

## **F. Public Participation and Notification**

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Public involvement provides an opportunity to involve concerned citizens, agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders in the environmental review process. The public participation and notification processes for the proposed Project focus on two areas of CEQA and NEPA: (1) Public Scoping and (2) Draft EIR public review. This section describes the outreach methods that were used for this Project.

### **F.1 Notices of Preparation and Intent**

The CPUC issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed Project on June 24, 2005. Consistent with CEQA (State Guidelines § 15082), the NOP summarized the proposed Project, stated the CPUC's intention to prepare a joint EIR/EIS, and requested comments from interested parties. The NOP was filed with the State Clearinghouse on June 28, 2005 (SCH# 2005061161), which began a 30-day comment period. The review period for the NOP ended on July 29, 2005. Seventy-seven (77) copies of the NOP were distributed to federal, State, regional, and local agencies, and elected officials. Seven additional copies of the NOP were delivered to the local repository sites.

The Forest Service issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) for the proposed Project, which was published in the *Federal Register* on June 28, 2005. Consistent with NEPA (40 CFR 1501.7), the NOI serves as the official legal notice that a federal agency is commencing preparation of an EIS. The *Federal Register* serves as the United States Government's official noticing and reporting publication.

The NOP and NOI are found in Appendix 2 of this EIR/EIS.

### **F.2 Scoping Process**

The scoping process for the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Line Project EIR/EIS consisted of four main elements, which are listed below.

- 1) Publish a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR and a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS, which marked the beginning of the 30-day scoping period (Section F.1), announced public scoping meetings, and solicited comments from affected public agencies and members of the public.
- 2) Conduct public scoping meetings and meetings with agencies.
- 3) Summarize scoping comments in a Scoping Report.
- 4) Establish an Internet web site, electronic mail address, a telephone hotline, and local EIR/EIS Information Repositories.

The scoping process was intended to allow interested parties to express their concerns regarding the proposed Project, thereby ensuring that relevant opinions and comments are considered in the environmental analysis. Scoping is an effective way to solicit and address the environmental concerns of the public, affected agencies, and other interested parties. Members of the public, relevant federal, State, regional and local agencies, interests groups, community organizations, and other interested parties may participate in the scoping process by providing comments or recommendations regarding issues to be investigated in the EIR/EIS.

In addition to the purpose of informing the public about the proposed Project, the scoping process is also meant to achieve the following: (1) identify potentially significant environmental impacts for consideration in

the EIR/EIS; (2) identify possible mitigation measures for consideration in the EIR/EIS; (3) identify alternatives to the proposed Project for evaluation in the EIR/EIS; and (4) compile a mailing list of public agencies and individuals interested in future Project meetings and notices.

### F.2.1 Scoping Meetings

Public meeting notices were prepared that provided a brief description of the Project, information on the meeting locations, information on where to send comments, contact information, and the duration of the public comment period. The date and location of the public scoping meetings were also advertised in five local newspapers. The advertisements provided a brief synopsis of the Project and encouraged attendance at the meetings to share comments on the Project. The meeting advertisements were placed in the following newspapers:

- *Antelope Valley Press* on June 26, 2005
- *Daily News* on June 26, 2005
- *Los Angeles Times, Valley Edition* on June 26, 2005
- *The Signal* on June 26, 2005
- *Agua Dulce/Acton Country Journal* on July 9, 2005

As part of the public scoping process, two public scoping meetings were held to present information to the public on the Project and to take public comments on the scope and content of this EIR/EIS, as well as alternatives and mitigation measures to be considered. The following public scoping meetings were held prior to selection of alternatives to be analyzed in this EIR/EIS:

- June 29, 2005, at 6:30 p.m. at the Desert Inn Hotel, Lancaster, California
- July 14, 2005, at 6:30 p.m. at the City of Santa Clarita Activities Center, Santa Clarita, California

### F.2.2 Scoping Report Summary

In August 2005, a comprehensive Scoping Report was issued, summarizing issues and concerns received from the public and various agencies. A total of 13 written comments were submitted and nine individuals presented verbal comments during the public scoping meetings. In addition, 21 phone messages were received on the Project hotline (661-215-5152).

The specific issues raised during the public scoping process are summarized below according to the following major themes:

- Human Environment Issues and Concerns
- Physical Environment Issues and Concerns
- Alternatives

#### Human Environmental Issues and Concerns

The majority of public comments focused on the potential effect of the Project on the human environment, most often expressing concerns with health risks arising from changes in electric and magnetic fields (EMF), visual and scenic impacts to private property, and the potential for noise and environmental justice impacts.

- **EMF-Related Health and Safety Issues.** The potential impacts of EMFs from the proposed Project and proximity of the Project to residences were some of the key concerns. Some members of the public would like to see SCE assume responsibility for the potential EMF impacts that may be caused from the proposed Project. Other comments stated that EMFs would significantly increase as a result of the Project.

- **Visual and Aesthetic Impacts.** Concerns were expressed regarding the potential aesthetic impacts of the Project on private properties. The concerns centered on the potential decrease in property values and the potential for the Project to limit use of private lands for business purposes (Movie Ranch) where aesthetics of the land play an important role.
- **Operational Noise Impacts.** A number of residents expressed concerns with the crackling noise (corona noise) caused by the current transmission lines, and are concerned about the increase of noise that would result from the proposed Project. A number of residents stated that the crackling noise is a nuisance to them and to the surrounding community.
- **Environmental Justice.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) expressed concerns regarding the environmental population within the geographic area of the Project. The agency recommends that if environmental justice is an issue, that the Draft EIR/EIS address the potential for disproportionate adverse impacts to minority and low-income populations.

### Physical Environmental Issues and Concerns

Public agencies and residents expressed concerns with the potential impacts that the Project may have on the physical environment, particularly to air quality, biological, cultural, geological, hazardous materials and hazardous wastes, hydrological and recreation resources, and traffic and transportation. In addition, some comments focused on the impacts to public service that would occur from the proposed Project.

- **Air Quality.** The USEPA requested that a full discussion of ambient air conditions, National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), criteria pollutant in non-attainment areas, and potential air quality impacts be conducted for the proposed Project and for each fully evaluated alternative. In addition, the agency requested a discussion of construction-related impacts.
- **Biological Resources Issues.** Most of the concerns addressed the possible effects of the proposed Project on wildlife movement and corridors, and the potential disruption to sensitive habitat, including the Antelope Valley Poppy Preserve. Consideration of sensitive habitats and appropriate mitigation measures to compensate for potential impacts, such as conservation easements, was requested. Other concerns included the potential increase and invasion of noxious and exotic plant species from soil disturbance into sensitive areas as a result of the proposed Project. It was requested that the Forest Service not use herbicides in their attempt to manage noxious and exotic plants, as this would impact biological resources in the near future. It was further requested that the Draft EIR/EIS identify all petitioned and listed threatened and endangered species, and critical habitats that might occur within the Project area, as well as compliance with Executive Order 13112 (Invasive Species).
- **Cultural Resources Issues.** Comments centered on the need to conduct a thorough analysis of the potential impacts on archeological resources. It was requested that a site evaluation be part of the environmental analysis process, and not be considered as a mitigation measure.
- **Geology and Soils.** Concerns were expressed regarding the Project's potential to affect soil resources and the geology of the area. More specifically, the potential of the Project construction to cause soil erosion in private property and cause soil compaction in farmlands.
- **Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste.** Hazardous waste impacts from construction and operation equipment was a concern. It was requested that the Draft EIR/EIS identify potential hazardous waste types and volumes, and expected disposal and management plans.
- **Hydrology and Water.** A complete evaluation of the potential impacts to water resources and water quality was requested, specifically, the need for the Project to comply with the appropriate permits and regulations, including SWRCB, and Section 404 and 303 (d) of the CWA.
- **Recreation Resources.** Concerns were expressed regarding the potential of the proposed transmission line to impact recreation facilities, specifically recreation trails, within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County. A thorough analysis of recreation resources in the EIR/EIS was requested.
- **Transportation and Traffic.** Public agency comments expressed significant concern regarding the impact to transportation and traffic during the Project construction and maintenance. Specifically, potential effects to the nearby residents from utility vehicles accessing the Project towers and power lines. In addition, the potential of the proposed Project to cross major transportation corridors.

- **Utilities and Public Service Systems.** The potential of the transmission lines to cause disruption of home receivers, such as radio, television, and cellular phones was a concern. It was requested that a full analysis be conducted and measures be identified to reduce potential impacts.

## Alternatives

Many of the comments received focused on providing alternatives to the proposed Project. Specifically, the possibility of utilizing tubular steel poles instead of lattice steel towers, exploring other routes for the proposed transmission line, and placing the line underground for portions of the proposed route.

- **Tubular Steel Poles.** The possibility of using tubular steel poles as an alternative to the proposed lattice towers was identified, as residents are concerned with the aesthetic impacts that may result from the lattice towers and believe that tubular steel poles will have less of an impact than the proposed towers. In addition, some comments stated that tubular steel poles may have the potential to decrease EMFs in the area.
- **Alternate Routes.** Discontent with the proposed transmission line route was expressed. Comments focused on realigning the proposed route, specifically between the proposed towers T-102 and T-105 to avoid proximity to home and orchard sites, rerouting the alignment away from an existing film-production ranch, and developing an alternative that maximizes avoidance of National Forest System land and existing and planned development along the proposed Project route.
- **Underground Construction.** Consideration of burying or undergrounding a portion of the line or along the entire route was requested. Specifically, burying the line adjacent to the Northpark neighborhood and through sensitive habitat.

## F.3 Notices of Completion and Availability

Per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15085, the Notice of Completion (NOC) is a document that must be filed with the State Clearinghouse, Office of Planning and Research, as soon as the Draft EIR is completed. The NOC should include: a description of the proposed Project, including location; the address where copies of the Draft EIR are available for review; and the review period during which public comments may be received. The CEQA Lead Agency shall also provide public notice of the availability of the Draft EIR at the same time it sends the NOC to the State Clearinghouse (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15087). In addition to the information disclosed in the NOC, the Notice of Availability (NOA) should also include details for any scheduled public meetings or hearings (date, time, and place); a list of significant environmental effects; and whether the project site is listed under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (hazardous waste facilities).

In compliance with NEPA (40 CFR 1506.6(b)(2)), a NOA of the Draft EIS must also be published in the *Federal Register*, thus beginning the public comment period. The NOA should be mailed to the USEPA, which is required to review all EISs; the USEPA is also responsible for publishing the NOA once it is received (40 CFR 1506.9, 1506.10).

## F.4 Draft EIR/EIS Public Hearings/Meetings

There will be a 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR/EIS, which is scheduled from August 4, 2006, to September 18, 2006. During the public review period, public meetings will be held at the dates and times indicated in the Notice of Availability.

## F.5 Document Repository Sites

Placing documents in repository sites is an effective way of providing ongoing information about the project to a large number of people. The CEQA/NEPA documents prepared as part of the proposed Project, which include the NOP, NOI, NOA, and Draft EIR/EIS, were made available at the following public repository sites:

<b>Repository Site</b>	<b>Address</b>
<b>Lancaster Area</b>	
City of Lancaster	44933 N. Fern Avenue, Lancaster, CA 93534
Lancaster Public Library	601 W. Lancaster Blvd., Lancaster, CA 93534
Antelope Valley Chamber of Commerce	554 W. Lancaster Blvd., Lancaster, CA 93534
<b>Palmdale Area</b>	
Quartz Hill Library	42018 N. 50th St. W., Quartz Hill, CA 93536-3509
Littlerock Library	35119 80th Street East, Littlerock, CA 93543-9702
Palmdale City Library	700 East Palmdale Blvd., Palmdale, CA 93550
Lake Los Angeles Library	16921 E. Ave. O, #A, Palmdale, CA 93550
Palmdale Chamber of Commerce	817 E. Ave Q-9, Palmdale, CA 93550
Palmdale City Hall	38300 Sierra Highway, Palmdale, CA 93550
<b>Angeles National Forest Area</b>	
Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger Station	30800 Bouquet Canyon Road, Saugus, CA 91390
ANF Supervisor's Office	701 N. Santa Anita Ave., Arcadia, CA 91006
<b>Santa Clarita Area</b>	
City of Santa Clarita City Hall	23920 Valencia Blvd., Santa Clarita, CA 91355
Canyon Country JoAnn Darcy Library	18601 Soledad Canyon Rd., Canyon Country, CA 91351
Newhall Library	22704 W. 9th Street, Newhall, CA 91321
Valencia Library	23743 W. Valencia Blvd., Valencia, CA 91355
Santa Clarita Community Center	24406 San Fernando Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91321

A telephone hotline for project information has been established at (661) 215-5152. This number receives voice messages and faxes.

EIR/EIS information, including proposed Project information, the environmental review process, and the Draft EIR/EIS will be posted on the Internet at:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspen/antelopepardee/antelopepardee.htm>

This site is used to post public documents during the environmental review process and to announce upcoming public meetings.

## **F.6 Document Distribution List**

Notices regarding the availability of environmental documents, such as the NOP, NOI, NOA, and Draft EIR/EIS, were mailed to approximately 3,423 addresses, including community organizations, interest groups, and property owners in the vicinity of the proposed Project route.