

Decision _____

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of Pacific Gas and Electric
Company for Approval of its Woody
Biomass to Renewable Natural Gas Pilot
Project (U39G).

Application 23-06-023

ORDER EXTENDING STATUTORY DEADLINE

Summary

This decision extends the statutory deadline in this proceeding to June 30, 2025.

1. Background and Justification

Public Utilities Code (Pub. Util. Code) Section 1701.5(a) provides that the Commission shall resolve the issues raised in the scoping memo of a ratesetting Proceeding within 18 months of the date the Proceeding is initiated unless the Commission makes a written determination that the deadline cannot be met and issues an order extending the deadline. The statutory deadline for resolving this Proceeding is December 30, 2024.

On June 30, 2023, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) filed Application (A.) 23-06-023 (the Application) seeking approval of its woody biomass to renewable natural gas pilot project (the Project) pursuant to Ordering Paragraph (OP) 43 of Decision (D.) 22-02-025. On August 11, 2023, protests to A.23-06-023 were filed by The Public Advocates Office at the California Public

Utilities Commission (Cal Advocates) and jointly by the Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity. Cal Advocates contested PG&E's request to use unspent Cap-and-Trade allowance proceeds instead of returning these to ratepayers as well as PG&E's request to do so through a Tier 2 advice letter. Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity argue that PG&E's application does not comply with D.22-02-025 and fails to demonstrate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions. PG&E filed a reply to the protests on August 21, 2023, asserting that Cal Advocates' request to include the Project's compliance with D.22-02-025 is redundant and that Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity's argument about GHG reductions is outside of the scope of this proceeding.

On September 29, 2023, an ALJ ruling directed the parties to A.23-06-023 to submit a Joint Prehearing Conference (PHC) statement, posed questions related to consolidation of the Application with the related but separate application of Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) seeking approval of its woody biomass pilot project pursuant to OP 43 of D.22-02-025, A.23-06-024, and set a concurrent PHC for the Application and A.23-06-024. On October 18, 2023, the parties to A.23-06-023 filed a Joint PHC Statement. A concurrent PHC for A.23-06-023 and A.23-06-024 was held on October 23, 2023, to address the scope of issues, need for hearing, proceeding schedule, and other procedural matters.

On December 14, 2023, the assigned Commissioner issued a Scoping Memo and Ruling which set the schedule for this proceeding, categorized this proceeding as ratesetting and determined that an evidentiary hearing was not needed.

An extension of the statutory deadline until June 30, 2025, is necessary to allow the Commission more time to fully examine the record of the proceeding.

2. Waiver of Comment Period

Under Rule 14.6(c)(4) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, the Commission may waive the otherwise applicable 30-day period for public review and comment on a decision that extends the 18-month deadline set forth in Pub. Util. Code § 1701.5. Under the circumstances of this proceeding, it is appropriate to waive the 30-day period for public review and comment.

3. Assignment of Proceeding

John Reynolds is the assigned Commissioner and Jonathan Lakey is the assigned Administrative Law Judge and the presiding officer in this proceeding.

Findings of Fact

1. The current statutory deadline for resolving A.23-06-023 is December 30, 2024.
2. A.23-06-023 cannot be completed by December 30, 2024.
3. An extension of the statutory deadline until June 30, 2025, is necessary to allow adequate time to complete this proceeding.

Conclusion of Law

Pursuant to the authority granted to the Commission under Pub. Util. Code § 1701.5(a), the statutory deadline should be extended until June 30, 2025.

IT IS ORDERED that the statutory deadline for completion of this proceeding is extended until June 30, 2025.

This order is effective today.

Dated _____ 2024, at San Francisco, California.