



MENDOCINO COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

## NEWS RELEASE

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**Ukiah, California...**

### MENDOCINO COUNTY FILES MOTION TO INTERVENE REGARDING PG&E'S MENDOCINO WAVECONNECT PROJECT

The County of Mendocino has filed a Motion to Intervene in Pacific Gas & Electric's *Mendocino WaveConnect Project*. This action is urgently necessary and required because the proposed project is located geographically in the County's "backyard", in the waters and on land adjacent to the County's unparalleled and protectively developed coastline. While the County is certainly supportive of, and looks forward to, the possibility of a clean, renewable, energy source off its coastline, the potential for significant impacts to its coastal environment, its coastal communities and its economy, necessitates recognition of the County as a primary stake holder and participant as the Commission further considers PG&E's *Mendocino WaveConnect Project*. The County filed the intervention with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which has jurisdiction over these matters.

The County's coastline generates roughly twenty-five percent (25%) of the County's income in visitor services, tourist-related dollars, and tourism. No other party to this proceeding adequately represents the County's interests and the County only recently became aware that its interests are not adequately represented.

On February 27, 2007, Pacific Gas and Electric Company ("PG&E") filed an application for a preliminary permit for a project entitled *Mendocino WaveConnect Project*, located in Mendocino County, California. The objective of this project is to "demonstrate the feasibility of generating electric power from waves off the coast of Mendocino County, California. PG&E will obtain data and perform the acts required to determine the feasibility of a *large scale* wave energy project up to 40 MW in installed capacity, and to support an application for a *license* for

such a project.” At this time, pursuant to its application, PG&E’s proposed project includes installation of an unknown number of wave energy conversion devices that would float on the surface of the ocean anywhere from one-half to six miles offshore. These devices would be moored and anchored by power cables to an undersea junction box, to be connected by a 40-kilovolt-transmission line from the undersea junction box to appurtenant facilities located in or near the City of Fort Bragg, California.

Mendocino County is predominantly rural; approximately seventy percent (70%) of its 86,000 inhabitants live in the unincorporated areas of the County. Although PG&E’s application correctly asserts the City of Fort Bragg (“City”) is the only city with a population of 5,000 or more that lies within fifteen (15) miles of this wave energy project, and at is the preliminary proposed site of the project interconnect location, the proposed project potentially impacts the County’s entire 120 miles of coastline and its coastal populations for a number of reasons, necessitating the County’s intervention as a party to these proceedings.

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors Chair Kendall Smith emphasized that the County’s adjacent coastal waters also support an active fishing industry community located both in and around the City of Fort Bragg and spans the entire length of the Mendocino Coast. This includes commercial and recreational fishing, crabbing, kelp harvesting, boating and navigation and other sports. The impact to the County’s fishing industry alone, valued last year at \$5,763,048<sup>1</sup>, will undoubtedly have to be carefully examined and input from the fishing community seriously evaluated. PG&E does anticipate studying existing conditions to assess the potential effects of its project on three broad areas: marine life, use of sea space, and coastal processes. Its application covers a project four (4) miles wide in the east-west direction and seventeen (17) miles long in the north-south direction. Clearly, the project, the project assessment, and the project’s potential impact stretches beyond the confines of the City’s geographic boundaries and requires communication with, and participation by, the County as the project assessments are made and evaluated. Further, the County believes that it is highly likely that an impact in one area of its coastal waters will be readily transferred to adjacent areas of coastline by the actions of currents, patterns of marine migration, and channels of navigation.

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<sup>1</sup> Mendocino County Crop Report (2006).

“The County’s coastal resources are interconnected, fragile, and finite. The County believes its development must be undertaken only with extreme care, safe guarding both our economic and environmental resources,” stated Mendocino County Board Chair Kendall Smith.

Released by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Mitchell  
Chief Executive Officer