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**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Application of Southern California  
Gas Company (U 904 G) Proposing  
Woody Biomass Pilot Project

Application 25-10-008

**ASSIGNED COMMISSIONER'S SCOPING MEMO AND RULING**

This scoping memo and ruling sets forth the issues, need for hearing, schedule, category, and other matters necessary to scope this proceeding pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 1701.1 and Article 7 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (Rules).

**1. Procedural Background**

Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) filed Application (A.) 25-10-008 (Application) on October 15, 2025, a request for authority to execute a woody biomass pilot project (Proposed Project) with a chosen third party contractor, West Biofuels LLC (West Biofuels).<sup>1</sup> On November 21, 2025, the Public Advocates Office at the California Public Utilities Commission, Small Business Utility Advocates and the Sierra Club filed protests, and The Bioenergy Association of California filed a response to the Application.

On December 1, 2025, SoCalGas replied to parties' protests and responses, and stated its intention to meet-and-confer with parties to incorporate their proposals to the scope. On December 18, 2025 the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) issued a ruling directing parties to meet-and-confer on a revised scope and

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<sup>1</sup> Commission Decision (D.) 24-12-032 granted SoCalGas' motion to withdraw its original woody biomass pilot project application filed pursuant to D.22-02-025.

directing SoCalGas to file the revised scope in the docket of this proceeding. SoCalGas filed the revised scope on January 7, 2026.

A prehearing conference was held on January 12, 2026 to address the issues of law and fact, determine the need for hearing, set the schedule for resolving the matter, and address other matters as necessary. After considering the party protest and responses to the application and discussion at the prehearing conference, I have determined the issues and initial schedule of the proceeding to be set forth in this scoping memo.

## **2. Issues**

The main issue to be determined is whether to grant SoCalGas's request, with or without modification. This determination of whether to grant the SoCalGas request depends upon:

1. Is the Proposed Project a pilot, as described in Ordering Paragraph 43 of D.22-02-025 and consistent with the common usage of the term "pilot project"?
2. Does the Proposed Project meet the requirements of D. 22-02-025?
  - a. D.22-02-025 (at 46) states that funding for the woody biomass pilot projects shall be used "to offset pipeline build-out costs and related expenses associated with the pilot projects." Does SoCalGas's proposal to fund lanes 7, 8, and/or 9 comport with this requirement? Does SoCalGas's proposal to use excess available funding for lanes 3, 4, and/or 5 comport with this requirement?
3. Does the Project meet the requirements of D.24-12-032?
4. Does the Proposed Project comply with applicable California Air Resources Board regulations, including but not limited to 17 CCR sections 95893(d)(3), (d)(5) and (d)(8)?
5. If at all, how should the costs of the Proposed Project and any associated ratemaking be considered?

- a. Should SoCalGas be allowed to add to rate base – and thus capitalize – the cost of utility-owned pipelines and/or associated infrastructure funded by Cap-and-Trade allowance proceeds, or should those costs be treated as non-capitalized expenses? How should SoCalGas fund ongoing maintenance and operations associated with the new utility-owned pipelines and/or associated infrastructure?
  - b. Should SoCalGas be allowed to add to rate base – and thus capitalize – the cost of project developer-owned pipelines and/or associated infrastructure funded by Cap-and-Trade allowance proceeds, or should those costs be treated as non-capitalized expenses? If funding is directed for project developer-owned pipelines and/or associated infrastructure, should SoCalGas have any ongoing obligation to fund ongoing maintenance and operations associated with the new project developer-owned pipelines and/or associated infrastructure?
6. Should SoCalGas’s review and reporting of methane leakage and emissions information from the Proposed Project be publicly available? Has SoCalGas established that the Commission should treat any part of such information as confidential?
7. If at all, how are Commission decisions approving Senate Bill 1383 Dairy Biomethane projects applicable to the Proposed Project, specifically to the
  - a. project readiness framework;
  - b. emissions study and reporting; and
  - c. monetary incentive program.
8. What, if any, are the impacts on environmental and social justice communities, including the extent to which the Proposed Project impacts the achievement of any of the nine goals of the Commission’s Environmental and Social Justice Action Plan.

**3. Need for Evidentiary Hearing**

There are no immediately apparent issues of material disputed fact. Therefore, evidentiary hearings are not needed. However, parties proposed and I agree to set a date by which parties shall request evidentiary hearings in the event disputed issues of fact are identified.

**4. Schedule**

The following schedule is adopted here and may be modified by the ALJ as required to promote the efficient and fair resolution of the application:

Event	Date
Intervenors' prepared direct testimony served	March 13, 2026
Prepared rebuttal testimony served	April 10, 2026
Joint case management statement filed	May 8, 2026
Motion for Evidentiary Hearing, filed	May 15, 2026
Evidentiary hearing (if necessary)	TBD
Opening briefs	June 8, 2026 (unless evidentiary hearing occurs, in which case the date will be rescheduled)
Reply briefs [matter submitted]	July 1, 2026 (unless evidentiary hearing occurs, in which case the date will be rescheduled)
Proposed decision	no later than 90 days after submission
Commission decision	no sooner than 30 days after Proposed Decision

The purpose of the May 8, 2026 joint case management statement is to ascertain whether, pursuant to Rule 13.8(c), the parties stipulate to the receipt of prepared testimony into evidence without direct or cross examination or other need to convene an evidentiary hearing or, in the alternative, the parties' resources, readiness and needs for the effective remote conduct of the evidentiary hearing, including estimates of time requested for cross-examination and identification of anticipated exhibits.

The proceeding will stand submitted upon the filing of reply briefs, unless the ALJ requires further evidence or argument. Based on this schedule, the proceeding will be resolved within 18 months as required by Public Utilities Code Section 1701.5.

## **5. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program and Settlements**

The Commission's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program offers mediation, early neutral evaluation, and facilitation services, and uses ALJs who have been trained as neutrals. At the parties' request, the assigned ALJ can refer this proceeding to the Commission's ADR Coordinator. Additional ADR information is available on the Commission's website.<sup>2</sup>

Any settlement between parties, whether regarding all or some of the issues, shall comply with Article 12 of the Rules and shall be served in writing. Such settlements shall include a complete explanation of the settlement and a complete explanation of why it is reasonable in light of the whole record, consistent with the law and in the public interest. The proposing parties bear the burden of proof as to whether the settlement should be adopted by the Commission.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/adr/>

The schedule set forth in this Scoping Memo includes a date for the completion of settlement talks. No later than this date, the parties will submit to the assigned ALJ a status report of their efforts, identifying agreements reached and unresolved issues requiring hearing. Any settlements between parties, whether regarding all or some of the issues, shall comply with Article 12 of the Rules and shall be served in writing. Such settlements shall include a complete explanation of the settlement and a complete explanation of why it is reasonable in light of the whole record, consistent with the law, and in the public interest. The proposing parties bear the burden of proof as to whether the settlement should be adopted by the Commission.

**6. Category of Proceeding and Ex Parte Restrictions**

This ruling confirms the Commission's preliminary determination<sup>3</sup> that this is a ratesetting proceeding. Accordingly, ex parte communications are restricted and must be reported pursuant to Article 8 of the Rules.

**7. Public Outreach**

Pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 1711(a), where feasible and appropriate, before determining the scope of the proceeding, the Commission sought the participation of those likely to be affected, including those likely to derive benefit from, and those potentially subject to, a decision in this proceeding. This matter was noticed on the Commission's daily calendar. Where feasible and appropriate, this matter was incorporated into engagements conducted by the Commission's External Affairs Division with local governments and other interested parties.

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<sup>3</sup> Resolution ALJ-176-3571 issued October 30, 2025.

## **8. Intervenor Compensation**

Pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 1804(a)(1), a customer who intends to seek an award of compensation must file and serve a notice of intent to claim compensation by February 11, 2026, which is 30 days after the prehearing conference.

## **9. Response to Public Comments**

Parties may, but are not required to, respond to written comments received from the public. Parties may do so by posting such response using the “Add Public Comment” button on the “Public Comment” tab of the online docket card for the proceeding.

## **10. Public Advisor**

Any person interested in participating in this proceeding who is unfamiliar with the Commission’s procedures or has questions about the electronic filing procedures is encouraged to obtain more information at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/about-cpuc/divisions/news-and-public-information-office/public-advisors-office> or contact the Commission’s Public Advisor at 866-849-8390 or 866-836-7825 (TTY), or send an e-mail to [public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov).

## **11. Filing, Service, and Service List**

The official service list has been created and is on the Commission’s website. Parties should confirm that their information on the service list is correct and serve notice of any errors on the Commission’s Process office, the service list, and the ALJ. Persons may become a party pursuant to Rule 1.4.<sup>4</sup>

When serving any document, each party must ensure that it is using the current official service list on the Commission’s website.

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<sup>4</sup> The form to request additions and changes to the Service list may be found at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/administrative-law-judge-division/documents/additiontoservicelisttranscriptordercompliant.pdf>

This proceeding will follow the electronic service protocol set forth in Rule 1.10. All parties to this proceeding shall serve documents and pleadings using electronic mail, whenever possible, transmitted no later than 5:00 p.m., on the date scheduled for service to occur. Rule 1.10 requires service on the ALJ of both an electronic and a paper copy of filed or served documents.

When serving documents on Commissioners or their personal advisors, whether or not they are on the official service list, parties must only provide electronic service. Parties must not send hard copies of documents to Commissioners or their personal advisors unless specifically instructed to do so.

Persons who are not parties but wish to receive electronic service of documents filed in the proceeding may contact the Process Office at [process\\_office@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:process_office@cpuc.ca.gov) to request addition to the "Information Only" category of the official service list pursuant to Rule 1.9(f).

The Commission encourages those who seek information-only status on the service list to consider the Commission's subscription service as an alternative. The subscription service sends individual notifications to each subscriber of formal e-filings tendered and accepted by the Commission. Notices sent through subscription service are less likely to be flagged by spam or other filters. Notifications can be for a specific proceeding, a range of documents and daily or weekly digests.

## **12. Receiving Electronic Service from the Commission**

Parties and other persons on the service list are advised that it is the responsibility of each person or entity on the service list for Commission proceedings to ensure their ability to receive emails from the Commission. Please add "@cpuc.ca.gov" to your email safe sender list and update your email

