

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Finding of No Significant Impact

California High-Speed Train Project Transmission Line Relocations at Lateral 6.2-13.4

FONSI CGB-EA-2021-01

Prepared by:

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Background

In 2012, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) and the Federal Railroad Administration completed the California High-Speed Train Project Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement: Merced to Fresno Section (2012 EIR/EIS ¹) to analyze and disclose the environmental impacts associated with the portion of the High-Speed Train project from Merced to Fresno. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) served as a cooperating agency, as the alignment crosses federally owned lands administered by Reclamation. In 2017, Reclamation completed a supplemental environmental assessment (2017 EA ²) to further analyze environmental impacts, as required by Department of the Interior regulations, Executive Orders, and Reclamation guidance. Reclamation then signed Finding of No Significant Impact 17-25-MP (2017 FONSI ²), approved the Authority's application for the associated construction package (Construction Package 1), and issued a temporary construction permit to the Authority.

In mid-2020, Reclamation and the Authority identified utility relocation activities that were omitted from the previous construction approvals: the relocation of Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) electric lines at Lateral 6.2-13.4 near Avenue 9 in Madera County. Reclamation now proposes to issue a temporary construction permit to the Authority and enter into a joint use agreement with PG&E to complete the relocations to enable the ongoing construction of the High-Speed Train in Madera County.

Proposed Action

No Action: Under the No Action alternative, Reclamation would not issue the Authority a temporary construction permit nor enter into a joint use agreement with PG&E to relocate electrical transmission lines to accommodate the High-Speed Train project alignment. If the utility lines are not relocated, ongoing construction of Construction Package 1 would be halted.

Proposed Action: Reclamation would issue a temporary construction permit to the Authority and enter into a joint use agreement with PG&E to complete electrical transmission line relocation activities. The Authority, on behalf of PG&E, would relocate approximately 1,000 linear feet of transmission lines, both overhead and underground at Lateral 6.2-13.4. The relocation activities would occur on a maximum of 1 acre of Reclamation-administered federal lands. These relocation efforts will accommodate for the construction of the High-Speed Train in Madera County.

Findings

Based on the analysis and findings in the 2012 EIR/EIS, the 2017 FONSI, and 2017 EA, Reclamation finds that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The previous environmental documents describe

¹ The 2012 EIR/EIS is available at: https://hsr.ca.gov/programs/environmental/eis_eir/final_merced_fresno.aspx

² The 2017 EA and 2017 FONSI are available at: https://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_project_details.php?Project_ID=30161

the existing environmental resources at the location of the Proposed Action and evaluate the effects of the activities to be constructed under the Proposed Action, in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior Regulations (43 CFR Part 46). Reclamation has determined the issuance of the new temporary construction permit and joint use agreement, under the Proposed Action, will not cause any environmental impacts beyond those identified in the previous environmental documents. The 2012 EIR/EIS, 2017 FONSI, and 2017 EA are incorporated by reference. Reclamation considered potential short-term and long-term effects of the Proposed Action, both beneficial and adverse. Following are the reasons why the impacts of the Proposed Action are not significant, with respect to the affected environment and degree of effects of the action (40 CFR 1501.3(b)).

1. The Proposed Action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1501.3(b)(2)(iii)).
2. The Proposed Action will not violate federal, state, tribal, or local law protecting the environment (40 CFR 1501.3(b)(2)(iv)).
3. The Proposed Action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum – July 2, 1993).
4. Implementing the Proposed Action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898 – February 11, 1994).
5. The Proposed Action will not limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007 – May 24, 1996 and 512 DM 3 – June 5, 1998).

Jacobson, Allison M
Fri 3/19/2021 1:25 PM
To:

James, Margaret K

Hi Maggie,

I am still not able to sign the PDF.

Please use this email as my approval and signature of the FONSI.

Thank you,

Allison Jacobson

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