

COVER SHEET

Project Title: Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement

Lead Agencies: California Public Utilities Commission (State) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Federal).

Location: Los Angeles County, California

Abstract: Southern California Edison (SCE) applied for a Special Use Authorization (Forest Service) and Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) to construct, operate, and maintain a new 25.6-mile 500-kV transmission line between the existing Antelope and Pardee Substations in northern Los Angeles County, California. The proposed Project/Action (proposed Project) route would be constructed within an existing 66-kV right-of-way (ROW) for 22.8 miles, of which 17.5 miles would be widened. Approximately 12.6 miles of the proposed Project is located on National Forest System (NFS) lands within the Angeles National Forest (ANF) and would be located in a designated utility corridor. The 500-kV transmission line would initially operate at 220 kV, and would serve to reduce the existing loading on the Antelope-Mesa 220-kV transmission line, which is currently susceptible to thermal overloading. The proposed Project would include removal of 17.5 miles of an existing 66-kV line, a 33-acre expansion of the Antelope Substation, 220-kV substation improvements, relocation of three 1,000-foot, double-circuit 66-kV line sections currently located southwest of the Antelope Substation to a new ROW, and relocation of an existing 12-kV circuit located on one side of the Antelope-Pole Switch 74 66-kV line in the Antelope area. The proposed Project would also include the construction of two telecommunication paths between the Antelope and Pardee substations, where the primary path would use the existing SCE infrastructure and the secondary path would be provided by Optical Ground Wire installed on the new transmission towers. This EIR/EIS evaluates the impacts of the proposed Project and a range of alternatives, including the No Project/Action Alternative. Alternate transmission routes are analyzed, including an alternative that largely avoids NFS lands, alternate construction methods (including underground construction), and alternate tower types. The primary environmental resource issues analyzed in this document are potential effects on (1) forest management activities, including wildland fire fighting, (2) biological resources, (3) land use and recreation, (4) visual resources, and (5) cultural resources. The need for a Forest Land Management Plan amendment that would modify the Scenic Integrity Objectives along the transmission route, address the need to reroute the location of the Saugus-Del Sur Utility Corridor for certain alternatives, and avoid establishing nonconforming land uses within the viewshed of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail is considered.

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Comments: Comments on the Draft EIR/EIS must be submitted to the CPUC/USDA Forest Service at the address provided above by September 16, 2006, which represents the end of the 45-day public review and comment period.

Reviewers should provide the Forest Service with their comments during the review period of the draft environmental impact statement. This will enable the Forest Service to analyze and respond to the comments at one time and to use information acquired in the preparation of the final environmental impact statement, thus avoiding undue delay in the decisionmaking process. Reviewers have an obligation to structure their participation in the National Environmental Policy Act process so that it is meaningful and alerts the agency to the reviewers' position and contentions. Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived if not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement. City of Angoon v. Hodel (9th Circuit, 1986) and Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Comments on the draft environmental impact statement should be specific and should address the adequacy of the statement and the merits of the alternatives discussed (40 CFR 1503.3).

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