



## **Surfrider's Position Statement on PG&E Seismic Testing:**

The Surfrider Foundation strongly opposes Pacific Gas and Electric's (PG&E) plan to conduct seismic testing off the Central Coast because it will have major impacts to marine life and may expose ocean users to harmful noise levels. Surfrider questions the overall value of the project especially considering PG&E has failed to review existing onshore and offshore data to determine geologic hazards.

### **Impacts to Ocean Ecosystems**

Seismic testing will significantly impact ocean ecosystems. **Imagine a bomb exploding every 15 seconds, 24 hours a day, for weeks on end!** Massive sound blasts can either damage or kill marine wildlife including whales, dolphins, sea otters, turtles and other sensitive species. Gray whales will be migrating through the area in December.

Surfrider is also concerned about broader impacts to the newly developed network of Marine Protected Areas (MPA). The State of California spent nearly a decade working to establish MPA and seismic testing will greatly interfere with MPA productivity.

### **Impacts to Recreation**

Surfrider is equally concerned about potential impacts to ocean users. The Central Coast area between Cayucos and Oceano is very popular for ocean recreation. PG&E's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) states seismic testing can impact humans:

"The proposed offshore activities *would* expose persons present in the water to harmful noise levels..."

"Studies have shown that high levels of underwater noise can cause dizziness, hearing damage, or other sensitive organ damage to divers and swimmers, as well as indirect injury due to startle responses"

"Noise levels in excess of 154 dB re 1  $\mu$ Pa could be considered potentially harmful to recreational divers *and swimmers* in the Project area".

A map recently obtained from PG&E shows that dB levels could reach upward of 160 at some beaches. This is well over the threshold for human safety. Surfrider is troubled by PG&E's apparent disregard for the health and safety of ocean users.

### **Project is Unnecessary**

Several entities including PG&E, USGS, and the oil industry have already conducted seismic testing in the area. A former PG&E geologist and current USGS geologist concur that the proposed new surveys offers little prospect for any result beyond marginal improvement to what is already known. Further, new information is unlikely to change the worse case scenarios already being used to plan for geologic hazards.