

FROM TOM LUSTER, CA COASTAL COMMISSION
WRITTEN PRESENTATION
READ BY PANEL AT TRANSPORTATION MEETING ON JUNE 24, 2020

PG&E will need a coastal development permit (CDP) from the County for the work on land and a CDP from the Commission for all decommissioning-related development activities below the ordinary high water mark -- e.g., removing all or part of the breakwater, discharge structure, etc. I expect PG&E will include its proposed barge transport or other alternative transport method(s) as part of that same CDP application.

Fundamentally, our review is meant to determine whether the proposed project is consistent with the coastal resource protection requirements of the Coastal Act's Chapter 3 and to determine whether the proposed activities are the least environmentally damaging alternative to conduct the project. For inwater construction or decommissioning activities, this could include identifying measures needed to avoid or minimize adverse effects to water quality and marine life -- for example, silt curtains to reduce turbidity, buffer requirements to avoid eelgrass, kelp, or other sensitive habitat, etc. We would also evaluate any inwater construction -- e.g., new piers, pilings, buoys, etc. -- to determine whether it represents the least environmentally damaging and feasible alternative.

If barge operations are determined to be the environmentally preferred alternative, our review could conceivably include identifying areas where the barges and their anchors should avoid (such as areas of eelgrass or kelp beds), possible timing restrictions and operational requirements to reduce potential impacts to marine mammals and other sensitive species, requirements related to spill prevention and response, and other similar measures. Regarding federal approvals, we often act on a CDP before a federal agency acts -- in this case, as part of a CDP approval, we would likely require that PG&E provide documentation of those federal approvals as a condition of allowing work to start.