



Agenda Report

19-160

Agenda Date: 6/25/2019

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Action on Approval and Adoption of the City of Santa Clara Electric Department, dba Silicon Valley Power (SVP), Wildfire Mitigation Plan

BACKGROUND

On October 9, 2018 the City of Santa Clara City Council took action on the initial determination of wildfire risk on the remote transmission assets for the City of Santa Clara dba Silicon Valley Power (SVP). This action directed SVP staff to create a formal wildfire mitigation plan for remote transmission assets owned by SVP as required by California Public Utilities Code Section 8387, as amended by Senate Bill 901 in 2018.

SVP's service territory is contiguous with the City of Santa Clara city limits with limited exceptions in neighboring jurisdictions. The City is an urban environment and is surrounded on all sides by urban environments in other cities. Based on historical fire data and local conditions, and in consultation with the fire departments or other entities responsible for controlling fires within SVP's geographical service area where the utility's overhead electrical lines and equipment are located, there is no significant risk of catastrophic wildfire resulting from those electrical lines and equipment. Therefore, this plan focuses on the management of five transmission assets outside of SVP's service territory within the City.

SVP owns remote transmission assets, including, but not limited to, the wires, the poles, and other equipment needed to safely maintain and deliver power generated from generation assets located outside the City limits as more fully described as follows:

- SVP owns and operates the Grizzly Hydroelectric Project (Grizzly), a part of the Bucks Creek Project, FERC No. 619, located in Plumas County, California, as set forth in the Grizzly Development and Mokelumne Settlement Agreement by and between Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) and Santa Clara, dated March 8, 1990, as amended (Grizzly Agreement). Through the project, SVP owns approximately 3.4 miles of a 115 kV transmission line, extending from the Grizzly powerhouse to, and including the end structure and disconnect switch, near Bucks Creek Powerhouse and all other facilities necessary for interconnection with PG&E's transmission system. PG&E maintains the transmission line.
- SVP owns and operates the Black Butte Hydroelectric Project (Black Butte), FERC No. 3190 dated May 5, 1983 and amended June 5, 1987. Through this project, SVP owns a 9.5 mile long 60 kV transmission line interconnecting the project to PG&E's existing 60 kV line near the City of Orland, California. SVP maintains the transmission line.

- SVP owns the Stoney Gorge Hydroelectric Project (Stoney Gorge), FERC No. 3193 dated July 15, 1983. Through this project, SVP owns a one mile-long, 60 kV transmission line connecting the project with PG&E's Elk Creek Substation north of the powerhouse. SVP maintains the transmission line.
- SVP owns the High Line Canal Hydroelectric Project (High Line), FERC No. 7252 dated July 17, 1984. Through this project, SVP owns an approximately 75 foot long 12 kV three phase transmission line that interconnects with existing PG&E lines. SVP maintains the transmission line.
- SVP owns a 4.98 percent ownership interest in a 230 kV double circuit transmission line between Castle Rock Junction and Lakeville Substation in the Geysers, as set forth in the Agreement of Co-tenancy in the Castle Rock Junction-Lakeville 230 kV Transmission Line, dated June 1, 1984. This line supports SVP's share of the Geothermal Generation Project with the Northern California Power Agency (NCPA). PG&E maintains the transmission line.

SVP utilized the 2018 California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Fire Threat map (Attachment 2) and data and historical fire map data to determine the level of wildfire risk. The CPUC fire map has two tiers; Tier 2 fire-threat areas depict areas where there is an elevated risk (including likelihood and potential impact on people and property) from utility associated wildfires; and Tier 3 fire-threat areas depict areas where there is an extreme risk (including likelihood and potential impact on people and property) from utility associated wildfires.

DISCUSSION

The primary goal of this Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) is to minimize the probability that SVP remote transmission assets will be the origin or contributing source for the ignition of a vegetation fire. The attached WMP meets the requirements of Public Utilities Code Section 8387. This plan is intended to supplement, but not replace or duplicate applicable building and fire codes. SVP has evaluated the prudent and cost-effective improvements to its physical assets, operations, and training that can help to meet this objective. SVP has implemented those changes consistent with this evaluation.

The secondary goal of this Wildfire Mitigation Plan is to improve the resiliency of the electric grid for its remote transmission assets. As part of the development of this plan, SVP assesses new industry practices and technologies that will reduce the likelihood of an interruption (frequency) in service and improve the restoration (duration) of service.

The final goal for this Wildfire Mitigation Plan is to measure the effectiveness of specific wildfire mitigation strategies. Where a particular action, program component, or protocol is determined to be unnecessary or ineffective, SVP will assess whether a modification or replacement is merited. This plan will also help determine if more cost-effective measures would produce the same or improved results.

SVP's Wildfire Mitigation Plan Strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Weather Monitoring - Monitored via locally owned weather stations and National Weather Service information and bulletins.

- Design and Construction Standards - Insure design and modifications meet or exceed standards established by CPUC General Order 95.
- Vegetation Management - Insure SVP meets the minimum of industry standards.
- Inspections - Insure SVP meets or exceeds minimum clearances established by CPUC.
- Workforce Training - Conduct training of work crews responsible for operation in wildfire areas.
- Deenergization - SVP will take necessary action on critical days to minimize risks by deenergization
- Restoration of Service - Facilities will only be returned to service after a complete inspection is conducted.
- Community Outreach and Public Awareness - SVP will reach out to local fire agencies related to our wildfire plan.

SVP reached out to Cal Fire's Tehama-Glen Unit for a review of SVP's draft Wildfire Mitigation Plan. The draft Wild Fire Mitigation Plan was reviewed by their Division Chief and Battalion Chief for both areas where SVP has assets and their comments have been incorporated.

The law requires that the WMP be independently reviewed by a qualified independent evaluator and the review be posted on the City's website and presented to Council in a public meeting. The California Public Utilities Commission has a proceeding in process to determine a list of independent evaluators. Because the timing of this process is unclear and the summer fire season is beginning, proactive adoption of the WMP ahead of the independent review is appropriate. Staff will return to Council with the independent evaluator's report and for approval of a modified WMP incorporating the independent evaluator's comments, if necessary. The WMP will also be presented to the City Council on an annual basis thereafter. Updates to the WMP may occur as needed to ensure the safe operation of SVP assets as determined by a qualified independent evaluator, as laws change, and/or as industry best practices evolve.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered does not constitute a "project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(a) as it has no potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment

FISCAL IMPACT

The creation of a SVP Wildfire Mitigation Plan consolidates and formalizes established SVP preventive maintenance procedures and practices. Related expenses have been included in the Generation and Transmission and Distribution programs within Utility Operations Division's operating budgets.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the Finance Department and City Attorney's Office.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall Council Chambers. A complete agenda packet is available on the City's website and in the City Clerk's Office at least 72 hours prior to a Regular Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Meeting. A hard copy of any agenda report may be requested by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (408) 615-2220, email clerk@santaclaraca.gov <<mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov>> or at the public information desk at any City of Santa Clara public library.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve and adopt the 2019 SVP Wildfire Mitigation Plan.
2. Do Not Approve and adopt the 2019 SVP Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Approve and adopt the 2019 Silicon Valley Power Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

Reviewed by: Manuel Pineda, Interim Chief Electric Utility Officer

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Wildfire Mitigation Plan
2. High Fire-Threat District Map