

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

May 4, 2009

Donald Johnson  
Project Manager  
Southern California Edison  
2131 Walnut Grove Ave.  
Rosemead, C 911770

RE: SCE Antelope-Pardee 500 kV Transmission Project, Segment 1 – Variance Request #42

Dear Mr. Johnson,

On April 28, 2009, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance requesting that a disturbance area approved under Variance #2 (Item 1) be expanded to include an additional 95 feet by 150 feet space or 14,250 square feet for use as a wire stringing site (WSS 13) for Structure 26A on Section 1 of the subject project, Los Angeles County. **This Variance Request is approved by CPUC for the proposed activities based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

SCE is requesting that Item 1 in approved Variance #2 be amended to include an additional 95 feet by 150 feet space or 14,250 square feet for use as a wire stringing site (WSS) for Structure 26A. An existing WSS is located approximately 400 feet east of new Tower 25, at the end of Kathleen Street Court in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The previously approved space will increase from 120 feet by 120 feet or 14,400 square feet, to a total of 28,650 square feet of temporary disturbance area. The expanded work area is necessary for ensuring worker safety when stringing wire from Construction Tower 25 to Construction Tower 26A.

- **Biological Resources.** Biological surveys were conducted on April 7, 2009, by SCE's biological subcontractor. Transects approximately 30 feet apart were walked within the impact area to visually search for focus species. An additional 500-foot buffer from the limits of proposed ground-disturbing work was also surveyed for nests. All plant and wildlife species observed were identified and documented. The vegetation community is disturbed coastal sage scrub consisting primarily of fourwing saltbrush (*Atriplex canescens*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), chaparral mallow (*Malacothammus fasciculatus*), short-pod mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), redstem filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), and cryptantha (*Cryptantha* sp.). The site is located within the mouth of a narrow canyon, and the topography is flat to slightly sloping. An active red-tailed hawk nest has been identified in a tower approximately 500 feet from WSS 13. To avoid impacting the nesting birds, a biological monitor shall ensure that the nesting behavior of the red-tailed hawks is not affected during wire stringing operations. The helicopter pilot shall be informed of the location of the nest in order to maintain a maximum buffer. No other target special status wildlife or plant species were found during the biological survey, nor were any bird nests within 300 feet of the work area located. No significant impacts to biological resources are anticipated with the implementation of the conditions noted below.
- **Cultural & Paleontological Resources.** SCE submitted a report by Cogstone Resource Management Inc. titled *Supplemental Archaeological and Paleontological Assessment, Segment 1, Section 1, Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project – Variance for Increased Disturbance Space at WSS 13, Los Angeles County, California* dated March 2009. Archaeological and historical

background contexts were developed for Segment 1 of the TRTP by ECORP Consulting, Inc. (Ahmet et al. 2006). The proposed project area is undeveloped and has no known historic uses. A search for archeological and historic records for Segment 1 of the TRTP was also conducted by ECORP Consulting, Inc. (Ahmet et al. 2006). ECORP consulted the South Central Coastal Information Center, the Angeles National Forest Heritage Resources Section, the National Register of Historic Places, the California Inventory of Historic Resources, California Points of Historical Interest and the California Historical Landmarks. The proposed project area falls within the one-mile search radius and no cultural resources are known.

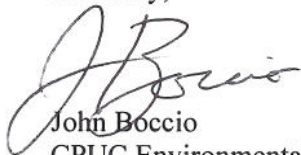
The sediments surrounding WSS 13 are of the Mint Canyon Formation. The Mint Canyon Formation consists primarily of lake and river deposits of up to 5,900 feet thick. This formation is known to be highly sensitive for paleontological resources (Fig. 5g in Scott and Gust 2008). Terrestrial fossils recovered indicate a Barstovian (15.5 – 11.8 million years ago) to Clarendonian (11.8 – 9 million years ago) land mammal age. In addition, immediately adjacent to WSS 13 is the Castaic formation where numerous fossil localities have been located during monitoring for Segment 1 of the TRTP. Some seven localities have been recorded within the Castaic formation. On March 20, 2009, Cogstone Resource Management conducted a survey of the proposed project area. The survey consisted of one person walking the project areas while closely inspecting the ground surface. Due to the small size of the survey areas, transects were walked at 5 meter intervals. The survey area consisted of a 95 foot by 150 foot space. No artifacts were observed, nor were fossils observed. Due to the highly sensitive paleontological sediments that are known throughout the proposed project area, full-time paleontological monitoring of earthmoving activities is required. No significant impacts to cultural or paleontological resources are anticipated with the implementation of the conditions noted below.

**The conditions noted below shall be met by SCE and its contractors:**

- All project mitigation measures, compliance plans, and permit conditions shall be implemented during construction activities. Some measures are on-going/time-sensitive requirements and shall be implemented prior to and during construction where applicable.
- Biological surveys shall be re-conducted and results submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to equipment and vehicles mobilizing to the project area. After complete surveys have been submitted and approved by the CPUC, site occupation can occur; however, if occupation does not occur within seven calendar days of survey submittals, biological clearance sweeps shall be conducted prior to site occupation, including nesting bird surveys.
- SCE has assigned Biological Monitors to the Project. They are responsible for ensuring that impacts to special-status species, native vegetation, wildlife habitat, or unique resources are minimized to the fullest extent possible. The Biological Monitor shall be on-site to monitor all work and shall conduct sweeps of the approved areas which will be impacted. If breeding birds with active nests are found, a biological monitor shall establish a 300-foot buffer around the nest and no activities will be allowed within the buffer until the young have fledged from the nest or the nest fails. The 300-foot buffer may be adjusted to reflect existing conditions including ambient noise and disturbance only with the approval of the CDFG and/or USFWS (Please note that the CPUC must be notified prior to the onset of construction). The biological monitor shall conduct regular monitoring of the nest to determine success/failure and to ensure that project activities are not conducted within the buffer until the nesting cycle is complete or the nest fails. If nesting birds move into the work area SCE will monitor the nest to ensure that their activities do not result in the loss or failure of the nest. A preliminary 300-foot buffer area around the nest will be established and SCE shall coordinate with the CPUC, CDFG and/or USFWS.

- To avoid impacting the active red-tailed hawk nest that has been identified in a tower approximately 500 feet from WSS 13, a biological monitor shall ensure that the nesting behavior of the red-tailed hawks is not affected during wire stringing operations. The helicopter pilot shall be informed of the location of the nest in order to maintain a maximum buffer.
- Due to the highly sensitive paleontological sediments that are known throughout the proposed project area, full-time paleontological monitoring of earthmoving activities is required.
- If unanticipated cultural discoveries occur, work must halt in the immediate vicinity until the find can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist to determine if it meets significance criteria under CEQA.
- After use, all areas proposed under this Variance shall be completely restored to preexisting conditions in accordance with approved project restoration plans.
- If construction debris or spills enter into environmentally sensitive areas, the jurisdictional agencies and CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.
- If not already provided, copies of all landowner agreements/lease agreements shall be submitted to the CPUC prior to use.
- Prior to the commencement of construction activities, all crew personnel including crane, haul truck and concrete truck drivers shall be appropriately WEAP trained on environmental issues including protocols for air quality, hazardous materials, biological resources, known and unanticipated cultural materials, as well as SWPPP BMPs. A log shall be maintained on-site with the names of all crew personnel trained.
- All work boundaries shall be flagged prior to construction. No movement or staging of construction vehicles or equipment shall be allowed outside of the approved areas.
- Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be implemented at all times during the use of the project area, as will Best Management Practices. Implementation of all necessary erosion control devices will be properly installed and maintained throughout the duration of project area use. A copy of the SWPPP will be available on-site for reference.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, and this Variance shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities where applicable.

Sincerely,



John Boccio  
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen