

3. Introduction to the Initial Study

3.1 Proposed Project Overview

Southern California Edison Company (SCE), a regulated California utility, filed an application with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on November 15, 2012, for a Permit to Construct (PTC) the Banducci Substation Project (Proposed Project). On June 17, 2014, SCE submitted an Amended Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) to the CPUC. The application and Amended PEA were deemed complete by the CPUC on July 15, 2014.

SCE is proposing to construct the Proposed Project, which would include the following components:

- Construction of a new Banducci 66/12 kilovolt (kV) Substation,
- Construction of two new 66 kV subtransmission lines segments that would loop into the existing Correction-Cummings–Kern River #1 66 kV subtransmission line,
- Construction of three new underground 12 kV distribution getaways, and
- Installation of telecommunication facilities to connect the proposed Banducci Substation to SCE's existing telecommunications system.

SCE's project objectives include adding sufficient additional substation capacity to the Electrical Needs Area (ENA), as well as three additional 12 kV distribution circuits, to increase capacity and meet current and projected load growth in the Cummings Valley, specifically in the communities of Bear Valley Springs and Stallion Springs. Additional details on the objectives appear in Section 4 (Project Description), specifically in Section 4.9.1 (Project Objectives).

3.2 Environmental Analysis

3.2.1 CEQA Process

This Initial Study (IS) has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the amended State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.), and the CPUC CEQA rules (Rule 2.4). The purpose of the Initial Study is to inform the decision-makers, responsible agencies, and the public of the Proposed Project, the existing environment that would be affected by the project, the environmental effects that would occur if the project is approved, and proposed mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce environmental effects.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) has been prepared based on the assessment of potential environmental impacts identified in the IS. All potentially significant impacts associated with the project can be mitigated to a level below significance; therefore, an MND can be adopted by the CPUC in accordance with Section 21080 of the Public Resources Code and CEQA Guidelines Section 15070.

3.2.2 CEQA Lead Agency

The CPUC is the lead agency for review of the project under CEQA because it must make a decision whether to adopt the MND and to approve or deny the PTC.

3.2.3 Initial Study

The IS presents an analysis of potential effects of the Proposed Project on the environment. The IS relies on information from SCE's Amended PEA and associated submittals, site visit, CPUC data requests, and additional research.

Construction activities and project operation could have direct and indirect impacts on the environment. The following environmental parameters are addressed based on the potential effects of the Proposed Project and potential growth-inducing or cumulative effects of the Proposed Project in combination with other projects:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gases
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Traffic and Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Corona and Induced Current Effects
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

The IS has been organized into the following sections:

- Section 3: Introduction to the Initial Study. Provides an introduction and overview describing the Proposed Project and the CEQA process.
- Section 4: Project Description. Presents the project objectives and provides an in-depth description of the Proposed Project, including construction details and methods.
- Section 5: Initial Study: Environmental Analysis and Mitigation. Includes a description of the existing conditions and analysis of the Proposed Project's potential environmental impacts, and identifies mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels.
- Section 6: Mitigation Monitoring Plan. Includes applicant proposed measures (APMs) and mitigation measures that SCE must implement as part of the project, actions required to implement these measures, monitoring requirements, and timing of implementation for each measure.
- Section 7: References. Lists the sources of information used to prepare the IS.
- Appendix A: List of Preparers
- Appendix B: Temporary and Permanent Land Disturbance