



# RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Community and Economic Development  
Department of Planning and Building

Norman L. Allinder, AICP  
Director

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**PLANNING COMMISSION DATE:** March 4, 2014

**AGENDA ITEM:** #3

<b>CUP</b>	<b>#2013-026</b>	<b>To amend a previous Conditional Use Permit to allow for a Power Substation</b>
<b>APN</b>	<b>#042-172-004, -005</b>	<b>Applicant/Owner: Paramount Farms</b>
<b>CEQA</b>	<b>MND #2014-02</b>	<b>Mitigated Negative Declaration</b>

### REQUEST:

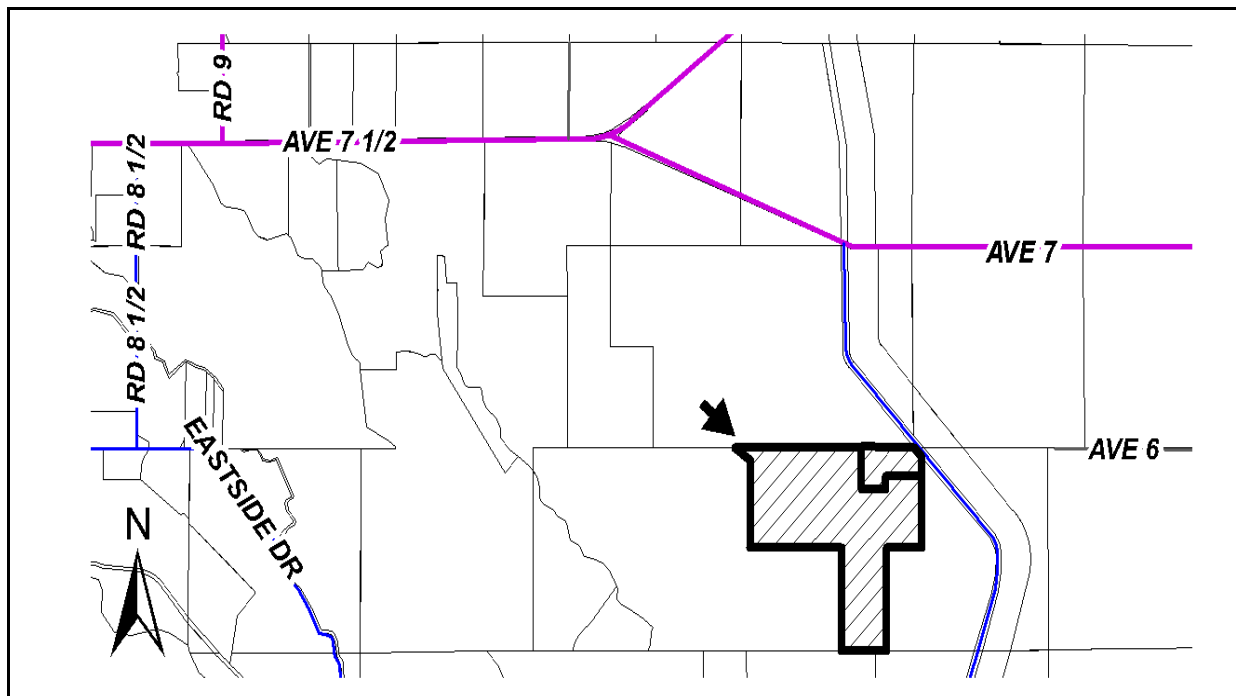
The applicant is requesting to amend Conditional Use Permit #2011-010 to allow for the installation of a power substation on the property.

### LOCATION:

The subject property is located on the southwest side of Chowchilla Canal Road, approximately 1.1 miles south of its intersection with Avenue 7 (12888 Avenue 6) Firebaugh.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND #2014-02) (Exhibit Q) has been prepared and is subject to approval by the Planning Commission.



**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of Conditional Use Permit #2013-026 subject to conditions and Mitigated Negative Declaration MND #2014-02 and Mitigation Monitoring Program.

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION (Exhibit A):**

**SITE:** AE (Agricultural Exclusive) Designation

**SURROUNDING:** AE (Agricultural Exclusive)

**ZONING (Exhibit B):**

**SITE:** ARE-40 (Agricultural Rural Exclusive – 40 Acre) District

**SURROUNDING:** ARE-40 (Agricultural Rural Exclusive – 40 Acre) District

**LAND USE:**

**SITE:** Pistachio hulling, storing and packaging facility

**SURROUNDING:** North, South, East and West: Agricultural

**SIZE OF PROPERTY:** 404.3 acres

**ACCESS (Exhibit A):** Access to the site is via Chowchilla Canal Road

**BACKGROUND AND PRIOR ACTIONS:**

Conditional Use Permit #2011-010 was approved by the Planning Commission on October 4, 2011 to allow for a pistachio hulling, storing and packaging plant.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

This project is to amend Conditional Use Permit #2011-010 to allow for the installation of an electrical substation and overhead high voltage electrical lines from Chowchilla Canal Road to substation. The electrical substation is to aid the operation. PG&E will be providing 115kV transmission voltage service lines to the substation.

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) has been requested by Paramount Farms to provide 115kV electric transmission voltage service to the new Paramount Farms owned and operated substation. PG&E proposes to install a new 115 kV power line that will be constructed, owned, operated and maintained by PG&E. The new line will tap from the existing Gill Ranch 115 kV along Chowchilla Canal Road and will include approximately 10 poles. The new power line will run west along the farm access road to the new substation and will be approximately 3,200 feet in length. The alignment of the new power line for the majority of the length overbuilt and co-located with an existing distribution line and the new 115 kV power line. The existing electric distribution poles are approximately 34 feet to 39 feet tall out of the ground. The new poles after construction will be approximately 61 feet to 100 feet tall out of the ground.

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As part of the construction of the line, temporary disturbance around each of the poles will be approximately a 50 foot radius. The new line will require approximately 2 pull and tension sites for the installation of the conductors (wires). Pull sites are typically 100 feet by 300 feet areas and are situated in the alignment, or extension of the alignment, of the new line. Standard equipment used in the construction of power lines includes bucket trucks, wire pull and tension equipment, and crew trucks and equipment.

**ORDINANCES/POLICIES:**

Section 18.58 of the Madera County Zoning Ordinance outlines the uses and regulations of the ARE-40 (Agricultural Rural Exclusive – 40 Acre District).

Section 18.92 of the Madera County Zoning Ordinance outlines the procedures for obtaining Conditional Use Permits.

Policy 1.E.3 of the Madera County General Plan supports the economic development of the County.

Policy 5.A.6 of the Madera County General Plan supports continued agricultural operations on lands designated for agricultural uses.

Policy 5.A.11 of the Madera County General Plan supports the allowing of agricultural services in agriculturally designated areas in support of that industry.

Policy 7.A.5 of the Madera County General Plan requires noise created by new non-transportation noise sources, or existing non-transportation noise sources which undergo modifications that may increase noise levels, to be mitigated so as not to exceed noise levels indicated in Table 7.A.4 on lands designated for noise-sensitive uses.

**ANALYSIS:**

The proposal is to amend Conditional Use Permit #2011-010 to allow for the installation of a power substation to be utilized in the existing pistachio hulling, storing and packaging plant. PG&E will be providing 115kV transmission voltage service to the substation.

The parcel is developed by Paramount Farms to process pistachios harvested in Madera County. The General Plan designates the parcel AE (Agricultural Exclusive) which provides for agricultural related activities. The subject parcel is zoned ARE-40 (Agricultural Rural Exclusive – 40 Acre) district which allows for agricultural related services with a Conditional Use Permit. The Zoning and General Plan designations for this parcel are consistent with one another and the hulling and shelling operation is considered an agriculturally oriented service. This Conditional Use Permit is to allow for a power substation in support of the agriculturally related facility on the parcel.

The hulling facility will be running year-round; and seasonally it will operate 5 to 7 days per week, 24 hour a day. The operation will receive the pistachios during a six week harvesting period that is between September and October. The pistachios will be stored on site during the remainder of the year while they are processed for shipping. The facility will employ between 80 and 400 persons for this process. During the harvest period, the facility expects approximately 100 truckloads to enter the site. Post production traffic will include approximately 5 truckloads a day outbound from the facility with the finished product.

Part of the substation equipment are transformers, which contains a pure-tone or "hum" component, as well as noise associated with the cooling fans and oil pumps that operate periodically. There are no hospitals, residential subdivisions, schools, performance centers or religious congregations (typically defined as "sensitive receptors") in the vicinity of this project. The Noise Element of the Madera County General Plan (Policy 7.A.5) provides that noise which will be created by new non-transportation noise sources shall be mitigated so as not to exceed the Noise Element noise level standards on lands designated for noise-sensitive uses. While this policy does not apply to agricultural uses, the substation technically cannot be thought of as agriculturally based.

Industrial uses, saw mills, energy generation plants, and mining operations are significant noise sources in Madera County. In some cases, noise-sensitive land uses are located near these operations. In most cases, however, noise generators are located in areas containing only industrial uses, or in rural areas surrounded by a significant amount of open space or agriculture. This area is predominately agricultural in nature and no residential uses are immediately adjacent to the project site.

The project is located on a Williamson Act enrolled parcel. The processing facility is not significantly displacing any existing agricultural operation and is considered compatible with the provisions of the Williamson Act. However, any expansion of the operation would be subject to review for consistency with the provisions of the Williamson Act and subject to review. The inclusion of this substation is not considered an expansion of the operation as it is designed and necessary for the power requirements of the operation.

According to the Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC), the traffic counts for the area, covering Avenue 7 east of Firebaugh Boulevard, range from 1,339 vehicles east bound and 1,244 vehicles westbound. With the exception of the time period during construction of the substation and transmission line extension, this project will not generate any traffic that will impact these figures. During installation of the poles leading to the site, and for when the substation is being installed, construction vehicles will travel to and from the areas of construction. There is the potential of occasional road closure or detours to

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facilitate the installation of the poles. Given the limited traffic on Chowchilla Canal Road, this is not seen as a significant impact. A mitigation measure is for construction personnel to coordinate with local emergency providers so as to have plans in place in the event emergency vehicles need to get through the area of construction.

There is no water, wastewater or trash generation expected as a result of this project.

The project has been routed to California Highway Patrol, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sheriff's Office, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, PG&E and Caltrans for comment. The Air District commented that project specific emissions of criteria pollutants will not exceed the District's significant thresholds.

If this project is approved, the applicant will need to submit a check, made out to the County of Madera, in the amount of \$2,231.25 to cover the Notice of Determination (CEQA) filing at the Clerks' office. The amount covers the current \$2,181.25 Department of Fish and Wildlife fee and the County Clerk \$50.00 filing fee. In lieu of the Fish and Wildlife fee, the applicant may choose to contact the Fresno office of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to apply for a fee waiver. The County Clerk Fee, Department of Fish and Wildlife Fee (or waiver if approved) is due within five days of approval of this permit.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The following findings of fact must be made by the Planning Commission to make a finding of approval of this conditional use permit application. Should the Planning Commission vote to approve the project, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission concur with the following in light of the proposed conditions of approval.

1. *The proposed project does not violate the spirit or intent of the zoning ordinance in that pursuant to Section 18.58.010 of the Madera County Zoning Ordinance, the proposed underlying use is allowed in the ARE-40 (Agricultural Rural Exclusive – 40 acre) Zone District subject to a conditional use permit. The proposed power substation is intended to provide power to the facility and aide in operations. The inclusion of the power substation will not change the underlying operation of the facility as a pistachio hulling, storing and packaging plant.*
2. *The proposed project is not contrary to the public health, safety, or general welfare in that the facility will adhere to all conditions of approval and mitigations as approved as they relate to the operations. The facility itself requires it to be regularly maintained, and will be by PG&E.*
3. *The proposed project is not hazardous, harmful, noxious, offensive, or a*

*nuisance because of noise, dust, smoke, odor, glare, or similar, factors, in that the project must adhere to local and state health and building codes. In addition, any potential environmental impacts have been mitigated to a level of less than significant through mitigation measures as outlined by the mitigated negative declaration and conditions of approval for the conditional use permit.*

4. *The proposed project will not for any reason cause a substantial, adverse effect upon the property values and general desirability of the surrounding properties. The underlying project is compatible with the nature of adjacent uses and is considered an agriculturally related service. The properties surrounding this facility are agricultural in nature and sparsely populated. The power substation in this project is supplementing the power requirements of the underlying use, therefore will not affect property values or general desirability of the surrounding properties.*

**WILLIAMSON ACT:**

The parcels are subject to a Williamson Act contract. The proposed project is not significantly displacing the existing agricultural operation, in fact is supplementing the power requirements of the operations only, and is considered compatible with the provisions of the Williamson Act.

**GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:**

The General Plan designates the site as AE (Agricultural Exclusive) which allows for similar uses as to that being proposed. The property is zoned ARE-40 (Agricultural Rural Exclusive – 40 acre) District. The proposed project is consistent with the designations.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The analysis provided in this report supports approval of Conditional Use Permit (CUP #2013-026), Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND #2014-02) and the Mitigation Measure Monitoring Program as presented.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Exhibit A, General Plan Map
2. Exhibit B, Zoning Map
3. Exhibit C, Assessor's Map
4. Exhibit D, Site Plan Map
5. Exhibit D-1, Site Plan North
6. Exhibit D-2, Site Plan South
7. Exhibit D-3, Elevations A
8. Exhibit D-4, Elevations B
9. Exhibit D-5, Elevations C
10. Exhibit D-6, Elevations D

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11. Exhibit D-7, Elevations E
12. Exhibit D-8, Elevations F
13. Exhibit E, Aerial Map
14. Exhibit F, Topographical Map
15. Exhibit G, Operational Statement
16. Exhibit H, Paramount PG&E Scope
17. Exhibit I, Power Line Layout
18. Exhibit J, Engineering Department Comments
19. Exhibit K, Environmental Health Comments
20. Exhibit L, Planning Department Comments
21. Exhibit M, Roads Department Comments
22. Exhibit N, Air District Comments
23. Exhibit O, Caltrans Comments
24. Exhibit P, Initial Study
25. Exhibit Q, Mitigated Negative Declaration #2014-02

## CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

**PROJECT NAME:**

CUP #2013-026 Paramount Farms Int.

**PROJECT LOCATION:**

on the southwest side of Chowchilla Canal Road approximately 1.1 miles

south of its intersection with Acenue 7 (12888 Avenue 6), Firebaugh

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

To amend CUP #2011-010 to allow for installation of a PGE substation

**APPLICANT:**

Paramount Farms

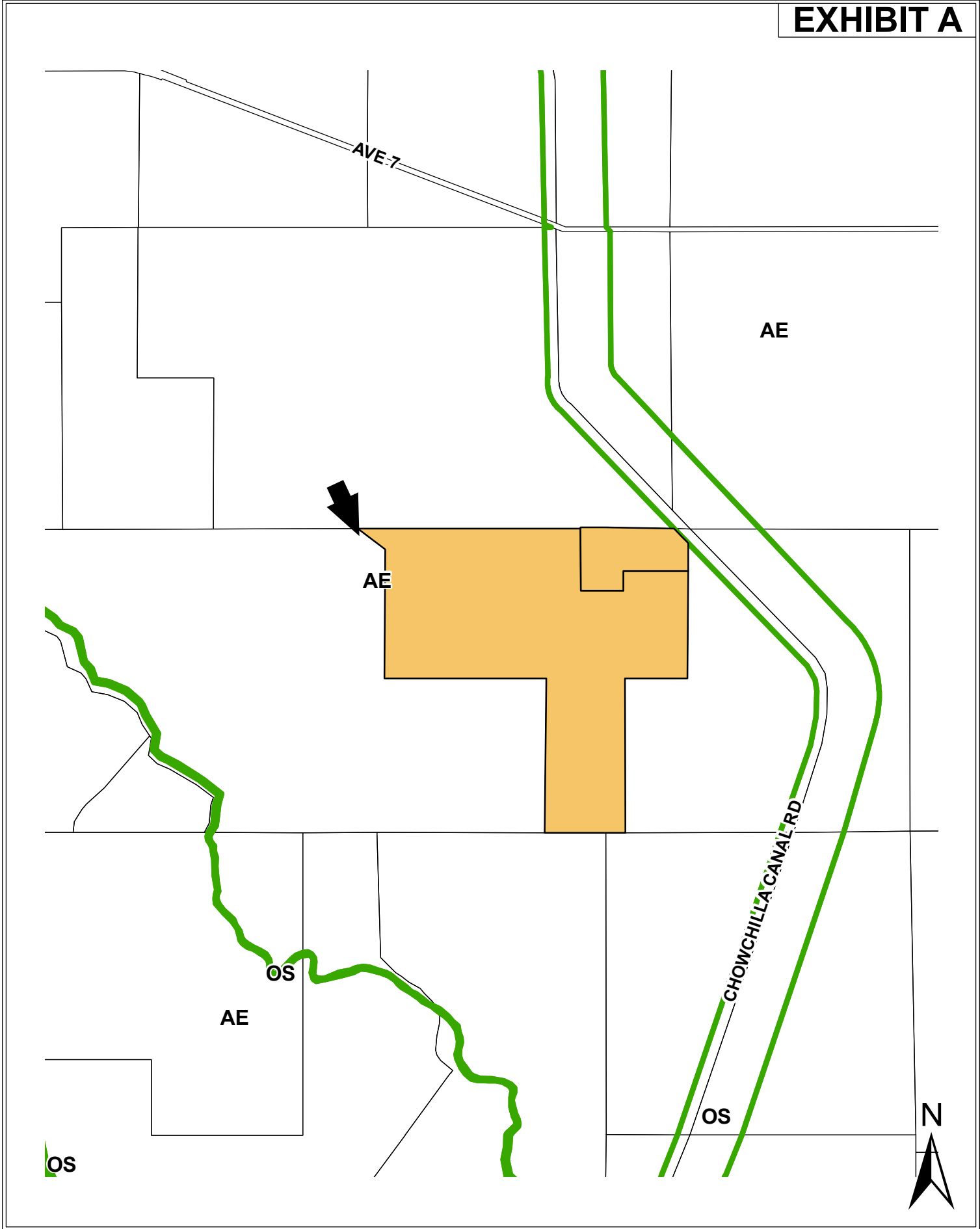
**CONTACT PERSON/TELEPHONE NUMBER:**

661-797-6500

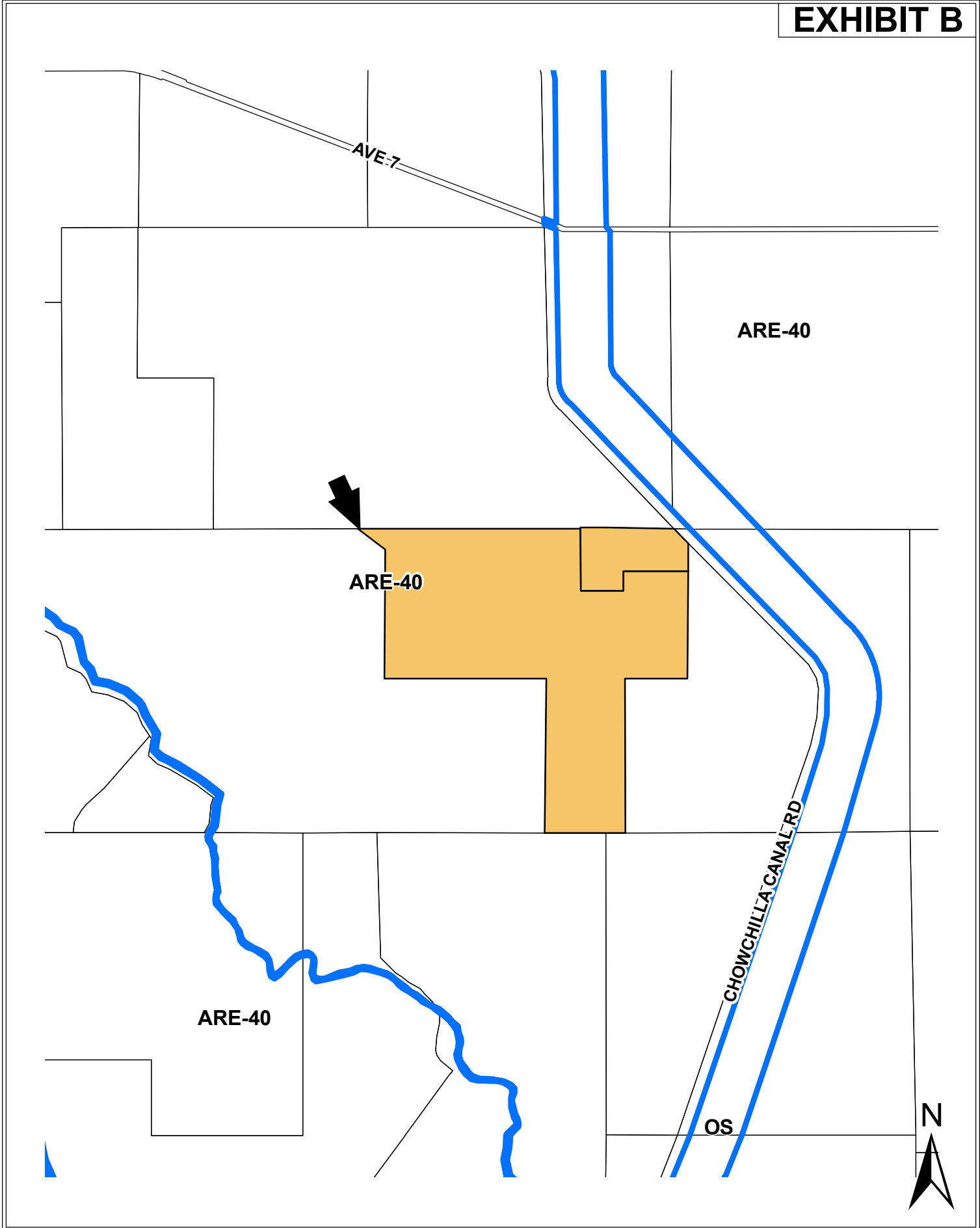
No.	Condition	Department/Agency	Verification of Compliance		
			Initials	Date	Remarks
<b>Engineering</b>					
1	The applicant shall submit a detailed grading, drainage and erosion control plan (24X36 2-sets) to the Engineering Department. This plan shall identify onsite retention for any increase in storm water runoff generated by this project. The grading, drainage and erosion control plan shall be prepared by a registered civil engineer and shall meet all applicable standards of the Building Code and the Madera County Code	Engineering			
<b>Environmental Health</b>					
1	This current applicant shall also meet all the previously required Madera County Env. Hlth Dept. conditions identified within the approved CUP #2011-010	Env. Hlth.			
<b>Fire</b>					
	None				
<b>Planning</b>					
1	The project shall operate in accordance with the operational statement and plans submitted for this project except as modified by the conditions of approval of this conditional use permit and associated mitigation measures.	Planning			
2	All driveways and parking associated with this project are to be constructed and maintained in a manner to provide for a dust free environment.	Planning			
3	Facility noise levels shall conform to Madera County Noise Ordinance standards.	Planning			



No.	Condition	Department/Agency	Verification of Compliance		
			Initials	Date	Remarks
4	Applicant shall landscape the frontage of the facility to create a windrow for dust minimization	Planning			
5	Conditions of Approval and Mitigation Measures related to Conditional Use Permit #2011-010, permitting the processing facility, remain in effect and remain unchanged as a result of this Conditional Use Permit.	Planning			
<b>Road</b>					
1	The applicant shall fulfill all conditions stipulated under CUP 2011-010.	Roads			



**GENERAL PLAN MAP**



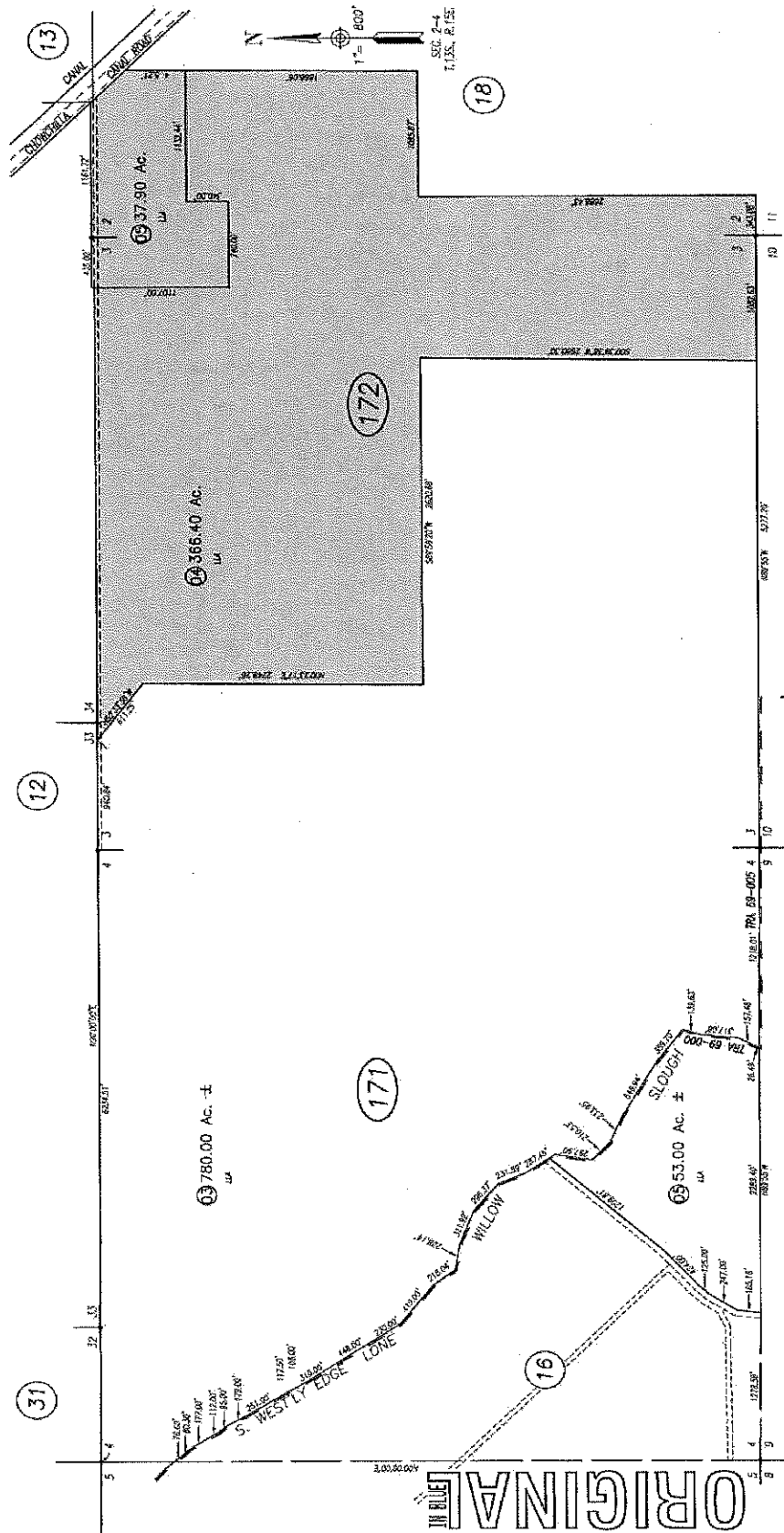
**ZONING MAP**

# EXHIBIT C

SECS. 2, 3 & 4 T.13S., R.15E. M.D.B.&M.  
MILLER & LUX

Tax Area Code  
69-000  
69-005

42-17



NOTE: This map is for assessment purposes only and is not intended for interpretation of boundary rights, zoning regulations or land division.

20

NOTE- Assessor's Block Numbers Shown in Ellipses.  
Assessor's Parcel Numbers Shown in Circles.

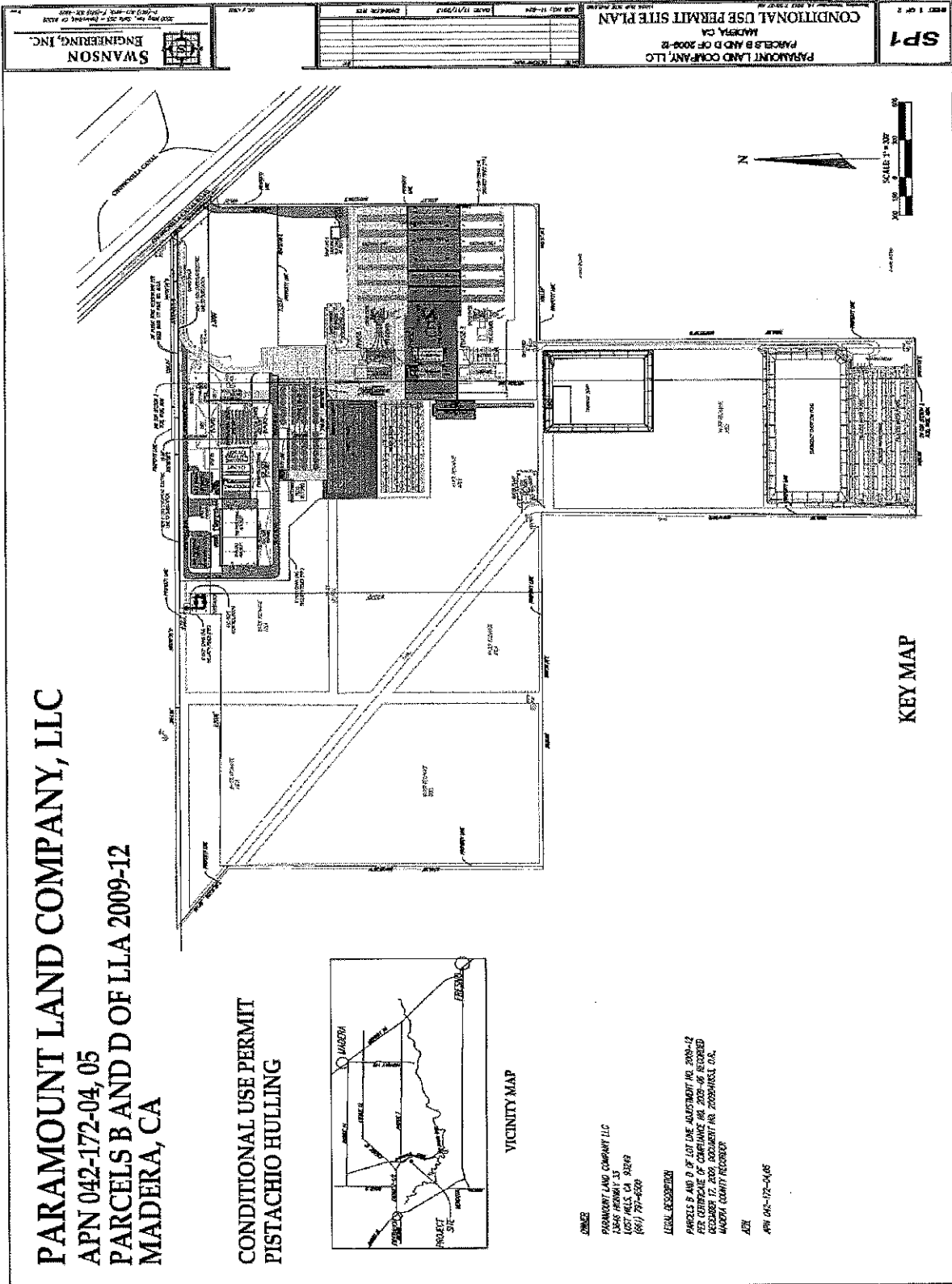
Assessor's Map No. 42-17  
Firebaugh  
County of Madera, Calif.  
1959

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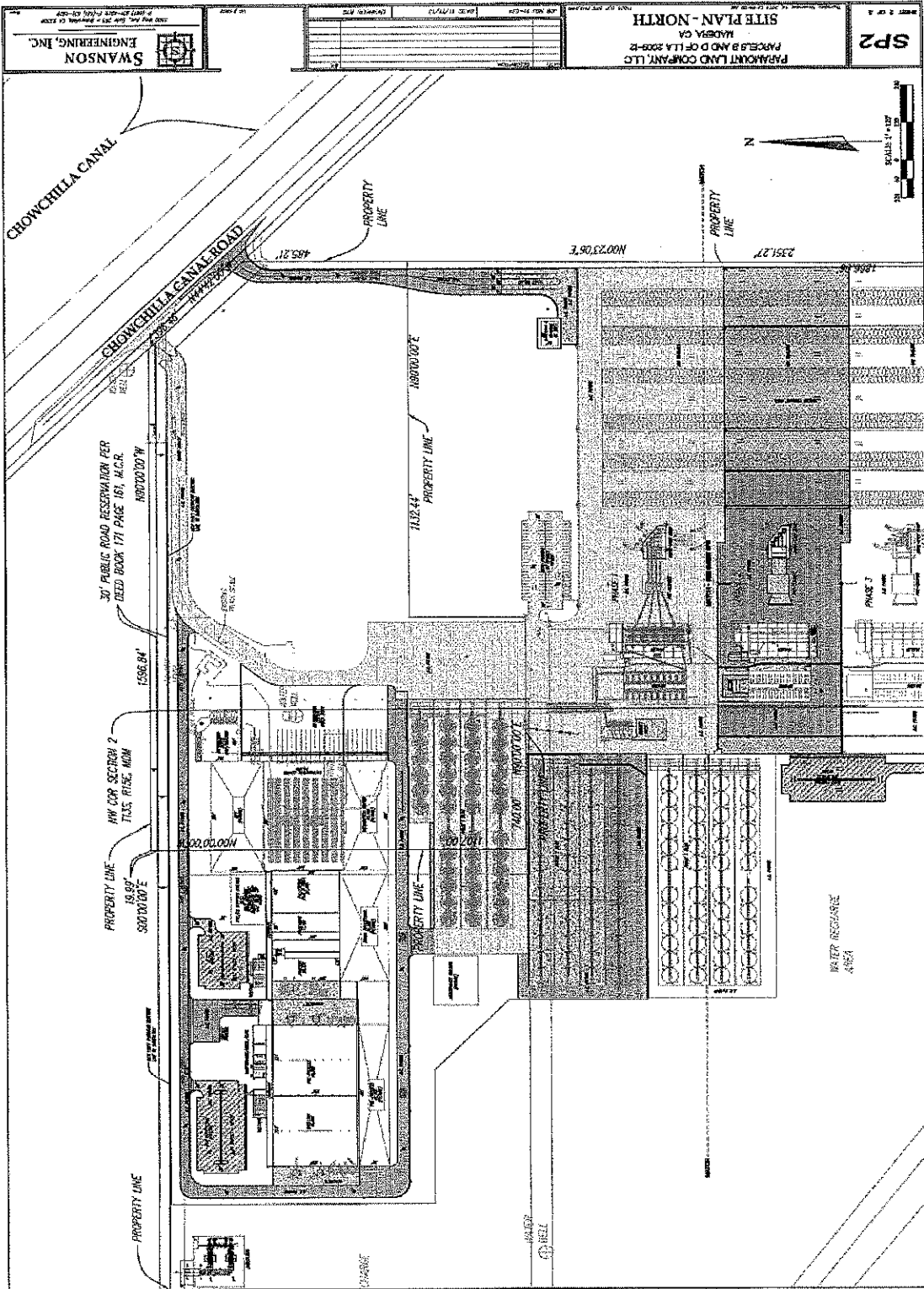
1983-1-05  
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# ASSESSOR'S MAP

# EXHIBIT D



# SITE PLAN



## SITE PLAN - NORTH







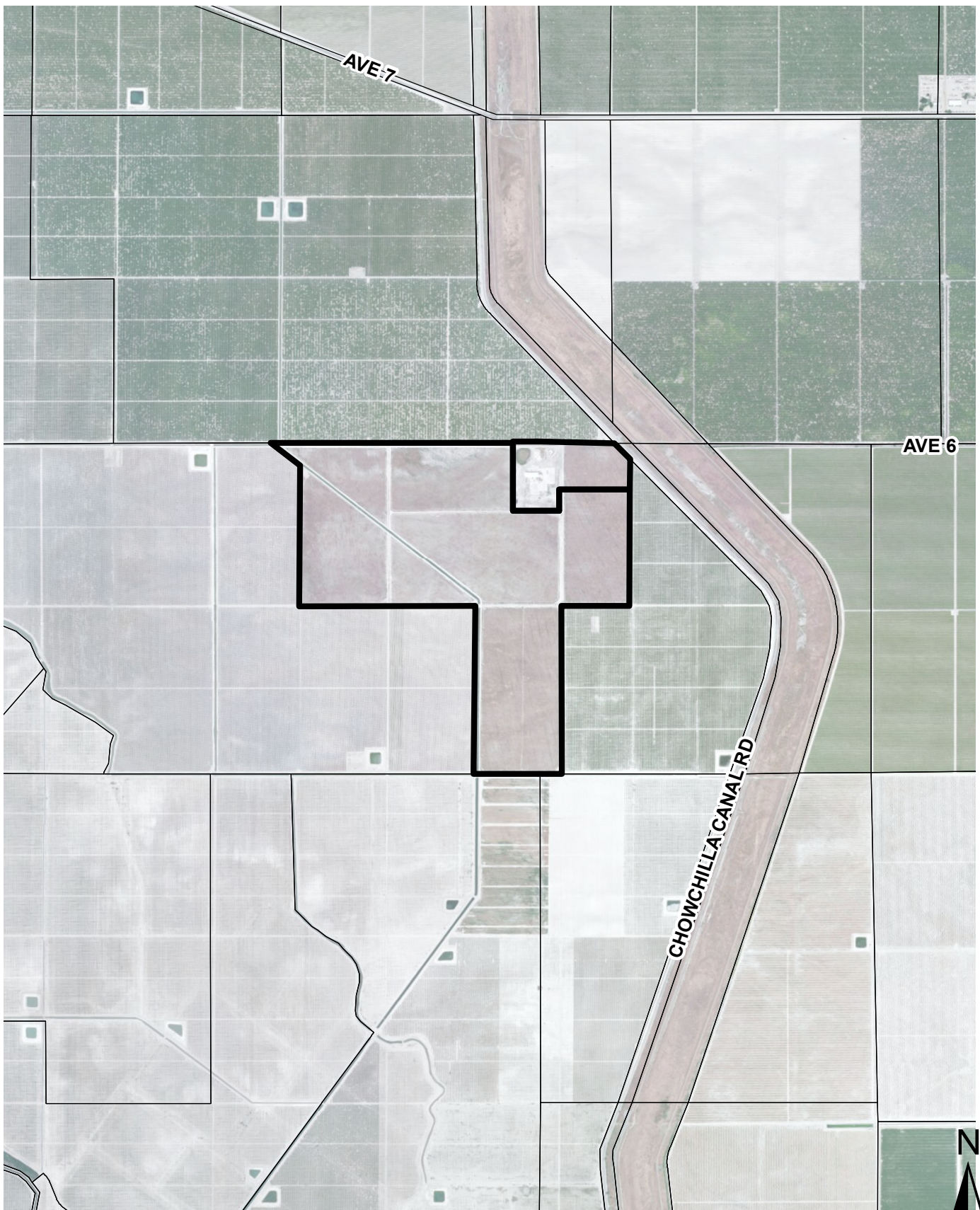




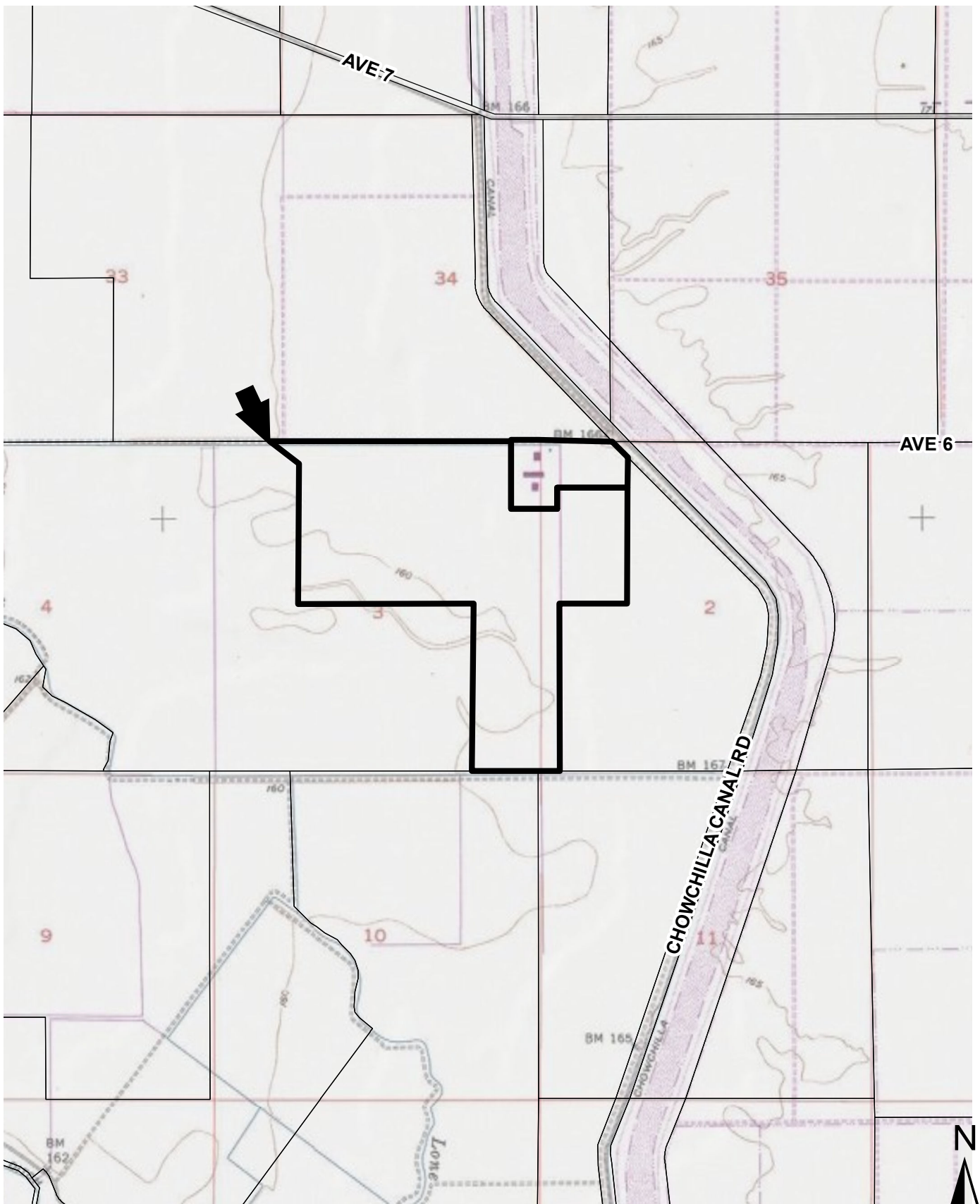








**AERIAL MAP**



**TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP**

Madera County Planning Department  
2037 W. Cleveland Avenue MS-G, Madera CA 93637

## OPERATIONAL/ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT CHECKLIST

It is important that the operational/environmental statement provides for a complete understanding of your project proposal. Please be as detailed as possible.

**1. Please provide the following information**

**Assessor's Parcel Number:** 042-172-04, 042-172-05  
**Applicant's Name:** Paramount Farms, LLC  
**Address:** 13646 Highway 33, Lost Hills, CA 93249  
**Phone Number:** 661-797-6500

**2. Describe the nature of your proposal/operation.**

Add an electrical substation and overhead high voltage electrical lines from Chowchilla Canal Road to substation. Electrical substation is to aid the farming operations.

**3. What is the existing use of the property?**

Agricultural land.

**4. What products will be produced by the operation? Will they be produced onsite or at some other location? Are these products to be sold onsite?**

N/A

**5. What are the proposed operational time limits?**

**Months (if seasonal):** Continuous operation.

**Days per week:**

**Hours (from \_\_\_ to \_\_\_):**

**Total Hours per day:**

**7. How many customers or visitors are expected?**

**Average number per day:** N/A

**Maximum number per day:**

**What hours will customers/visitors be there?**

**8. How many employees will there be?**

**Current:** N/A

**Future:** N/A

**Hours they work:** N/A

**Do any live onsite? If so, in what capacity (i.e. caretaker)?**



N/A

9. **What equipment, materials, or supplies will be used and how will they be stored? If appropriate, provide pictures or brochures.**

Minimal tools and electrical equipment.

10. **Will there be any service and delivery vehicles?**

**Number:** Maintenance vehicles as needed. Not a typical occurrence.

**Type:**

**Frequency:**

11. **Number of parking spaces for employees, customers, and service/delivery vehicles. Type of surfacing on parking area.**

No employees or customers. Gravel area available for parking when needed.

12. **How will access be provided to the property/project? (street name)**

Access from Chowchilla Canal Road along existing farm road along the alignment of Avenue 6.

13. **Estimate the number and type (i.e. cars or trucks) of vehicular trips per day that will be generated by the proposed development.**

No additional trips from the proposed substation addition.

14. **Describe any proposed advertising including size, appearance, and placement.**

None.

15. **Will existing buildings be used or will new buildings be constructed? Indicate which building(s) or portion(s) will be utilized and describe the type of construction materials, height, color, etc. Provide floor plan and elevations, if applicable.**

New control room for substation.

16. **Is there any landscaping or fencing proposed? Describe type and location.**

No landscaping proposed. There is a perimeter security chain link fence proposed.

17. **What are the surrounding land uses to the north, south, east and west property boundaries?**

Agriculture.

18. **Will this operation or equipment used, generate noise above other existing parcels in the area?**

No.

- 19. On a daily or annual basis, estimate how much water will be used by the proposed development, and how is water to be supplied to the proposed development (please be specific).**  
No water for substation.
- 20. On a daily or weekly basis, how much wastewater will be generated by the proposed project and how will it be disposed of?**  
No wastewater for substation.
- 21. On a daily or weekly basis, how much solid waste (garbage) will be generated by the proposed project and how will it be disposed of?**  
No solid waste for substation.
- 22. Will there be any grading? Tree removal? (please state the purpose, i.e. for building pads, roads, drainage, etc.)**  
Grading for pad for substation, control room, and gravel entrance to fenced substation.
- 23. Are there any archeological or historically significant sites located on this property? If so, describe and show location on site plan.**  
No.
- 24. Locate and show all bodies of water on application plot plan or attached map.**  
Chowchilla Canal to the east.
- 25. Show any ravines, gullies, and natural drainage courses on the property on the plot plan.**  
N/A
- 26. Will hazardous materials or waste be produced as part of this project? If so, how will they be shipped or disposed of?**  
No.
- 27. Will your proposal require use of any public services or facilities? (i.e. schools, parks, fire and police protection or special districts?)**  
No.
- 28. How do you see this development impacting the surrounding area?**  
No impact.
- 29. How do you see this development impacting schools, parks, fire and police protection or special districts?**  
No impact.
- 30. If your proposal is for commercial or industrial development, please complete the following;**

**Proposed Use(s):** Electrical substation for farming operations.

**Square feet of building area(s):** 480 square feet.

**Total number of employees:** No employees.

**Building Heights:** 9' high control room building.

**31. If your proposal is for a land division(s), show any slopes over 10% on the map or on an attached map.**

N/A

End

*Paramount Farms (Firebaugh) Sub*

*12/5/2013*

*PM 31018047*

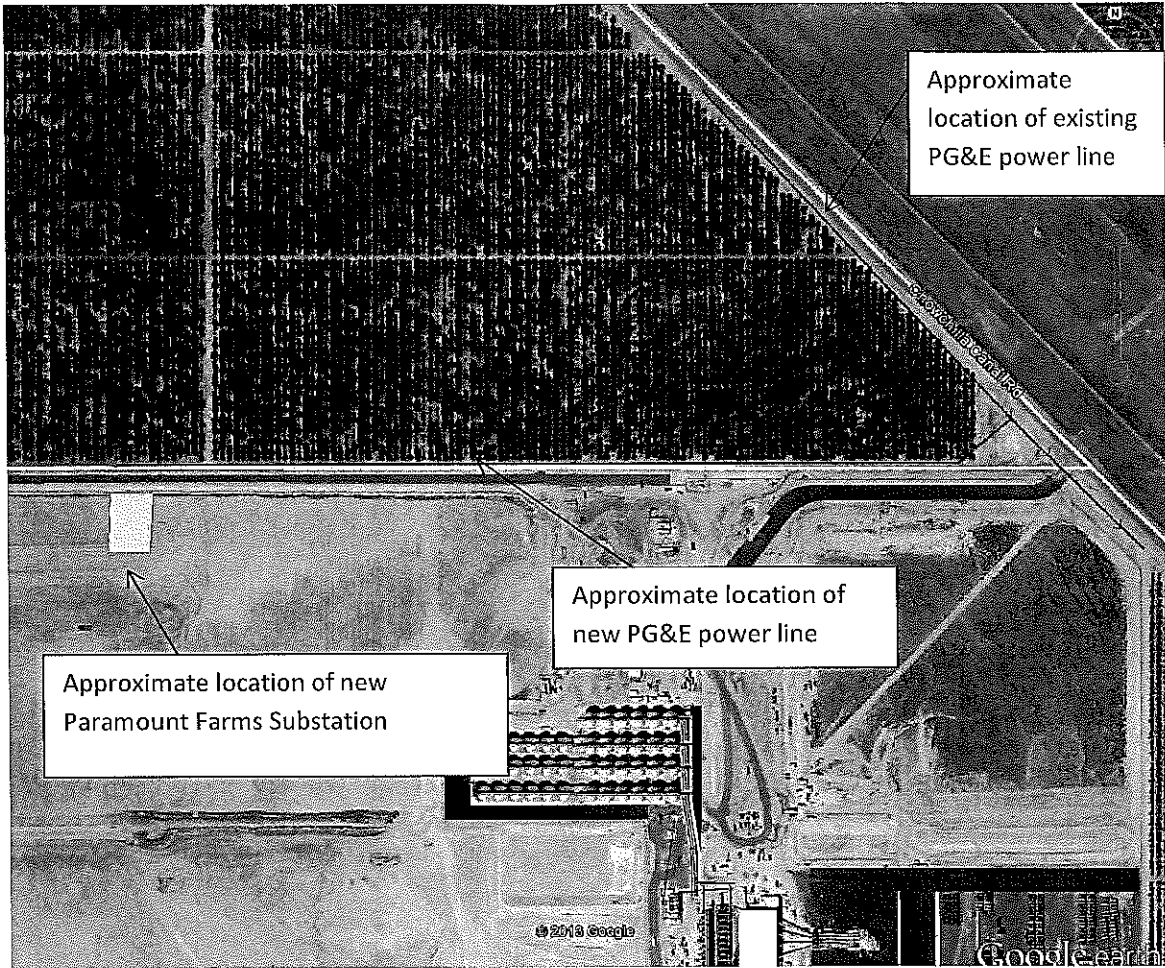
This document has been prepared for the County of Madera as a scope document to include the new Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) 115 kilovolt (kV) electric power line in the previously issued MND #2011-11 (Mitigated Negative Declaration) by the County. The MND was originally prepared for the Paramount Farms Pistachio hulling, storing, processing, and shipping facility, and did not include PG&E's portion of the project.

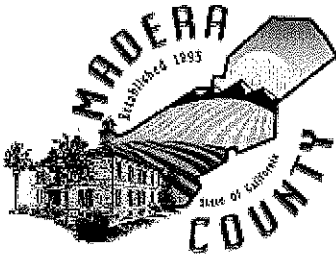
PG&E has been requested by Paramount Farms to provide 115kV electric transmission voltage service to the new Paramount Farms owned and operated Substation. PG&E proposes to install a new 115 kV power line that will be constructed, owned, operated and maintained by PG&E. The new line will tap from the existing Gill Ranch 115kV along Chowchilla Canal Road and will include approximately 10 poles. The new power line will run west along the farm access road to the new substation and will be approximately 3,200 feet in length. The alignment of the new power line for the majority of the length overbuilt and co-located with an existing electric distribution line. The new line after construction will accommodate both the existing distribution line and the new 115 kV power line. The existing electric distribution poles are approximately 34 feet to 39 feet tall out of the ground. The new poles after construction will be approximately 61 feet to 100 feet tall out of ground.

As part of construction of the line, temporary disturbance around the poles will be approximately a 50 foot radius. The new line will require approximately 2 pull and tension sites for the installation of the conductors (wires). Pull sites are typically 100 feet by 300 feet areas and are situated in the alignment, or extension of the alignment, of the new line. Temporary staging and lay down areas will also be needed for the construction of the new line. Standard equipment used in the construction of power lines includes bucket trucks, cranes, wire pull and tension equipment, and crew trucks and equipment.

Additional notes regarding the inclusion of PG&E's project in the MND are as follows:

- The overall plan area needs to be depicted in the CEQA document so as to include the areas that will be needed for the construction and operation of the new power line.
- Swanson's Hawk may occur in the project area, and may need to be addressed in the CEQA document.





## Engineering and General Services

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Madera, CA 93637

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Bass Lake, CA  
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(559) 642-3203  
(559) 658-6959  
FAX

[engineering@madera-county.com](mailto:engineering@madera-county.com)

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert Mansfield  
FROM: Engineering Department  
DATE: January 13, 2014  
RE: Paramount Farms International - Conditional Use Permit - Firebaugh (042-172-004-000)

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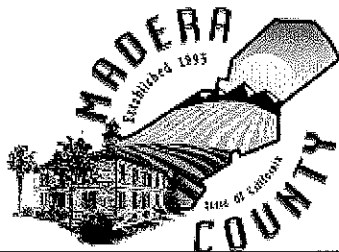
#### Comments

CUP 2013-026

This department does not object to this request, recommends approval and submits the following comments and conditions:

- 1) The identified parcel appears to be located within Flood Zone 'A', an area determined to be inundated by 100-year flood with no base flood elevations determined
- 2) The subject property is not within a Maintenance District or Service Area administered by the Madera County Engineering Department.
- 3) The applicant shall submit a detailed grading, drainage and erosion control plan (24X36 2-sets) to the Engineering Department. This plan shall identify onsite retention for any increase in storm water runoff generated by this project. The grading, drainage and erosion control plan shall be prepared by a registered civil engineer and shall meet all applicable standards of the Building Code and the Madera County Code.

Dario Dominguez  
Engineering Dept.  
559-675-7817 ext 3322  
[dario.dominguez@madera-county.com](mailto:dario.dominguez@madera-county.com)



# RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

## Environmental Health Department

Jill Yaeger, Director

• 2037 West Cleveland Avenue  
• Madera, CA 93637  
• (559) 675-7823

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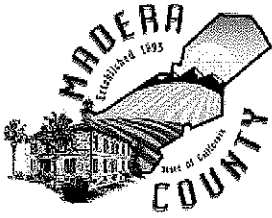
### MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert Mansfield  
FROM: Environmental Health Department  
DATE: January 13, 2014  
RE: Paramount Farms International - Conditional Use Permit - Firebaugh (042-172-004-000)

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#### Comments

This Dept. has reviewed the previously submitted information and documentation for compliance with applicable Madera County Env. Hlth, Dept. jurisdiction requirements for this proposed project and has determined that no comments are required at this time. However, this current applicant shall also meet all the previously required Madera County Env. Hlth Dept. conditions identified within the approved CUP #2011-010.



# RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

EXHIBIT L

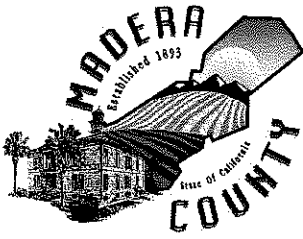
Community and Economic Development  
Department of Planning and Building  
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TDD (559) 675-8970  
mc\_planning@madera-county.com

DATE: January 7, 2014  
TO: Development Review Committee  
FROM: Robert Mansfield, Planning Department  
RE: Paramount Farms International - Conditional Use Permit - (CUP #2013-026)  
Firebaugh (042-172-004-000)

1. The project shall operate in accordance with the operational statement and plans submitted for this project except as modified by the conditions of approval of this conditional use permit and associated mitigation measures.
2. All driveways and parking associated with this project are to be constructed and maintained in a manner to provide for a dust free environment.
3. Facility noise levels shall conform to Madera County Noise Ordinance standards.
4. Applicant shall landscape the frontage of the facility to create a windrow for dust minimization.
5. Any lighting associated with this project shall be hooded and directed away from neighboring parcels and potential habitats.
6. Conditions of Approval and Mitigation Measures related to Conditional Use Permit #2011-010, permitting the processing facility, remain in effect and remain unchanged as a result of this Conditional Use Permit.





**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY**  
**Road Department**


2037 W. Cleveland Avenue  
Mail Stop 'D'  
Madera, CA 93637-8720  
(559) 675-7811  
FAX (559) 675-7631  
jhoevertsz2@madera-county.com

Johannes J. Hoevertsz, Road Commissioner

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Robert Mansfield – Planning Department

**FROM:** Jason Chandler – Road Department 

**DATE:** January 3, 2014

**SUBJECT:** **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 2013-026 / PARAMOUNT FARMS**

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The department has reviewed the above referenced project to construct and install an electrical substation and other pertinent components to boost power for future expansion to existing Pistachio Processing plant. This project will have minimal effect upon traffic.

As a condition of approval of this CUP, the applicant shall fulfill all conditions stipulated under CUP 2011-010.



December 26, 2013

Robert Mansfield  
County of Madera  
Planning Department  
2037 W. Cleveland Avenue  
Madera, CA 93637

**Project: CUP #2013-026, Paramount Farms International  
Conditional Use Permit – Firebaugh (042-172-004-000)**

**District CEQA Reference No: 20131046**

Dear Mr. Mansfield:

The San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District (District) has reviewed the project referenced above consisting of a request to allow installation of an electrical substation and overhead high voltage electrical lines, located at Chowchilla Canal Road, in Madera, CA. The District offers the following comments:

1. Based on information provided to the District, project specific emissions of criteria pollutants are not expected to exceed District significance thresholds of 10 tons/year NOX, 10 ton/year ROG, and 15 tons/year PM10. Therefore, the District concludes that project specific criteria pollutant emissions would have no significant adverse impact on air quality.
2. Based on information provided to the District, the proposed project does not meet the definition of a development project. Therefore, the District concludes that the proposed project is not subject to District Rule 9510 (Indirect Source Review).
3. The proposed project may be subject to District Rules and Regulations, including: Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM10 Prohibitions), Rule 4102 (Nuisance), Rule 4601 (Architectural Coatings), and Rule 4641 (Cutback, Slow Cure, and Emulsified Asphalt, Paving and Maintenance Operations). In the event an existing building will be renovated, partially demolished or removed, the project may be subject to District Rule 4002 (National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants). The above list of rules is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. To identify other District rules or regulations that apply to this project or to obtain information about District permit

Seyed Sadredin  
Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer

**Northern Region**  
4800 Enterprise Way  
Modesto, CA 95356-8718  
Tel: (209) 557-6400 FAX: (209) 557-6475

**Central Region (Main Office)**  
1990 E. Gettysburg Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93726-0244  
Tel: (559) 230-6000 FAX: (559) 230-6061

**Southern Region**  
34946 Flyover Court  
Bakersfield, CA 93308-9725  
Tel: 661-392-5500 FAX: 661-392-5585

requirements, the applicant is strongly encouraged to contact the District's Small Business Assistance Office at (559) 230-5888. Current District rules can be found online at: [www.valleyair.org/rules/1ruleslist.htm](http://www.valleyair.org/rules/1ruleslist.htm).

4. The District recommends that a copy of the District's comments be provided to the project proponent.

If you have any questions or require further information, please call Sharla Yang at (559) 230-5934.

Sincerely,

David Warner  
Director of Permit Services

*Sharla Yang*

*yow* Arnaud Marjollet  
Permit Services Manager

DW: sy

Cc: File

NOTE: PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY OR TYPE:

Application(s): CUP #2013-026

Return to: Robert Mansfield, Planning Department

Paramount Farms International

Responding Agency: Caltrans Date: 1/3/2014

Respondent's Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

1. Does your Agency or Department have a recommendation regarding the approval or denial of this project?

Approve  Deny

If your Agency or Department recommends denial of this project, please list the reasons below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. If the project is approved, what conditions of approval are recommended?

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Please identify any existing regulations, standards, or routine processing procedures which would mitigate the potential impacts?

None  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. General Comments - Please attach on additional sheet.

NOTE: PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY OR TYPE:

Application(s): CUP #2013-026

Return to: Robert Mansfield, Planning Department

Paramount Farms International

Responding Agency: Caltrans

Contact Person.: David Padilla

Signature: [Signature]

Telephone No.: 444-2493

Date: 1/3/2014

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

1. Is there sufficient information for you to evaluate the probable environmental impacts of this project?

✓ Yes

\_\_\_\_ No, the following information is needed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What potential impacts will the project result in (e.g. change in traffic volumes, water quality, land use, soils air quality, etc.)? Be as precise as possible and answer only for your area of expertise.

None  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are the potential impacts identified in Question 2, significant enough to warrant the preparation of an EIR?

\_\_\_\_ Yes

✓ No

## Environmental Checklist Form

**Title of Proposal:** CUP #2013-026 Paramount Farms – Substation installation

**Date Checklist Submitted:** January 29, 2014

**Agency Requiring Checklist:** Madera County Planning Department

**Agency Contact:** Robert Mansfield, AICP

**Phone:** (559) 675-7821

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**Description of Initial Study/Requirement**

The Initial Study is a public document used by the decision-making lead agency to determine whether a project may have significant effects on the environment. In the case of the proposed project, the Madera County Planning Department, acting as lead agency, will use the initial study to determine whether the project has a significant effect on the environment. In accordance with CEQA, Guidelines (Section 15063[a]), an environmental impact report (EIR) must be prepared if there is substantial evidence (such as results of the Initial Study) that a project may have significant effect on the environment. This is true regardless of whether the overall effect of the project would be adverse or beneficial. A negative declaration (ND) or mitigated negative declaration (MND) may be prepared if the lead agency determines that the project would have no potentially significant impacts or that revisions to the project, or measures agreed to by the applicant, mitigate the potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.

The initial study considers and evaluates all aspects of the project which are necessary to support the proposal. The complete project description includes the site plan, operational statement, and other supporting materials which are available in the project file at the office of the Madera County Planning Department.

**Description of Project:**

To amend Conditional Use Permit #2011-010 to allow for the installation of an electrical substation and overhead high voltage electrical lines from Chowchilla Canal Road to substation. The electrical substation is to aid the farming operation. PG&E will be providing 115kV transmission voltage service to the substation.

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) has been requested by Paramount Farms to provide 115kV electric transmission voltage service to the new Paramount Farms owned and operated substation. PG&E proposes to install a new 115 kV power line that will be constructed, owned, operated and maintained by PG&E. The new line will tap from the existing Gill Ranch 115 kV along Chowchilla Canal Road and will include approximately 10 poles. The new power line will run west along the farm access road to the new substation and will be approximately 3,200 feet in length. The alignment of the new power line for the majority of the length overbuilt and co-located with an existing distribution line and the new 115 kV power line. The existing electric distribution poles are approximately 34 feet to 39 feet tall out of the ground. The new poles after construction will be approximately 61 feet to 100 feet tall out of the ground.

As part of the construction of the line, temporary disturbance around the poles will be approximately a 50 foot radius. The new line will require approximately 2 pull and tension sites for the installation of the conductors (wires). Pull sites are typically 100 feet by 300 feet areas and are situated in the alignment, or extension of the alignment, of the new line. Standard equipment used in the construction of power lines includes bucket trucks, wire pull and tension equipment, and crew trucks and equipment.

**Project Location:**

The subject property is located on the southwest side of Chowchilla Canal Road, approximately 1.1 miles south of its intersection with Avenue 7 (12888 Avenue 6) Firebaugh.

Power lines associated with the installation of the substation will run along Chowchilla Canal Road in the vicinity of the Paramount Farms parcel.

**Applicant Name and Address:**

13646 Highway 33  
Lost Hills, CA 93249

**General Plan Designation:**

AE (Agricultural Exclusive)

**Zoning Designation:**

ARE-40 (Agricultural, Rural, Exclusive – 40 Acre) District

**Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:**

North, South, East and West: Agricultural

**Other Public Agencies whose approval is required:**

None

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.


- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics               | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Geology /Soils                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials      | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning        | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing     | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic   | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems        | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prior EIR or ND/MND Number

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

January 29, 2014  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



I. AESTHETICS – Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Discussion:**

**(a - b) No Impact.** There are no scenic vistas in the vicinity of this project site. The closest areas that are being considered as scenic highways by the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) are Highways 41 and 49 north of Oakhurst.

There are no scenic resources on or near these parcels that will be damaged as a result of this project.

The surrounding area is predominately agricultural in nature. The site is being developed by Paramount Farms International for the purpose of processing pistachios (hulling, storing and packaging). This is a year-round facility, and the purpose of this particular project is to install a power substation and transmission lines to provide power to the facility. The substation itself will be placed on the parcel that consists of the processing plant, so no new visual impacts related to the substation is expected. The transmission lines and poles being installed related to the substation do not pose significant impacts visually.

**(c) No Impact.** The site is being utilized for an agriculturally oriented service and is surrounded by agriculture. The substation will be on the property where the processing plant is located, and the power transmission lines supplying the substation are common in the area.

The surrounding area is predominately agriculturally oriented (vineyards, orchards and a dairy). The addition of the substation will not impact the visual character of the surrounding area. The transmission lines and poles do not constitute an impact on the visual character of the area.

**(d) Less than Significant Impact.** There is a processing facility going on the property which will have lighting, as it is a 24 hour a day operation especially during the harvest season. The power substation will not generate any more light than that being generated by the processing plant currently (at full build out of the plant). There is the potential of security lighting associated with the substation, which is typical. Standard conditions associated with the Conditional Use Permit require that all new lighting be hooded and directed away from neighboring parcels, so the impact will be less than significant as a result.

A nighttime sky in which stars are readily visible is often considered a valuable scenic/visual resource. In urban areas, views of the nighttime sky are being diminished by "light pollution." Light pollution, as defined by the International dark-Sky Association, is any adverse effect of artificial light, including sky glow, glare, light trespass, light clutter, decreased visibility at night, and energy waste. Two elements of light pollution may affect city residents: sky glow and light trespass. Sky glow is a result of light fixtures that emit a portion of their light directly upward into the sky where light scatters, creating an orange-yellow glow above a city or town. This light can interfere with views of the nighttime sky and can diminish the number of stars that are visible. Light trespass occurs when poorly shielded or poorly aimed fixtures cast light into unwanted areas, such as neighboring property and homes.

Light pollution is a problem most typically associated with urban areas. Lighting is necessary for nighttime viewing and for security purposes. However, excessive lighting or inappropriately designed lighting fixtures can disturb nearby sensitive land uses through indirect illumination. Land uses which are considered "sensitive" to this unwanted light include residences, hospitals, and care homes.

Daytime sources of glare include reflections off of light-colored surfaces, windows, and metal details on cars traveling on nearby roadways. The amount of glare depends on the intensity and direction of sunlight, which is more acute at sunrise and sunset because the angle of the sun is lower during these times.

II. **AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES:** In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
--------------------------------	---	------------------------------	-----------

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| of, forest land (as defined in Public Resource Code section 12220(g)) or timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526) or timberland zoned Timberland Protection (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest land?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**Discussion:**

**(a - e) No Impact.** No conversion of farmland or forest land is proposed as a part of this project. Surrounding properties are agriculturally used and will not be impacted by this project in any way. The facility itself is related to agriculturally oriented services.

While the facility is located on a Williamson Act enrolled parcel, it is not displacing agriculture and is in fact an agriculturally related operation. The power substation going in is in support of that operation. The transmission lines associated with the project will not impact agricultural land as they are typically placed parallel to roadways for ease of access by PG&E.

**General Information**

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965 -- commonly referred to as the Williamson Act -- enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value.

The Department of Conservation oversees the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California's agricultural resources. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status; the best quality land is called Prime Farmland. The maps are updated every two years with the use of a computer mapping system, aerial imagery, public review, and field reconnaissance. The program's definition of land is below:

**PRIME FARMLAND (P):** Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

**FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE (S):** Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

**UNIQUE FARMLAND (U):** Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include nonirrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time

during the four years prior to the mapping date.

**FARMLAND OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE (L):** Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee.

**GRAZING LAND (G):** Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities. The minimum mapping unit for Grazing Land is 40 acres.

**URBAN AND BUILT-UP LAND (D):** Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, institutional, public administrative purposes, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.

**OTHER LAND (X):** Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

III.	<p><b>AIR QUALITY --</b> Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:</p>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Discussion:**

**(a) No Impact.** No impacts have been identified as a result of this project.

**(b) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporation.** During the construction phase of this project, fugitive dust emissions and vehicular emissions from construction related vehicles are expected to occur. These emissions, however, are expected to be for a short duration of time in light of the whole and will only be for the period of construction. These emissions are expected to be generated by construction crews coming and going to the site, supplies being delivered, and the actual construction itself. Most of the emissions will be associated with the transmission line installation, and minimally from the substation construction.

During the lifetime operation of the substation and its associated infrastructure, it will be visited in accordance with PG&E standards for routine maintenance and operational inspections. This is not expected to generate significant amounts of dust emissions or vehicular emissions. The actual operations of the substation and infrastructure are not expected to generate particulate emissions.

**(c) Less than Significant Impact.** Any impacts generated from this project are expected to be minimal if any at all due to the limited time frame of construction and the minimal presence of personnel related to the substation being onsite for maintenance visits.

**(d - e) Less Than Significant Impact.** No significant impacts have been identified as a result of this project. The project will not impact implementation of any air quality plans.

There may be a minor increase in emissions from vehicles during the period in time when the transmission lines and power substation are being constructed and put in to use, but the overall operations will not increase air emissions impacts in the vicinity.

There are no residences, schools or hospitals within the vicinity, and the entire area is sparsely populated in any event. Any odors potentially generated as a result of this project will dissipate.

Sensitive receptors are facilities that "house or attract children, the elderly, people with illnesses, or others who are especially sensitive to the effects of air pollution. Hospitals, schools, convalescent facilities and residential areas are examples of sensitive receptors." (GAMAQI, 2002). There are no significant numbers of residential units in the vicinity; no schools or hospitals are located within the vicinity. With the distances between existing residential units in the area being significant, any emissions that will cause odor will have dissipated.

### Global Climate Change

Climate change is a shift in the "average weather" that a given region experiences. This is measured by changes in temperature, wind patterns, precipitation, and storms. Global climate is the change in the climate of the earth as a whole. It can occur naturally, as in the case of an ice age, or occur as a result of anthropogenic activities. The extent to which anthropogenic activities influence climate change has been the subject of extensive scientific inquiry in the past several decades. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), recognized as the leading research body on the subject, issued its Fourth Assessment Report in February 2007, which asserted that there is "very high confidence" (by IPCC definition a 9 in 10 chance of being correct) that human activities have resulted in a net warming of the planet since 1750.

CEQA requires an agency to engage in forecasting "to the extent that an activity could reasonably be expected under the circumstances. An agency cannot be expected to predict the future course of governmental regulation or exactly what information scientific advances may ultimately reveal" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15144, Office of Planning and Research commentary, citing the California Supreme Court decision in Laurel Heights Improvement Association v. Regents of the

University of California [1988] 47 Cal. 3d 376).

Recent concerns over global warming have created a greater interest in greenhouse gases (GHG) and their contribution to global climate change (GCC). However at this time there are no generally accepted thresholds of significance for determining the impact of GHG emissions from an individual project on GCC. Thus, permitting agencies are in the position of developing policy and guidance to ascertain and mitigate to the extent feasible the effects of GHG, for CEQA purposes, without the normal degree of accepted guidance by case law.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Discussion:**

**(a) Less Than Significant Impact.** While there are species indicated as threatened or endangered

in the quadrangle this project is located in, due to the fact that in large part the surrounding parcels are agriculturally oriented and disturbed, and the parcel itself has previously been disturbed, the chances of any impact are less than significant. The species identified for this quadrangle are noted in the chart below.

A brief description of the threatened and endangered species (marked in the chart with an \* in the chart below) is included here:

Sanford's Arrowhead: This species is known to occur in the Central Valley and delta region of California. It occurs in marshes, ditches, swamps, sloughs, ponds, and slow-moving streams with a silty or muddy bottom.

Western Pond Turtle: This species can be found in a variety of aquatic habitats, including marshes, streams, ponds, and irrigation ditches. They require aquatic vegetation and basking sites; however nesting locations may be found up to 0.5 kilometer from water.

Blunt Nosed Leopard Lizard: This lizard is found in association with other burrowing animals. It prefers burrows in sparsely vegetated areas. It is known to occur in valley and foothill grassland, salt brush scrubland, iodine bush grassland, and Sueda flats communities.

Giant Garter Snake: USFWS lists four habitat requirements for this species: adequate water during the active season, emergent herbaceous wetland vegetation, grassy banks with open areas for basking, and higher elevation uplands for cover and refuge from flooding.

Western yellow-billed cuckoo: The western yellow-billed cuckoo inhabits riparian areas with dense shrubs and a developed canopy. The canopy is often composed of cottonwood and sycamore trees.

Fresno Kangaroo Rat: This species occurs in grasslands and chenopod scrub communities on the San Joaquin Valley floor. It prefers areas with flat, friable soils that stay moist year-round.

San Joaquin Kit Fox: The San Joaquin Kit Fox occurs in various grassland and scrubland communities. It requires loose-textured sandy soils for burrowing and suitable prey base. SJKF's are generally restricted to the San Joaquin Valley.

Swainson's Hawk: These hawks spend summers in the wide-open spaces of the American West. They are the typical nesting buteo of grasslands, but also use sage flats and even swaths of agriculture intermixed with native habitat. Nests are placed in trees, often in the only tree visible for miles

Bank Swallow: Breeding habitat in California is extremely consistent with regard to the microsite. Nesting colonies only occur in vertical banks or bluffs of friable soils suitable for burrowing by these small birds. Banks or bluffs must be at least 1 m tall to have some predator deterrence values, and some source of continual erosion is almost always present. Breeding habitat vegetation is extremely varied because breeding sites are mostly selected for the suitability of the nesting bank.

Nelson's Antelope Squirrel: The San Joaquin antelope squirrel is found in the San Joaquin Valley,

including slopes and ridge tops along the western edge of the valley.

The closest potential riparian habitat(s) to this project is the Chowchilla Canal; however, this project does not include the Canal in any portion of construction or operation.

**(b – f) No Impact.** There are no wetlands on the parcels involved with this project. The Chowchilla Canal is in proximity to the project site, but is not directly or indirectly involved with the site or the proposed actions.

There are no habitats identified on this parcel, so no modifications are expected as a result. The only portion of this project off-site is the installation of power lines that will supply the substation. This line runs adjacent to the Chowchilla Canal Road which runs parallel to the Chowchilla Canal. There are no identified habitats of any kind in this vicinity that will be impacted by these poles going in. While there are candidate species identified in the quadrangle in which this project is located, given the development that has occurred in the area over the years, the chances of any of the listed species being on the parcel are less than likely.

There are no known riparian habitats in the immediate vicinity of the project site. Aside from the canal, there are no known waterways in the area. The operations of this project will not interfere with any habitats off site, either directly or indirectly.

There are no federally protected wetlands on or in the vicinity of this project. There are no streams or bodies of water of which migratory fish or other species that would use bodies of water would be impacted by this project.

No migratory patterns are expected to be impacted as a direct or indirect result of this project for the long term. During construction, there is the potential that some migratory species may avoid the area, but this is considered typical and natural as most species tend to avoid areas where they perceive potential harm. Once construction is completed, the migratory species will return to normal, if not near normal, migratory patterns once they have determined that there is no danger to them. This is an instinctive action found throughout nature.

While the list below shows a significant number of species listed in the quadrangle in which this project is located, this does not necessarily mean that these species are actually located on the project site either in a habitat setting or migrating through. As mentioned, given the development in the immediate area, the chances of disturbing any species is considerably minimal.

Special Status Species include:

- Plants and animals that are legally protected or proposed for protection under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) or Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA);
- Plants and animals defined as endangered or rare under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) §15380;
- Animals designated as species of special concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG);
- Animals listed as “fully protected” in the Fish and Game Code of California (§3511, §4700, §5050 and §5515); and



- Plants listed in the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California.

A review of both the County's and Department of Fish and Game's databases for special status species have identified the following species:

Species	Federal Listing	State Listing	Dept. of Fish and Game Listing	CNPS Listing
Swainson's Hawk*	None	Threatened	None	None
Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo*	Proposed Threatened	Endangered	None	None
Bank Swallow*	None	Threatened	None	None
Western Mastiff Bat	None	None	SSC	None
Nelson's Antelope Squirrel*	None	Threatened	None	None
San Joaquin Pocket Mouse	None	None	None	None
Fresno Kangaroo Rat*	Endangered	Endangered	None	None
San Joaquin Kit Fox*	Endangered	Threatened	None	None
Western Pond Turtle*	None	None	SSC	None
Silvery Legless Lizard	None	None	SSC	None
Blunt Nosed Leopard Lizard*	Endangered	Endangered	FP	None
Giant Garter Snake*	Threatened	Threatened	None	None
Valley Sacaton Grassland	None	None	None	None
Heartscale	None	None	None	1B.2
Lost Hills Crownscale	None	None	None	1B.2
Lesser Saltscale	None	None	None	1B.1
Subtle Orache	None	None	None	1B.2
Recurved Larkspur	None	None	None	1B.2
Sanford's Arrowhead	None	None	None	1B.2

**Mendota Dam Quadrangle**

List 1A: Plants presumed extinct

List 1B: Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and elsewhere.

List 2: Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, but more numerous elsewhere

List 3: Plants which more information is needed – a review list

List 4: Plants of Limited Distributed - a watch list

**Ranking**

0.1 – Seriously threatened in California (high degree/immediacy of threat)

0.2 – Fairly threatened in California (moderate degree/immediacy of threat)

0.3 – Not very threatened in California (low degree/immediacy of threats or no current threats known)

SSC Species of Special Concern

WL Watch List

**General Information**

Effective January 1, 2007, Senate Bill 1535 took effect that has changed de minimis findings procedures. The Senate Bill takes the de minimis findings capabilities out of the Lead Agency hands and puts the process into the hands of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (formally the California Department of Fish and Game). A Notice of Determination filing fee is due each time a NOD is filed at the jurisdictions Clerk’s Office. The authority comes under Senate Bill 1535 (SB 1535) and Department of Fish and Wildlife Code 711.4. Each year the fee is evaluated and has the potential of increasing. For the most up-to-date fees, please refer to: [http://www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon/ceqa/ceqa\\_changes.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon/ceqa/ceqa_changes.html).

The Valley elderberry longhorn beetle was listed as a threatened species in 1980. Use of the elderberry bush by the beetle, a wood borer, is rarely apparent. Frequently, the only exterior evidence of the elderberry’s use by the beetle is an exit hole created by the larva just prior to the pupal stage. According to the USFWWS, the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle habitat is primarily in communities of clustered Elderberry plants located within riparian habitat. The USFWS stated that VELB habitat does not include every Elderberry plant in the Central Valley, such as isolated, individual plants, plants with stems that are less than one inch in basal diameter or plants located in upland habitat.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

pursuant to §15064.5?

- c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?
- d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

**Discussion:**

**(a - d) Less Than Significant Impact.** While the County is known to potentially have historical and archaeological resources, due to the development of the site and the agricultural uses of surrounding properties, the chances of finding any archaeological or paleontological resources are less than likely.

While there are no known paleontological resources in the area, there is still the potential of buried unknown sources. As such, there is the potential of discovering previously unknown paleontological resources.

There are no known human remains located in the vicinity of this project, and there is no proposed construction associated with this project that could potentially uncover previously unknown human resources. The chances, though, are very minimal in that the surrounding area has been developed over the years, and there are no records of any significant finds.

Most of the archaeological survey work in the County has taken place in the foothills and mountains. This does not mean, however, that no sites exist in the western part of the County, but rather that this area has not been as thoroughly studied. There are slightly more than 2,000 recorded archaeological sites in the County, most of which are located in the foothills and mountains. Recorded prehistoric artifacts include village sites, camp sites, bedrock milling stations, pictographs, petroglyphs, rock rings, sacred sites, and resource gathering areas. Madera County also contains a significant number of potentially historic sites, including homesteads and ranches, mining and logging sites and associated features (such as small camps, railroad beds, logging chutes, and trash dumps).

Public Resource Code 5021.1(b) defines a historic resource as “any object building, structure, site, area or place which is historically significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California.” These resources are of such import, that it is codified in CEQA (PRC Section 21000) which prohibits actions that “disrupt, or adversely affect a prehistoric or historic archaeological site or a property of historical or cultural significance to a community or ethnic or social groups; or a paleontological site except as part of a scientific study.”

Archaeological importance is generally, although not exclusively, a measure of the archaeological research value of a site which meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Is associated with an event or person of recognized significance in California or American history or of recognized scientific importance in prehistory.
- Can provide information which is both of demonstrable public interest and useful in addressing scientifically consequential and reasonable archaeological research questions.

- Has a special or particular quality such as oldest, best example, largest, or last surviving example of its kind.
- Is at least 100 years old and possesses substantial stratigraphic integrity (i.e. it is essentially undisturbed and intact).
- Involves important research questions that historic research has shown can be answered only with archaeological methods.

Reference CEQA Guidelines §15064.5 for definitions.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water				

disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

**Discussion:**

**(a i - iii) Less than Significant Impact.** Madera County is divided into two major physiographic and geologic provinces: the Sierra Nevada Range and the Central Valley. The Sierra Nevada physiographic province in the northeastern portion of the county is underlain by metamorphic and igneous rock. It consists mainly of homogenous types of granitic rocks, with several islands of older metamorphic rock. The central and western parts of the county are part of the Central Valley province, underlain by marine and non-marine sedimentary rocks.

The foothill area of the county is essentially a transition zone, containing old alluvial soils that have been dissected by the west-flowing rivers and streams which carry runoff from the Sierra Nevada's.

Seismicity varies greatly between the two major geologic provinces represented in Madera County. The Central valley is an area of relatively low tectonic activity bordered by mountain ranges on either side. The Sierra Nevada's, partly within Madera County, are the result of movement of tectonic plates which resulted in the creation of the mountain range. The Coast Ranges on the west side of the Central Valley are also a result of these forces, and continued movement of the Pacific and North American tectonic plates continues to elevate the ranges. Most of the seismic hazards in Madera County result from movement along faults associated with the creation of these ranges.

There are no active or potentially active faults of major historic significance within Madera County. The County does not lie within any Alquist Priolo Special Studies Zone for surface faulting or fault creep.

However, there are two significant faults within the larger region that have been and will continue to be, the principle sources of potential seismic activity within Madera County.

San Andreas Fault: The San Andreas Fault lies approximately 45 miles west of the county line. The fault has a long history of activity and is thus a concern in determining activity in the area.

Owens Valley Fault Group: The Owens Valley Fault Group is a complex system containing both active and potentially active faults on the eastern base of the Sierra Nevada Range. This group is located approximately 80 miles east of the County line in Inyo County. This system has historically been the source of seismic activity within the County.

The *Draft Environmental Impact Report* for the state prison project near Fairmead identified faults within a 100 mile radius of the project site. Since Fairmead is centrally located along Highway 99 within the county, this information provides a good indicator of the potential seismic activity which might be felt within the County. Fifteen active faults (including the San Andreas and Owens Valley Fault Group) were identified in the *Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation*. Four of the faults lie along the eastern portion of the Sierra Nevada Range, approximately 75 miles to the northeast of Fairmead. These are the Parker Lake, Hartley Springs, Hilton Creek and Mono Valley Faults. The remaining faults are in the western portion of the San Joaquin Valley, as well as within the Coast Range, approximately 47 miles west of Fairmead. Most of the remaining 11 faults are associated with the San Andreas, Calaveras, Hayward and Rinconada Fault Systems which collectively form the tectonic plate boundary of the Central Valley.

In addition, the Clovis Fault, although not having any historic evidence of activity, is considered to be

active within quaternary time (within the past two million years), is considered potentially active. This fault line lies approximately six miles south of the Madera County line in Fresno County. Activity along this fault could potentially generate more seismic activity in Madera County than the San Andreas or Owens Valley fault systems. However, because of the lack of historic activity along the Clovis Fault, there is inadequate evidence for assessing maximum earthquake impacts.

Seismic ground shaking, however, is the primary seismic hazard in Madera County because of the County's seismic setting and its record of historical activity (General Plan Background Element and Program EIR). The project represents no specific threat or hazard from seismic ground shaking, and all new construction will comply with current local and state building codes. Other geologic hazards, such as landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, and liquefaction have not been known to occur within Madera County.

According to the Madera County General Plan Background Report, groundshaking is the primary seismic hazard in Madera County. The valley portion of Madera County is located on alluvium deposits, which tend to experience greater groundshaking intensities than areas located on hard rock. Therefore, structures located in the valley will tend to suffer greater damage from groundshaking than those located in the foothill and mountain areas.

Liquefaction is a process whereby soil is temporarily transformed to a fluid form during intense and prolonged ground shaking. According to the Madera County General Plan Background Report, although there are areas of Madera County where the water table is at 30 feet or less below the surface, soil types in the area are not conducive to liquefaction because they are either too coarse in texture or too high in clay content; the soil types mitigate against the potential for liquefaction.

**(a – iv) Less than Significant Impact.** The parcels are in an area where it is topographically not conducive to landslides. However, any grading may cause the topography to change, even slightly, where erosion could occur where once it did not.

**(b) Less than Significant Impact.** The parcel in which this project is being introduced has been developed for use as an agriculturally related service (pistachio hulling, packaging and shipping). The grading and construction related to this project has changed erosion patterns in the area due to impervious soils and structures. This project has the potential of adding to erosion potential elsewhere on site, but not to significant levels.

**(c - e) No impact.** There are no known impacts that will occur as a direct or indirect result of this project.

VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS - Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions				

of greenhouse gases?

**Discussion:**

**(a) Less Than Significant Impact.** Emission rates from project construction are expected. Daily emissions would vary throughout the construction period depending on the equipment being utilized and duration of use. The overall impact is expected to be minimal.

Operationally, substation circuit breakers contain Sulfur-hexafluoride, a greenhouse gas. The breakers are maintained in accordance with PG&E's maintenance guidelines and x-ray technology is used to inspect internal circuit breaker components so as to ensure there are no chances of leakage. The ongoing maintenance and inspections are expected to minimize any impacts to less than significant, even to no impact.

**(b) No Impact.** There is no anticipated impact as a result of this project.

Implementation of the Climate Change Scoping Plan includes a regulation for Sulfur-hexafluoride reductions in the Electricity Sector that was partially approved in February 2011 with an implementation date of 2012 and reporting starting in June 2012 (California Code of Regulations §95356). The new regulations applies to operation of Sulfur-hexafluoride gas insulated switchgear (California Code of Regulations §95350).

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions: The potential effect of greenhouse gas emission on global climate change is an emerging issue that warrants discussion under CEQA. Unlike the pollutants discussed previously that may have regional and local effects, greenhouse gases have the potential to cause global changes in the environment. In addition, greenhouse gas emissions do not directly produce a localized impact, but may cause an indirect impact if the local climate is adversely changed by its cumulative contribution to a change in global climate. Individual development projects contribute relatively small amounts of greenhouse gases that when added to other greenhouse gas producing activities around the world would result in an increase in these emissions that have led many to conclude is changing the global climate. However, no threshold has been established for what would constitute a cumulatively considerable increase in greenhouse gases for individual development projects. The State of California has taken several actions that help to address potential global climate change impacts.

Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, outlines goals for local agencies to follow in order to bring Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels (a 25% overall reduction) by the year 2020. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) holds the responsibility of monitoring and reducing GHG emissions through regulations, market mechanisms and other actions. A Draft Scoping Plan was adopted by CARB in order to provide guidelines and policy for the State to follow in its steps to reduce GHG. According to CARB, the scoping plan's GHG reduction actions include: direct regulations, alternative compliance mechanisms, monetary and non-monetary incentives, voluntary actions, and market-based mechanisms such as a cap-and-trade system.

Following the adoption of AB 32, the California State Legislature adopted Senate Bill 375, which became the first major bill in the United States that would aim to limit climate change by linking directly to "smart growth" land use principles and transportation. It adds incentives for projects which intend to be in-fill, mixed use, affordable and self-contained developments. SB 375 includes the creation of a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) through the local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in order to create land use patterns which reduce overall emissions and

vehicle miles traveled. Incentives include California Environmental Quality Act streamlining and possible exemptions for projects which fulfill specific criteria.

VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS – Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Discussion:**

**(a) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporation.** The use of hazardous materials



during project construction would be minimal. Hazardous materials associated with construction may include gasoline, diesel fuel, hydraulic oils, equipment coolants, and generated wastes that may include these materials. These materials are considered hazardous because they are flammable and/or contain toxic compounds, such as volatile organic compounds and heavy metals. Waste considered hazardous by the State of California would be transported and disposed of according to applicable federal, state and local regulations. Fueling and routine maintenance of equipment and vehicles would be performed off-site to the greatest extent feasible.

While the application did not specify equipment schematics, it can be safely assumed that the substation will have transformers associated with it. Each transformer has the potential of containing approximately 6,000 gallons of mineral oil for cooling. This mineral oil would not contain polychlorinated biphenyls and thus be non-toxic; however they would have to be disposed of as hazardous waste none-the-less. Other potential hazardous wastes can include batteries (used as back-up to the system) and petroleum hydrocarbon products associated with maintenance vehicles.

Operationally, substation circuit breakers contain Sulfur-hexafluoride, a greenhouse gas. The breakers are maintained in accordance with PG&E's maintenance guidelines and x-ray technology is used to inspect internal circuit breaker components so as to ensure there are no chances of leakage.

**(b) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporation.** Reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions that could involve the release of hazardous materials would include the spill of petroleum hydrocarbons or other hazardous fluids associated with vehicle and equipment operation during construction and maintenance of the proposed project, and spills of mineral oil or battery acid associated with the substation.

**(c) No Impact.** While there is the potential of spills and emissions as a course of emergency situations, there are no schools within  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile from this project site.

**(d) No Impact.** According to the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC), there are no sites on or near this project site that is or are hazardous waste sites.

**(e – f) No Impact.** The project site is not in the vicinity of any known airports or airstrips, nor is it in an Airport/Airspace Overlay District.

**(g) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporation.** During construction of the substation and installation of the power distribution poles, there will be periods of time in which the local road network may be closed to through traffic. This could potentially have an impact to emergency response vehicles and personnel.

During normal operations of the substation, there will be no impact to traffic or circulation unless there is an emergency situation that would impact the substation and closing lanes in the vicinity would be a necessity to protect lives and property.

**(h) Less Than Significant.** The project is not located in an area known for wildfires. However, equipment used during construction could create sparks and cause fires in the agricultural areas that surround the project sites. Other potential fire hazards include worker behavior such as smoking and disposing of cigarettes or parking vehicles on dry vegetation.

Normal operations of the substation and distribution network will not pose significant risk of fire. However, areas around the substation and distribution network will need to be maintained in such a fashion so as to reduce any potential risks.

Any hazardous material because of its quantity, concentration, physical or chemical properties, pose a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety, or the environment the California legislature adopted Article I, Chapter 6.95 of the Health and Safety Code, Sections 25500 to 25520 that requires any business handling or storing a hazardous material or hazardous waste to establish a Business Plan. The information obtained from the completed Business Plans will be provided to emergency response personnel for a better-prepared emergency response due to a release or threatened release of a hazardous material and/or hazardous waste.

Business owners that handle or store a hazardous material or mixtures containing a hazardous material, which has a quantity at any one time during the year, equal to or greater than:

- 1) A total of 55 gallons,
- 2) A total of 500 pounds,
- 3) 200 cubic feet at standard temperature and pressure of compressed gas,
- 4) Any quantity of Acutely Hazardous Material (AHM).

Assembly Bill AB 2286 requires all business and agencies to report their Hazardous Materials Business Plans to the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) information electronically at <http://cers.calepa.ca.gov>

IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY – Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**Discussion:**

**(a - h) No Impact.** There are no impacts associated with this project anticipated as a result of the installation of the substation or power poles.

In light of the whole, given other construction on site, this substation will not significantly alter the course of any rainfall. While impervious surfaces and buildings exist on site and are currently causing a change in drainage patterns on the property, there is no alteration of the course of a stream or river as a result. Through the existing impervious surfaces, this project site could contribute to runoff of storm water from rainfall.

The site is not near any creeks or streams or bodies of water in which runoff could have an impact to water quality. With best management practices during business operations in place, this impact will be insignificant. The closest area is the Chowchilla Canal, but topographically this canal will not be impacted as a result of this project.

**(i) Less than Significant Impact.** The site has been identified as being in Flood Zone "A" which is an area determined to be inundated by 100-year floods with no base flood elevation determined. No new housing structures are planned as a result of this project. No new housing structures are planned.

The flood hazard areas of the County of Madera are subject to periodic inundation which results in loss of life and property, health and safety hazards, disruption of commerce and governmental services, extraordinary public expenditures for flood protection and relief, and impairment of the tax base, all of which adversely affect the public health, safety and general welfare. These flood losses are caused by uses that are inadequately elevated, floodproofed, or protected from flood damage. The cumulative effect of obstruction in areas of special flood hazards which increase flood height and

velocities also contribute to flood loss.

**(j) No Impact.** A seiche is an occasional and sudden oscillation of the water of a lake, bay or estuary producing fluctuations in the water level and caused by wind, earthquakes or changes in barometric pressure. A tsunami is an unusually large sea wave produced by seaquake or undersea volcanic eruption (from the Japanese language, roughly translated as “harbor wave”). According to the California Division of Mines and Geology, there are no active or potentially active faults of major historic significance within Madera County. As this property is not located near any bodies of water that could produce a seiche or tsunami, no impacts are identified.

**General Information**

Groundwater quality contaminants of concern in the Valley Floor include high salinity (total dissolved solids), nitrate, uranium, arsenic, methane gas, iron, manganese, slime production, and dibromochloropropane with the maximum contaminant level exceeded in some areas. Despite the water quality issues noted above, most of the groundwater in the Valley Floor is of suitable quality for irrigation. Groundwater of suitable quality for public consumption has been demonstrated to be present in most of the area at specific depths.

Groundwater quality contaminants of concern in the Foothills and Mountains include manganese, iron, high salinity, hydrogen sulfide gas, uranium, nitrate, arsenic, and methylbutylethylene (MTBE) with the maximum concentration level being exceeded in some areas. Despite these problems, there are substantial amounts of good-quality groundwater in each of the areas evaluated in the Foothills and Mountains. Iron and manganese are commonly removed by treatment. Uranium treatment is being conducted on a well by the Bass Lake Water Company.

X.	LAND USE AND PLANNING – Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Discussion:**

**(a & c) No Impact.** This project will not physically divide an existing community or be an impact on habitat conservation plans.

**(b) Less Than Significant.** The General Plan and Zoning Designation for the parcel on which this

substation is being placed is agricultural in nature. These designations are designed to protect the general welfare of the agricultural community from encroachments of non-related agricultural uses. However, this substation is being installed to accommodate the power needs of the existing pistachio hulling facility; therefore technically this project would not be considered an encroachment.

XI. MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Discussion:**

**(a - b) No Impact.** There are no known minerals in the vicinity of the project site.

XII. NOISE – Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

levels?

- f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

**Discussion:**

**(a - d) Less Than Significant Impact.** Construction activities have the potential of creating noise levels and groundborne vibrations for the duration of construction related activities. The area in which this activity is occurring is largely agricultural in nature and residential use is sparse, thus will be less than significant in impacts.

Part of the substation equipment are transformers, which contains a pure-tone or "hum" component, as well as noise associated with cooling fans and oil pumps that operate periodically. There are no hospitals, residential subdivisions, schools, performance centers or religious congregations (typically defined "sensitive receptors") in the vicinity of this project, so there will be no impact in that regard. Personnel on-site will be scattered throughout the facility, and will have facility structures occasionally in between the substation and where the personnel are located. There will be a less than significant impact as a result taken in light of the whole.

Operation of the power lines will not generate noise. Maintenance of the substation could potentially generate short term noise for the duration of the maintenance activity. This noise will be similar to construction related noise levels and would occur on an as needed basis.

Groundborne vibration is expected during the period of construction of the substation and installation of the transmission poles. This may result from heavy equipment driving on uneven surfaces, tamping the ground surface or drilling activities. These impacts are dependent on soil type and construction equipment utilized as a whole. Project maintenance and operations are not expected to generate groundborne vibrations.

Ambient noise levels are expected to increase only minimally as they relate to the substation operations. There are no ambient noise levels expected as a result of the power lines associated with the project. In light of the whole, and taking in consideration the hulling operations specifically, the increase is not seen as significant.

**(e - f) No Impact.** This project is not within proximity to an airstrip or airport. It is not within an airport/airspace overlay district. There will be no impacts as a result.

**General Discussion**

The Noise Element of the Madera County General Plan (Policy 7.A.5) provides that noise which will be created by new non-transportation noise sources shall be mitigated so as not to exceed the Noise Element noise level standards on lands designated for noise-sensitive uses. However, this policy does not apply to noise levels associated with agricultural operations. All the surrounding properties, while include some residential units, are designated and zoned for agricultural uses. This impact is therefore considered less than significant.

Construction noise typically occurs intermittently and varies depending upon the nature or phase of construction (e.g. demolition/land clearing, grading and excavation, erection). The United States Environmental Protection Agency has found that the average noise levels associated with

construction activities typically range from approximately 76 dBA to 84 dBA Leq, with intermittent individual equipment noise levels ranging from approximately 75 dBA to more than 88 dBA for brief periods.

Short Term Noise

Noise from localized point sources (such as construction sites) typically decreases by approximately 6 dBA with each doubling of distance from source to receptor. Given the noise attenuation rate and assuming no noise shielding from either natural or human-made features (e.g. trees, buildings, fences), outdoor receptors within approximately 400 feet of construction site could experience maximum noise levels of greater than 70 dBA when onsite construction-related noise levels exceed approximately 89 dBA at the project site boundary. Construction activities that occur during the more noise-sensitive eighteen hours could result in increased levels of annoyance and sleep disruption for occupants of nearby existing residential dwellings. As a result, noise-generating construction activities would be considered to have a potentially significant short-term impact. However with implementation of mitigation measures, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Long Term Noise

Mechanical building equipment (e.g. heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, and boilers), associated with the proposed structures, could generate noise levels of approximately 90 dBA at 3 feet from the source. However, such mechanical equipment systems are typically shielded from direct public exposure and usually housed on rooftops, within equipment rooms, or within exterior enclosures.

Landscape maintenance equipment, such as leaf blowers and gasoline powered mowers, could result in intermittent noise levels that range from approximately 80 to 100 dBA at 3 feet, respectively. Based on an equipment noise level of 100 dBA, landscape maintenance equipment (assuming a noise attenuation rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance from the source) may result in exterior noise levels of approximately 75 dBA at 50 feet.

MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE NOISE EXPOSURE FOR  
NON-TRANSPORTATION NOISE SOURCES\*

		Residential	Commercial	Industrial (L)	Industrial (H)	Agricultural
Residential	AM	50	60	55	60	60
	PM	45	55	50	55	55
Commercial	AM	60	60	60	65	60
	PM	55	55	55	60	55
Industrial (L)	AM	55	60	60	65	60
	PM	50	55	55	60	55
Industrial (H)	AM	60	65	65	70	65
	PM	55	60	60	65	60
Agricultural	AM	60	60	60	65	60
	PM	55	55	55	60	55

\*As determined at the property line of the receiving land use. When determining the effectiveness of noise mitigation measures, the standards may be applied on the receptor side of noise barriers at the property line.

AM = 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM

PM = 10:00 PM to 7:00 AM

L = Light

H = Heavy

Note: Each of the noise levels specified above shall be lowered by 5 dB for pure tone noises, noises consisting primarily of speech or music, or for recurring impulsive noises. These noise level standards do not apply to residential units established in conjunction with industrial or commercial uses (e.g. caretaker dwellings).

Sensitive Noise Receptors include residential areas, hospitals, schools, performance spaces, businesses, and religious congregations.

Vibrating objects in contact with the ground radiate energy through the ground. Vibrations from large and/or powerful objects are perceptible by humans and animals. Vibrations can be generated by construction equipment and activities. Vibrations attenuate depending on soil characteristics and distance. Vibration perception threshold: The minimum ground or structure-borne vibrational motion necessary to cause a normal person to be aware of the vibration by such direct means as, but not limited to, sensation by touch or visual observation of moving objects. The perception threshold shall be presumed to be a motion velocity of one-tenth (0.1) inches per second over the range of one to one hundred Hz.

<b>Reaction of People and Damage to Buildings from Continuous Vibration Levels</b>		
<b>Velocity Level, PPV (in/sec)</b>	<b>Human Reaction</b>	<b>Effect on Buildings</b>
0.006 to 0.019	Threshold of perception; possibility of intrusion	Damage of any type unlikely
0.08	Vibration readily perceptible	Recommended upper level of vibration to which ruins and ancient monuments should be subjected
0.10	Continuous vibration begins to annoy people	Virtually no risk of architectural damage to normal buildings
0.20	Vibration annoying to people in buildings	Risk of architectural damage to normal dwellings such as plastered walls or ceilings



0.4 to 0.6	Vibration considered unpleasant by people subjected to continuous vibrations vibration	Architectural damage and possibly minor structural damage
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Source: Whiffen and Leonard 1971

XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING -- Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Discussion:**

**(a - c) No Impact.** The construction and operation of the substation and power lines will not have an impact on housing or population needs for the County or the area specifically.

According to the California Department of Finance, in January of 2012, the County wide population was 152,074 with a total of 49,334 housing units. This works out to an average of 3.33 persons per housing unit. The vacancy rate was 11.84%.

XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain				

acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

- |                             |                          |                          |                                     |                                     |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| i) Fire protection?         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| ii) Police protection?      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| iii) Schools?               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| iv) Parks?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| v) Other public facilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**Discussion:**

**(a - i and ii) Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would not result in significant additional demands on fire protection, would not require additional fire services in the area, and would not impact fire protection and fire suppression objectives. Construction of the power poles needed to provide electrical distribution to the substation could potentially require rerouting of traffic and/or lane closures around the work area for short periods of time.

The Madera County Fire Department exists through a contract between Madera County and the CALFIRE (California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention) and operates six stations for County responses in addition to the state-funded CALFIRE stations for state responsibility areas. Under an "Amador Plan" contract, the County also funds the wintertime staffing of four fire seasonal CALFIRE stations. In addition, there are ten paid-call (volunteer) fire companies that operate from their own stations. The administrative, training, purchasing, warehouse, and other functions of the Department operate through a single management team with County Fire Administration.

The proposed project in and of itself would not result in any additional demands for police protection with the exception of ancillary need for potential events of vandalism and theft of copper wires or related materials.

Crime and emergency response is provided by the Madera County Sherriff's Department. There will be an incidental need for law enforcement in the events of theft and vandalism on the project site.

A Federal Bureau of Investigations 2009 study suggests that there is on average of 2.7 law enforcement officials per 1,000 population for all reporting counties. The number for cities had an average of 1.7 law enforcement officials per 1,000 population.

**(a - iii) No Impact.** No impacts are anticipated as a result of this project as it does not relate to any educational programs, or increase the surrounding population.

Single Family Residences have the potential for adding to school populations. The average per Single Family Residence is:

Grade	Student Generation per Single Family Residence
K – 6	0.425
7 – 8	0.139
9 – 12	0.214

**(a - iv) No Impact.** No impacts are anticipated as a direct, indirect, short or long term impact as a result of this project.

The Madera County General Plan allocates three acres of park available land per 1,000 residents' population.

**(a - v) No Impact.** No impacts identified as a result of this project.

**XV. RECREATION**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Discussion:**

**(a - b) No Impact.** No impacts have been identified to recreational facilities as a result of this project.

The Madera County General Plan allocates three acres of park available land per 1,000 residents' population.

**XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC -- Would the project:**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

and bicycle paths, and mass transit?

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to, level of service standards and travel demand measures or other standards, established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| e) Result in inadequate emergency access?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**Discussion:**

**(a - b) Less than Significant Impact.** In the area around the proposed project, opportunities for bicycles and pedestrians, especially as an alternative to the private automobile, are significantly limited by lack of developed shoulders, sidewalks or pavement width accommodating either mode. The condition is not uncommon in rural areas where distances between origins and destinations are long and the terrain is either rolling or mountainous. In the locations outside urbanized portions of the County, the number of non-recreational pedestrians/cyclists would likely be low, even if additional facilities were provided.

As with most rural areas, Madera County is served by limited alternative transportation modes. Currently, only limited public transportation facilities or routes exist within the area. Volunteer systems such as the driver escort service, as well as the senior bus system, operate for special purpose activities and are administered by the Madera County Action Committee. The rural densities which are prevalent throughout the region have typically precluded successful public transit systems, which require more concentrated populations in order to gain sufficient ridership.

Local circulation is largely deficient with these same State Highways and County Roads composing the only existing network of through streets. Most local streets are dead-end drives, many not conforming to current County improvement standards. Existing traffic, particularly during peak hour and key intersections, already exhibits congestion.

During the period of construction of the substation and related power transmission lines to the project site, it is expected that there will be a considerable amount of construction related vehicles. However, the specific roadway leading to the site is not a major thoroughfare and will not be significantly

impacted. As mitigated, the impact of the road closures and detours will be less than significant.

During operations of the substation, there will be minimal traffic and only when maintenance is required.

Madera County currently uses Level Of Service "D" as the threshold of significance level for roadway and intersection operations. The following charts show the significance of those levels.

Level of Service	Description	Average Control Delay (sec./car)
A	Little or no delay	0 – 10
B	Short traffic delay	>10 – 15
C	Medium traffic delay	> 15 – 25
D	Long traffic delay	> 25 – 35
E	Very long traffic delay	> 35 – 50
F	Excessive traffic delay	> 50

Unsignalized intersections.

Level of Service	Description	Average Control Delay (sec./car)
A	Uncongested operations, all queues clear in single cycle	< 10
B	Very light congestion, an occasional phase is fully utilized	>10 – 20
C	Light congestion; occasional queues on approach	> 20 – 35
D	Significant congestion on critical approaches, but intersection is functional. Vehicles required to wait through more than one cycle during short peaks. No long-standing queues formed.	> 35 – 55
E	Severe congestion with some long-standing queues on critical approaches. Traffic queues may block nearby intersection(s) upstream of critical approach(es)	> 55-80
F	Total breakdown, significant queuing	> 80

Signalized intersections.

Level of service	Freeways	Two-lane rural highway	Multi-lane rural highway	Expressway	Arterial	Collector
A	700	120	470	720	450	300
B	1,100	240	945	840	525	350
C	1,550	395	1,285	960	600	400
D	1,850	675	1,585	1,080	675	450
E	2,000	1,145	1,800	1,200	750	500

Capacity per hour per lane for various highway facilities

Madera County is predicted to experience significant population growth in the coming years (62.27 percent between 2008 and 2030). Accommodating this amount of growth presents a challenge for attaining and maintain air quality standards and for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The increase in population is expected to be accompanied by a similar increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (61.36 percent between 2008 and 2030).

Horizon Year	Total Population (thousands)	Employment (thousands)	Average Weekday VMT (millions)	Total Lane Miles
2010	175	49	5.4	2,157
2011	180	53	5.5	NA
2017	210	63	6.7	NA
2020	225	68	7.3	2,264
2030	281	85	8.8	2,277

Source: MCTC 2007 RTP

The above table displays the predicted increase in population and travel. The increase in the lane miles of roads that will serve the increase in VMT is estimated at 120 miles or 0.94 percent by 2030. This indicates that roadways in Madera County can be expected to become much more crowded than is currently experienced.

Emissions of CO (Carbon Monoxide) are the primarily mobile-source criteria pollutant of local concern. Local mobile-source CO emissions near roadway intersections are a direct function of traffic volume, speed and delay. Carbon monoxide transport is extremely limited; it disperses rapidly with distance from the source under normal meteorological conditions. Under certain meteorological conditions, however, CO concentrations close to congested roadway or intersection may reach unhealthy levels, affecting local sensitive receptors (residents, school children, hospital patients, the elderly, etc.). As a result, the SJVAPCP recommends analysis of CO emissions of at a local rather than regional level. Local CO concentrations at intersections projected to operate at level of service (LOS) D or better do not typically exceed national or state ambient air quality standards. In addition, non-signalized intersections located within areas having relatively low background concentrations do not typically have sufficient traffic volumes to warrant analysis of local CO concentrations.

**(c) No Impact.** As this project is not within an airport/airspace overlay district, or in proximity to any airport or airstrip within the County, no impacts to airspace or air flight will occur as a result.

**(d - e) Less Than Significant Impact.** During the period of construction, it is expected that there will be lane closures and detours to accommodate overall traveler safety. These lane closures and

detours are expected to be temporary for the duration of the construction. Long term operations of the substation and transmission lines will not be an impact in light of the whole.

**(f) No Impact.** No impacts have been identified as a result of this project.

As with most rural areas, Madera County is served by limited alternative transportation modes. Currently, only limited public transportation facilities or routes exist within the area. Volunteer systems such as the driver escort service, as well as the senior bus system, operate for special purpose activities and are administered by the Madera County Action Committee. The rural densities which are prevalent throughout the region have typically precluded successful public transit systems, which require more concentrated populations in order to gain sufficient ridership.

**XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS – Would the project:**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## **Discussion:**

**(a) Less Than Significant.** During construction of the substation and transmission lines, minimal amounts of wastewater would be generated. Wastewater generated would be limited to portable sanitary facilities and would be maintained and/or removed by the portable sanitary waste facility operators.

During operations, no wastewater will be generated from the substation or power lines so no new facilities will be required.

**(b & e) Less Than Significant Impact.** Wastewater generated by the construction phase of this project is limited to that required by portable sanitary facilities in place for the construction workers on the project. This will be a temporary requirement for the duration of the construction phase of the project.

No water or wastewater facilities are directly required for this project.

**(c) No Impact.** As this project is being located on an existing developed parcel, stormwater drainage will utilize existing facilities related to the hulling business.

**(d) Less than Significant Impact.** It is expected that water will be used for dust control during construction phase of the project. This will be of short duration and only during periods of dry weather. Operationally, no new water will be needed.

**(f) Less Than Significant.** There may be scrap material related to the construction of the project that is generated. This will need to be disposed of, but is expected to be minimal in light of the whole.

There is no expected waste material expected during the operations of the substation or power lines.

**(g) No Impact.** Any waste material from the construction phase of this project will be disposed of in accordance with Local, State and Federal Guidelines.

There is no waste generation expected from normal operations.

The project's solid waste will be collected weekly and shipped to the County's landfill at Fairmead.

## **General Discussion**

Madera County has 34 County Service Areas and Maintenance Districts that together operate 30 small water systems and 16 sewer systems. Fourteen of these special districts are located in the Valley Floor, and the remaining 20 special districts are in the Foothills and Mountains. MD-1 Hidden Lakes, Bass Lake (SA-2B and SA-2C) and SA-16 Sumner Hill have surface water treatment plants, with the remaining special districts relying solely on groundwater.

The major wastewater treatment plants in the County are operated in the incorporated cities of Madera and Chowchilla and the community of Oakhurst. These wastewater systems have been recently or are planned to be upgraded, increasing opportunities for use of recycled water. The cities of Madera and Chowchilla have adopted or are in the process of developing Urban Water Management Plans. Most of the irrigation and water districts have individual groundwater



management plans. All of these agencies engage in some form of groundwater recharge and management.

Groundwater provides almost the entire urban and rural water use and about 75 percent of the agricultural water use in the Valley Floor. The remaining water demand is met with surface water. Almost all of the water use in the Foothills and Mountains is from groundwater with only three small water treatment plants relying on surface water from the San Joaquin River and its tributaries.

In areas of higher precipitation (Oakhurst, North Fork, and the topographically higher part of the Coarsegold Area), groundwater recharge is adequate for existing uses. However, some problems have been encountered in parts of these areas due to well interference and groundwater quality issues. In areas of lower precipitation (Raymond-Hensley Lake and the lower part of the Coarsegold area), groundwater recharge is more limited, possibly requiring additional water supply from other sources to support future development.

Madera County is served by a solid waste facility (landfill) in Fairmead. There is a transfer station in North Fork. The Fairmead facility also provides for Household Hazardous Materials collections on Saturdays. The unincorporated portion of the County is served by Red Rock Environmental Group. Above the 1000 foot elevation, residents are served by EMADCO services for solid waste pick-up.

XVIII MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

**Discussion:**

CEQA defines three types of impacts or effects:

- Direct impacts are caused by a project and occur at the same time and place (CEQA §15358(a)(1).
- Indirect or secondary impacts are reasonably foreseeable and are caused by a project but occur at a different time or place. They may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate and related effects on air, water and other natural systems, including ecosystems (CEQA §15358(a)(2).
- Cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts (CEQA §15355(b)). Impacts from individual projects may be considered minor, but considered retroactively with other projects over a period of time, those impacts could be significant, especially where listed or sensitive species are involved.

**(a) Less Than Significant Impact.** Construction of the project would not substantially degrade the quality of the environment or reduce the habitat of fish or wildlife species. There are no wetlands identified, so impacts would not occur. The proposed project would not cause population numbers of any special status species to drop below self-sustaining levels or threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community. The construction will not reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare plant or animal.

**(b) Less Than Significant.** Overall construction of this project will be minimal in light of the whole. Construction of the hulling facility is continuing at this time, so there may be occasional occurrence of impacts being cumulative. However, again, the construction phase for this substation will not be considerable in time, so the impacts will not continue for any length of time.

**(c) No Impact.** The project would not adversely affect human beings either directly or indirectly. Environmental parameters with potential to impact human health would include impacts from changes in air quality and existing hazards and hazardous materials use. Potential impacts from hazards and hazardous materials or air quality, and other environmental resources that could affect human beings, would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of mitigation measures identified in this document.

**Documents/Organizations/Individuals Consulted  
In Preparation of this  
Initial Study**

Madera County General Plan

California Department of Finance

California Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) <http://dtsc.ca.gov/database/index.cfm>

California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS)

California Integrated Waste Management Board

California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Caltrans website [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic\\_highways/index.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm) accessed October 31, 2008

California Department of Fish and Game "California Natural Diversity Database"  
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/>

Madera County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

Madera County Roads Department

Madera County Environmental Health Department

Madera County Department of Engineering and General Services

State of California, Department of Finance, *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2011 and 2012, with 2010 Benchmark*. Sacramento, California, May 2012

MND 2014-02

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January 29, 2014

## MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

MND

RE: CUP #2013-026 Paramount Farms

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

The subject property is located on the southwest side of Chowchilla Canal Road, approximately 1.1 miles south of its intersection with Avenue 7 (12888 Avenue 6) Chowchilla.

To amend Conditional Use Permit #2011-010 to allow for the installation of an electrical substation and overhead high voltage electrical lines from Chowchilla Canal Road to substation. The electrical substation is to aid the farming operation. PG&E will be providing 115kV transmission voltage service to the substation.

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) has been requested by Paramount Farms to provide 115kV electric transmission voltage service to the new Paramount Farms owned and operated substation. PG&E proposes to install a new 115 kV power line that will be constructed, owned, operated and maintained by PG&E. The new line will tap from the existing Gill Ranch 115 kV along Chowchilla Canal Road and will include approximately 10 poles. The new power line will run west along the farm access road to the new substation and will be approximately 3,200 feet in length. The alignment of the new power line for the majority of the length overbuilt and co-located with an existing distribution line and the new 115 kV power line. The existing electric distribution poles are approximately 34 feet to 39 feet tall out of the ground. The new poles after construction will be approximately 61 feet to 100 feet tall out of the ground.

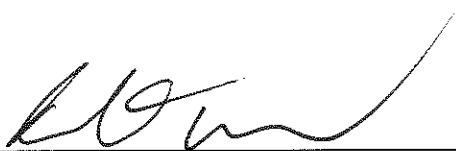
As part of the construction of the line, temporary disturbance around the poles will be approximately a 50 foot radius. The new line will require approximately 2 pull and tension sites for the installation of the conductors (wires). Pull sites are typically 100 feet by 300 feet areas and are situated in the alignment, or extension of the alignment, of the new line. Standard equipment used in the construction of power lines includes bucket trucks, wire pull and tension equipment, and crew trucks and equipment.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

No adverse environmental impact is anticipated from this project. The following mitigation measures are included to avoid any potential impacts.

BASIS FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATION:

1. Any lighting associated with this project will be hooded and directed away from adjoin parcels.
2. PG&E will continuously monitor the equipment associated with this project for Sulfer-hexaflouride leaks and immediately repair any discovered leaks.
3. All driveways and parking stalls associated with this project will be constructed and maintained in such a manner so as to be dust free.
4. PG&E and others associated with the construction of the substation and distribution network will coordinate with local emergency personnel in the event project activities impact points of entry or road networks in the area. PG&E or others associated with this project will contact law enforcement and fire services prior to the closure of roads so as the project will not cause inadequate access.
5. No smoking will be permitted in areas of dry vegetation.
6. Where feasible, there will be no parking of vehicles in areas of dry grass.
7. If project construction related activities (including but not limited to ground disturbing activities) result in the disturbing of subsurface cultural deposits, project related activities shall be halted and a professional archaeologist brought in to determine the culture of the deposits. In addition, if human remains are unearthed, the Madera County Coroner, by law, must be notified immediately.
8. No grading or construction to occur near riparian habitats or potential riparian habitats.



Madera County Environmental Committee

A copy of the negative declaration and all supporting documentation is available for review at the Madera County Planning Department, 2037 West Cleveland Avenue, Madera, California.

DATED: January 29, 2014

FILED:

PROJECT APPROVED:

# MITIGATION MONITORING REPORT

**MND # 2014-002**

No.	Mitigation Measure	Monitoring Phase	Enforcement Agency	Monitoring Agency	Action Indicating Compliance	Verification of Compliance		
						Initials	Date	Remarks
<b>Aesthetics</b>								
1	Any lighting associated with this project will be hooded and directed away from adjoin parcels.	Construction	Planning	Planning				
<b>Agricultural Resources</b>								
<b>Air Quality</b>								
2	All driveways and parking stalls associated with this project will be constructed and maintained in such a manner so as to be dust free	Construction	Planning	Planning				
<b>Biological Resources</b>								
3	No grading or construction to occur near riparian habitats or potential riparian habitats							
<b>Cultural Resources</b>								
4	If project construction related activities (including but not limited to ground disturbing activities) result in the disturbing of subsurface cultural deposits, project related activities shall be halted and a professional archaeologist brought in to determine the culture of the deposits. In addition, if human remains are unearthed, the Madera County Coroner, by law, must be notified immediately	Construction	Planning	Planning				
<b>Geology and Soils</b>								
<b>Hazards and Hazardous Materials</b>								
5	PG&E will continuously monitor the equipment associated with this project for Sulfur-hexafluoride leaks and immediately repair any discovered leaks	Operations	Env. Hlth	Env. Hlth				
<b>Hydrology and Water Quality</b>								

No.	Mitigation Measure	Monitoring Phase	Enforcement Agency	Monitoring Agency	Action Indicating Compliance	Verification of Compliance		
						Initials	Date	Remarks
<b>Land Use and Planning</b>								
<b>Mineral Resources</b>								
<b>Noise</b>								
<b>Population and Housing</b>								
<b>Public Services</b>								
6	No smoking will be permitted in areas of dry vegetation	Construction	Fire	Contractor				
7	Where feasible, there will be no parking of vehicles in areas of dry grass	Construction	Fire	Contractor				
<b>Recreation</b>								
<b>Transportation and Traffic</b>								
8	PG&E and others associated with the construction of the substation and distribution network will coordinate with local emergency personnel in the event project activities impact points of entry or road networks in the area. PG&E or others associated with this project will contact law enforcement and fire services prior to the closure of roads so as the project will not cause inadequate access	Construction	Roads	Roads				
<b>Utilities and Service Systems</b>								