

Memorandum

Date : December 21, 1998

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To : Robert A. Laurie, La Paloma Committee Presiding Member
David A. Rohy, La Paloma Committee Associate Member

File : STATRPT4.W52

From : California Energy Commission - Marc S. Pryor
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Subject : **LA PALOMA GENERATING PROJECT (98-AFC-2) STATUS REPORT NUMBER 4**

At the La Paloma Generating Project Committee's September 16, 1998 Information Hearing, staff was directed to file monthly status reports starting on September 23, 1998. The following is staff's fourth status report on the La Paloma Generating Project.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The project is proceeding in accordance with the Committee's Scheduling Order of October 13, 1998. Scheduling issues could arise due to the number of Siting Cases now under review by staff. If it appears that there could be an effect on the La Paloma schedule, staff will immediately inform the Committee.

SUPPLEMENTAL FILING

On December 7, 1998, the applicant submitted a supplement to the Application for Certification (AFC) that results in changes in the project description:

- Four new natural gas compressors will be added at the facility to ensure a continuous minimum pressure of 790 psig for each of the four gas turbines. (The Kern-Mojave pipeline supply ranges from 450 to 930 psig.)
- An increase in the assumed maximum sulfur content of the natural gas. New information from the Kern River Gas Transmission Company indicates that the natural gas sulfur content may range as high as 0.75 grains per 100 standard cubic feet. This value is greater than the level originally assumed for sulfur dioxide emission estimates evaluated in the AFC.
- Revisions to the water supply turnout and pump station design allow these features to be totally contained within the existing flood protection without the relocation of the existing levee, as was proposed in the AFC. This will require the importation and compaction of approximately 5,000 cubic yards of material to raise the pump

station area to the same grade as the aqueduct road and Highway 58. Overall site surface disturbance impacts remain at 1 acre.

- A route adjustment to the raw water supply pipeline to avoid an existing drainage channel that parallels Highway 58. This will increase the overall length of the pipeline by about 50 feet.
- Construction of a new 700,000 water storage reservoir tank along the raw water supply pipeline. Water levels in this tank will trigger mechanisms to control pump operation at the aqueduct pump station. The tank will also provide a constant, uniform flow and adequate pressure through the plant's water treatment facilities. The welded steel tank will be approximately 74 feet in diameter and 24 feet high, and is proposed to sit near the top of a knoll adjacent to the proposed transmission line and raw water supply pipeline, and at a distance of about 1.5 miles from the plant site.
- The installation of a 30 foot high free-standing communication tower located near the water storage reservoir tank. This will be used to relay information from the reservoir tank to the pump station for control of pump operations, to the plant control room and to the West Kern Water District office to allow remote monitoring and control of the pump station at the aqueduct. Three 18-inch diameter reflectors would be mounted on the tower. Power would be provided by either nearby electrical utilities or by photovoltaic cells.

Staff is incorporating these items into the appropriate PSA sections.

CEQA/NEPA COORDINATION

Staff attended an agencies-only meeting December 1, 1998 with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss interagency coordination and timing between US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and CDFG on the production of the Biological Opinion (BO). (USFWS was represented by BLM.) The USFWS is preparing the BO in response to BLM's request for a Section 7 consultation.

Both CDFG and BLM believe the preparation of a joint CDFG/USFWS BO is possible by closely coordinating state and federal requirements. This would consist of incorporating CDFG's requirements into both the BO and respective agency permits. Dale Mitchell, CDFG, will check with CDFG legal and, if approved, will submit to USFWS what CDFG wants in the BO and permits. Larry Saslaw, BLM, will coordinate with Peter Cross, USFWS. If a joint BO can be achieved, then a letter from the CDFG Director stating their acceptance of the USFWS BO, will be provided to the Energy Commission.

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The Section 7 consultation may be completed by USFWS in mid-February 1999. However, Saslaw believes USFWS will request an extension past the mid-February time frame, but he would not speculate any further.

In addition, the attendees discussed the expected timing of the applicant's draft Biological Resources Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (BRMIMP). The BRMIMP is being drafted by the applicant's biological consultant, and the first draft is expected in late December 1998.

PROCESS WATER SUPPLY SOURCE

La Paloma continues to work with both the West Kern Water District and Buena Vista Water Storage District to resolve contract interpretation issues. Staff has not participated in these activities.

DATA REQUEST WORKSHOP

A data request workshop has been scheduled for the evening of December 21, 1998 at the Pioneer Senior Center in Buttonwillow, to discuss four air quality data requests. This workshop will also provide an opportunity for the public and other agencies to ask questions of the Energy Commission's air quality technical expert, project manager and the applicant.

MSP:msp

cc: LaPaloma Generating Project Proof of Service List
Ray Menebroker, California ARB
Bob Giorges, California ARB
Tom Goff, San Joaquin Valley Unified APCD
Matt Haber, U.S. EPA, Region IX
Carol Bohnencamp, U.S. EPA, Region IX
Reza Ahfami, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Thomas Clark, Kern County Water Agency
Jerry Pearson, West Kern Water District
David Rickels, Kern County Planning Dept.
Dale Mitchell, California Department of Fish and Game
Peter Cross, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jesse Wild, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service