

) **Effective to:** February 7, 2027

1. PANOCHE operates a peak demand electrical power generating facility located at 43883 West Panoche Road, Firebaugh, CA 93622
2. The subject equipment is one of four 100MW General Electric LMS100 natural gas-fired combustion turbine generators (CT-3) with water injection to the combustors, a selective catalytic reduction (SCR) system with ammonia injection, and an oxidation catalyst.
3. The operation of the subject equipment is authorized by duly issued District permits.

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BACKGROUND

Panoche Energy Center, LLC (PANOCHE) operates a 400 megawatt electric power generating facility consisting of four General Electric LMS100 natural gas-fired combustion turbine generators. All electric power generated at the facility, which first commenced commercial operation in mid-2009, is in accordance with a Power Purchase Agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), and the plant is dispatched solely at PG&E's direction. Each of the combustion turbine (CT) units utilize water injection, a selective catalytic reduction (SCR) system with ammonia injection, and an oxidation catalyst to control emissions. Exhaust gas from each turbine is routed through individual stacks. District Rules and PANOCHE permit conditions require them to certify, maintain, operate, and quality-assure a Continuous Emissions Monitoring System (CEMS) on each stack that is designed to continuously measure and record the NOx, CO, and O2 concentrations of the exhaust gas.

PANOCHE will be replacing the NOx, CO and O2 CEMS analyzers on CT-3 with new, like kind analyzers. The current analyzers are in proper working order but are becoming obsolete and PANOCHE is electing to replace now them to avoid future potential problems.

Once the new analyzers are installed, PANOCHE will calibrate the CEMS and begin collecting data. However, the CEMS data will not be valid until PANOCHE completes testing and certification of the new system, including a Relative Accuracy Test Audit (RATA), which is currently scheduled for the week of December 7, 2026.

RULE REQUIREMENTS

1. The equipment subject to this variance is regulated by the following District Rules:
 - A. 1080 – *Stack Monitoring*
 - B. 2070 – *Standards for Granting Applications*
 - C. 2201 – *New and Modified Stationary Source Review Rule*
 - D. 2520 – *Federally Mandated Operating Permits*
 - E. 4001 – *New Source Performance Standards*
 - F. 4703 – *Stationary Gas Turbines*
2. District Rules 1080, 2070, 2201, 2520, 4001, and 4703 require that the subject equipment be operated in accordance with the conditions of the applicable permits and have a certified CEMS.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Pursuant to California Health & Safety Code § 42352, the following findings have been made:

1. ***That the petitioner for a variance is, or will be, in violation of Section 41701 or of any rule, regulation, or order of the District.***

The Hearing Board finds that operation of CT-3 without a certified CEMS will result in a violation of applicable requirements of District Rules 1080, 2070, 2201, 2520, 4001, and 4703 in addition to the applicable conditions on the subject permits.

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2. ***That, due to conditions beyond the reasonable control of the petitioner, requiring compliance would result in either (1) an arbitrary or unreasonable taking of property, or (2) the practical closing and elimination of a lawful business.***

The Hearing Board finds it is beyond the reasonable control of PANOCHE to maintain a certified CEMS at all times when hardware gets old, becomes obsolete, and must be upgraded to ensure compliant operation in the future. After installation of the analyzers, PANOCHE will be operating out of compliance until the necessary testing is done to complete the certification process. However, they must continue to operate the facility in order to complete the testing. Requiring PANOCHE to remain in compliance is unreasonable and would effectively shut down the facility since the unit could not complete the necessary testing to certify the CEMS.

3. ***That the closing or taking would be without a corresponding benefit in reducing air contaminants.***

The Hearing Board finds that there will be no excess emissions associated with this variance. Therefore, the closing or taking will not have a corresponding benefit in reducing air contaminants.

4. ***That the applicant for the variance has given consideration to curtailing operations of the source in lieu of obtaining a variance.***

The Hearing Board finds that PANOCHE considered an operational curtailment. However, since no excess emissions are expected to occur and PANOCHE has contractual requirements to provide power to customers, an operational curtailment is not considered a reasonable alternative. Also, the certification process requires that the facility be operating under normal conditions.

5. ***During the period, the variance is in effect, that the applicant will reduce excess emissions to the maximum extent feasible.***

The Hearing Board finds that no excess emissions are expected to occur as a result of the variance activities, nor is any relief being sought from the applicable emission limits.

6. ***During the period the variance is in effect, that the applicant will monitor or otherwise quantify emission levels from the source, if requested to do so by the District, and report these emissions levels to the District pursuant to a schedule established by the District.***

The Hearing Board finds that it is not expected that excess emissions will occur. During the variance period, PANOCHE will perform a probationary calibration error test and operate the CEMS with the new multi-point sample probe. The collected data will be conditionally valid until the CEMS can be fully certified and the records will be available to the District for review.

CONCLUSIONS AND ORDER

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NOW, THEREFORE, the CENTRAL REGION HEARING BOARD ORDERS that a short variance be granted to PANOCHE, subject to the following conditions:

1. The requested short variance would be from November 9, 2026, through February 7, 2027. If granted, the variance would allow PANOCHE to operate CT-3 without a certified CEMS while the new analyzers are installed and the CEMS recertified.
2. Relief shall be granted from the requirements of the applicable sections of District Rules 1080, 2070, 2201, 2520, 4001, and 4703, in addition to the following permit conditions:

C-7220-0-2	Condition 5
C-7220-3-5	Conditions 36, 37
3. The variance shall allow the continued operation of CT-3 without a certified CEMS until it can be certified per the applicable parts of the Code of Federal Regulations.
4. The variance shall end upon completion of the certification.
5. This variance does not grant relief for excess emissions during the variance period.
6. Notwithstanding the protection granted by this variance pending full certification, a failed RATA will not be granted variance protection and the District may take enforcement action upon failure.
7. At the conclusion of this variance, PANOCHE must be in compliance with all their permit conditions and applicable District Rules. If PANOCHE will not achieve compliance prior to conclusion of this variance they must contact the District as soon as practicable and before the variance period ends
8. A Federal Title V deviation report shall be submitted to the District within 10 days of discovery each time a Federal Title V permit condition is violated. It should be noted that multiple deviation reports may need to be submitted during this variance period. The deviation report must be sent to the facility inspector.
9. Should the facility experience operational conditions likely to cause a public nuisance, PANOCHE shall cease operations causing the problems and take all necessary actions to abate the problem immediately.
10. By February 22, 2027, or no later than 15 calendar days after the CEMS is certified, whichever occurs first, PANOCHE shall submit to the District a summary report. If the report due date should fall on a day the District is closed, it shall be due the next business day. The report shall include the following:
 - A. A summary of all activities undertaken during the variance period,
 - B. Date of the RATA (results can be submitted at a later date), and
 - C. The required certification of truth and accuracy, and completeness, signed by the designated responsible official of the facility, as required by Sections 9.13.1 and 10.0 of District Rule 2520 – *Federally Mandated Operating Permits*.

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11. The end of variance summary report shall be submitted to the attention of:

Shannon Moore
SJVAPCD, Compliance Department
1990 E. Gettysburg Avenue
Fresno, CA 93726
Telephone: (559) 230-5874
E-mail: shannon.moore@valleyair.org

12. Failure to comply with any condition of this variance may render the variance null and void with the possibility of enforcement action taken that may include monetary penalties.

MOTION: Robertson **SECOND:** Dr. Goodwin

Ayes: Soldani, Mulligan, Hartwig, Dr. Goodwin, Robertson
Noes: None
Abstained: None
Recused: None
Absent: None

THE FOREGOING DECISION IS APPROVED:

Signed by:


Daniel Hartwig, Chair
Hearing Board – Central Region
San Joaquin Valley APCD

10/23/2026

Date

ATTEST:

Signed by:


Katrina Rojas, Deputy Clerk to the Boards

10/23/2026

Date



San Joaquin Valley

AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

PROOF OF SERVICE

I, Lien Vong, declare:

I am a resident of the State of California and over the age of 18 years, and not a party to the within action; my business address is San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, 1990 E. Gettysburg, Fresno, California 93726.

On October 26, 2026, I served the within documents:

ORDER GRANTING A VARIANCE – **DOCKET No. C-26-15S**

☒ by placing the document(s) listed above in a sealed envelope, and placing the same for mailing in the United States mail at Fresno, California, in accordance with the company's ordinary practices, and addressed as set forth below.

☒ based on an agreement of the parties with email addresses below, to accept service by transmitting via email the above listed document(s) to the email addresses set forth below on this date before 5 p.m.

_____ by personally delivering the document(s) listed above to the person(s) at the address(s) set forth below:

David Fisher
Panoche Energy Center, LLC
43833 W. Panoche Road
Firebaugh, CA 93622
david.fisher@naes.com

Roshni Brahmhatt
USEPA Region IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901
AEO_R9@epa.gov

CARB – Enforcement Division
PO Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95814
variance@arb.ca.gov

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on October 26, 2026, at Fresno, California.

Lien Vong
Office Assistant II

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