



**We Advocate Thorough Environmental Review**

P.O. Box 873, Mount Shasta, California 96067 \* (530) 918-8805 \* [mountshastawater@gmail.com](mailto:mountshastawater@gmail.com) \* [www.cawater.net](http://www.cawater.net)

April 10, 2019

Juliana Lucchesi, City Planner  
City of Mt. Shasta  
305 N. Mt. Shasta Blvd.  
Mt. Shasta, CA 96067  
[jlucchesi@mtshastaca.gov](mailto:jlucchesi@mtshastaca.gov)

sent via email

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Dear Planner Lucchesi,

We Advocate Thorough Environmental Review (W.A.T.E.R.) is a California 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation incorporated to promote quality local and regional planning, land use and development, as well as to preserve a healthy human and natural environment within the Siskiyou County area.

We are responding to a request for public comment on the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration For Sewer Interceptor Improvements Project. Please note there is one attachment and please acknowledge receipt of these documents.

**General Comments:**

1) Cumulative /Growth Inducing Impact: The Cumulative Impact Section 3.4 discusses the cumulative construction impacts of a number of utility projects (various sewer upgrades, water distribution work, electric power upgrades) but fails to address Growth Impacts. For example, the study ignores a very important cumulative impact of this project, that of development on the west side of I-5 north of Hatchery Lane. There are at least 35 acres of undeveloped property, and this project will provide a needed service and thus stimulus for development of that property. The potential growth-inducing impact of this development, along with its potential to have negative impacts to the downtown businesses, must be included in the IS/MND: The resulting analysis has the potential to impact many sections of this study (GHG, housing, air quality, traffic, etc.). We note that a 1985 court decision regarding this same property invalidated a CEQA analysis (needed for rezoning of the property), in part, because the impacts of development of the property had not been adequately addressed ([http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/cases/1988/shasta\\_020888.html](http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/cases/1988/shasta_020888.html)). The CDMS property is not the only potentially developable property (as noted in Section 4.13) that is not addressed in the IS/MND. We also note that we have called for this analysis in relation to other sewer projects, as noted in the attached letter of 2014, and in a letter of comment on the Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study, State Mandated Waste Water Treatment and Outfall Improvement Project, January 8, 2016. (See also comment #6).

2) Noticing: W.A.T.E.R. submitted a letter on this project in 2014, (see attached document) and explicitly requested that we be informed of any further development of this project: "Please keep us informed of all contracts, notices, hearings, staff reports, briefings, meetings, and other events related to the proposed Project" (last sentence in attached letter). Yet we were not notified when the "Notice of Availability and Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration by the City of Mt. Shasta City Council," was published in the paper on February 13, 2019, even though our contact information has not changed. We know that the City has had high turnover in the past five years but this does not relieve the City of the obligation to notify us properly. We only became aware of that notice on March 7, and would have had only one week to evaluate the document if the comment period had not been extended. We request that in the future we are contacted directly as we have requested: Please keep us informed of all contracts, notices, hearings, staff reports, briefings, meetings, and other events related to this proposed Project.

3) According to the terms of the Crystal Geysers Industrial Wastewater Permit, Crystal Geysers Water Company was to have completed the work on the interceptor section south of Ream by December 31, 2018, and their cost of so doing was to be reimbursed as a deduction to their hook up fee. While noting that the permit approval is being contested in court, we request that if CGWC does open in the future, they will pay the full hook up fee, and not be given any undue reduction for not having complied with the original agreement.

4) While the IS/MND mentions the Lassen substation and transmission line upgrades in the context of other construction projects in the vicinity, it fails to acknowledge and explore the opportunity to underground the transmission lines to increase the community's resilience to wild fire in conjunction with the interceptor line. Underground transmission lines could be installed in a coordinated project with the interceptor line (to save money), possibly even in the same trench that the interceptor line will be in, or in parallel trenches in the same area, dug at the same time. We find it extremely alarming that Pacific Power refuses to put the upgraded transmission lines underground, in spite of the fact that the area of these upgrades and the City are in Tier 3 ("extreme") wild fire hazard areas as designated by the CPUC itself. The CPUC defines Tier-3 as follows:

**"Tier 3 fire-threat areas depict areas where there is an extreme risk (including likelihood and potential impacts on people and property) *from utility associated wildfires.*"** (italic emphasis added). Mount Shasta City and the Lassen substation sit squarely in the middle of a Tier-3 area (see CPUC map below). Much of the rest of the County is designated "only" Tier-2 ("elevated" risk). **The CPUC has not yet approved Pacific Power's project.** There may still be time for the City to intervene and demand undergrounding of the transmission lines.

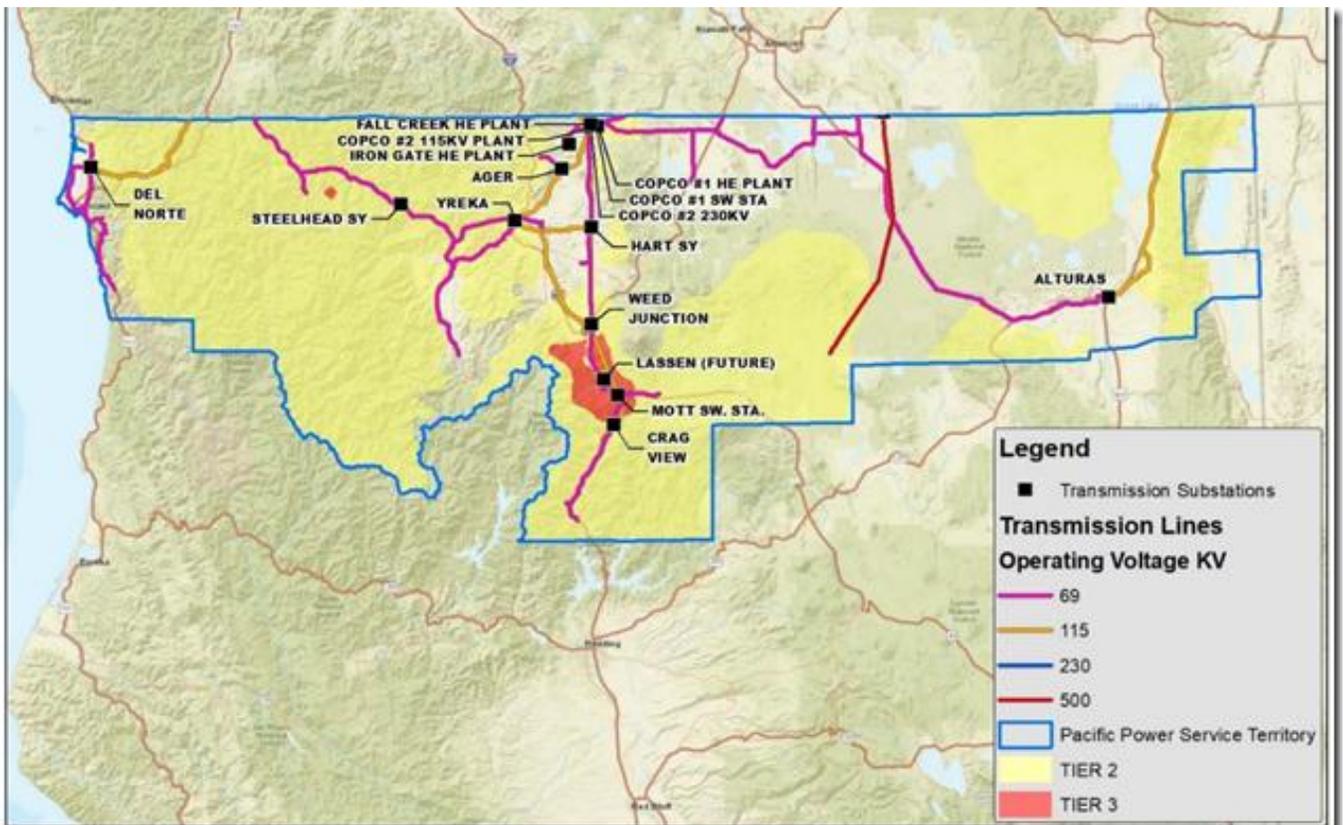


Figure 1 High Level Map of PacifiCorp's California Transmission Assets by Geographic Fire Tier

Source: <https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/firemap/>

**Specific Issues:**

5) Figure 1: The map of Figure 1 is totally inadequate to describe the project. For one thing, it is old, showing a high school where one is not; and not showing the I-5 north bound exit ramp to eastbound Lake Street. Whereas the map has overlaid upon it an outline of the project area, there are many features identified in the text that are not identified in Figure 1. Descriptions and construction plans for this project are very difficult to follow without being able to reference an excellent map. For example, identifiers for staging areas, temporary access road, permanent access road, current interceptor lines, the boundaries of the Morgan-Merrill Wetland Preserve, the segment of Cold Creek that traverses the Preserve from east to west, current easements, the Old Roseburg Mill, and many more, are essential for understanding the project. (Figure 2, an aerial/satellite view of the area, likewise is devoid of identifiers.)

6) Page 20-21: The pipe under I-5 will be repaired using a "cured-in-place pipe" process. The document does not state the diameter of the resulting pipe. Will this ultimately be another bottleneck that will cause sewer spills on W. Jesse Street east of I-5?

Numerous existing manholes will be "abandoned." How will these be treated?-- filled in, welded shut, completely removed? How much of the existing interceptor will be removed and what will be the fate of the removed material? How much of the existing pipe will be left in the ground and why?

7) Ozone: It is stated on page 43: "**Ozone.** CalEEMod does not directly calculate ozone emissions. Instead, the emissions associated with ozone precursors (ROG and NOX) are calculated. Because project construction would generate relatively low amounts of both ROG and NOx, the potential for ozone production/emissions is less than significant." The last sentence is a conjecture. It must be substantiated with the actual calculation of ozone production based on anticipated ROG and NOx levels. Without such a calculation, one cannot tell if ozone will exceed levels indicated in Table 4.3-1.

8) Housing study: On page 121, the following perplexing discussion occurs:

*"The Schlumpberger report acknowledges that upsizing the interceptor may allow for growth to occur, and implementation of the proposed Project could potentially indirectly foster development of vacant properties served by the City's public sewer system.*

*Although the total amount of vacant property in the City is not currently readily available, according to the City's 2014-2019 Housing Element, in 2014, there were about 120 vacant parcels totaling 585 acres in the City limits that were not served by public sewer and that could accommodate residential uses. There is undoubtedly additional commercial and industrial vacant property in the City's sewer service area that is not currently served by public sewer.*

*These properties have a range of zoning designations with various allowable densities and building intensities. Because of the wide range of allowable uses, projecting population growth or development density that may occur as a result of the proposed Project would be too speculative to allow a meaningful evaluation at this time. Whether the proposed Project would have a major influence on the development of adjacent undeveloped lands cannot be ascertained because there are many other factors that influence the density and timing of development (e.g., cost of installing water, electric, and gas infrastructure; cost of completing roadway improvements, regulatory controls, economic conditions, property owner decisions, and other market forces); it is not anticipated that the proposed Project would significantly influence development in the sewer service area; therefore, the proposed Project's potential growth-inducing impacts are less than significant."*

We note the following serious issues with the above statements:

The first paragraph acknowledges, based on a 2005 study, that the project has the potential to "indirectly foster development of vacant properties served by the City's public sewer system". However, that indirect development is inappropriately ignored throughout the IS/MND.

The second paragraph references a 2014 study that determined the number of vacant lots that could accommodate residential use, and acknowledges that there are additional commercial and industrial vacant properties that are not currently being served, and of course could be. However, there is no analysis of what and where these additional properties are, of what the potential is for these properties to be developed, and no study of their impacts.

The third paragraph describes (contrives) many reasons why the impact of the project on population growth and development density cannot be estimated, then concludes with the totally unsubstantiated statement that, "it is not anticipated that the proposed project would significantly influence development in the sewer service area: therefore, the proposed project's potential growth-inducing impacts are less than significant." The entire body of this paragraph is an argument for how the impacts cannot be (or

just weren't) determined, therefore the conclusion (or any conclusion) is unwarranted. The City must and needs to conduct a study concerning these growth inducing factors. See also comment #1.

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We offer these comments with a genuine interest in the development of a healthy local community, economy, and environment. We look forward to the City's response to our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geneva M. Omann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Geneva M. Omann  
Secretary of the Board of Directors  
We Advocate Thorough Environmental Review