if anyone needed a break, and no one did.

20 Okay. So my high-level takeaway on schedule is
21 that PG&E would like its proposed schedule. TURN has a
22 couple of options that they laid out.

23 And, Mr. Bawa, can you clarify whether you are
24 suggesting anything different than in your protest? I
25 think the answer is no; is that correct?

1 MR. BAWA: That is correct, your Honor.

2 MR. HAWIGER: Can I add one thing, your Honor.

3 I would just note --

4 (Crosstalk.)

5 MR. HAWIGER: Thank you. I would just note I
6 think the difference between what PG&E proposed in their
7 application I believe was a testimony -- intervenor
8 testimony date of February 7th versus Cal Advocates,
9 which would be, I think, a month later. So it's really
10 not a huge difference; and for the reasons I already
11 outlined, we would prefer the March -- March date.

12 ALJ SOTERO: Okay.

13 Let's go off the record again.

14 (Off the record.)

15 ALJ SOTERO: Let's go back on the record.

16 While we were off the record, we just worked
17 through a little bit more of the detail on schedule and
18 next steps. PG&E is going to work internally and talk
19 to the parties and anticipates filing a motion that
20 contains additional information as we have discussed.
21 It is always possible that a ruling could be issued
22 giving more specific direction on that.

23 And I have one final question before we close,
24 which was I referred to direction for settlement
25 conference and a joint case management statement. So I

1 want to ask each of you by when would you recommend
2 being required to do that?

3 AC ALJ KLINE: Judge, if I may, perhaps a joint
4 management statement and just a meet and confer. We can
5 encourage them to settle, but they could also just meet
6 and discuss the issues as well.

7 ALJ SOTERO: Yes, okay. Thank you, AC Kline.

8 And with that, Mr. Gambelin, what timeline
9 would you want if you were required to have one of those
10 milestones?

11 MR. GAMBELIN: Your Honor, could you repeat the
12 question? Is that timeline for a -- for our motion or
13 timeline for the --

14 ALJ SOTERO: A timeline -- yes. A timeline for
15 meet and confer and a joint case management statement
16 and you don't have to be exact but you could tell me
17 what month or how much time from now you think you would
18 need.

19 MR. GAMBELIN: In keeping with our theme of
20 expeditiously moving the process forward, I would
21 suggest with -- within a month to have a -- to have a --
22 to write an update on that.

23 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you.

24 And, Cal Advocates, how about you? Suggested
25 timeline for a meet and confer a month from now work for

1 you?

2 MR. BAWA: Your Honor, we are still in the
3 process of discovery, so I'm not quite sure if a month
4 will give us enough time especially considering there is
5 this threshold matter to resolve. Generally in my
6 previous cases we have waited until after rebuttal
7 testimony. So -- but we understand that if the judge
8 would like us to meet earlier than that time, we are
9 open to --

10 AC ALJ KLINE: And then if I may suggest that
11 the judge is asking for a suggestion and then the
12 schedule will be determined in the scoping memo. So
13 nothing will be decided today, but it will be set in the
14 scoping memo.

15 ALJ SOTERO: And, Mr. Hawiger?

16 MR. HAWIGER: Your Honor, I guess I'm a little
17 unclear of the purpose of the meet and confer. I
18 believe that if the need -- a scope of work and cost is
19 an issue, that would be a -- certainly an issue that is
20 amenable to settlement with discussions among subject
21 matter experts, but I don't know when that would occur.

22 Otherwise, I'm not quite sure what the topics
23 for the meet and confer would be, and so I would request
24 we defer that because it just -- I'm not sure it is
25 useful use of our time.

1 ALJ SOTERO: Okay. Thank you.

2 As was said, we don't -- we are not going to
3 decide all of this today. What you all said has been
4 sufficient for my purposes, and I will just say that I
5 see meet and confer and a joint case management
6 statement as useful to the extent that they identify the
7 issues that are in dispute, say what the parties have
8 done to address those issues, say whether or not
9 hearings are desired. So essentially an update on your
10 status, but what you've told me is sufficient.

11 So at this time, I'm just going to go around
12 again and ask you each if there is anything else that
13 you wanted to raise here at the PHC today, and I will
14 start with PG&E.]

15 MR. GAMBELIN: Nothing further, your Honor.

16 ALJ SOTERO: Thank you.

17 And next, Cal Advocates.

18 MR. BAWA: Yes, your Honor. Just one thing
19 that popped to my mind, that as hearings may be
20 necessary, we think it may be prudent to provide dates
21 for possible hearings to calendar.

22 ALJ SOTERO: I take that to mean you would want
23 the scoping memo to account for the possibility of
24 hearings, and you would want it to state when those
25 would be if we have them. Okay. I see you are nodding

1 your head.

2 MR. BAWA: Yes.

3 ALJ SOTERO: Thank you.

4 And Mr. Hawiger, anything else to add today?

5 MR. HAWIGER: Nothing else to add, your Honor,
6 just to thank you. This is a somewhat unusual case, and
7 I appreciate your patience with us in working through
8 some of these issues.

9 ALJ SOTERO: We appreciate all of the activity
10 from the parties to work through the issues as well.

11 All right. Hearing no additional matters that
12 parties want to raise, we are concluded for today.
13 Thank you for your participation and your time. We are
14 adjourned, and we are off the record.

15 (At the hour of 2:21 p.m., this matter
16 having concluded, the Commission then
17 adjourned.)]

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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATION OF TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDING

I, ANDREA L. ROSS, CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER
NO. 7896, IN AND FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DO
HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE PAGES OF THIS TRANSCRIPT
PREPARED BY ME COMPRISE A FULL, TRUE, AND CORRECT
TRANSCRIPT OF THE TESTIMONY AND PROCEEDINGS HELD IN
THIS MATTER ON NOVEMBER 3, 2025.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE
EVENTS OF THE MATTER OR THE OUTCOME OF THE PROCEEDING.
EXECUTED THIS NOVEMBER 04, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrea L. Ross". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "R".

ANDREA L. ROSS
CSR NO. 7896

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATION OF TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDING

I, JASON STACEY, CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER
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THIS MATTER ON NOVEMBER 3, 2025.

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EVENTS OF THE MATTER OR THE OUTCOME OF THE PROCEEDING.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JAS STACEY', written over a horizontal line.

JASON A. STACEY
CSR NO. 14092

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