

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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# F 10a

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Staff: Melissa B. Kraemer  
Staff Report: November 18, 2011  
Hearing Date: December 9, 2011  
Commission Action:

## **STAFF REPORT: PERMIT AMENDMENT**

APPLICATION NO.: **1-08-037-A1**

APPLICANT: **Pacific Gas & Electric Company**

PROJECT LOCATION: Along various segments of existing natural gas transmission pipeline right-of-ways located between the City of Arcata and the Van Duzen River south of the community of Alton, in Humboldt County.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT  
ORIGINALLY APPROVED: Multi-year authorization for on-going maintenance of over 6 acres of woody vegetation across four right-of-way segments on an as needed basis using hand tools (e.g., chain saws, loppers, etc.) to clear vegetation to within 6 inches of ground level along Segments 1, 2, and 3, and to prune back woody vegetation and remove one large conifer tree along Segment 4.

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT  
AMENDMENT REQUEST: Multi-year authorization for on-going maintenance of an additional approximately 0.52-acre of woody vegetation across nine additional right-of-way segments (Segments 1A-9A) on an as needed basis using hand tools (e.g., chainsaw and loppers) to clear vegetation to within 6 inches of ground level.

APPROVALS RECEIVED: Caltrans Encroachment Permit No. 0108-6-LM-0221

OTHER APPROVALS NEEDED: Caltrans Encroachment Permit for proposed work along Highway 101.

SUBSTANTIVE FILE  
DOCUMENTS:

City of Arcata & Humboldt County Local Coastal Programs.

**SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval with special conditions of the permit amendment application for the proposed repair and maintenance project on the basis that, as conditioned, the proposed amended development is consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

The original project area includes four different segments (totaling approximately six acres in size) of existing high pressure natural gas transmission pipeline right-of-way located along Highway 101 between the Van Duzen River south of the community of Alton and the City of Arcata, in Humboldt County. CDP No. 1-08-037, approved by the Commission in April of 2009, authorizes on-going maintenance clearing of vegetation along the existing gas lines as needed to (1) allow the lines to be adequately surveyed and tested for leaks, (2) keep the right-of-ways clear of deep rooted vegetation that has the potential to damage the protective “rap” around the gas pipes (which protects the pipes from corrosion), (3) support aerial surveys of the lines, and (4) facilitate a quicker response time and repair of the lines in the event of an emergency. The permit authorizes vegetation management activities to be conducted on an annual basis as needed along the four segments for a period of ten years.

Under the current amendment request, the applicant proposes to conduct on-going maintenance of vegetation across nine additional segments of gas transmission line right-of-ways located between the City of Arcata and the unincorporated community of Fernbridge in Humboldt County. The additional area of proposed vegetation maintenance totals approximately 15,200 linear feet or 0.52-acre. The proposed maintenance work is necessary to allow PG&E to conduct federal- and California Public Utilities Commission-mandated “leak” surveys across gas pipeline areas where dense vegetative cover has grown, precluding access for surveyors. Leak surveys are conducted by one or two personnel who are required to walk directly over the gas line carrying hand-held equipment capable of detecting a gas leak.

Portions of Segments 2A through 9A of the amended project area contain some environmentally sensitive habitat (wetland and/or riparian habitats). To minimize the degree of disturbance to existing vegetation and to ESHA, PG&E proposes an approach similar to that authorized in the original permit intended to minimize disturbance to ESHA vegetation while still allowing foot access along the gas line right-of-way alignments. Under the current amendment request, PG&E proposes to manually cut no more than a 2-ft-wide foot-path through existing vegetation within ESHAs (such riparian and/or wetland areas) directly over each of the proposed gas pipeline segments on an annual or biennial (twice-a-year) basis (as needed). A 4-foot-wide path is proposed to be cut through non-ESHA areas. Cut/trimmed vegetation would be lopped into 6-inch to 24-inch lengths and scattered within the cut path. Only woody and/or brushy vegetation (such as blackberry brambles) that would obstruct a surveyor from walking directly over existing gas pipeline segments would be cut, while canopy areas would be left undisturbed. No ground-

disturbing activities such as excavation or removal of plant roots are proposed. Rather, vegetation would be trimmed to within 6 inches of ground level, and vegetation within the herbaceous layer would be left intact.

Section 30610(d) of the Coastal Act states that no permit is required for repair and maintenance of existing development unless the repair and maintenance involves an extraordinary method of repair and maintenance. Thus, unless the repair and maintenance is extraordinary, no permit is needed to maintain the functionality of the development legally in place.

The proposed amended development involves a risk of substantial adverse environmental impact pursuant to Section 30610 of the Coastal Act and Section II-B-1-e of the 1978 Utility Exclusions because it involves clearing more than 500 square feet (0.01-acre) of brush or other vegetation within 50 feet of an ESHA (riparian and wetland habitats). The proposed vegetation maintenance project therefore requires a coastal development permit under Section 30610 of the Coastal Act, Section II-B-1-e of the 1978 Utility Exclusions, and Section 13252 of the Commission regulations.

In considering a permit application for a repair or maintenance project pursuant to the above-cited authority, the Commission reviews whether the proposed method of repair or maintenance is consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. The Commission's evaluation of such repair and maintenance projects does not extend to an evaluation of the conformity with the Coastal Act of the underlying existing development (in this case the installation of natural gas pipelines).

Staff believes that the various mitigation measures proposed by the applicant as part of its permit amendment application are appropriate to avoid or minimize potential impacts of the vegetation maintenance within environmentally sensitive habitat areas. The applicant proposes to conduct the work with manual tools (e.g., chainsaws and loppers), to trim only a 2-ft-wide path through ESHA without disturbing canopy areas or the herbaceous layer, to remove the vegetation outside of the bird breeding/nesting season (i.e., no maintenance work between March 1st and August 15th annually), and other measures summarized above in Finding IV-B. To ensure that the vegetation maintenance work is compatible with the continuance of riparian and wetland habitat consistent with the requirements of Section 30240, staff recommends imposing Special Condition No. 6. This condition would require PG&E to adhere to certain vegetation maintenance responsibilities for the amended project area, including, in part, as follows (a) vegetation shall only be cleared or trimmed using manual methods (e.g., chainsaws and loppers) to no more than within 6 inches of ground level as needed to allow surveyor foot access atop existing gas pipelines for necessary leak surveys; (b) cut vegetative "spoils" shall be lopped in place and scattered or chipped and scattered within the right-of-way segments; herbaceous vegetation shall not be removed; (c) woody canopy areas shall not be disturbed; (d) no ground-disturbance shall occur in any of the amended project area; and (e) vegetation maintenance shall only occur during the period of August 15 through March 1 to avoid sensitive nesting bird habitat.

Staff believes that the amended development as conditioned is designed to prevent impacts that would significantly degrade the ESHA vegetation and is compatible with the continuance of the

riparian and wetland vegetation. With the limitations on pruning and clearing the vegetation, habitat area and functions will be maintained. As the approved vegetation maintenance activities as conditioned will not result in significant disruption or degradation of the riparian or wetland habitats and will be compatible with the continuance of the habitat areas and functions, the Commission finds that the amended development, as conditioned, is consistent with Section 30240 of the Coastal Act. Staff further believes that the proposed amended development, as conditioned, is consistent with all other applicable Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

**The Motion to adopt the Staff Recommendation is found on Page 6.**

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## **STAFF NOTES**

### **1. Procedural Note**

Section 13166 of the California Code of Regulations states that the Executive Director shall reject an amendment request if: (a) it lessens or avoids the intent of the approved permit; unless (b) the applicant presents newly discovered material information, which he or she could not, with reasonable diligence, have discovered and produced before the permit was granted.

On April 10, 2009 the Commission approved Pacific Gas & Electric Company's Coastal Development Permit Application No. 1-08-037 for on-going maintenance of over 6 acres of woody vegetation across four right-of-way segments on an as needed basis using hand tools (e.g., chain saws, loppers, etc.) to clear vegetation to within 6 inches of ground level along Segments 1, 2, and 3, and to prune back woody vegetation and remove one large conifer tree along Segment 4.

Under the current amendment request, the applicant proposes to conduct similar on-going maintenance of woody vegetation across nine additional segments of gas transmission line right-of-ways (Segments 1A-9A) located between the City of Arcata and the unincorporated community of Fernbridge in Humboldt County. The additional area of proposed vegetation maintenance totals approximately 15,200 linear feet or 0.52-acre. As under the original permit, the proposed maintenance work is necessary to allow PG&E to conduct federal- and California Public Utilities Commission-mandated "leak" surveys across gas pipeline areas where dense vegetative cover has grown, precluding access for surveyors. Leak surveys are conducted by one or two personnel who are required to walk directly over the gas line carrying hand-held equipment capable of detecting a gas leak.

Portions of Segments 2A through 9A of the amended project area contain some environmentally sensitive habitat (wetland and/or riparian habitats). To minimize the degree of disturbance to existing vegetation and to ESHA, PG&E proposes to manually cut a 2-ft-wide (through ESHA areas) to 4-ft-wide (through non-ESHA areas) foot-path through existing woody vegetation directly over each of the proposed gas pipeline segments on an annual or biennial (twice-a-year) basis (as needed). Vegetation would be lopped into 6-inch to 24-inch lengths and scattered within the cut path. Only woody brush that would obstruct a surveyor from walking directly over

existing gas pipeline segments would be cut. Canopy areas would not be disturbed. The amendment request does not propose any ground-disturbing activities such as excavation or removal of plant roots. Rather, woody or brambly vegetation such as blackberries would be trimmed to within 6 inches of ground level. Herbaceous vegetation would be left intact.

Staff believes that by adding new Special Condition No. 6 as described below, the development authorized by the amended permit would be consistent with the Commission's intent in granting the original permit with conditions to allow the applicant to conduct necessary maintenance work on existing gas pipeline right-of-way segments in a manner that minimizes the degree of disturbance to existing vegetation and to ESHA. Therefore, the Executive Director has determined that the proposed amendment as conditioned would not lessen or avoid the intent of the approved permit and has accepted the amendment request for processing.

## **2. Jurisdiction & Standard of Review**

Under the current amendment request, the applicant proposes to conduct on-going maintenance of vegetation across nine additional segments (Segments 1A-9A) of gas transmission line rights-of-ways located between the City of Arcata and Fernbridge in Humboldt County. Portions of these nine additional segments are bisected by the boundary between the retained coastal development permit (CDP) jurisdiction of the Commission and the CDP jurisdiction delegated to Humboldt County by the Commission through the County's certified Local Coastal Program (LCP). Segments 5A, 6A, 9A, and portions of Segments 7A and 8A are located within the retained CDP jurisdiction of the Commission. Segments 1A through 4A and portions of Segment 7A are located within the County's permit jurisdiction. In addition, a portion of Segment 8A is located within the CDP jurisdiction delegated to the City of Arcata by the Commission through the City's certified LCP.

The Coastal Act was amended by Senate Bill 1843 in 2006, effective January 1, 2007. The amendment added Section 30601.3 to the Coastal Act. Section 30601.3 authorizes the Commission to process a consolidated coastal development permit application when requested by the local government and the applicant and approved by the Executive Director for projects that would otherwise require coastal development permits from both the Commission and from a local government with a certified LCP. In this case, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution, and the applicant and the County submitted letters requesting consolidated processing of the CDP amendment application by the Commission for the subject project, which was approved by the Executive Director.

The policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act provide the legal standard of review for a consolidated coastal development permit application submitted pursuant to Section 30601.3. The local government's certified LCP may be used as guidance.

To date, the City of Arcata has not adopted a resolution requesting consolidated processing of the coastal development permit applications by the Commission. Therefore, the City will process a separate coastal development permit application for the portion of the proposed development in Segment 8 within the City's jurisdiction.

### **3. Scope**

This staff report addresses only the coastal resource issues affected by the proposed permit amendment, provides recommended special conditions to reduce and mitigate significant impacts to coastal resources caused by the development as amended in order to achieve consistency with the Coastal Act, and provides findings for conditional approval of the amended development. All other analyses, findings, and conditions related to the originally permitted development, except as specifically affected by the current permit amendment request and addressed herein, remain as stated within the original permit approval adopted by the Commission on April 10, 2009.

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## **I. MOTION, STAFF RECOMMENDATION, & RESOLUTION**

The staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following resolution:

### **Motion:**

*I move that the Commission approve the proposed amendment to Coastal Development Permit No. 1-08-037 pursuant to the staff recommendation*

### **Staff Recommendation of Approval:**

Staff recommends a **YES** vote. Passage of this motion will result in approval of the permit amendment as conditioned and adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

### **Resolution to Approve Permit:**

The Commission hereby approves the proposed permit amendment and adopts the findings set forth below, subject to the conditions below, on the grounds that the development with the proposed amendment, as conditioned, will be in conformity with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. Approval of the permit complies with the California Environmental Quality Act because all feasible mitigation measures and alternatives have been incorporated to substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.

## **II. STANDARD CONDITIONS:**                      See Appendix A.

## **III. SPECIAL CONDITIONS:**

**Note:** The original permit (CDP No. 1-08-037) contains five special conditions which are reimposed as conditions of CDP Amendment No. 1-08-037-A1 without any changes and remain in full force and effect. Special Condition Nos. 6-9 are additional new special conditions that apply to the on-going maintenance of vegetation and related development

**within the nine additional segments (Segments 1A-9A) of gas transmission line rights-of-ways approved under CDP Amendment No. 1-08-037-A1.**

**Special Conditions of the original permit that apply to the on-going maintenance of vegetation and related development within the four original segments (Segments 1-4) of gas transmission line rights-of-ways**

**1. Final Nesting Bird Protection Program**

**A. PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF ANY VEGETATION MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS AFTER APRIL 10, 2009**, the permittee shall submit, for the review and approval of the Executive Director, a final Nesting Bird Protection Program, prepared by a qualified biologist, for conducting seasonal surveys for bird nesting and roosting habitat in Segments 1 and 4 of the project area and protecting such habitat from project impacts. The protection program shall, at a minimum, include the following:

- 1) Provisions for surveying for the presence of active nesting and/or roosting habitat, by a qualified biologist, the areas proposed for vegetation maintenance during the nesting season (March 1 through August 15) along Segments 1 and 4 each nesting season that vegetation maintenance is proposed prior to the commencement of that season's vegetation maintenance work during the length of the development authorized by this permit;
- 2) Provisions for avoiding any bird nesting and/or roosting trees located in areas of potential impact; and
- 3) Provisions for submission of the surveys of nesting and roosting habitat required above for the review and approval of the Executive Director prior to the commencement of that season's vegetation maintenance work that includes a map that locates any sensitive habitat identified by the survey, and a narrative that describes sensitive avoidance measures proposed;

**B.** The permittee shall undertake development in accordance with the approved final nesting bird protection program and the approved season surveys. Any proposed changes to the approved final nesting bird protection program and the approved season surveys shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final nesting bird protection program and the approved season surveys shall occur without an amendment to Coastal Development Permit No. 1-08-037, unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is legally required.

**2. Vegetation Maintenance Responsibilities**

The permittee shall comply with the following vegetation maintenance-related responsibilities:

- A.** Vegetation maintenance activities along Segment 1 north of the Van Duzen River along the west shoulder of Highway 101 shall be limited to a 445-foot-long by 8-foot-wide swath centered on the gas pipeline and shall be limited to (i) trimming non-woody vegetation with hand-held tools, (ii) cutting down with chainsaws woody vegetation with stems or trunks located within the 8-foot-wide swath to within 6 inches of ground level, (iii) trimming with chainsaws or other hand held tools the portions of branches of

other woody vegetation with stems or trunks located outside of the 8-foot-wide swath that overhang the 8-foot-wide swath and are below 6 feet above ground level, and (iv) hauling plant remains off-site for composting or disposal at an authorized facility or scattering or chipping and scattering the plant remains within the PG&E right-of-way;

- B. Vegetation maintenance activities along Segment 2 north of the Highway 101/36 interchange along the eastern right-of-way of Highway 101 shall be limited to a 2,000-foot-long by 40-foot-wide swath along the gas pipeline and shall be limited to (i) trimming non-woody vegetation with hand held tools, (ii) cutting down with chainsaws woody vegetation with stems or trunks located within the 40-foot-wide swath to within 6 inches of ground level, and (iii) hauling plant remains off-site for composting or disposal at an authorized facility or scattering or chipping and scattering the plant remains within the PG&E right-of-way;
- C. Vegetation maintenance activities along Segment 3 between the Fernbridge & Palmer Road exits along the western right-of-way of Highway 101 shall be limited to a 4,000-foot-long by 50-foot-wide swath along the gas pipeline and shall be limited to (i) trimming non-woody vegetation with hand held tools, (ii) cutting down with chainsaws woody vegetation with stems or trunks located within the 50-foot-wide swath to within 6 inches of ground level, and (iii) hauling plant remains off-site for composting or disposal at an authorized facility or scattering or chipping and scattering the plant remains within the PG&E right-of-way;
- D. Vegetation maintenance activities along Segment 4 located along the west shoulder of the South G Street on-ramp to Highway 101 in Arcata shall be limited to a 560-foot-long by 10-foot-wide swath along the northeast side of the centerline of the gas pipeline and shall be limited to (i) trimming with hand tools non-woody vegetation the minimum amount necessary for pedestrian access to the gas pipeline for necessary repair and maintenance purposes, (ii) trimming with chainsaws or other hand held tools the portions of branches of other woody vegetation that are within or overhang the 10-foot-wide swath and are below 6 feet above ground level the minimum amount necessary for pedestrian access to the gas pipeline for necessary repair and maintenance purposes, (iii) completely removing one large conifer tree growing over the gas pipeline, and (iv) hauling all plant remains off-site for composting or disposal at an authorized facility;
- E. No herbicides shall be used within any portion of the project area; and
- F. Maintenance protocols and project activities shall conform to all provisions specified in Special Conditions Nos. 1 through 4 of Coastal Development Permit No. 1-08-037.

### **3. Length of Development Authorization**

Development authorized by this permit is valid for five (5) years from the date of Commission approval (until April 10, 2014). One request for an additional five-year period of development authorization may be accepted, reviewed, and approved by the Executive Director for a maximum total of ten (10) years of development authorization (until April 10, 2019), provided that the request would not substantively alter the project description and/or potentially require modifications of conditions due to new information or technology or other changed



circumstances. The request for an additional five-year period of development authorization shall be made prior to April 10, 2014. If the request for an additional five-year period would substantively alter the project description and/or potentially require modifications of conditions due to new information or technology or other changed circumstances, an amendment to this permit will be necessary. All vegetation maintenance operations proposed after April 10, 2019, or after 2014 if no additional five-year period of authorization has been granted by the Executive Director or amendment has been obtained, shall require a new coastal development permit.

#### **4. Permit Expiration & Condition Compliance**

Because some of the proposed development has already commenced, **this** coastal development permit shall be deemed issued upon the Commission's approval and will not expire. Failure to comply with the special conditions of this permit may result in the institution of an action to enforce those conditions under the provisions of Chapter 9 of the Coastal Act.

#### **5. State Lands Commission Review**

**PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF ANY VEGETATION MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS AFTER APRIL 10, 2009**, the permittee shall submit to the Executive Director, a written determination from the State Lands Commission that:

- A. No State lands are involved in the development; or
- B. State lands are involved in the development and all permits required by the State Lands Commission have been obtained; or
- C. State lands may be involved in the development, but pending a final determination an agreement has been made with the State Lands Commission for the project to proceed without prejudice to that determination.

**Special Conditions added by CDP Amendment No. 1-08-037-A1 that apply to the on-going maintenance of vegetation and related development within the nine additional segments (Segments 1A-9A) of gas transmission line rights-of-ways approved under the amendment.**

#### **6. Vegetation Maintenance Responsibilities**

**The permittee shall comply with the following vegetation maintenance-related responsibilities:**

- A. Vegetation maintenance activities along Segments 1A through 9A shall be limited to the lengths, widths, and methods specified in the application, as summarized below and in Table 2 and Exhibit No. X of the staff report for the permit amendment dated November 18, 2011:**
  - 1. Segment 1A (north of Eel River near Fernbridge, both north and south of Hwy 101): 840-ft-long by 4-ft-wide;**
  - 2. Segment 2A (immediately east of Loleta and also adjacent to both sides of Hwy 101 east of Loleta): 700-ft-long by 2-ft-wide;**

3. Segment 3A (College of the Redwoods and south to Tompkins Hill Road): 750-ft-long by 2-ft-wide;
4. Segment 4A (between Humboldt Hill Road and South Broadway): 600-ft-long by 2-ft-wide (approx. half of length requires trimming);
5. Segment 5A (adjacent to Ryan Slough north of Myrtle Avenue): 1,500-ft-long by 2-ft-wide (trimming may include patches of cattail);
6. Segment 6A (south of Indianola Cutoff, east of Hwy 101 between Arcata and Eureka): 600-ft-long by 2-ft-wide (trimming may include patches of cattail);
7. Segment 7A (south of Bayside Cutoff, east of Hwy 101 between Arcata and Eureka): 1,200-ft-long by 2-ft-wide (approx. 2/3 of length requires trimming);
8. Segment 8A (south of Hwy 255 along the railroad corridor and through the Arcata Marsh, south to G Street in Arcata): ~3,500-ft-long by 2-ft-wide (trimming may include patches of cattail); and
9. Segment 9A (north of Hwy 255, including across Janes Creek): 300-ft-long by 2-ft-wide.

Vegetation within Segments 1A-9A shall only be cleared or trimmed using manual methods (e.g., chainsaws and loppers) to no more than within 6 inches of ground level as needed to allow surveyor foot access atop existing gas pipelines for necessary leak surveys. Cut vegetative "spoils" shall lopped in place and scattered or chipped and scattered within the right-of-way segments. Herbaceous vegetation shall not be removed (except for patches of cattail, as indicated above), woody canopy areas shall not be disturbed, and no ground-disturbance shall occur in any of the amended project area. Vegetation maintenance shall only occur during the period of August 15 through March 1 annually to avoid sensitive nesting bird habitat.

B. No herbicides shall be used within any portion of the project area; and

C. Maintenance protocols and project activities shall conform to all provisions specified in Special Conditions Nos. 6 through \_\_\_\_ of Coastal Development Permit Amendment No. 1-08-037-A1.

## 7. Length of Development Authorization

Development authorized by this permit, as amended, is valid for five (5) years from the date of Commission approval of CDP No. 1-08-037 (until April 10, 2014). One request for an additional five-year period of development authorization may be accepted, reviewed, and approved by the Executive Director for a maximum total of ten (10) years of development authorization (until April 10, 2019), provided that the request would not substantively alter the project description and/or potentially require modifications of conditions due to new information or technology or other changed circumstances. The request for an additional five-year period of development authorization shall be made prior

to April 10, 2014. If the request for an additional five-year period would substantively alter the project description and/or potentially require modifications of conditions due to new information or technology or other changed circumstances, an amendment to this permit will be necessary. All vegetation maintenance operations proposed after April 10, 2019, or after 2014 if no additional five-year period of authorization has been granted by the Executive Director or amendment has been obtained, shall require a new coastal development permit.

**8. State Lands Commission Review**

PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AMENDMENT NO. 1-08-037-A1, the applicant shall submit to the Executive Director, a written determination from the State Lands Commission that:

- A. No State lands are involved in the development within the nine additional segments (Segments 1A-9A) of gas transmission line rights-of-ways authorized by CDP Amendment No. 1-08-037-A1; or
- B. State lands are involved in the development within the nine additional segments (Segments 1A-9A) of gas transmission line rights-of-ways authorized by CDP Amendment No. 1-08-037-A1 and all permits required by the State Lands Commission have been obtained; or
- C. State lands may be involved in the development within the nine additional segments (Segments 1A-9A) of gas transmission line rights-of-ways authorized by CDP Amendment No. 1-08-037-A1, but pending a final determination an agreement has been made with the State Lands Commission for the project to proceed without prejudice to that determination.

**9. Caltrans Encroachment Permit**

PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AMENDMENT NO. 1-08-037-A1, the applicant shall provide to the Executive Director a copy of an encroachment permit issued by Caltrans for the proposed development within the nine additional segments (Segments 1A-9A) of gas transmission line rights-of-ways authorized by CDP Amendment No. 1-08-037-A1, or evidence that no permit is required. The applicant shall inform the Executive Director of any changes to the project required by Caltrans. Such changes shall not be incorporated into the project until the applicant obtains a further Commission amendment to this coastal development permit, unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is legally required.

**IV. FINDINGS & DECLARATIONS**

The Commission hereby finds and declares as follows:

**A. Description of Development Approved Under CDP No. 1-08-037**

The original coastal development permit approved in 2009 (CDP No. 1-08-037) authorized on-going maintenance clearing of approximately six acres of vegetation along four segments of existing gas lines as needed to (1) allow the lines to be adequately surveyed and tested for leaks, (2) keep the right-of-ways clear of deep rooted vegetation that has the potential to damage the protective “rap” around the gas pipes (which protects the pipes from corrosion), (3) support aerial surveys of the lines, and (4) facilitate a quicker response time and repair of the lines in the event of an emergency. Areas authorized for woody vegetation maintenance in each of the four segments are summarized in Table 1 below. The gas line right-of-way (ROW) widths of each of the four project area segments are somewhat wider than the width of the actual corridors where vegetation management activities would occur.

As part of its on-going maintenance, CDP No. 1-08-037 authorizes PG&E to clear woody vegetation (trees, shrubs, and brambles) manually with chainsaws along Segments 2 and 3 and a portion of Segment 1 to within 6 inches of ground level, lop it in place, and scatter or chip and scatter the “spoils” within the right-of-ways. Along Segment 4, which is adjacent to an intermittent watercourse, PG&E is authorized to manually prune back vegetation (mostly willow branches) growing along the eastern side of the right-of-way within 10-feet of the gas line centerline. Pruned branches then are fed through a chipper, loaded onto a truck, and hauled away from the site. Additionally, one large conifer tree growing over the gas line was authorized for removal and hauling off-site for disposal. Along Segment 1, which contains riparian habitat connected to the Van Duzen River riparian complex, PG&E is authorized to remove the understory Himalayan blackberries and other non-native vegetation within a 10-ft wide right-of-way swath (five feet to each side of the gas line) and to limit native woody vegetation (trees/shrubs) removal to a distance of 4 feet from the gas pipeline centerline. The permit requires that PG&E leave intact (except for trimming to allow foot passage) native woody vegetation located within the right-of-way that is further than 4 feet from the centerline. This approach is intended to minimize the number of tree saplings that are removed yet still allow foot access along the alignment.

Additionally, CDP No. 1-08-037 authorized after-the-fact the clearing of approximately 3.7 acres of vegetation (primarily blackberry, poison oak, and Pampas grass) in Segment 3 and 0.07-acre of vegetation (primarily blackberry and poison oak) in Segment 1 which was performed in 2007 without the benefit of a coastal development permit.

The work authorized under CDP No. 1-08-037 is summarized in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Gas pipeline right-of-way vegetation maintenance activities authorized under CDP No. 1-08-037.

<b>Segment No. &amp; Gas Line (G/L) ID</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Gas Line Right-of-way Width</b>	<b>Area Proposed for Clearing/Trimming</b>	<b>Proposed Vegetation Maintenance Methods</b>
<b>Segment 1</b> G/L Rio Dell DFM	north of Van Duzen River along west shoulder of Hwy 101	15 ft	445-ft-long by 10-ft-wide	clear woody vegetation (trees, shrubs, and brambles) manually with chainsaws to within 6 inches of ground level, lop it in place, and

<b>Segment No. &amp; Gas Line (G/L) ID</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Gas Line Right-of-way Width</b>	<b>Area Proposed for Clearing/Trimming</b>	<b>Proposed Vegetation Maintenance Methods</b>
				scatter or chip and scatter the “spoils” within the right-of-ways; leave woody native vegetation beyond 4 feet on either side of the gas line centerline
<b>Segment 2</b> G/L 177	north of the Hwy 36/Hwy 101 intersection along the eastern right of way of Hwy 101	50 ft	2,000-ft-long by 40-ft-wide	clear woody vegetation manually with chainsaws to within 6 inches of ground level, lop it in place, and scatter or chip and scatter the “spoils” within the right-of-ways
<b>Segment 3</b> G/L 177	between the Fernbridge & Palmer Road exits along the western right of way of Hwy 101	50 ft	4,000-ft-long by 50-ft-wide	
<b>Segment 4</b> G/L 137B	along the west shoulder of the G Street on-ramp to Hwy 101 in Arcata	20 ft	560-ft-long by 10-ft-wide	manually prune woody vegetation growing along the eastern side of the right-of-way within 10-feet of the gas line centerline, completely remove one large conifer tree growing over the gas line, and chip and haul all spoils off site for disposal.

#### **B. Description of Development Proposed Under CDP No. 1-08-037-A1**

Under the current amendment request, the applicant proposes to conduct on-going maintenance of woody vegetation across nine additional segments of gas transmission line right-of-ways located between the City of Arcata and the unincorporated community of Fernbridge in Humboldt County (Exhibit Nos. 1 & 2). The additional area of proposed vegetation maintenance totals approximately 15,200 linear feet or 0.52-acre (Exhibit No. 3). The proposed maintenance work is necessary to allow PG&E to conduct federal- and California Public Utilities Commission-mandated “leak” surveys across gas pipeline areas where dense vegetative cover has grown, precluding access for surveyors. Leak surveys are conducted by one or two personnel who are required to walk directly over the gas line carrying hand-held equipment capable of detecting a gas leak.

Portions of Segments 2A through 9A of the amended project area contain some environmentally sensitive habitat (wetland and/or riparian habitats) (Exhibit No. 4). To minimize the degree of disturbance to existing vegetation and to ESHA, PG&E proposes an approach similar to that

authorized in the original permit intended to minimize disturbance to ESHA vegetation while still allowing foot access along the gas line right-of-way alignments. Under the current amendment request, PG&E proposes to manually cut no more than a 2-ft-wide foot-path through existing vegetation within ESHAs (such riparian and/or wetland areas) directly over each of the proposed gas pipeline segments on an annual or biennial (twice-a-year) basis (as needed). A 4-foot-wide path is proposed to be cut through non-ESHA areas. Cut/trimmed vegetation would be lopped into 6-inch to 24-inch lengths and scattered within the cut path. Only woody and/or brushy vegetation (such as blackberry brambles) that would obstruct a surveyor from walking directly over existing gas pipeline segments would be cut, while canopy areas would be left undisturbed. No ground-disturbing activities such as excavation or removal of plant roots are proposed. Rather, vegetation would be trimmed to within 6 inches of ground level, and vegetation within the herbaceous layer would be left intact. All vegetation removal would occur between August 15<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup> only to avoid disturbing breeding bird activity. No heavy equipment or herbicides are proposed to be used.

The work proposed under CDP No. 1-08-037-A1 is summarized in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Gas pipeline right-of-way vegetation maintenance activities proposed under CDP No. 1-08-037-A1.

Segment No. & Gas Line (G/L) ID	Location	Gas Line Right-of-way Width	Area Proposed for Clearing/Trimming	Proposed Vegetation Maintenance Methods
<b>Segment 1A</b> G/L 13010-01 (Fernbridge DFM)	North of Eel River near Fernbridge, both north and south of Hwy 101	10 ft	840-ft-long by 4-ft-wide	The applicant proposes to manually clear and/or trim woody and/or brambly vegetation with chainsaws and/or loppers to within 6 inches of ground level as needed to allow surveyor foot access directly atop existing gas pipelines for mandated annual leak surveys. Cut vegetative "spoils" would be lopped in place and scattered or chipped and scattered within the right-of-way segments. Herbaceous vegetation would not be removed (except where noted in column to left), woody canopy areas would not be
<b>Segment 2A</b> G/L 1311-01 (Loleta DFM)	Immediately east of Loleta and also adjacent to both sides of Hwy 101 east of Loleta	10 ft	700-ft-long by 2-ft-wide	
<b>Segment 3A</b> G/L 177, 126A, 126B	~600 feet of G/L 177 is located on the campus of College of the Redwoods; ~150 linear ft of G/L is located ~0.5-mile south of the campus along Tompkins Hill Road	G/L 177 = 50 ft G/L 126A = 15 ft G/L 126B = 10 ft	750-ft-long by 2-ft-wide	
<b>Segment 4A</b> G/L 189	Between Humboldt Hill Road and South Broadway, within the electric line corridor that connects to the Power Plant	20 ft	600-ft-long by 2-ft-wide (approx. half of length requires trimming)	
<b>Segment 5A</b> G/L 137B	Adjacent to Ryan Slough north of Myrtle Avenue	20 ft	1,500-ft-long by 2-ft-wide (trimming may include patches of cattail)	

Segment No. & Gas Line (G/L) ID	Location	Gas Line Right-of-way Width	Area Proposed for Clearing/Trimming	Proposed Vegetation Maintenance Methods
<b>Segment 6A</b> G/L 137B	South of Indianola Cutoff, east of Hwy 101 between Arcata and Eureka	20 ft	600-ft-long by 2-ft-wide (trimming may include patches of cattail)	disturbed, and no ground-disturbance is proposed in any of the amended project area. No herbicides would be used in any of the vegetation maintenance areas. Vegetation maintenance would occur only during the period of August 15 through March 1 to avoid the potential for disturbance of sensitive nesting bird habitat.
<b>Segment 7A</b> G/L 137B	South of Bayside Cutoff, east of Hwy 101 between Arcata and Eureka	20 ft	1,200-ft-long by 2-ft-wide (approx. 2/3 of length requires trimming)	
<b>Segment 8A</b> G/L 137B	South of Hwy 255 along the railroad corridor and through the Arcata Marsh, south to G Street in Arcata	20 ft	~3,500-ft-long by 2-ft-wide (trimming may include patches of cattail)	
<b>Segment 9A</b> G/L 137D	North of Hwy 255, including across Janes Creek	20 ft	300-ft-long by 2-ft-wide	

Other resource protection measures proposed in the amendment application include the following:

- The Department of Fish and Game would be consulted for gasline segments that cross creeks and streams;
- All maintenance vehicles would be confined to existing access roads or previously disturbed areas such as road-side pullouts;
- Refueling of equipment would occur 200 feet or more away from wetland or riparian habitats;
- Vegetation maintenance operations would be supervised by persons familiar with the right-of-way location and sensitive habitats that require avoidance; and
- For the Arcata Marsh segment, a botanist familiar with the local flora would be present on site during clearing activities due to the close proximity of wetland and salt marsh habitats to the ROW.

### **C. Existing Conditions / Environmental Setting**

The proposed project is located along existing high pressure natural gas transmission pipeline right-of-ways along nine segments totaling approximately 15, 250 linear feet between the City of Arcata and the unincorporated community of Fernbridge, in Humboldt County. Existing conditions in each of the segments is summarized below and in Exhibit No. 4.

**Table 3.** Summary of existing conditions in each gas pipeline right-of-way vegetation maintenance area proposed under CDP No. 1-08-037-A1.

Segment No. & Gas Line (G/L) ID	Location	Area Proposed for Clearing/Trimming	Existing Conditions / Environmental Setting
<b>Segment 1A</b> G/L 13010-01 (Fernbridge DFM)	North of Eel River near Fernbridge, both north and south of Hwy 101	840-ft-long by 4-ft-wide	A portion of this proposed maintenance segment traverses a wooded hillside dominated by native plants such as red alder, willows, twinberry, and the nonnative invasive Spanish heath ( <i>Erica lusitanica</i> ). Approximately 360 linear feet of the segment is dominated by Spanish heath
<b>Segment 2A</b> G/L 1311-01 (Loleta DFM)	Immediately east of Loleta and also adjacent to both sides of Hwy 101 east of Loleta	700-ft-long by 2-ft-wide	A portion of this proposed maintenance segment is dominated by the invasive Himalayan blackberry ( <i>Rubus discolor</i> ). A portion of it consists of wetland creek habitat and open grassland (lacking woody vegetation requiring maintenance). Riparian forest dominated by native plants such as willow, alder, cascara, spruce, blackberry, huckleberry, and salmonberry is located near the highway.
<b>Segment 3A</b> G/L 177, 126A, 126B	~600 feet of G/L 177 is located on the campus of College of the Redwoods; ~150 linear ft of G/L is located ~0.5-mile south of the campus along Tompkins Hill Road	750-ft-long by 2-ft-wide	Approximately 50 feet of this segment runs through a wetland-riparian area dominated by willow, elderberry, nettle, and horsetail. An understory "tunnel" (2-ft-wide) is proposed to be trimmed through the vegetation in this 50-ft stretch. The remainder of this segment passes through "ruderal vegetation" between the College of the Redwoods parking lot and Tompkins Hill Road.
<b>Segment 4A</b> G/L 189	Between Humboldt Hill Road and South Broadway, within the electric line corridor that connects to the Humboldt Bay Power Plant	600-ft-long by 2-ft-wide	This proposed maintenance segment passes through a wetland marsh dominated by cattails, sedges, and rushes, and a dense stand of coastal scrub vegetation dominated by California blackberry, Himalayan blackberry, and willow. Only blackberries would need to be cleared/trimmed through this area, and no clearing is proposed through the marsh habitat.
<b>Segment 5A</b> G/L 137B	Adjacent to Ryan Slough north of Myrtle Avenue	1,500-ft-long by 2-ft-wide	This proposed maintenance segment consists of wetland-riparian, north coastal scrub and coastal salt marsh habitats. Some areas are dominated by rushes, sedges, and cattails and will not need vegetation maintenance work. Vegetation maintenance will be required through blackberry thickets. There also is a willow patch proposed to be trimmed to allow for access through the area.
<b>Segment 6A</b> G/L 137B	Between Indianola Cutoff and the Fay Slough Wildlife Area,	600-ft-long by 2-ft-wide	The vegetation maintenance along this segment will be through a large Himalayan blackberry thicket. No maintenance work is



Segment No. & Gas Line (G/L) ID	Location	Area Proposed for Clearing/Trimming	Existing Conditions / Environmental Setting
	east of Hwy 101 between Arcata and Eureka		proposed within the wetland-marsh channel located between the highway and the gas pipeline right-of-way.
<b>Segment 7A</b> G/L 137B	South of Bayside Cutoff, east of Hwy 101 between Arcata and Eureka	1,200-ft-long by 2-ft-wide	Some willow patches are proposed for trimming along this segment, including a riparian area along Rocky Gulch. Portions of this segment are within the Caltrans right-of-way that is maintained (mowed) by Caltrans).
<b>Segment 8A</b> G/L 137B	South of Hwy 255 along the railroad corridor and through the Arcata Marsh, south to South G Street in Arcata	~3,500-ft-long by 2-ft-wide	Portions of this proposed maintenance segment consist of freshwater wetlands, salt marsh, riparian, scrub, and mowed grassy habitats. A number of willows in the Arcata Marsh are proposed to be trimmed.
<b>Segment 9A</b> G/L 137D	North of Hwy 255, traversing Janes Creek to the Windsong area	300-ft-long by 2-ft-wide	A portion of this proposed maintenance segment consists of riparian habitat around Janes Creek dominated by blackberry, willows, and small redwoods.

#### **D. Permit Authority, Extraordinary Methods of Repair & Maintenance**

Coastal Act Section 30610(d) generally exempts from Coastal Act permitting requirements the repair or maintenance of structures that does not result in an addition to, or enlargement or expansion of, the structure being repaired or maintained. However, the Commission retains authority to review certain “extraordinary methods” of repair and maintenance of existing structures that involve “a risk of substantial adverse environmental impact” as enumerated in Section 13252 of the Commission regulations.

Section 30610 of the Coastal Act provides, in relevant part, for the following:

*Notwithstanding any other provision of this division, no coastal development permit shall be required pursuant to this chapter for the following types of development and in the following areas: . . .*

*(d) Repair or maintenance activities that do not result in an addition to, or enlargement or expansion of, the object of those repair or maintenance activities; provided, however, that if the commission determines that certain extraordinary methods of repair and maintenance involve a risk of substantial adverse environmental impact, it shall, by regulation, require that a permit be obtained pursuant to this chapter.* [Emphasis added]

Section 13252 of the Commission administrative regulations (14 CCR 13000 et seq.) provides, in relevant part, for the following (emphasis added):

*(a) For purposes of Public Resources Code section 30610(d), the following extraordinary methods of repair and maintenance shall require a coastal development permit because they involve a risk of substantial adverse environmental impact:...*

(3) Any repair or maintenance to facilities or structures or work located in an environmentally sensitive habitat area, any sand area, within 50 feet of the edge of a coastal bluff or environmentally sensitive habitat area, or within 20 feet of coastal waters or streams that include:

(A) The placement or removal, whether temporary or permanent, of rip-rap, rocks, sand or other beach materials or any other forms of solid materials;

(B) The presence, whether temporary or permanent, of mechanized equipment or construction materials.

All repair and maintenance activities governed by the above provisions shall be subject to the permit regulations promulgated pursuant to the Coastal Act, including but not limited to the regulations governing administrative and emergency permits. The provisions of this section shall not be applicable to methods of repair and maintenance undertaken by the ports listed in Public Resources Code section 30700 unless so provided elsewhere in these regulations. The provisions of this section shall not be applicable to those activities specifically described in the document entitled Repair, Maintenance and Utility Hookups, adopted by the Commission on September 5, 1978 unless a proposed activity will have a risk of substantial adverse impact on public access, environmentally sensitive habitat area, wetlands, or public views to the ocean....

Section II-B-1-e of the document entitled “Repair, Maintenance and Utility Hookup Exclusions from Permit Requirements” adopted by the Commission on September 5, 1978 states the following, in relevant part:

*e. Grading and Clearing. Maintenance activities shall not extend to the construction of any new roads to the site of the work. A permit is required for grading an undisturbed area of greater than 500 sq. ft., removal of trees exceeding 12 inches dbh or clearing more than 500 sq. ft. of brush or other vegetation...*

The proposed amended development involves on-going vegetation management activities along existing natural gas pipelines as needed to (1) allow the lines to be adequately surveyed and tested for leaks, (2) keep the right-of-ways clear of deep rooted vegetation that has the potential to damage the protective “rap” around the gas pipes (which protects the pipes from corrosion), (3) support aerial surveys of the lines, and (4) facilitate a quicker response time and repair of the lines in the event of an emergency. Section 30610 of the Coastal Act, Section 13252 of the Commission’s administrative regulations, and the “Repair, Maintenance, and Utility Hook-Up Exclusions from Permit Requirements” guidelines (1978 Utility Exclusions) adopted by the Commission in 1978 provide for the exemption of certain types of repair and maintenance projects from CDP requirements, unless certain “*extraordinary methods of repair and maintenance*” enumerated in the regulation could “*involve a risk of substantial adverse environmental impact.*”

As stated above, Section 30610(d) of the Coastal Act states that no permit is required for repair and maintenance of existing development or to maintain the functionality of the development legally in place unless the repair and maintenance involves an extraordinary method of repair and maintenance. The proposed vegetation clearing along the nine additional segments of gas pipeline right-of-way involves a risk of substantial adverse environmental impact pursuant to Section 30610 of the Coastal Act and Section II-B-1-e of the 1978 Utility Exclusions because it

involves clearing more than 500 square feet (0.01-acre) of brush or other vegetation within 50 feet of an ESHA (riparian and/or wetlands habitats). The applicant proposes to clear over 22,660 square feet (0.52-acre) of vegetation in the nine additional right-of-way segments included in the permit amendment request (see Exhibit No. 3). The proposed vegetation maintenance project therefore requires a coastal development permit under Section 30610 of the Coastal Act, Section II-B-1-e of the 1978 Utility Exclusions, and Section 13252 of the Commission regulations.

In considering a permit application for a repair or maintenance project pursuant to the above-cited authority, the Commission reviews whether the proposed method of repair or maintenance is consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. The Commission's evaluation of such repair and maintenance projects does not extend to an evaluation of the conformity with the Coastal Act of the underlying existing development (in this case the installation of natural gas pipelines).

The proposed vegetation maintenance of the existing natural gas transmission line right-of-ways could have adverse impacts on coastal resources, in this case primarily riparian and wetland habitats, if not properly undertaken with appropriate mitigation. The applicant proposes to clear 2-ft-wide to 4-ft-wide swaths of woody vegetation (trees, shrubs, and brambles) in specified right-of-way areas manually with chainsaws to within 6 inches of ground level, lop it in place, and scatter or chip and scatter the "spoils" within the right-of-ways. Work will be performed on an as-needed basis over a period of multiple years for the various reasons described above.

The applicant has proposed minimization measures as part of its proposal to avoid or minimize potential impacts of the vegetation maintenance within environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA). The applicant proposes to conduct the work with manual tools (e.g., chainsaws and loppers), to trim only a 2-ft-wide path through ESHA without disturbing canopy areas or the herbaceous layer, to remove the vegetation outside of the bird breeding/nesting season (i.e., no maintenance work between March 1<sup>st</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup> annually), and other measures summarized above in Finding IV-B. Nevertheless, the Commission recommends various conditions to ensure that the amended development is consistent with Coastal Act policies protecting environmentally sensitive habitat areas, as discussed in the following findings.

Therefore, as conditioned, the Commission finds that the amended development is consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

**E. Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA)**

Coastal Act Section 30240 states as follows:

- (a) *Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas.*
- (b) *Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.*

As described in Table 3 above, portions of the amended project area contain riparian and wetland vegetation that requires cutting to allow for foot access by PG&E surveyors conducting mandated annual leak surveys. Riparian and wetland vegetation grows directly above the buried gas pipelines within portions of each of the nine additional segments proposed for vegetation removal and trimming under the permit amendment request. Thus, the proposed amended development is located within and adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat (ESHA) under the Coastal Act.

Riparian and wetland vegetation growing directly above gas pipelines within the additional nine segments proposed under this permit amendment application will be trimmed back to a width of two feet for the specified length of each of the nine right-of-way segments. To avoid ground disturbance, vegetation will be cut no lower than 6 inches from ground level, herbaceous vegetation will be left intact, and canopy areas will be left intact for taller trees and shrubs within the proposed survey/maintenance areas. Furthermore, all vegetation removal proposed under this permit amendment will occur August 15<sup>th</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup> annually outside of the bird breeding/nesting seasons to avoid impacts to bird breeding/nesting habitat.

To ensure that the vegetation maintenance work is performed in the manner proposed to minimize impacts to sensitive habitat and is compatible with the continuance of riparian and wetland habitat consistent with the requirements of Section 30240, the Commission attaches **Special Condition No. 6**. This condition requires PG&E to adhere to certain vegetation maintenance responsibilities for the amended project area, including, in part, as follows (a) vegetation shall only be cleared or trimmed using manual methods (e.g., chainsaws and loppers) to no more than within 6 inches of ground level as needed to allow surveyor foot access atop existing gas pipelines for necessary leak surveys; (b) cut vegetative “spoils” shall lopped in place and scattered or chipped and scattered within the right-of-way segments; herbaceous vegetation shall not be removed; (c) woody canopy areas shall not be disturbed; (d) no ground-disturbance shall occur in any of the amended project area; and (e) vegetation maintenance shall only occur during the period of August 15 through March 1 to avoid sensitive bird nesting habitat.

The applicant is not proposing mitigation for the loss of riparian vegetation resulting from the proposed maintenance vegetation activities. However, with the proposed measures to reduce impacts to the ESHA vegetation as further reduced by the requirements of Special Condition No. 6, the amended development as conditioned is designed to prevent impacts that would significantly degrade the ESHA vegetation and is compatible with the continuance of the riparian and wetland vegetation. With the limitations on pruning and clearing the vegetation, habitat area and functions will be maintained. For example, preserving the tree canopy will retain opportunities for nesting and provide cover for other animals, and limiting the width of trimming of the affected riparian vegetation will allow the timed areas to be surrounded by undisturbed riparian vegetation, which will similarly maintain cover and provide opportunities for nesting and roosting. As the approved vegetation maintenance activities as conditioned will not result in significant disruption or degradation of the riparian or wetland habitats and will be compatible with the continuance of the habitat areas and functions, the Commission finds that the amended development, as conditioned, is consistent with Section 30240 of the Coastal Act.

**F. Public Access**

Coastal Act Sections 30210, 30211, and 30212 require the provision of maximum public access opportunities, with limited exceptions. Coastal Act Section 30210 requires in applicable part that maximum public access and recreational opportunities be provided when consistent with public safety, private property rights, and natural resource protection. Section 30211 requires in applicable part that development not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use (i.e., potential prescriptive rights or rights of implied dedication). Section 30212 requires in applicable part that public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast be provided in new development projects, except in certain instances, such as when adequate access exists nearby or when the provision of public access would be inconsistent with public safety. In applying Sections 30211 and 30212, the Commission is limited by the need to show that any denial of a permit application based on these sections or any decision to grant a permit subject to special conditions requiring public access is necessary to avoid or offset a project's adverse impact on existing or potential public access.

Portions of the proposed amended development area are located between the sea and the first designated through public road. However, the proposed development will not require closure of any roads during construction, there are no trails within the immediate vicinity of the amended project area that would be affected by the proposed amended development, and the proposed amended development will not create any new demand for public access or otherwise create any additional burdens on public access.

Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed amended development will not have an adverse effect on public access, and the project, as proposed, is consistent with the requirements of Coastal Act Sections 30210, 30211, and 30212.

**G. California Environmental Quality Act**

Section 13906 of the Commission's administrative regulation requires Coastal Commission approval of coastal development permit applications to be supported by a finding showing the application, as modified by any conditions of approval, is consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are any feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available, which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect the proposed development may have on the environment.

The Commission incorporates its findings on Coastal Act consistency at this point as if set forth in full. As discussed above, the proposed amended development has been conditioned to be consistent with the policies of the Coastal Act. The findings address and respond to all public comments regarding potential significant adverse environmental effects of the project that were received prior to preparation of the staff report. As specifically discussed in these above findings, which are hereby incorporated by reference, mitigation measures that will minimize or avoid all significant adverse environmental impacts have been required. As conditioned, there are no other feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts which the activity may have on the environment. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed amended development, as conditioned to mitigate the

identified impacts, can be found consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Act to conform to CEQA.

**V. EXHIBITS:**

1. Regional Location
2. Project Vicinity
3. Permit Amendment Project Description
4. Biological Assessment

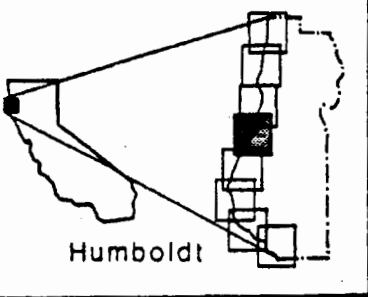
## **APPENDIX A**

### **STANDARD CONDITIONS**

1. Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgement. The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.
2. Expiration. If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date on which the Commission voted on the application. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.
3. Interpretation. Any questions of intent of interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director of the Commission.
4. Assignment. The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.
5. Terms and Conditions Run with the Land. These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the permittee to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O

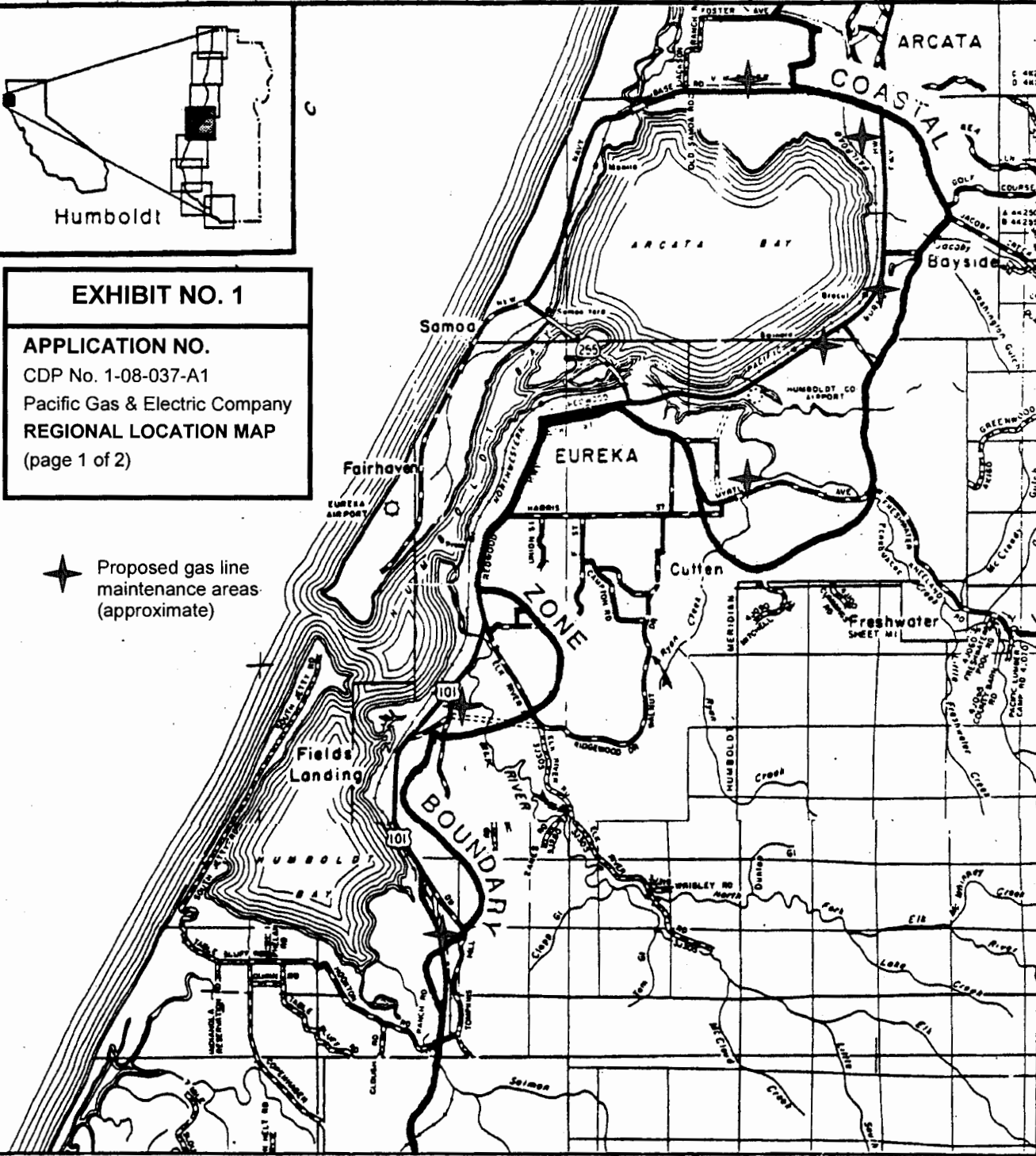
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**EXHIBIT NO. 1**

**APPLICATION NO.**  
CDP No. 1-08-037-A1  
Pacific Gas & Electric Company  
**REGIONAL LOCATION MAP**  
(page 1 of 2)

✦ Proposed gas line maintenance areas (approximate)



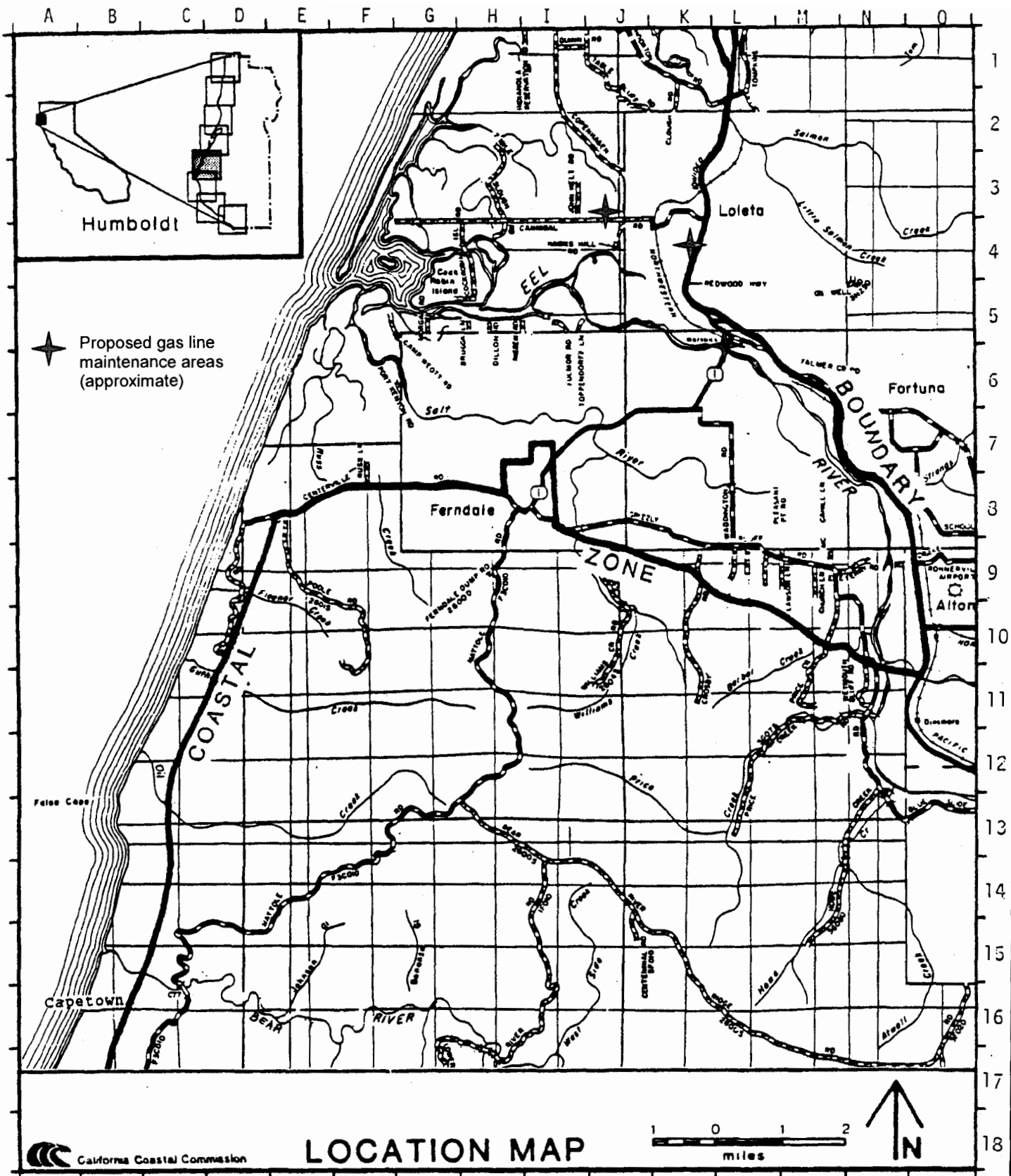
**LOCATION MAP**



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County of Humboldt

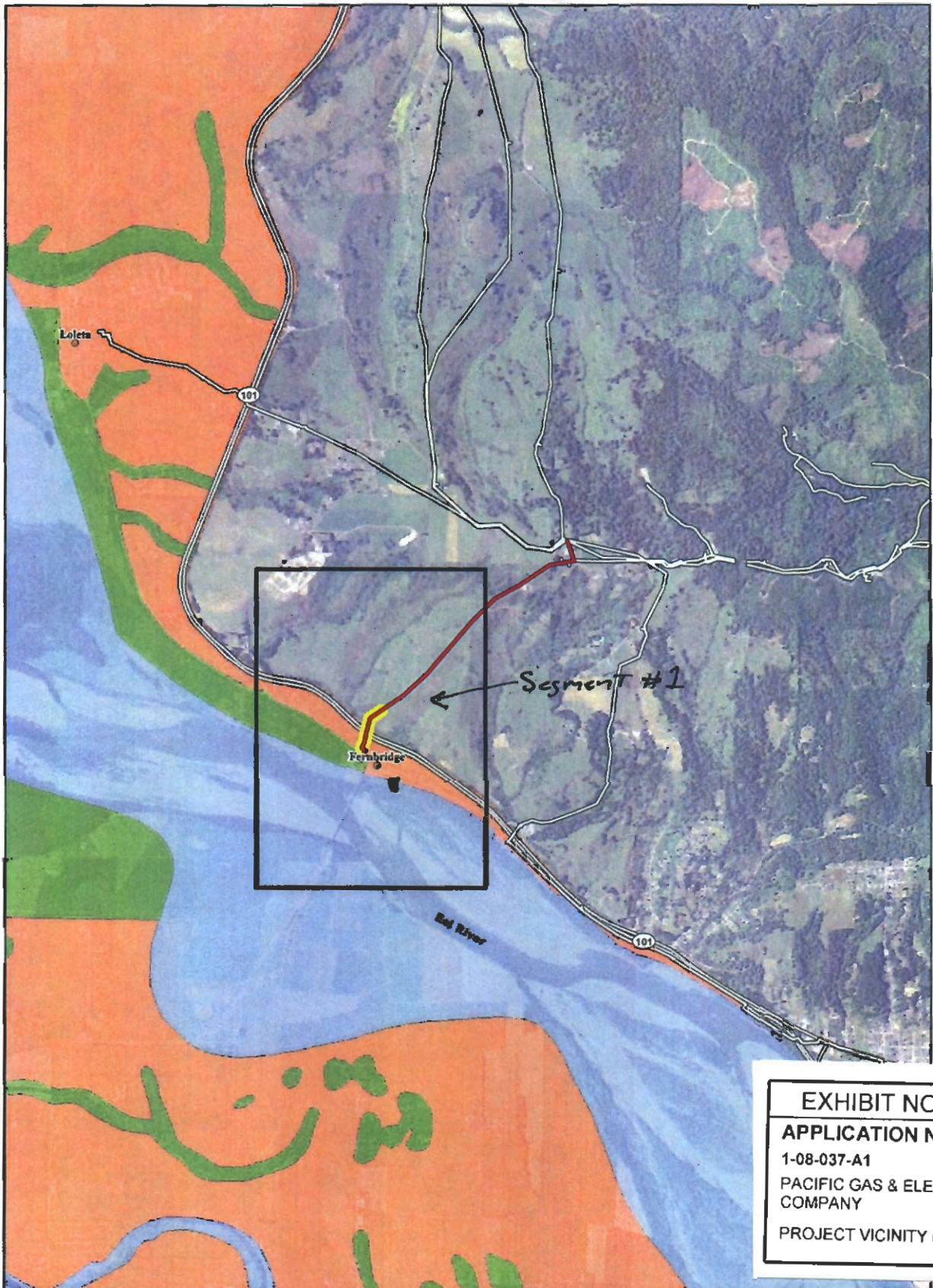




County of Humboldt

2072

Segment #1



**EXHIBIT NO. 2**

**APPLICATION NO.**

1-08-037-A1

PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC  
COMPANY

PROJECT VICINITY (1 of 5)



**Humboldt Gas Line Vegetation Clearing**

**Route: 13010-01**

**Vegetation Clearing Area: 900 Linear Ft**

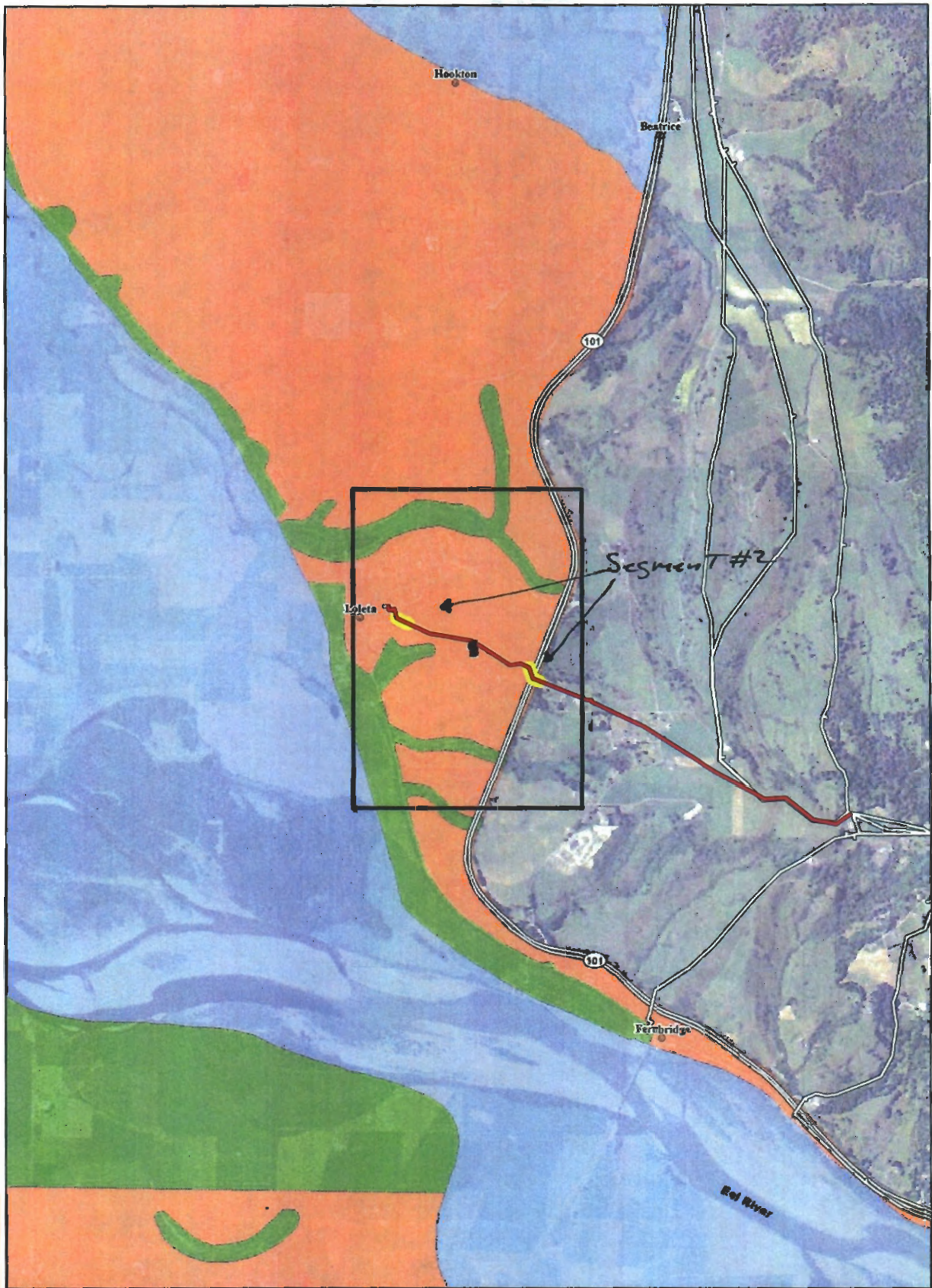
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- Line 1310-01
- Other Gas Lines
- Vegetation Clearing
- Detailed Map Extent

- Highway
- Coastal Zone Jurisdiction
  - Local
  - State
  - Appeal



Segment #2



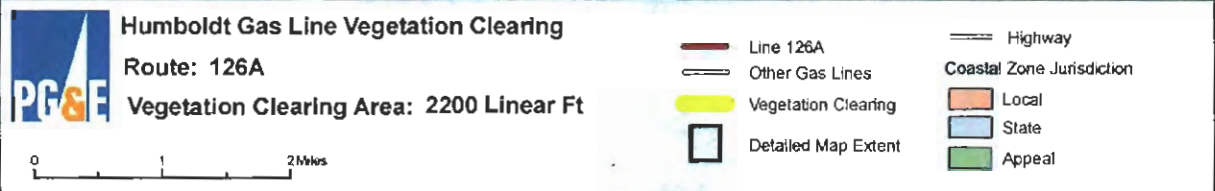
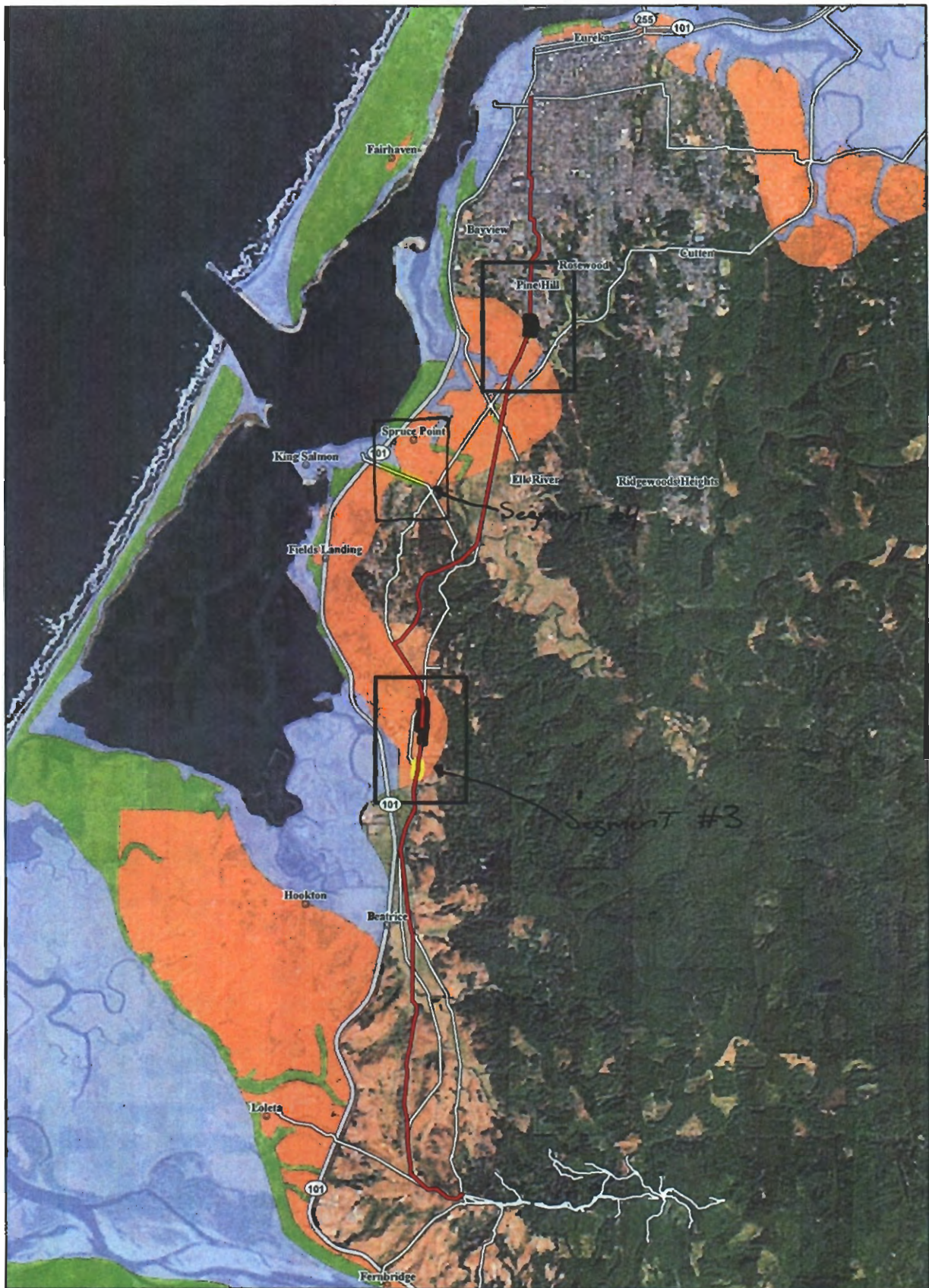
**Humboldt Gas Line Vegetation Clearing**  
**Route: 13011-01**  
**Vegetation Clearing Area: 700 Linear Ft**

0 0.5 1 Miles

- |                     |                                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Line 1311-01        | Highway                         |
| Other Gas Lines     | Coastal Zone Jurisdiction Local |
| Vegetation Clearing | State                           |
| Detailed Map Extent | Appeal                          |

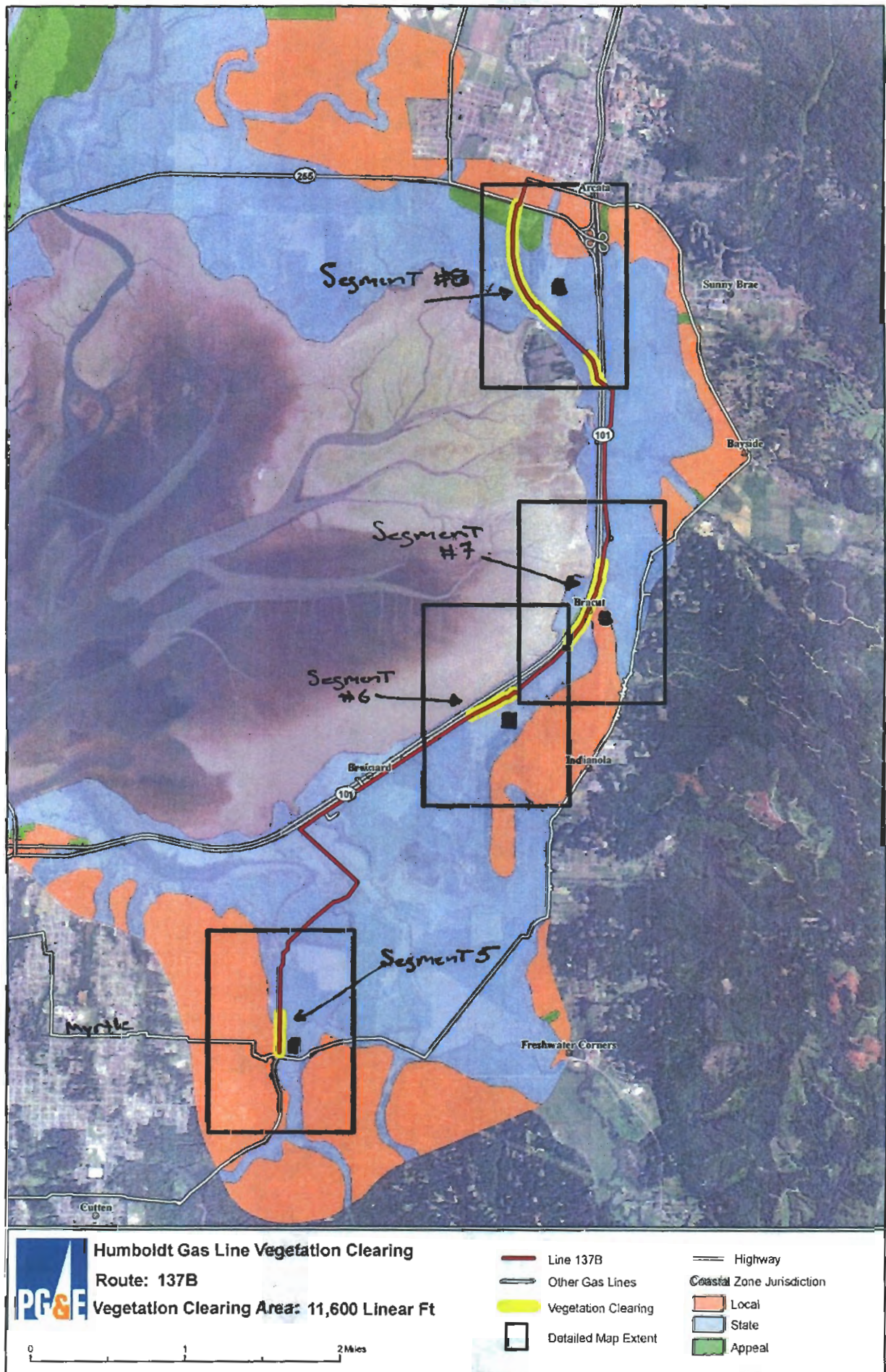
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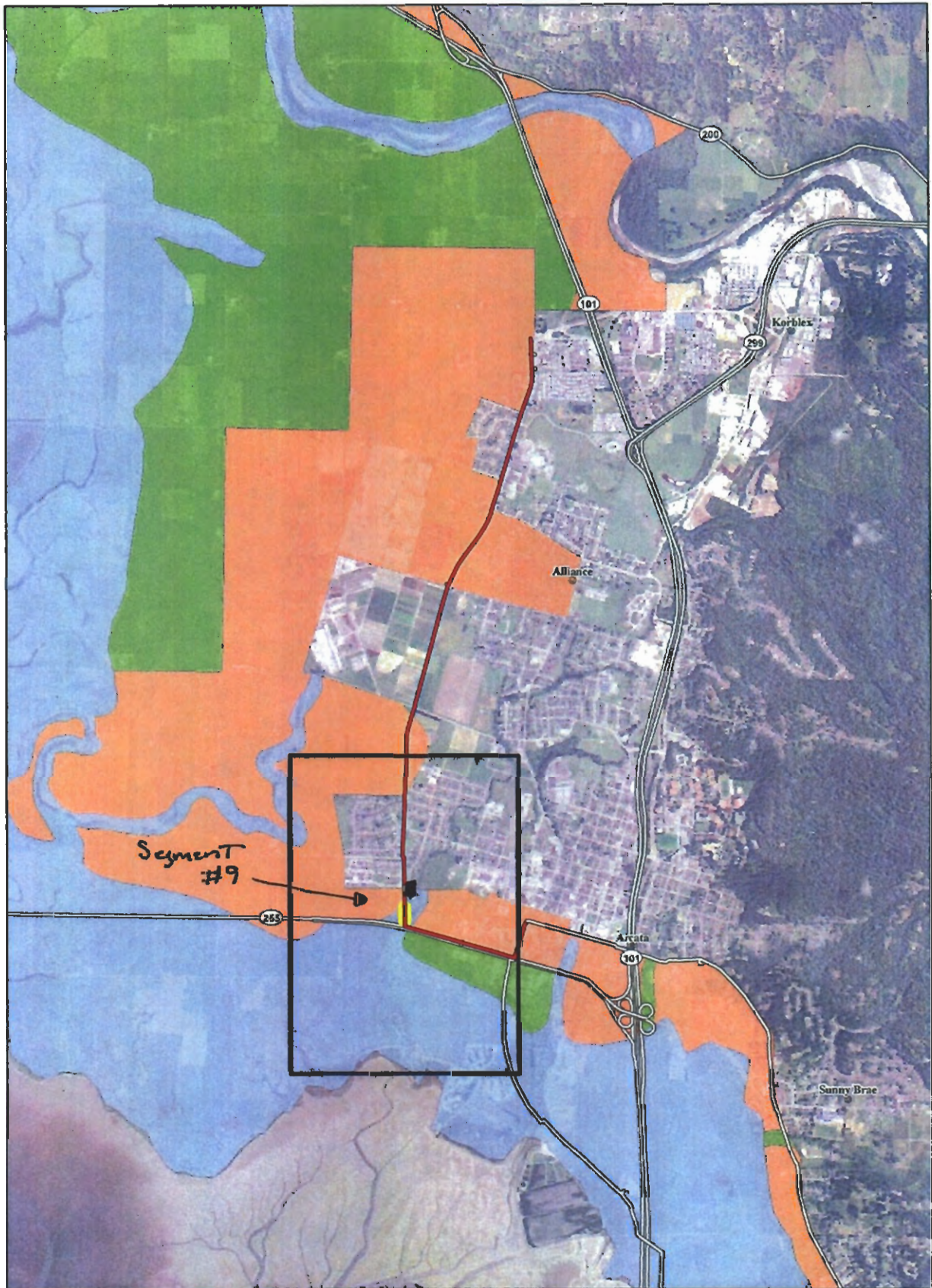


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**Humboldt Gas Line Vegetation Clearing**  
**Route: 137D**  
**Vegetation Clearing Area: 300 Linear Ft**

0 0.5 1 Miles

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|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Line 137D           | Highway                          |
| Other Gas Lines     | Coastal Zone Jurisdiction: Local |
| Vegetation Clearing | State                            |
| Detailed Map Extent | Appeal                           |

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2. Describe the proposed development in detail. Include secondary improvements such as grading, septic tanks, water wells, roads, driveways, outbuildings, fences, etc. (Attach additional sheets as necessary.)

PG&E is proposing to amend CDP 1-08-037 to conduct vegetation management work along 9 segments of gas pipeline located in Humboldt County within the coastal zone. The subject gas pipelines are located on lands within State and Local Coastal Plan (LCP) jurisdiction. Vegetation management is necessary to allow PG&E to conduct federal and California Public Utilities Commission mandated "leak" surveys. Dense vegetative cover has grown within the right-of-way, precluding access for the surveyors. The leak survey is conducted by 1 or 2 personnel who are required to walk directly over the gas line carrying handheld equipment capable of detecting a gas leak. To minimize the degree of disturbance, but to allow for the necessary access, PG&E proposes to manually cut (e.g. chainsaw) a 2-4 foot wide foot path directly over the gas pipeline. Vegetation will be lopped into 6-24 inch lengths and scattered within the cut path. Woody brush that obstructs the surveyor from walking directly over the gas pipeline will be cut. Patches of cattail where water depth is less than 1 foot will also be cut. Herbaceous vegetation will be left intact. To avoid ground disturbance, vegetation will be cut no lower than 6 inches from ground level. No mature trees will be removed from segments 1 through 9. The proposed work will take 7 to 10 days to complete.

Where the gas line is located in environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA), the vegetation trimming width will be reduced to 2 feet. It is assumed that segments 2 through 9 support ESHA, therefore only a 2 foot wide path will be created along these segments of gas line. To further reduce impacts to ESHA, herbaceous vegetation will not be trimmed, the vegetative canopy will be left intact, and woody vegetation will be cut to within 6 inches of ground level.

The attached table lists the jurisdiction and vegetation management area for each segment, which are further described in the attached September 8, 2011 field review letter report prepared by Natural Resource Management, Inc.

a. If multi-family residential, state: **Not Applicable**

Number of units			Number of bedrooms per unit (both existing and proposed)	Type of ownership proposed
Existing units	Proposed new units	Net number of units on completion of project		
				<input type="checkbox"/> rental <input type="checkbox"/> condominium <input type="checkbox"/> stock cooperative <input type="checkbox"/> time share <input type="checkbox"/> other _____

b. If land division or lot line adjustment, indicate: **Not Applicable**

Number of lots			Size of lots to be created (indicate <i>net</i> o	
Existing Lots	Proposed new lots	Net number of lots on completion of project	Existing	

<b>EXHIBIT NO. 3</b>
<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>
<b>1-08-037-A1 - PACIFIC GAS &amp; ELECTRIC COMPANY</b>
<b>PERMIT AMENDMENT</b>
<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>
(1 of 2)

PG&E Gas Pipeline Vegetation Management in the Coastal Zone - Humboldt County

Application for a CDP Amendment

Segment	Jurisdiction	Total Segment		Trim Area			Notes
		Length (ft)	Length (ft)	Length (ft)	Width (ft)	Area (ft2)	
1- Fernbridge	LCP	900		840	4	3360	Trim area excludes Hwy 101
2- Loleta	LCP	700		700	2	1400	Two segments of 350 ft
3- College of the Redwoods	LCP	750		750	2	1500	Two segments = 600 ft + 150 ft
4- Humboldt Hill	LCP	1100		600	2	1200	Approximately 50% of total length to be trimmed
5- Myrtle Ave	State	1500		1500	2	3000	Trimming may include patches of cattail
6- Indianola @ Hwy 101	State	1800		600	2	1200	Trimming may include patches of cattail
7- Bracut @ Hwy 101	LCP + State	3200		1200	2	2400	Approximately 2/3 of total length to be trimmed
8- Arcata March - G Street to Hwy 255	State	5000		4000	2	8000	Trimming may include patches of cattail
9- Janes Creek - N of Samoa Blvd (Hwy 255)	State	300		300	2	600	Entire segment requires trimming
						<b>22660</b>	<b>ft2</b>
						<b>0.52</b>	<b>acres</b>

Revised October 28, 2011

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Steve Yonge  
Pacific Gas & Electric Company  
3600 Meadowview Drive  
Redding, CA 96002

<b>EXHIBIT NO. 4</b>
<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>
1-08-037-A1
PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY
BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (1 of 21)

July 28, 2011

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**Re: Humboldt County, Gas Line Right of Way Clearing Within the Coastal Zone**

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Dear Mr. Yonge,

Per your request Natural Resources Management Corporation (NRM) conducted a field review of nine segments of buried gas line that require vegetation trimming within the right of way (ROW) to facilitate Federal mandated leak surveys. All nine segments are located within the coastal zone; and are either within local or state coastal commission jurisdiction.

During the period of June 10<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011 reconnaissance level surveys of all treatment segments were performed by NRM staff biologist Jason Meyer and NRM staff botanist Prairie Moore. Prior to field surveys, aerial imagery and California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) records were reviewed. Of concern were potential impacts to sensitive species and habitats resulting from the proposed vegetation management activities.

**Scope of Work**

Gas lines are routinely surveyed to detect leaks. In order to perform the leak test, surveyors must physically traverse the entire gas line ROW with sensitive hand held equipment. The gas line segments described in this report have become impassable due to dense vegetation. The intent of this project is to clear a 4' to 5' wide path over the identified gas lines to allow access for leak surveys to be performed in Fall of 2011. The work will be performed by 2 to 4 man crews using chainsaws. Woody vegetation will be cut into 6" to 24" lengths, lopped and scattered within the ROW. No heavy equipment is proposed for usage and no mowing of the herbaceous vegetation is proposed. No clearing is proposed in areas of standing water, sloughs or salt marsh.

**Sensitive Environmental Resources**

All areas surveyed have some level of suitable habitat for breeding birds within or adjacent to the ROW. The areas of densest vegetation to remove are the most likely to harbor breeding birds (riparian areas and blackberry thickets). All watercourses (salt marsh, freshwater marsh, creeks and drainage ditches) have the potential to harbor sensitive aquatic species including: tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*, Federal Endangered), salmonids (*Oncorhynchus* spp., Federal Threatened), and northern red-legged frog (*Rana aurora*, California Species of Special Concern). Based on field review, the primary vegetation to be cleared in the ROW is

dense Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*), willow (*Salix* spp.) and coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*). Sensitive plants may be present in the study area, and are most likely to occur in the herbaceous layer of coastal prairie, coastal scrub, riparian, wetlands and salt marsh that makeup the study area (Table 1). No clearing is proposed in surface waters of creeks, or freshwater marsh and salt marsh. No mowing is proposed of the herbaceous layer. Following are measures that will be implemented to minimize the temporary impact of the proposed vegetation management work.

**Table 1.** Sensitive plant species that could occur in the project areas.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Habitat	Status
<i>Astragalus pycnostachyus</i> var. <i>pycnostachyus</i>	coastal marsh milk-vetch	wetland-riparian	1B.2
<i>Calamagrostis foliosa</i>	leafy reed grass	Northern Coastal Scrub	CR, 4.2
<i>Carex arcta</i>	northern clustered sedge	wetland-riparian	2.2
<i>Carex lenticularis</i> var. <i>limnophila</i>	lagoon sedge	wetland-riparian	2.2
<i>Carex leptalea</i>	bristle-stalked sedge	wetland-riparian	2.2
<i>Carex lyngbyei</i>	Lyngbye's sedge	Coastal Salt Marsh	2.2
<i>Carex Praticola</i>	northern meadow sedge	Coastal Prairie, North Coastal Coniferous Forest	2.2
<i>Carex saliniformis</i>	deceiving sedge	Coastal Prairie, Northern Coastal Scrub, wetland-riparian	1B.2
<i>Carex viridula</i> var. <i>viridula</i>	green yellow sedge	wetland-riparian	2.3
<i>Castilleja affinis</i> ssp. <i>Litoralis</i>	Oregon coast paintbrush	Northern Coastal Scrub	2.2
<i>Castilleja ambigua</i> ssp. <i>Humboldtensis</i>	Humboldt Bay owl's-clover	Coastal Salt Marsh	1B.2
<i>Castilleja mendocinensis</i>	Mendocino Coast paintbrush	Coastal Prairie, Northern Coastal Scrub,	1B.2
<i>Clarkia amoena</i> ssp. <i>Whitneyi</i>	Whitney's farewell-to-spring	Northern Coastal Scrub	1B.1
<i>Coptis laciniata</i>	Oregon goldthread	wetland-riparian	2.2
<i>Cordylanthus maritimus</i> ssp. <i>Palustris</i>	Point Reyes bird's-beak	Coastal Salt Marsh	1B.2
<i>Empetrum nigrum</i> ssp. <i>Hermaphroditum</i>	mountain crowberry	Coastal Prairie, Northern Coastal Scrub	2.2
<i>Erythronium revolutum</i>	coast fawn lily	wetland-riparian	2.2
<i>Gilia capitata</i> ssp. <i>Pacifica</i>	pacific gilia	coastal prairie	1B.2
<i>Glyceria grandis</i>	American manna grass	wetland-riparian	2.3
<i>Lathyrus palustris</i>	marsh pea	Coastal Prairie, Northern Coastal Scrub, wetland-riparian	2.2
<i>Lilium occidentale</i>	western lily	Coastal Prairie, Northern Coastal Scrub, wetland-riparian	FE, CE, 1B.1
<i>Lycopodiella inundata</i>	inundated bog-clubmoss	Northern Coastal Scrub, Freshwater Wetlands	2.2
<i>Montia howellii</i>	Howell's montia	wetland-riparian	2.2
<i>Oenothera wolfii</i>	Wolf's evening-primrose	Coastal Prairie, Northern Coastal Scrub	1B.1
<i>Packera bolanderi</i> var. <i>bolanderi</i>	seacoast ragwort	Northern Coastal Scrub	2.2

**Table 1. (Continued) Sensitive plant species that could occur in the project areas.**

<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Habitat</b>	<b>Status</b>
<i>Polemonium carneum</i>	Oregon polemonium	Northern Coastal Scrub, Coastal Prairie	2.2
<i>Puccinellia pumila</i>	dwarf alkali grass	Coastal Salt Marsh	2.2
<i>Romanzoffia tracyi</i>	Tracy's romanzoffia	Northern Coastal Scrub	2.3
<i>Sidalcea malviflora</i> ssp. <i>Patula</i>	Siskiyou checkerbloom	Coastal bluff scrub, coastal prairie,	1B.2
<i>Sidalcea oregana</i> ssp. <i>Eximia</i>	Coast sidalcea	wetland-riparian,	1B.2
<i>Spergularia canadensis</i> var. <i>occidentalis</i> <i>Caryophyllaceae</i>	western sand-spurrey	Coastal Salt Marsh	2.1
<i>Viola palustris</i>	marsh violet	Northern Coastal Scrub, wetland-riparian	2.2

Listing codes are as follows: CNPS 1B = rare, threatened, or endangered in CA and elsewhere; CNPS 2 = rare, threatened, or endangered in CA, but more common elsewhere; CNPS 3 = plants about which more information is needed; a review list. Threat rank: 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) CR = state-listed RARE; CE = state-listed ENDANGERED; FE = federally-listed ENDANGERED

### **Resource Protection Measures**

To avoid impacts to sensitive natural resources, the following resource protection measures will be followed:

1. All vegetation removal will occur between August 15<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup> to avoid disturbing breeding bird activity.
2. Herbaceous vegetation will not be cleared unless surveyed by a qualified botanist for sensitive plants.
3. To minimize disturbance only a 4-5' wide path will be created. The entire ROW width will not be trimmed.
4. The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) will be consulted for gas line segments that cross creeks or streams.
5. All vehicles will be confined to existing access roads or previously disturbed areas such as road side pullouts.
6. All vegetation removal shall be conducted manually (chainsaws); no heavy equipment will be used.
7. Refueling of equipment will occur 200' or more away from wetland or riparian habitats.
8. Clearing operations will be supervised by persons familiar with the ROW location and sensitive habitats that require avoidance.
9. For the Arcata Marsh segment of gas line 137B a botanist familiar with local flora will be present on site during clearing activities due to the close proximity of wetland and salt marsh to the ROW.

10. A qualified biological monitor will be on site during all vegetation management activities.

#### **Project Area Descriptions**

Following is a detailed description of each line segment proposed for treatment. A project overview map is provided first followed by individual segment descriptions and maps. Site photos are included in appendix A.



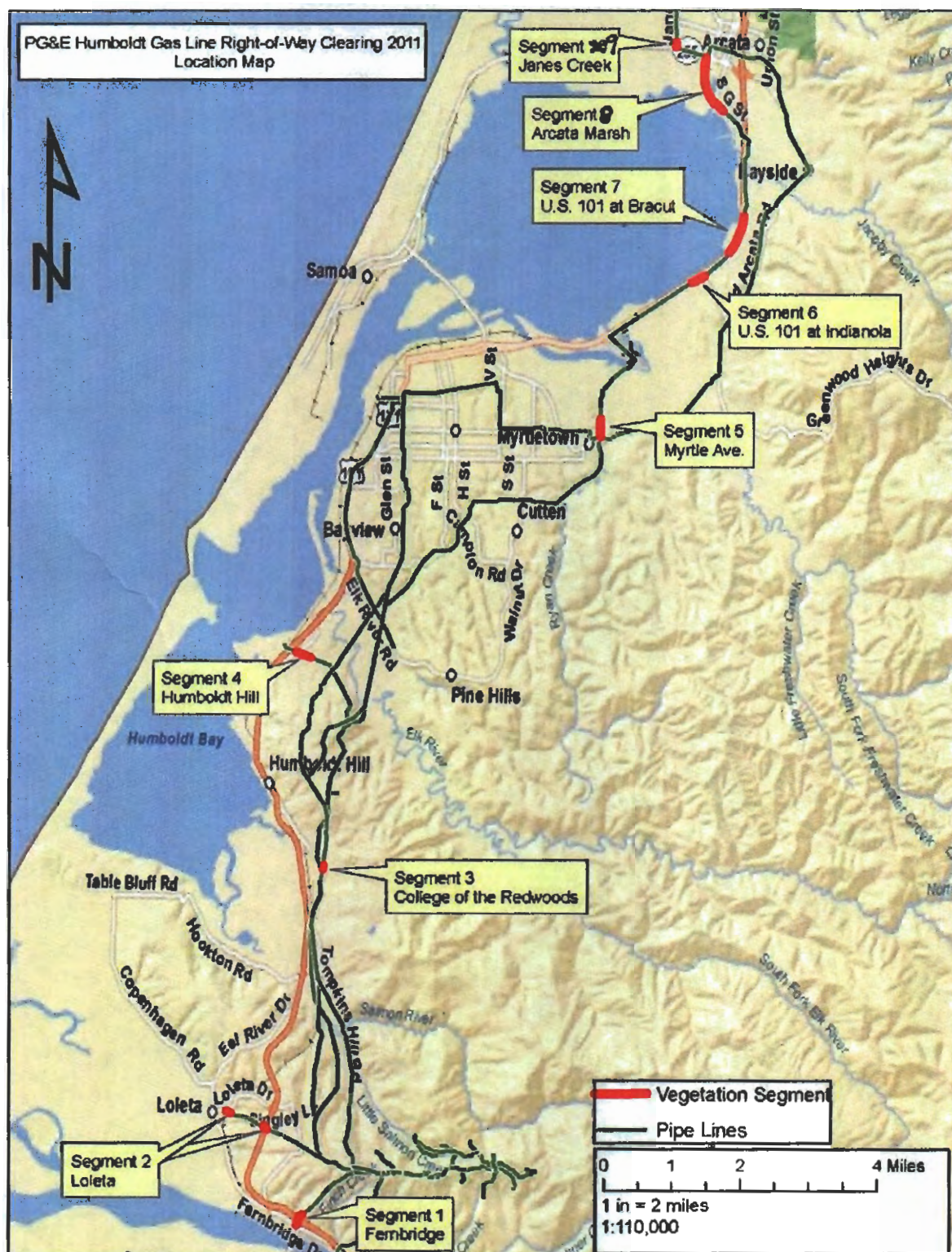


Figure 1 - Project Overview Map

### Segment 1 Fernbridge Area

Located north of the Eel River near Fernbridge, this 900 linear foot segment of gas line 13010-01 is located from Fernbridge Drive and runs north under Highway 101 and uphill through rangelands. A 4'-5" wide ROW will be cleared over the gas line (Figure 2, Appendix A, Photo 1).

Vegetation between Fernbridge Drive and HWY 101 consists of approximately 480 linear feet of a wooded hillside of north coastal scrub dominated by willow, alder (*Alnus rubra*), twin berry (*Lonicera involucrata*) and Spanish heather (*Erica lusitanica*). The herbaceous layer is dominated by velvet grass (*Holcus lanatus*), sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), and bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*). Dense sedge (*Carex densa*) is also present.

The segment north of HWY 101 consisting of approximately 360 linear feet is a steep slope dominated by Spanish heather. The heather is dense enough that it is unlikely that there is a herbaceous layer beneath it that would support special status plant species.

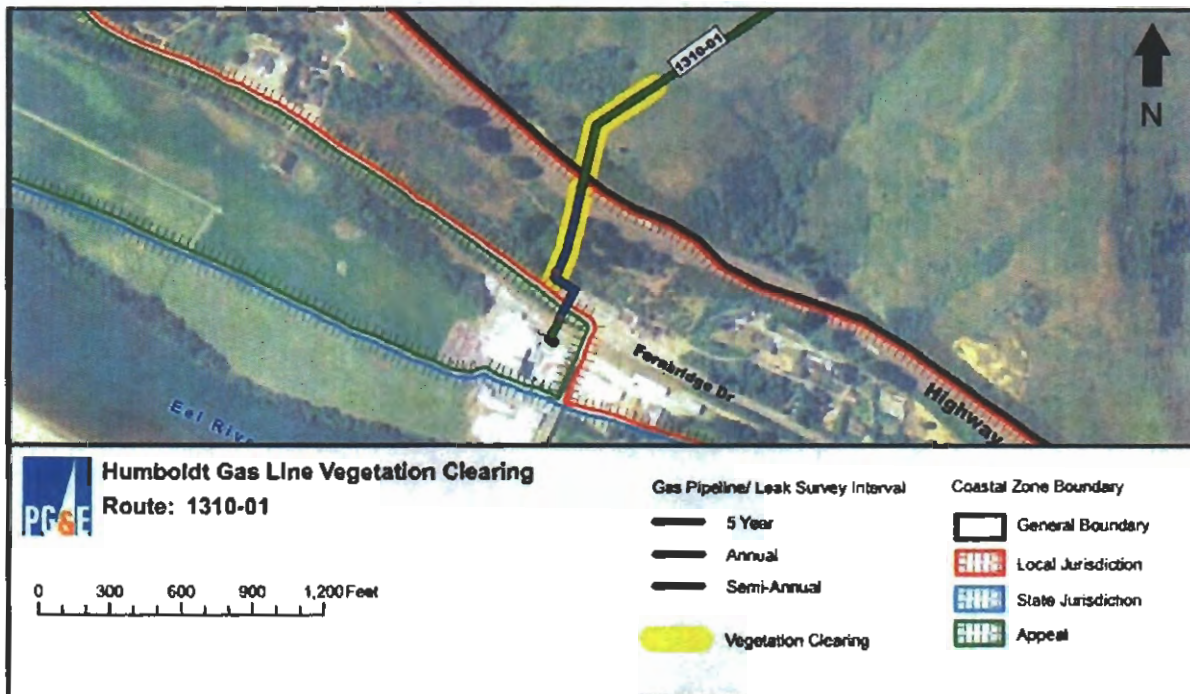


Figure 2 - Fernbridge Area



## Segment 2 Loleta Area

Gas line 1311-01 has two segments each approximately 350 linear feet which require vegetation clearing just east of the town of Loleta and on both sides of HWY 101 (Figure 3, Appendix A Photos 2 and 3). A 4-5' wide ROW will be cleared in these areas. The 350 foot segment east of Loleta is covered by a dense patch of Himalayan blackberry adjacent to an alley/driveway, but then opens up into a wetland creek bottom and open grassland. The blackberry is an overhead, closed canopy thicket lacking a herbaceous layer due to the denseness, but represents habitat for breeding birds. The hillside down to the creek is a mosaic of open coastal prairie with patches of coastal scrub dominated by Himalayan blackberry and coyote brush. The creek bottom is a wide wetland- riparian area dominated by rushes (*Juncus spp.*) and sedges (*Carex spp.*).

The segment of gas line 1311-01 adjacent to HWY 101 crosses through riparian forest on both the west and east sides of the highway. Overstory vegetation consists of willow, alder, cascara (*Frangula purshiana*), and Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*). The shrub layer is dominated by California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*), and sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*). Only woody vegetation will be trimmed in these areas leaving the herbaceous layer intact.

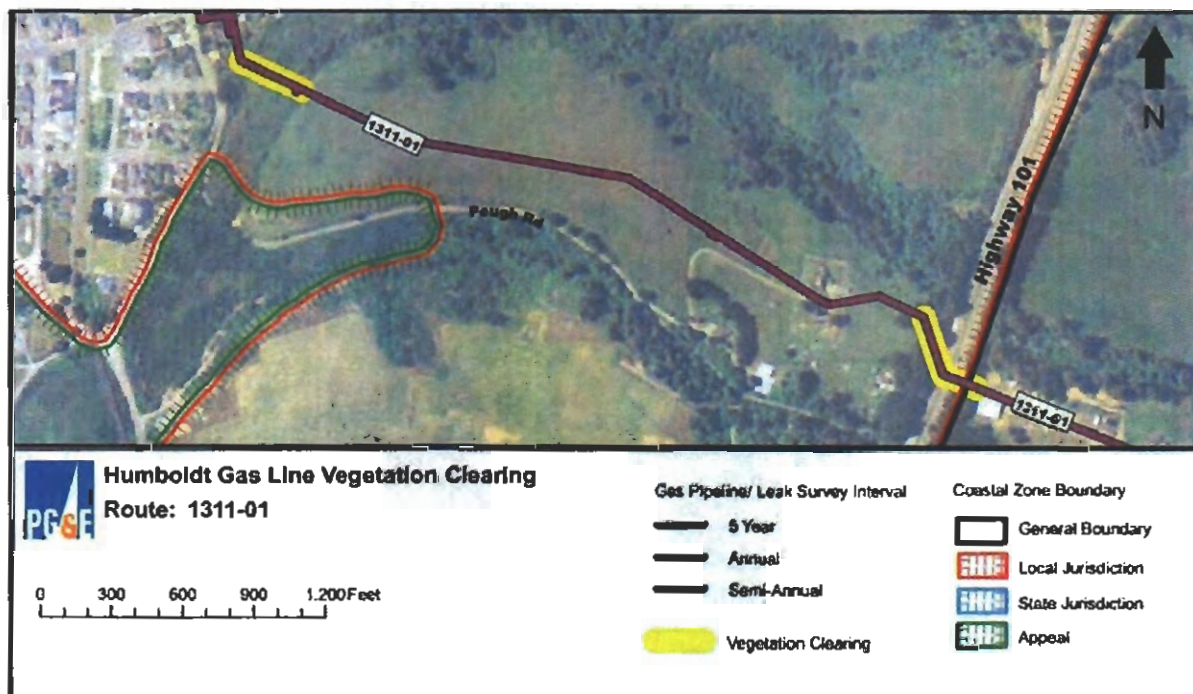


Figure 3 - Loleta Area

### **Segment 3 College of the Redwoods Area**

There are two segments of gas line proposed for trimming in this area. The first area is located approximately 0.5 miles south of College of the Redwoods on the west side of Tompkins Hill Road (Figure 4, Appendix A Photo 3) where gas lines 126A, 126B and 177A converge into one ROW. The ROW runs through a wetland-riparian area dominated by willow, elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), and horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*). To adequately survey the three gas lines a 4-5' wide path must be trimmed. In place of clearing the entire ROW width of approximately 60 feet of vegetation, vegetation would be trimmed in a way as to create a "tunnel" in the understory. Vegetation clearing would involve creating a 4-5' wide by approximately 50 foot long path over each gas pipeline. Vegetation will be cut and lopped with chain saws and scattered within the ROW.

The second segment runs south from College of the Redwoods parking lot to Tompkins Hill road for a distance of 600 linear feet. A 4-5' wide path through ruderal vegetation will be trimmed over the gas line.

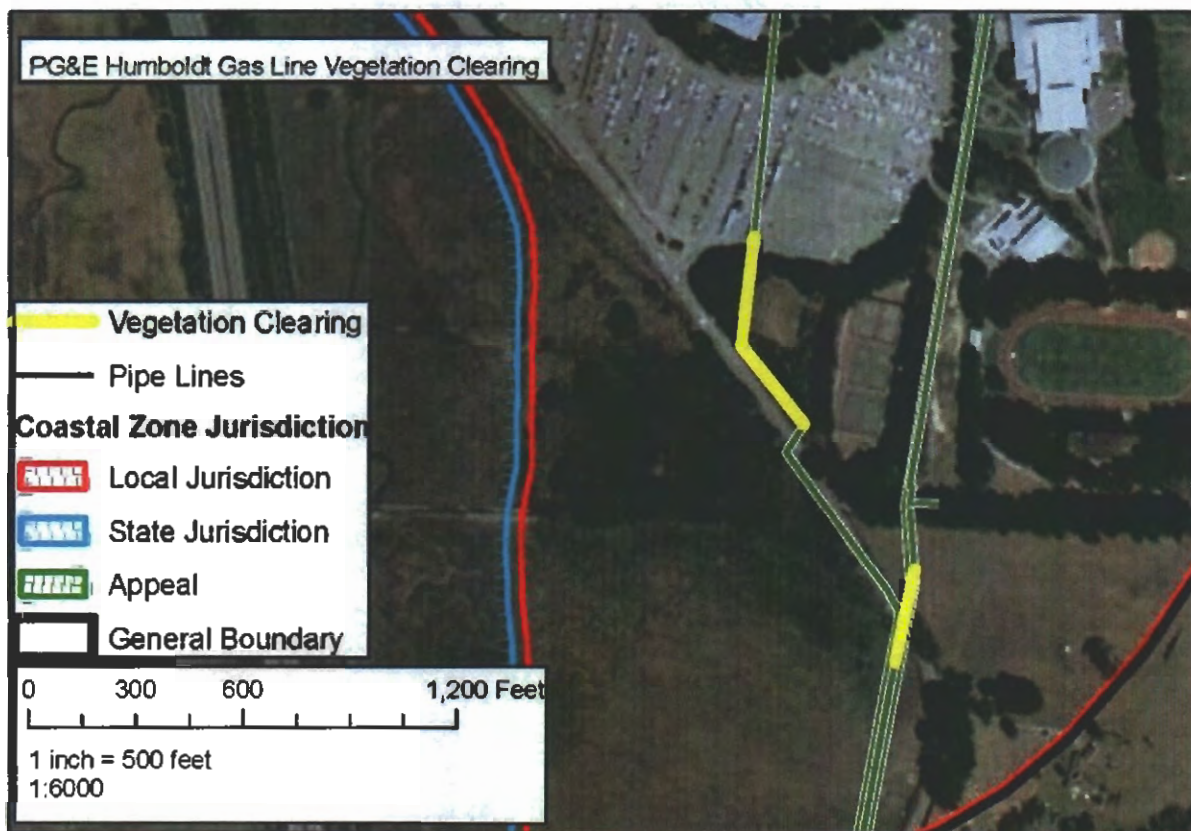


Figure 4 - College of the Redwoods Area



#### **Segment 4 Humboldt Hill Area**

Gas line 189 runs from South Broadway Street to Humboldt Hill Road through a wetland marsh and a dense stand of coastal scrub dominated by California and Himalayan blackberry, and willow. (Figure 5, Appendix A Photo 5). A 4-5' wide ROW will be cleared over this segment. The marsh area has surface water dominated by cattails (*Typha* spp.), sedges and rushes which will not require clearing. There are stretches of shrubby areas which will be treated. This segment is approximately 1,100 linear feet of which approximately one half will need to be cleared of blackberry. No clearing will occur in areas where the pipeline is within marsh habitat.

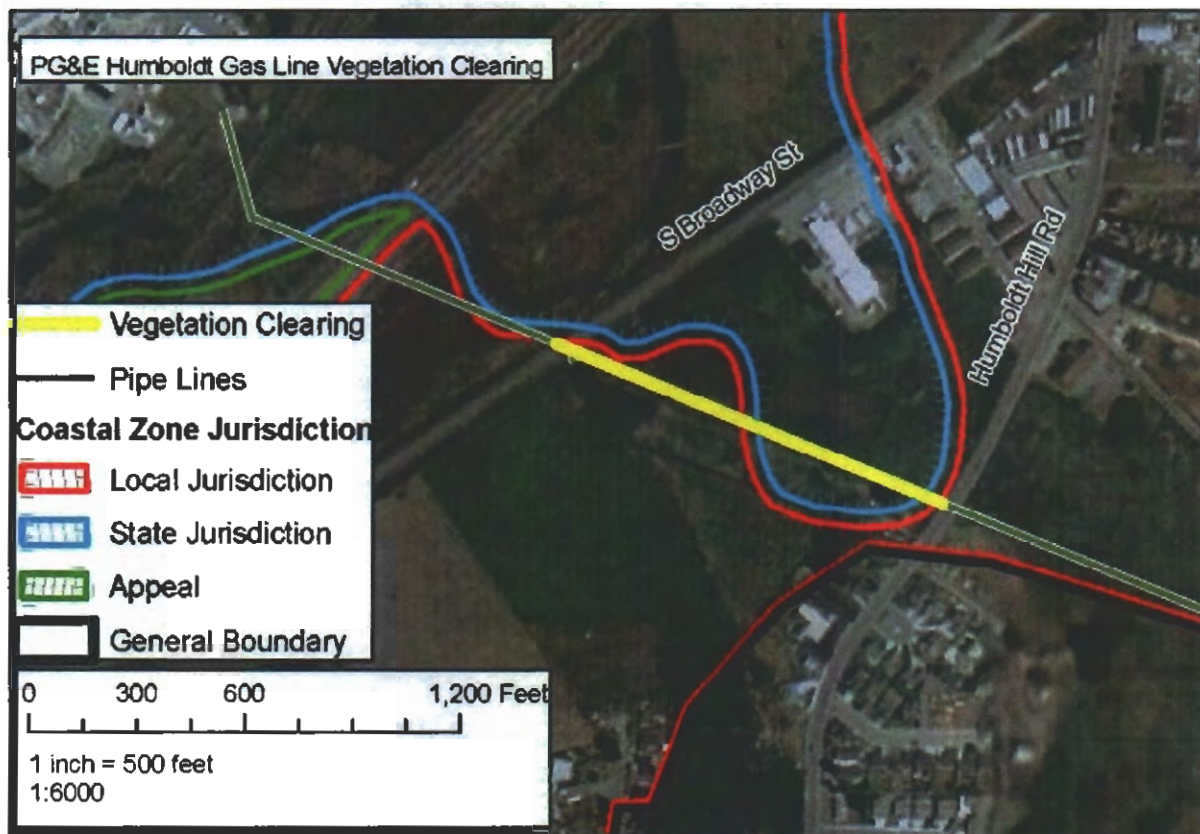


Figure 5 - Humboldt Hill Area

### Segment 5 Myrtle Ave Area

The segment of gas line 137B that runs north from Myrtle Avenue for approximately 1,500 linear feet requires vegetation maintenance in some areas (Figure 6, Appendix A Photo 6). A 4-5' wide ROW will be cleared over this segment. This segment runs along the base of the Eureka plateau and consists of wetland-riparian, north coastal scrub, and coastal salt marsh habitats. Some areas of the wetland are dominated by rushes, sedges and cattails and will not need vegetation management work. Areas dominated by blackberry will need to be cleared to allow access. There is a willow patch that will also require some trimming to provide access. This segment has the potential to support many of the sensitive plant species found in Table 1, therefore a biological monitor will be present during vegetation management work.

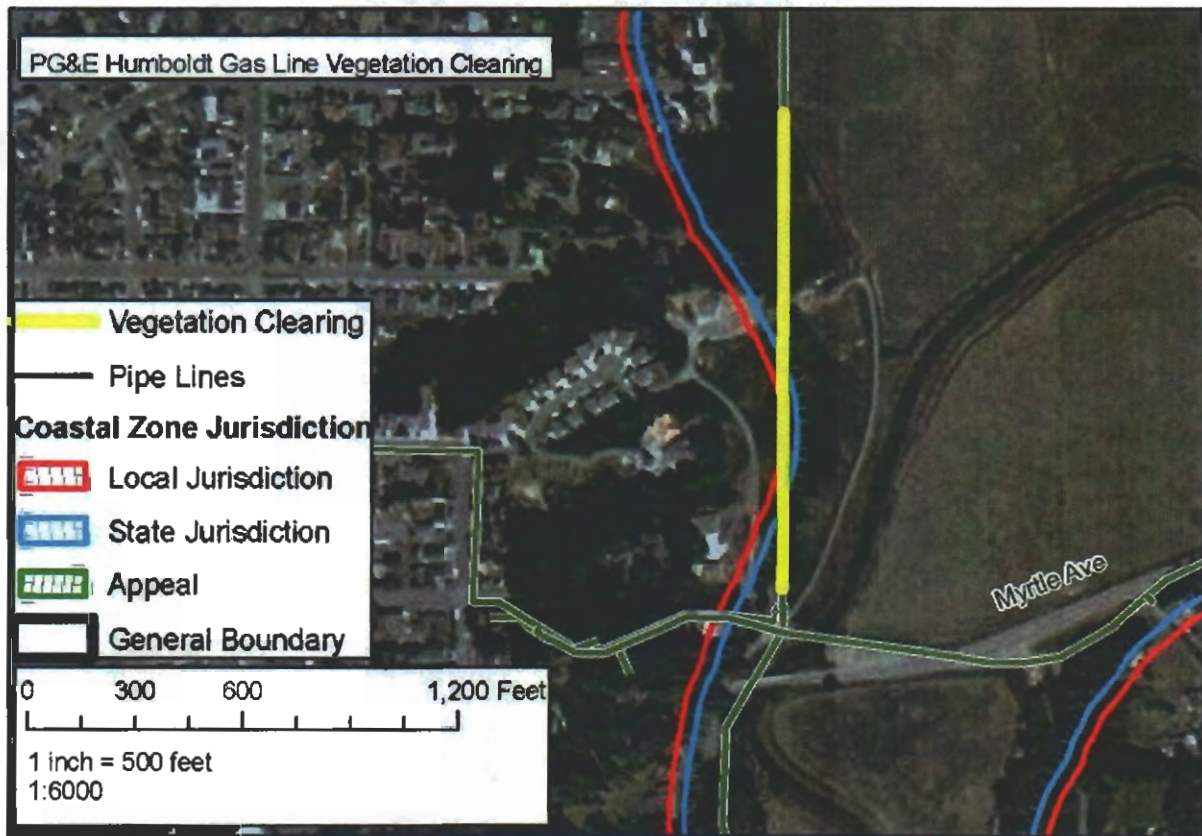


Figure 6 - Myrtle Avenue Area



**Segment 6 Highway 101 at Indianola**

This segment of gas line 137B runs parallel to HWY 101 from the Fay Slough Wildlife Area north to just past Indianola Cutoff, a distance of approximately 1,800 linear feet (Figure 7, Appendix A Photo 7). A four to five foot wide ROW will be cleared over the gas line were required. There is a wetland-marsh channel between the ROW and the highway that will not be cleared of vegetation. Within the Fay Slough Wildlife Area the ROW is dominated by Himalayan blackberry for a distance of 600 feet. This thicket is dense and not likely to support sensitive plant species within it.

The segment north of the wildlife area is dominated by non-native grasses with some blackberry. This area appears to be mowed annually, as the blackberry is much lower and the area is currently passable on foot. The segment adjacent to the retail parking lot is regularly mowed across the ROW up to a channel. Between the parking lot and Indianola Cutoff is a wetland dominated by cattails with surface water that is passable without removing vegetation.

North of Indianola Cutoff the ROW passes through ruderal grasses, under a cattail slough and again becomes dominated by blackberry thicket.

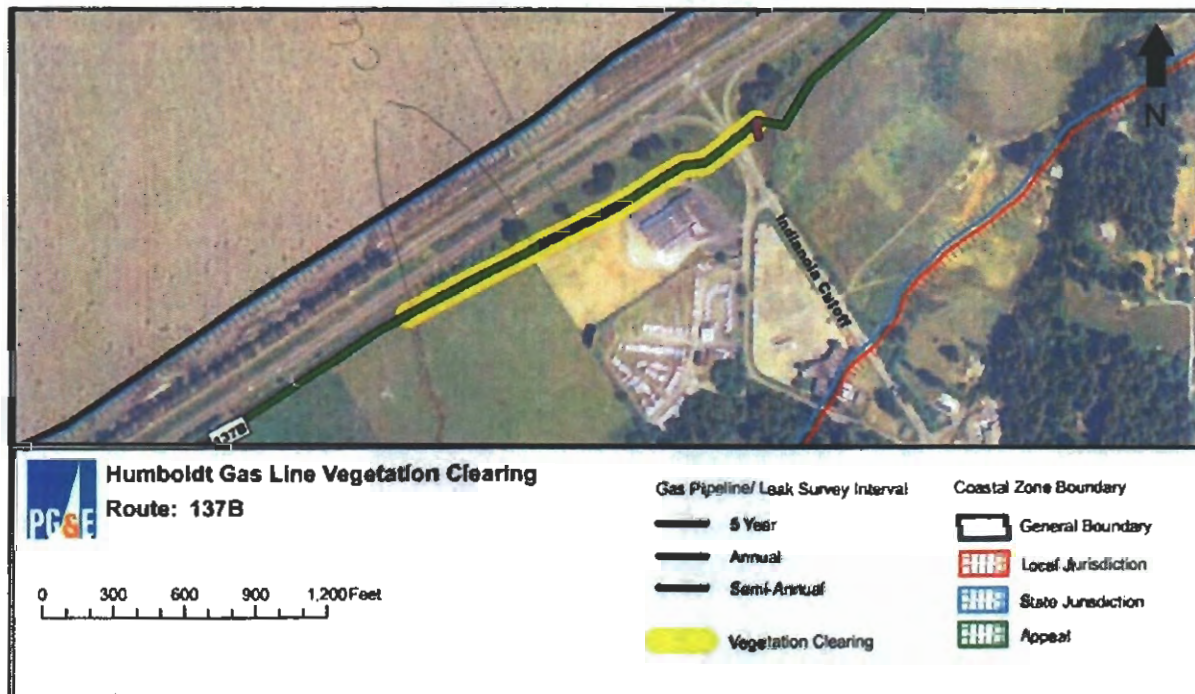


Figure 7 - Highway 101 at Indianola

### Segment 7 Highway 101 at Bracut

This segment of gas line 137B parallels the east side of HWY 101 and begins near the southern boundary of Resale Lumber and continues north towards Bayside Cutoff a linear distance of approximately 3,200 feet (Figure 8, Appendix A Photo 8). A 4-5' wide ROW will be cleared in overgrown areas. South of Resale Lumber's property fence is grazed grassland under conifers; a distance of approximately 250 feet which will not require vegetation removal. The ROW is then covered by dense non-native grass (*Poa spp.*) which blocks out any native species, and will be cleared.

Just north of the non-native grass, extending north to the highway exit, the ROW is dominated by wetland and is mostly clear enough to be surveyed, however will require clearing in a few willow patches. Vegetation clearing in this area will be limited to the minimum amount to allow access for leak surveyors. Clearing in this stretch will be limited to woody vegetation minimizing impacts to the herbaceous layer.

North of the exit, adjacent to a Caltrans facility is mowed grass under conifers. This 800 foot stretch will not need vegetation removal.

North of the Caltrans facility the ROW passes along the mowed Highway 101 ROW through riparian forest associated with Rocky Gulch and parallels and crosses various wetlands, marshes and sloughs. No clearing is proposed across wetlands and marshes. The riparian area associated with Rocky Gulch will have a minimum ROW cleared that is 4-5' wide. The minimum amount of vegetation will be cut to allow passage of the leak surveyors, only branches and small shrubs will be cut. This will create a temporary Tunnel for access and result in minimum temporary disturbance.

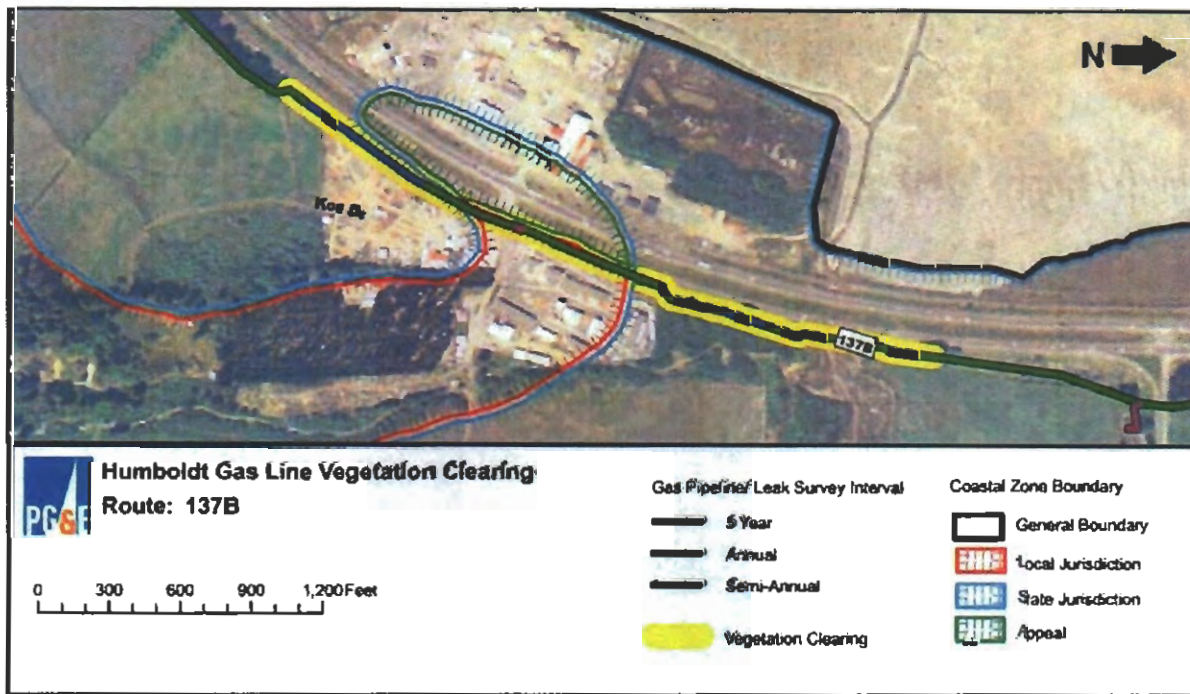


Figure 8 - Highway 101 at Bracut



### Segment 8 Arcata Marsh

This segment of gas line 137B parallels G street for a short distance then continues through the Arcata Marsh, paralleling the railroad grade and ends at state route 255 (Figure 10, Appendix A Photos 10, 11, 12), the length of this segment is approximately 5,000 linear feet. A 4-5' wide ROW will be cleared over the gas line. It is estimated that only 50% of the actual ROW will need clearing. The gas line passes under freshwater wetlands dominated by cattail, north coastal salt-marsh, riparian, north coastal scrub, non-native ruderal and mowed grass areas. There is potential for sensitive plants associated with the coastal salt marsh, wetland, riparian, and coastal scrub habitats (Table 1). If a sensitive plant is identified within the ROW, the location will be marked to avoid trampling and no clearing will occur within 10 feet of the plant

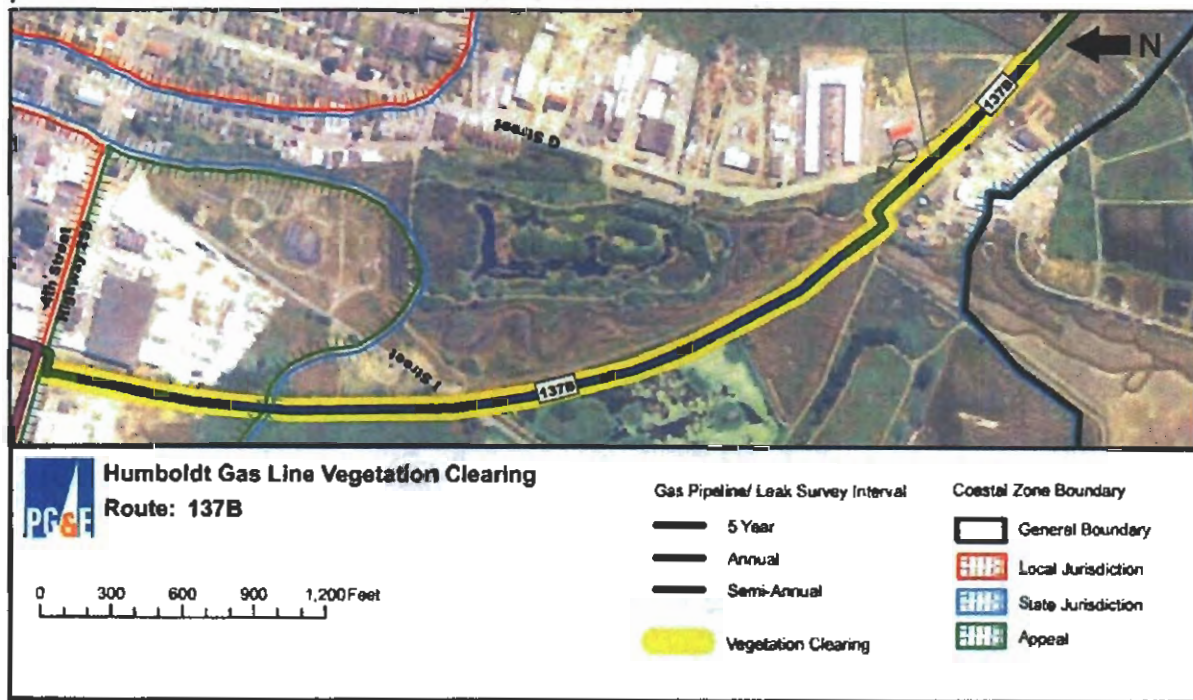


Figure 9 - Arcata Marsh

### Segment 9 Janes Creek

Gas line 137D passes under Janes Creek / McDaniel Slough just north of Samoa Boulevard. (Figure 11, Appendix A Photo 13). This segment is dominated by riparian habitat, and has the potential for occurrence of sensitive riparian plants from Table 1. This habitat consists of dense blackberry, willow, and some sapling and pole size redwoods. The length of line to be cleared is approximately 300 linear feet. To minimize impacts to riparian habitats only a path approximately 4-5' in width will be cleared for this area. This will create the minimum amount of disturbance to the area while still allowing leak surveyors access to complete the testing. The result will be more like a tunnel and will rapidly regenerate causing a minimal temporary disturbance.

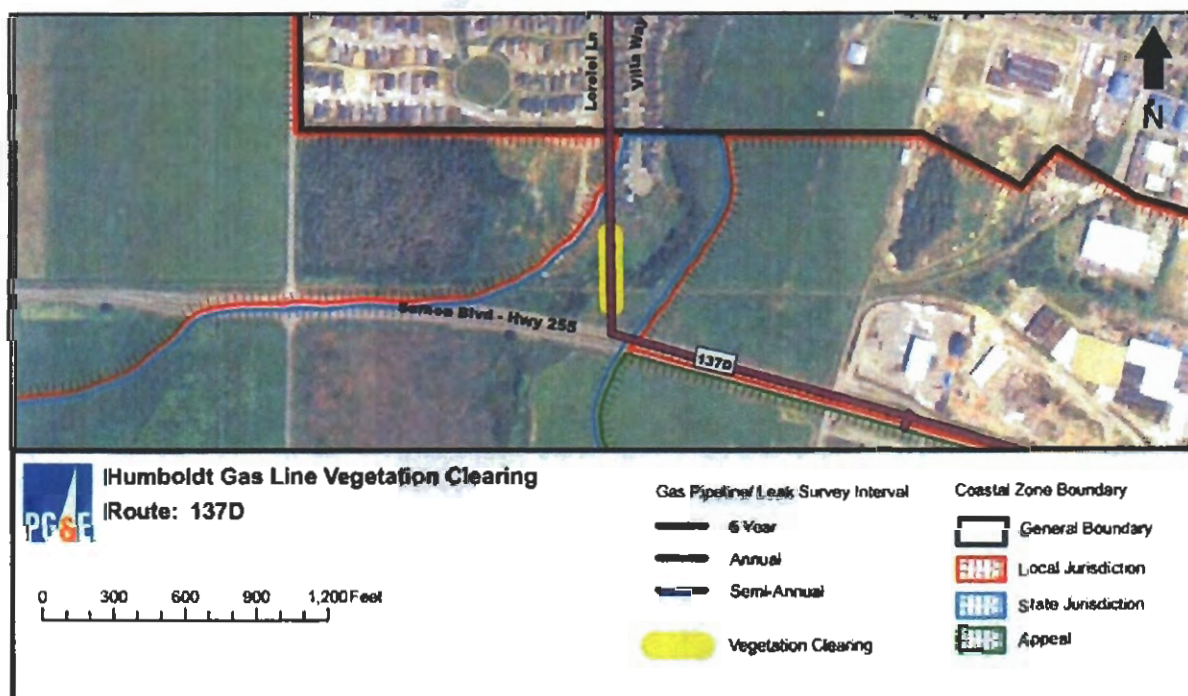


Figure 10 - Janes Creek

**Pacific Gas and Electric  
Humboldt County Coastal Zone  
Gas Line Right of Way Assessment 2011**

**Appendix A – Segment Photographs**



**Photo 1 - Route 13010-1 Fernbridge. Segment south of US Highway 101.**





**Photo 2 - Route 1311-01 Loleta. Segment east of US Highway 101.**



**Photo 3 - Route 1311-01 Loleta. Segment east of US Highway 101.**





**Photo 4 - Route 126A, 126B, 177A College of the Redwoods. Looking south from Hookton Road.**



**Photo 5 - Route 189.103 Humboldt Hill. Looking east from South Broadway.**



**Photo 6 - Route 137D Myrtle Ave. Looking north from substation.**



**Photo 7 - Route 137B Indianola Cutoff. Looking southwest across mowed field to start of clearing of dense blackberry.**





**Photo 8 - Route 137B Hwy 100 at Bracut. Looking southwest adjacent to Resale Lumber yard.**



**Photo 9 - Route 137B. Arcata Marsh.**



**Photo 10 - Route 137B. Arcata Marsh.**



**Photo 11 - Route 137B. Arcata Marsh.**





**Photo 12 - Route 137D Janes Creek. Looking north from State Route 255.**