



COM/MBK/abb 4/21/2026

FILED

04/21/26

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

01:49 PM
A2407018

Application of LS Power Grid California, LLC (U-247-E) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity Authorizing Construction of the Collinsville 500/230 kV Substation Project.

Application 24-07-018

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

Application 24-07-018 was filed on July 30, 2024, by LS Power Grid California (LSPGC) seeking a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) authorizing construction of the Collinsville 500/230 kilovolt (kV) Substation Project (Proposed Project). The Proposed Project includes three major components:

1. The new 500/230 kV Collinsville substation;
2. Four related transmission and distribution upgrades/extensions/replacements consisting of:
 - a. The addition of approximately 2.5 miles of new 500 kV transmission lines with two self-supporting segments of new 500 kV conductor and structures roughly parallel along the approximately 1.2-mile interconnection route (or "loop") between the proposed LSPGC Collinsville

Substation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) existing Vaca Dixon-Tesla 500 kV Transmission Line;

- b. A new approximately 6 mile-long, double-circuit 230 kV transmission line to connect the proposed LSPGC Collinsville Substation to PG&E's existing Pittsburg Substation, with approximately 4.5 miles of submarine cables running beneath the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta waterways;
 - c. Extension of PG&E's existing 12 kV Peabody 2107 Circuit distribution line to the proposed LSPGC Collinsville Substation; and
 - d. Three new transportation structures and the replacement of two existing lattice steel poles (LSPs) with one new three-pole dead-end tubular steel pole (TSP) structure along PG&E's existing Vaca Dixon-Tesla 500 kV Transmission Line; and
3. Communication upgrades and installations including a new microwave tower at the substation and related modifications to PG&E's nearby substations and a new fiber optic link to existing fiber in the City of Pittsburg.

As part of the 2021-2022 Transmission Planning Process, the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the CAISO transmission grid to address grid reliability requirements and to ensure compliance with applicable North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) reliability standards, the CAISO planning standards, and tariff requirements. The CAISO's analysis used a 10-year planning horizon, modeled a range of on-peak and off-peak system conditions, and considered facilities under CAISO operational control with voltages ranging from 60 kV to 500 kV. The analysis also included a policy-driven needs assessment to identify the transmission upgrades required to meet California's renewable energy and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets.

The CAISO approved the Collinsville substation project as a policy-driven upgrade in its 2021-2022 Transmission Plan on March 17, 2022. The Proposed Project is identified under the policy-driven category because it is needed to enable access for proposed renewable generation projects as well as to address transmission constraints and provide an additional supply from the 500 kV system into the northern Greater Bay Area. As a policy driven upgrade, economic justification was not needed for CAISO approval, nevertheless, CAISO's economic assessment projected a \$145 million present value benefit to CAISO ratepayers due to the Collinsville Upgrade, assuming 7% discount rate and a 50-year project life.

CAISO selected LSPGC as the approved project sponsor for the Proposed Project through a competitive selection process. Once constructed, the Proposed Project would become part of the CAISO-controlled transmission system. The agreement entered into by LSPGC and CAISO requires the Proposed Project to be in service by no later than June 1, 2028. The costs of the Proposed Project would be recovered solely through transmission rates as part of CAISO's Transmission Access Charge, which comes under the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) exclusive jurisdiction over rates for interstate transmission service. LSPGC estimates the total capital cost of the Proposed Project is \$324,675,000, excluding allowance for funds used for construction. It has also agreed to an annual revenue requirement cap of \$24,500,000 for the first 40 full calendar years, subject to FERC approval.

No protest to the initial application was filed. Motions for party status were received from California Forever LP on October 25, 2024, and CAISO on February 26, 2026. Both motions were granted on March 3, 2026, at the prehearing conference.

The California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) requires the lead agency (the Commission in this case) to identify environmental impacts of the project and ways to avoid or lessen those impacts.¹ The Commission issued its Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on November 4, 2025, and the Final EIR was released on March 23, 2026. The Final EIR addresses the determination that the Proposed Project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts on air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, greenhouse gases, land use, noise, and tribal cultural resources that were identified in the Draft EIR. The Commission may not approve the Project unless it:

- i. Reviews and certifies the EIR;
- ii. Considers feasible alternatives or mitigation measures that would substantially lessen any significant effects that the Project would have on the environment; and
- iii. Determines whether there are overriding considerations that merit approval of the Project and issuance of a CPCN to LSPGC despite the unavoidable, significant impacts. These and other issues will be addressed in the Commission's final decision for this proceeding.

In addition, pursuant to GO 131-D and Decision (D.) 06-01-042,² the Commission will not approve a project until the Commission is satisfied that its design complies with the Commission's policies governing the mitigation of electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) using low-cost and no-cost measures. These matters will also be addressed in the Commission's final decision for this proceeding.

¹ See, Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15000, *et seq.* (CEQA Guidelines), §15060.

² Subsequent to the filing of this application the Commission adopted GO 131-E in D.25-01-055. As this application was filed when GO 131-D was in effect, it is analyzed under that General Order.

A prehearing conference was held on March 3, 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. While no protests were filed in response to this application, California Forever LP indicated that there may be issues of disputed material fact during the prehearing conference.³

After considering application and associated attachments thereto, the Draft EIR, motions filed in this case, and 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 issues to be determined or otherwise considered are:

1. Does the Project serve a present or future public convenience and necessity that meets the requirements of Public Utilities Code Sections 1001, et seq.?
2. Does the Project qualify for the rebuttable presumption under Public Utilities Code Section 1001.1 in favor of the CAISO's "needs evaluation"?
3. What are the significant environmental impacts of the Project?
4. Are there potentially feasible mitigation measures that will avoid or lessen the identified significant environmental impacts?
5. As between the Project and the project alternatives, which is environmentally superior?
6. Are the mitigation measures or environmentally superior project alternatives infeasible for economic, social, legal, technological, or other considerations?
7. To the extent that the Project and/or project alternatives result in significant and unavoidable impacts, are there

³ See, RT at 11, 12, and 15.

overriding considerations that nevertheless merit Commission approval of the Project or alternative?⁴

8. Did the Commission review and consider the EIR for the Project, was the EIR completed in compliance with CEQA, and does the EIR reflect the Commission's independent judgment?
9. Does the application meet the requirements of General Order 131-D and Rule 13.1 to obtain a CPCN?⁵
10. What, if any, are the community values affected by the Project under Public Utilities Code Section 1002(a)(1)?
11. What is the maximum prudent and reasonable cost of the Project?⁶
12. What are the impacts on environmental and social justice communities, including the extent to which the construction of the Project impacts the achievement of any of the nine goals of the Commission's Environmental and Social Justice Action Plan?
13. Is the Project and/or environmentally superior project alternative in compliance with the Commission's policies governing the mitigation of EMF effects using low-cost and no-cost measure?

3. Need for Evidentiary Hearing

Issue numbers 1, 9, 10, 11, and 12 are potentially contested, material issues of fact. Accordingly, we will allow parties to present evidence on these issues. The need for evidentiary hearing will be determined by the assigned Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) and further instructions provided at the status conference.

⁴ See CEQA Guidelines §15093.

⁵ See, Public Utilities Code §1001.

⁶ See, Public Utilities Code §1005.5.

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	May 13, 2026
Prepared rebuttal testimony served	June 5, 2026
Status conference & deadline for completion of settlement talks	June 11, 2026
Evidentiary hearing	June 22-23, 2026
Opening briefs	July 10, 2026
Reply briefs [matter submitted]	July 24, 2026
Proposed decision	no later than 90 days after
Commission decision	no sooner than 30 days after Proposed Decision

The purpose of the status conference 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 organization of prepared testimony and briefs must correlate to the identified issues.

The proceeding will stand submitted upon the filing of reply briefs, unless the ALJ requires further evidence or argument. On January 15, 2026, the Commission adopted D.26-01-010 which extended the statutory deadline for this proceeding to February 28, 2027, based on the time needed to complete the

CEQA process. Based on this schedule, the proceeding will be resolved within the extended deadline 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.⁷

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.

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.

⁷ <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/adr/>

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

Resolution ALJ 176-3550 preliminarily determined that this is a ratesetting proceeding. This ruling confirms the Commission's preliminary determination⁸ 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.

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 April 1, 2026, 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.

⁸ Resolution ALJ-176-3550 at 3.

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.

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 1.4.⁹

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

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.

⁹ 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>

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 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 e-mails from the Commission. Please add “@cpuc.ca.gov” to your e-mail safe sender list and update your e-mail screening practices, settings and filters to ensure receipt of e-mails from the Commission.

13. Assignment of Proceeding

Commissioner Matthew Baker is the assigned commissioner, and Robert Haga is the assigned ALJ and presiding officer for the proceeding.

IT IS RULED that:

1. The scope of this proceeding is described above and is adopted.
2. The schedule of this proceeding is set forth above and is adopted.
3. Evidentiary hearing may be needed.
4. The presiding officer is Administrative Law Judge Robert Haga.

5. The category of the proceeding is ratesetting.

Dated April 21, 2026, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ MATTHEW BAKER

Matthew Baker
Assigned Commissioner