Public Comment on PG&E's Proposed 2028–2037 Undergrounding Plan

Montclair, Oakland

To the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety,

Writing as a Montclair homeowner alongside my spouse, I respectfully request that the OEIS delay authorization of PG&E's 2028–2037 Undergrounding Proposal until the utility thoroughly accounts for local evacuation vulnerabilities.

Our core worry is simple: if a wildfire breaks out and utility poles tumble across our local corridors, can our household and neighbors successfully escape?

Our neighborhood features steep hillsides, dense canopies, narrow, twisting roadways, and very few exit points. Fleeing residents would be forced to compete directly with inbound emergency responders for the exact same pathways. Furthermore, a downed line or fallen pole on a secondary street could trap residents before they ever reach a primary artery, even if that main route remains unobstructed.

While grid hardening and public safety power shutoffs help mitigate ignition hazards, de-energizing a line does nothing to physically clear fallen poles or wires from the asphalt. Evacuation models must evaluate blocked pathways regardless of the fire's initial ignition source.

Working in construction, I understand how essential structural plans and logistical models are for managing complex projects, but I also know their conclusions are only as sound as the variables included. If road blockages and egress delays are left out of the equation, a favorable cost-benefit outcome fails to prove the remaining risk is safe.

Prior to granting approval, please require PG&E to complete the following measures:

- Analyze Montclair's entire interconnected road grid, focusing particularly on the minor feeder streets required to access primary evacuation routes.
- Model worst-case scenarios where severe gales, falling timber, and collapsed electrical infrastructure simultaneously obstruct multiple escape paths during a wildfire.
- Integrate the Oakland Fire Department's specific evaluations regarding local access and egress, detailing how those insights influence project timelines and priorities.
- Provide a fully transparent rationale for Montclair's priority ranking in the undergrounding schedule, including an accounting of analytical uncertainties and reasons for retaining any overhead assets.

I strongly support undergrounding in Montclair and want it weighed properly against the severe risks of losing emergency accessibility. Because undergrounding involves high costs and cannot eliminate all wildfire risks, a rigorous and transparent assessment is vital.
Our household, our community, and the firefighters rushing to our aid rely entirely on these roads. Before endorsing a plan that leaves overhead wires active for another decade, please mandate that PG&E explicitly demonstrate how it has mitigated the threat of blocked escape routes.

Sincerely,

Burak Kasapoglu

Montclair, Oakland, California