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▲ PG&E Comments on Federal Plan to Expand Path 15

Pacific Gas and Electric Company released the following statement in response to today's announcement by the Department of Energy, directing the Western Area Power Authority (WAPA) to make upgrades to the congested section of the Path 15 transmission line in Central California:

"As more power plants come on-line in California and the Western states over the next few years, the transmission system needs to be enhanced to move the new power to where it's needed. The upgrades to be pursued by the Department of Energy will help to eliminate the congestion that currently exists, and provide additional room to move the output from the new power resources that are planned and under construction in the Western United States.

"We applaud the DOE's efforts to expand Path 15 in order to increase the flow of electricity between Northern and Southern California. The participation of the federal government in this upgrade will be of substantial benefit not only to California, but also to the entire Western grid, particularly in terms of significantly expediting the permitting process, as well as reducing the overall project cost.

"Clearly, in addition to California's retail electricity customers, there are several other groups that stand to benefit from increased Path 15 capacity - primarily municipally owned utilities, as well as federal and state agencies like the California Department of Water Resources and the Western Area Power Authority. Several times over the past decade, Pacific Gas and Electric Company has attempted to work with these groups on ways to fairly share the costs and benefits of any upgrade. However, in each case, these interests have declined to participate in upgrading Path 15, leaving the cost of making the upgrade to be born only by PG&E's retail customers. In at least one case, the California Public Utilities Commission determined the effort to upgrade Path 15 was uneconomic.

"In the meantime, the utility has made several low cost, high benefit upgrades to Path 15, which have successfully increased its capacity. Furthermore, earlier this year, the utility performed preliminary environmental studies that should help expedite the development of an upgrade of Path 15.

"Pacific Gas and Electric Company looks forward to working with the DOE and WAPA to accelerate the development of this needed transmission upgrade."