

Public Scoping Report

Southern California Edison's Devers–Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Line Project

CPCN Application No. A.05-04-015

SCH No. 2005101104



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1. Introduction

The environmental review of the Devers–Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Line Project (DPV2) project is being conducted by two lead agencies, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the State of California and the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, (BLM) for the United States, and therefore is regulated by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under California law and by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) under federal law. The public scoping requirements for each of these regulations differs slightly; however, the intent of each process remains the same — to initiate the public scoping for the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), provide information about the DPV2 project, and solicit information that will be helpful in the environmental review process.

This Scoping Report for DPV2 documents the issues and concerns expressed by members of the public, government agencies, and organizations during the October/November 2005 public scoping period. After the release of the Notice of Preparation, the CPUC and BLM held a 30-day public scoping period under CEQA. The comment period allowed the public and regulatory agencies an opportunity to comment on the scope of the environmental document, comment on the alternatives considered, and to identify issues that should be addressed in the EIR/EIS. A second public comment period and additional public meetings will be conducted as part of the review process under NEPA. An Addendum to this report will be prepared after completion of this second scoping period and will be available for public review.

Southern California Edison (SCE), the Project proponent, has filed an application with the CPUC for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity and an application for Amended Right-of-Way Grant to the BLM for approval to construct DPV2. As part of the review process, the CPUC and BLM will prepare the EIR/EIS, which will evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with DPV2 and will identify mitigation measures to reduce these impacts, where possible.

SCE will also submit an application to the Arizona Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting Committee (Siting Committee) for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility. The Siting Committee (made up of representatives of Arizona State agencies and appointed members of the public) will hold a formal hearing on the application, and then will propose a recommended order to the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC). The ACC will make a final decision on the project in a public meeting.

1.1 Purpose of Scoping

The process of determining the focus and content of the EIR/EIS is known as scoping. Scoping helps to identify the range of actions, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in depth, and eliminates from detailed study those issues that are not pertinent to the final decision on the Proposed Project. The scoping process is not intended to resolve differences of opinion regarding the Proposed Project or evaluate its merits. Instead, the process allows all interested parties to express their concerns regarding the Proposed Project and thereby ensures that all opinions and comments are considered in the environmental analysis. Scoping is an effective way to bring together and address the 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.

Comments received during the scoping process are part of the public record as documented in this scoping report. The comments and questions received during the public scoping process have been reviewed and considered by the CPUC and BLM in determining the appropriate scope of issues to be addressed in the EIR/EIS.

The purpose of the scoping for DPV2 was to:

- Inform the public and relevant public agencies about the DPV2 project, CEQA and NEPA requirements, and the environmental impact analysis process;
- Identify potentially significant environmental impacts for consideration in the EIR/EIS;
- Identify possible mitigation measures for consideration in the EIR/EIS;
- Identify alternatives to the DPV2 project for evaluation in the EIR/EIS; and
- Compile a mailing list of public agencies and individuals interested in future Project meetings and notices.

1.2 Summary of DPV2 Project

SCE is proposing to construct a new electric transmission line to import power generated in Arizona into southern California. The 278-mile project would consist of two components: (1) construction from Devers Substation to Harquahala Generating Substation, and (2) upgrades west of Devers Substation. From SCE's Devers Substation (north of Palm Springs) to the Harquahala Generating Station near Wintersburg, Arizona, SCE would build a new 230-mile, 500 kV transmission line, roughly following the route of Interstate 10. This segment parallels SCE's existing 500 kV transmission line, Devers–Palo Verde No. 1. The California segment of DPV2 would be 128 miles long and would be located in unincorporated Riverside County and the Cities of Palm Springs, Cathedral City, and Coachella. The Arizona segment of DPV2 would be 102 miles long within La Paz and Maricopa Counties.

The DPV2 project would also include the upgrading of existing transmission lines between the Devers Substation and the Vista Substation (in Grand Terrace) and the San Bernardino Substation (in San Bernardino County). Along 40 miles of existing transmission corridors (through the Cities of Palm Springs, Banning, Beaumont, and Calimesa), one new 230 kV transmission line would be built and two existing lines removed. Along two other existing transmission line segments (in the Cities of Redlands, Loma Linda, Colton, and Grand Terrace), existing transmission towers would be reconducted (existing wires would be replaced with new, larger capacity wires and 14 structures and one inter-set structure would be replaced between San Bernardino Junction and Vista Substation).

1.3 Scoping Report Organization

This scoping report includes four main sections and appendices, as described below:

- Section 1 provides an introduction to the report and describes the purpose of scoping and a brief overview of the DPV2 project.
- Section 2 provides information on the scoping meeting and notification materials, including the Notice of Preparation and Notice of Intent.
- Section 3 summarizes the comments received and issues raised during the scoping comment period.

- Section 4 provides the next steps in the EIR/EIS process.
- Appendices consist of all the supporting materials used during scoping. These appendices include copies of the Notice of Preparation, Notice of Intent, and meeting materials provided at the public scoping meetings. It also includes copies of comment letters received on DPV2.

2. Project Scoping

This section describes the methods used to notify the public and agencies about the scoping process conducted for DPV2. It outlines how information was made available for public and agency review and identifies the different avenues available for providing comments on the project (meetings, fax, email, mail, and phone).

2.1 Notice of Preparation

As required by CEQA Guidelines §15082, the CPUC issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) on October 25, 2005 that summarized the DPV2 Project, stated its intention to prepare a joint EIR/EIS, and requested comments from interested parties (See Appendix A). The NOP also included notice of the public scoping meetings that were held on November 1, 2, and 3, 2005 in Blythe, Beaumont, and Palm Desert, California, respectively. The NOP was filed with the State Clearinghouse on October 25, 2005 (SCH# 2005101104), which began the 30-day public scoping period. The review period for the NOP ended on November 28, 2005.

Over 2,500 copies of the NOP were distributed to federal, State, regional, and local agencies; elected officials; and the general public. The mailing included the following approximate distribution:

- 80 agency representatives (includes over 40 different agencies)
- 120 environmental groups/organizations
- 50 private organizations
- 60 tribal government representatives
- 20 elected officials (including 12 Assembly and State Senators)
- 2,100 private citizens (including those within 300 feet of the project corridor)

In addition, twenty-six additional copies of the NOP were delivered to the local repository sites. The NOP and all future DPV2-related documents are available for review at the following repository sites:

Table 1. Repository Sites

Devers to Harquahala – Library Sites		
Desert Hot Springs City Public Library	11691 West Drive, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240	(760) 329-5926
City of Palm Springs Library	300 S. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262	(760) 323-8298
Cathedral City Branch Library	33520 Date Palm Drive, Cathedral City, CA 92234	(760) 328-4262
Rancho Mirage City Library	42520 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270	(760) 341-7323
Palm Desert City Library	73300 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92260	(760) 346-6552
Indio Public Library	200 Civic Center Mall, Indio, CA 92201	(760) 342-0185
Coachella Branch Library	1538 7th Street, Coachella, CA 92236	(760) 398-5148
Palo Verde Valley Library District	125 W. Chanslorway, Blythe, CA 92225	(760) 922-5371
Quartzsite Public Library	465 N. Plymouth Ave. Quartzsite, AZ 85346	(928) 927-6593
Buckeye Public Library	312 N. 6th St, Buckeye, AZ 85326	(623) 386-2778

Table 1. Repository Sites

Devers to Harquahala – U.S Bureau of Land Management Offices			
Palm Springs/South Coast Field Office	690 W. Garnet Avenue, N. Palm Springs, CA 92258	(760) 251-4800	
Phoenix Field Office	21605 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85027-2099	(623) 580-5500	
Yuma Field Office	2555 East Gila Ridge Road, Yuma, AZ 85365-2240	(928) 317-3200	
West of Devers – Library Sites			
City of Riverside Library	5505 Dewey Avenue, Riverside, CA 92504.....	(951) 359-3906	
San Bernardino County Library	104 W. Fourth Street, San Bernardino, CA 92415	(909) 387-5723	
Colton Public Library	656 N. Ninth Street, Colton, CA 92324.....	(909) 370-5083	
Grand Terrace Library	22795 Barton Road, Grand Terrace, CA 92313	(909) 783-0147	
City of Loma Linda Library	25581 Barton Road, Loma Linda, CA 92354.....	(909) 796-8621	
A.K. Smiley Public Library	125 West Vine Street, Redlands, CA 92373.....	(909) 798-7565	
Mentone County Library	1870 Mentone Boulevard, Mentone, CA 92359.....	(909) 794-2657	
Yucaipa Branch Library	12040 5th Street, Yucaipa, CA 92399	(909) 790-3146	
Calimesa City Library	974 Calimesa Boulevard, Calimesa, CA 92320.....	(909) 795-9807	
Beaumont Library District	125 East 8th Street, Beaumont, CA 92223.....	(951) 845-1357	
Banning Public Library	21 W Nicolet Street, Banning, CA 92220.....	(951) 849-3192	
Morongo Community Library	11581 Potrero Road, Banning, CA 92220	(951) 849-5937	
West of Devers - U.S Bureau of Land Management Office			
California Desert District Office	22835 Calle San Juan Del Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553	(951) 697-5200	

NOP Scoping Meetings

The CPUC and BLM held five public scoping meetings in three locations in California on November 1, 2, and 3, 2005. The scoping meetings provided an opportunity for the public and government agencies to obtain more information on the DPV2 Project, to learn more about the CEQA and NEPA processes, to ask questions regarding the DPV2 project, and to provide formal comments on the DPV2 project.

Meeting Locations and Handouts

The five scoping meetings were held at the locations and on the dates specified below:

Table 2. California Public Scoping Meetings

Date and Time	Meeting Location	Sign-Ins	Formal Comments Received
Tuesday, November 1, 2005 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.	City of Blythe Multipurpose Room 235 N. Broadway, Blythe, CA 92225	2	1
Wednesday, November 2, 2005 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. & 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	City of Beaumont Civic Center Council Chambers 550 E. 6th Street, Beaumont, CA 92223	19 (total) 13 6	7 (total) 3 4
Thursday, November 3, 2005 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. & 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	CSUSB Palm Desert Campus Oliphant Auditorium (Room 117) 37-500 Cook Street, Palm Desert, CA 92211	7 (total) 5 2	4 (total) 3 1

Handouts and informational materials available at each meeting are listed below. Refer to Appendices A and B for copies of these materials.

- Notice of Preparation
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Project Fact Sheets
- Self-Addressed Speaker Comment Sheet
- Speaker Registration Card

Other information was also made available for public review, which included a copy of the Proponent’s Environmental Assessment, West of Devers aerial maps, and large-scale maps of the project alignment.

Newspaper Advertisements

The date and location of the public scoping meetings were advertised in four 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 newspapers presented at right (also see Appendix B-3).

Newspaper Advertisements	
Publication	Advertisement Date
The San Bernardino Sun	Sunday, October 23, 2005
The Press Enterprise	Sunday, October 23, 2005
Redlands Daily Facts	Sunday, October 23, 2005
The Desert Sun	Sunday, October 23, 2005

Agency Consultation

Over 40 federal, State, and local agencies were contacted by phone to provide information on the project and to determine interest in face-to-face meetings to discuss the project. These agencies were sent an information packet that included the NOP and two fact sheets (see Appendix B) that described the key components of the project. About half of these agencies responded to the telephone contact and several agencies requested meetings as part of the agency consultation. The comments received during both the telephone and face-to-face consultations are summarized in Appendix C.

2.2 Outreach

The CPUC and BLM also provided opportunities for the public and agencies to ask questions or comment on the DPV2 project outside of the meetings. A public hotline, email address, and website were established and available during the public comment period. Information on these additional outreach efforts are described below.

Project Information Hotline

In order to offer another opportunity to inquire about the scoping meetings or the DPV2 project, a hotline [(800) 886-1888] was established to take oral comments and questions from those unable to attend the meetings. Telephone messages were retrieved daily and all calls were responded to within a 48-hour period. The hotline also served as a fax line to allow for comments to be submitted by fax instead of mail. Comments received through this hotline (voice or fax) have been considered and incorporated in this report.

Email Address

An email address was established for the DPV2 project (dpv2@aspeneg.com) to provide another means of submitting comments on the scope of the EIR/EIS. The email address was provided on meeting hand-outs and posted on the website. Comments received by email have been considered and incorporated in this report.

Internet Website

Information about the DPV2 project was made available through the Project website hosted by the CPUC. During the October/November 2005 scoping period, the website included electronic versions of the Project application, NOP, and Project-related maps and thus provided another public venue to learn about the Project. The website will remain a public resource for the Project and will announce future public meetings and hearings. The website address is:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspen/dpv2/dpv2.htm>.

3. Scoping Comments

This section summarizes the comments raised by the public and agencies during the scoping process for the DPV2 EIR/EIS. This summary is based upon both written and oral comments that were received during the NOP review period, which officially extended from October 25, 2005 to November 28, 2005. All written and oral comments received during the public comment period on the NOP, during the public scoping meetings, through the phone line (voice/fax), and through email were reviewed for this report and for the EIR/EIS. Section 3.1 discusses the comments in relation to the human environment, physical environment, and DPV2 project alternatives. Section 3.2 references Appendix C, which summarizes all comments received during the scoping period.

Twelve individuals presented oral comments during the scoping meetings, and seven comment letters were submitted during the scoping process. Appendix C summarizes all written and oral comments received. In addition to private individuals, eleven government agencies, one tribal government, and four private organizations submitted written and/or oral comments:

Government Agencies and Special Districts

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Coachella Valley Preserve
- La Paz County, Community Development
- Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
- Riverside County, Transportation & Land Management
- City of Banning, Community Development Department
- City of Blythe
- City of Loma Linda, Community Development Department
- City of Cathedral City, Planning Department
- Palo Verde Irrigation District
- Harquahala Valley Irrigation District (via Ellis & Baker)
- Harquahala Valley Power District (via Moyes Storey Ltd.)

Tribal Governments

- Morongo Indian Reservation, Morongo Band of Mission Indians

Private Organizations and Companies

- Matich Corporation
- The Tanin Group Glorious Land Company/GLC Enterprises, LLC
- Harquahala Valley Farms (via Five Star Inc.)

3.1 Key Issues Raised during the Public Comment Period

As discussed above, written and oral comments were provided by members of the public, organizations, and government agencies. The discussion below presents the key issues identified from the written and oral comments received on the project. The specific issues raised during the public scoping process are summarized according to the following topics and issue areas:

- Human Environment Issues and Concerns
- Physical Environment Issues and Concerns
- Alternatives
- Cumulative Projects
- Environmental Review and Decision-Making Process

3.1.1 Human Environment Issues and Concerns

Some public comments focused on the potential effect of the project on the human environment, including the health and safety impacts of electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) from increased EMF emissions, impacts to property values, safety and fire risk issues, noise, construction impacts, and conflicts with planned uses.

EMFs

Health and safety-related issues resulting from increased EMF emissions was a primary concern of some members of the public. One commenter strongly opposed the DPV2 project due to the significant health risks associated with prolonged exposure to increased high voltage electric fields due to the proposed DPV2 project's placement of the transmission line on the edge of the ROW adjacent to the commenter's property. The commenter included a brochure entitled "EMF: Electric and Magnetic Fields Associated with the Use of Electric Power – Questions and Answers" that references a 200-foot "danger zone" associated with transmission lines. The commenter also states that SCE should buy any properties affected by EMF emissions.

Construction Impacts

Beaumont residents expressed concern that construction of the DPV2 project would cause an increase of traffic, safety, and noise; destruction of habitat; and conflict with other land uses, especially with regard to ongoing development in the area. Another comment expressed concern that construction of the project would cause additional noise and safety impacts to the area, and destroy landscapes. One comment also related concern about how the construction of DPV2 would impact their business's property (which con-

tains an SCE easement) and operations, but was willing to work with the CPUC and BLM to find mutually agreeable construction plans and schedules. In addition, a commenter from the Harquahala Valley Irrigation District expressed concern that the Harquahala West Subalternate Route would traverse its District destroying the rural atmosphere and scenic quality of the area. Representatives from the two public districts and Harquahala Valley Farms expressed concern that the Harquahala West Subalternate Route would cause environmental, aesthetic, and economic impacts to landowners in the Harquahala Valley.

Safety Issues and Fire Risk

In addition to the safety issues associated with EMF emissions, one commenter opposed the DPV2 project due to concerns about the risk of accidental electrocution, and falling towers and cables due to mechanical failure or collision with large trucks or airplanes. The commenter's property in North Palm Springs is 200 feet from the existing ROW and is already within a danger zone for electrocution; however, the DPV2 project will place transmission towers 160 feet closer.

Impacts to Property Values

Residents expressed concern about how the DPV2 project would affect the value of their property. One commenter was concerned with the appraisal method that may be used if new property would be required for the ROW. Another resident expressed concern that property adjacent to the ROW has decreased in value by as much as 75% due to the increased health and safety risks due to EMF emissions, accidental electrocution, and other accidents related to the nearby transmission lines. The Harquahala Valley Irrigation District also expressed concern that the Harquahala West Subalternate Route would devalue land in the District.

Conflicts with Existing or Planned Land Uses

A Redlands resident questioned the impact that the DPV2 project would have on the proposed San Timoteo Canyon State Park. Another commenter questioned whether the construction or presence of the DPV2 project would conflict with new development projects. A property owner in Cabazon was concerned that the DPV2 project would affect ROW setbacks. A private company also expressed concern that construction of the Proposed Project would preclude the future development of Paradise Valley, a 6,400-acre mixed-use master-planned community located in the Shavers Valley area of Riverside County. The Harquahala Valley Irrigation District also expressed concern that the Harquahala West Subalternate Route would be located through the middle of the District, and would cause adverse impacts to agriculture in the area including removing cropland from production, interfering with tilling and irrigation, as well as crop dusting and defoliating operations. The City of Banning, Community Development Department stated that additional residential development (Loma Linda) may be impacted by the project.

Riverside County Transportation and Land Management stated that the only major issue is whether the project would cause a re-zone of any County lands in areas that are zoned other than Rural Residential (RR) or Controlled Development (W-1 or W-2). The RR and W-1/W-2 zones allow for public utilities; however, siting of public utilities in other zones would require a re-zone. The County recommended identifying the APNs and zones that would be affected, and if any APNs are identified that are in areas zoned other than RR or W-1/W-2, then the County should be contacted. The County also suggests that this info should also be presented in the EIR document.

The City of Cathedral City stated that the project route includes areas of the City slated for development. The City representative stated that good quality development is being proposed in the City that will require

disclosure regarding the proposed transmission line. No development is proposed for north of the freeway; however, commercial development and a travel center is being proposed in other areas. The City proposes to annex unincorporated areas that may also be impacted by the project.

3.1.2 Physical Environment Issues and Concerns

Commenters expressed concerns with the potential impacts that the DPV2 project may have on the physical environment, particularly to biological, cultural, and traffic and transportation. Most of the concern centered on the impact of the Project on biological resources, those comments are summarized below.

Biological Resources Issues

One resident expressed concern that some landscapes and habitats would be destroyed due to the construction of the DPV2 project, and would take a long time to restore to the existing condition. A representative from the Coachella Valley Preserve questioned whether the DPV2 project would impact the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard. The Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District requested that the potential impacts to the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), including Criteria Area and P/QP lands, be evaluated in the EIR/EIS. In addition, a commenter for the Harquahala Valley Irrigation District expressed concern that the Harquahala West Subalternate Route would impact endangered species and other wildlife.

3.1.3 Alternatives

Alternatives Suggested

Following are all written, oral, and agency consultation comments that suggested an alternative, along with a statement of each suggestion.

Government Agency and Tribal Government Suggestions

Mission Band of Morongo Indians

The EIR/EIS Team met with members of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians and discussed the tribe's concerns about a potential alternative that would be located north of the proposed route on Morongo land.

City of Blythe – Charles Hull, Assistant City Manager

Stated that it was important for the DPV2 project to make an interconnection to the Blythe Energy Project (BEP) I and II, and suggested looping in the North of Blythe Alternative with BEP I and II to eliminate the 6.7 miles of transmission line from Buck Boulevard to Midpoint Substation and avoid the mid-point connection.

Harquahala Valley Irrigation District

Suggested that adverse impacts caused by the Harquahala West Subalternate Route could be avoided if the HGC line to Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station was utilized, and the new line could use the existing ROW corridor of the DPV1 transmission line.

La Paz County, Community Development

Expressed preference for the project route of the North of Kofa – North of I-10 Alternative and the North of Blythe Alternative to remain south of I-10 as it would be disruptive to residential views and plans for new development. Stated that residents are comfortable with the existing route crossing Highway 95, and by having the route go through Kofa, the transmission lines are hidden behind the hills and mountains.

Palo Verde Irrigation District

Stated that if the proposed DPV2 project is placed north of DPV1 it would pose major problems for the Palo Verde Irrigation District because it would block maintenance of the District's existing system.

Private Organization and Company Suggestions

Glorious Land Company/GLC Enterprises, LLC

Suggested an alternative that would avoid the future site of the Paradise Valley project located seven miles east of the City of Coachella in the Shavers Valley of Riverside County. This alternative would circumvent the proposed Paradise Valley project area by relocating south through BLM land, and west of the development boundary. Also stated that this alternative would avoid or alleviate the potential danger of the convergence of existing and proposed transmission lines, and gas lines and pump station.

Private Citizen Suggestions

Julian Veselkov

Questioned whether the transmission line could be constructed in the middle of the 800-foot ROW, rather than along the northern edge, through the North Palm Springs area.

3.1.4 Cumulative Projects

A representative from the Glorious Land Company expressed concern about the Desert Southwest Transmission Project (DSWTP) and the potential cumulative effects of the convergence of four transmission lines (DPV1, DPV2, DSWTP, and an SCE 230 kV line) in the middle of the planned future site of Paradise Valley in Riverside County. This commenter suggested that siting each of these transmission lines in different locations would result in fewer impacts. This commenter is not opposed to the DPV2 project, but is opposed to the currently proposed route through Paradise Valley and would like to work with the agencies to recommend other alternatives to avoid the convergence of the aforementioned four transmission lines and gas line due to safety and energy reliability reasons.

3.1.5 Environmental Review and Decision-Making Process

Public Involvement

Members of the public expressed interest in DPV2 project information being made available through different outlets. One resident suggested that information from the public scoping meetings be summarized and published in local newspapers. Another resident questioned whether project maps could be made available for public review at city offices or the library. Two public districts, the Harquahala Valley Irrigation District and the Harquahala Valley Power District, in Arizona expressed concern that affected landowners in their Districts were not provided proper notice of the DPV2 project nor of the scoping meetings held

in California. In addition, Harquahala Valley Farms expressed the same concerns and questioned why there were no scoping meetings held in Arizona. Also, the Morongo Band of Mission Indians stated that timing of the tribal decision regarding extension of SCE easements may take longer than the EIR/EIS process.

3.2 Summary of All Public and Agency Comments

Appendix C presents a comprehensive summary of all oral and written comments received from the general public, government agencies, and private companies. Appendix C-1 to C-3 provides a summary of all written comments received. Appendix C-4 presents a summary of the agency consultations conducted as part of the scoping process and Appendix C-5 presents a summary of all comments by issue area. Appendix D includes copies of written comments received on the DPV2 project.

4. Next Steps in EIR/EIS Process

4.1 EIR/EIS Events and Documents

While scoping is the initial step in the environmental review process, additional opportunities to comment on the Project EIR/EIS will be provided. As stated earlier, a second public comment period will be held to comply with NEPA. In addition, the CPUC and the BLM will provide for additional public input when the Draft EIR/EIS is released and during the public meetings for the Draft EIR/EIS. Table 3 on the following page presents the proposed schedule for the EIR/EIS and identifies where in the process the public and agencies can provide additional input in the environmental review process.

Table 3. EIR/EIS Events and Documents

Event/Document	Purpose		Approximate Date
Completed Events/Documents			
Notice of Preparation (NOP) for CEQA	Release of NOP ¹	Notified interested parties and agencies of the CPUC's and BLM's intent to prepare an EIR/EIS.	October 25, 2005
	Public Review Period	Held 30-day public scoping period on the Project to provide for public comments on the scope of EIR/EIS.	October 25 to November 28, 2005
Scoping Meetings – NOP	Five scoping meetings were held	Presented information on the Project and provided opportunity for public and agency comments in a public forum.	November 1, 2, and 3, 2005
Notice of Intent (NOI) for NEPA	NOI published in the Federal Register	Initiated the NEPA public scoping process and served to inform other cooperating agencies of the BLM's and CPUC's intent to prepare an EIR/EIS.	December 7, 2005
Scoping Report for CEQA NOP Process		Reported public and agency comments on the proposed Project and environmental issues of concern to the public and agencies. This report includes comments made during the scoping process for the CEQA Notice of Preparation.	December 2005
Upcoming Events/Documents			
Scoping Meetings – NOI – NEPA portion	Three scoping meetings will be held	Presents information on the Project and provides opportunity for public and agency comments in a public forum.	January 18 and 19, 2006
Addendum to Scoping Report for NOI/NEPA Process		Addendum to Scoping Report to include public and agency comments on the proposed Project and environmental issues of concern to the public and agencies from second round of scoping meetings on the NOI/NEPA process.	Late January – early February 2006
Draft EIR/EIS	Release of Draft EIR/EIS	Presents impacts and mitigation for the Proposed Project and its alternatives	May 2006
	Public Review Period	CEQA: 45-day minimum review period for State agencies. NEPA: BLM requires a 60-day public review period (516 DM 4.24) or 90-day if Plan Amendment is required.	May to June 2006
	Draft EIR/EIS Public Meetings	Allows for public comment on the draft document	Mid-May to mid-June 2006
Final EIR/EIS	Release of Final EIR/EIS	Final EIR/EIS, with response to comments, issued by CPUC and BLM Final EIR/EIS is filed with US EPA	August 2006
	Decision on the Project	CPUC certifies EIR/EIS and issues a Proposed Decision BLM issues the Record of Decision; 45-day appeal period	Winter 2006 Fall 2006

Note: 1. The NOP was mailed to interested parties, property owners within 300 feet of the Project route, federal, State, and local regulatory agencies, and elected officials.
Refer to the website for specific EIR/EIS document dates: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspen/dpv2/dpv2.htm>