

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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September 9, 2019

Carl Eastlick
Project Manager
Siskiyou Telephone Company
30 Telco Way
P.O. Box 157
Etna, CA, 96027-0157

RE: Siskiyou Telephone Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project: Notice to Proceed #3

Dear Mr. Eastlick,

On August 16, 2019, Siskiyou Telephone Company (Siskiyou Telephone) submitted Notice to Proceed (NTP) Request #3 to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for Phase 3 of the Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project (Project). Under this NTP Request, Siskiyou Telephone is seeking CPUC authorization to proceed with the construction and installation of a new fiber optic broadband facility cable within or adjacent to State Highway 96 (Caltrans right-of-way) in the Six Rivers National Forest from mile post (MP) 14.36 south to MP 12.15. The required Caltrans Encroachment Permit was submitted August 16, 2019.

Siskiyou Telephone Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project was evaluated in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The mitigation measures described in the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) were adopted by the CPUC as conditions of project approvals. The CPUC voted on August 9, 2018 to approve Siskiyou Telephone Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project (Resolution T-17623) and a Notice of Determination was submitted to the State Clearinghouse (SCH# 2018032045). The CPUC worked with Siskiyou Telephone on the development of a Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance and Reporting Program (MMCRP) that is being implemented during construction to ensure compliance with all mitigation measures imposed on the Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project.

As currently proposed by Siskiyou Telephone, the Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project includes multiple phases. This is a typical process for large-scale projects with multiple components. Given that the Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project has been approved by the CPUC, as described above, this phased construction review process allows Siskiyou Telephone to proceed with individual project components where compliance with all applicable mitigation measures and conditions can be documented.

This letter documents the CPUC's thorough evaluation of all activities covered in this NTP, including the mitigation measure requirements and preconstruction compliance tracking table. The evaluation process ensures that all mitigation measures applicable to the location and activities covered in the NTP are implemented, as required in the CPUC's Resolution.

Project Description

Siskiyou Telephone is constructing the Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project, which will provide telephone and broadband service capability to residences in the area between Clear Creek and Ti Bar in Siskiyou County, California. Fiber optic broadband facility cable will be installed within a newly constructed conduit for approximately 17 miles within or adjacent to State Highway 96. The Project will be constructed under a grant from the California Advanced Service Grant Program, as funded by the CPUC to Siskiyou Telephone. Under this NTP Request, Siskiyou Telephone Company is seeking CPUC authorization to proceed with the construction and installation of the new fiber optic broadband facility cable within or adjacent to State Highway 96 (Caltrans right-of-way) in the Six Rivers National Forest from MP 14.36 south to MP 12.15. This is the final NTP required for the Project.

Project Components

The Project consists of two components: fiber optic broadband facility cable and utility box installation. The project would consist of all new construction because no such components are located in the project area.

Fiber Optic Broadband Facility Cable

Underground fiber optic broadband facility cable, including drops to subscribers, will be installed in conduit along the cable alignment. The telephone service cable will be made of fiber optic service line that will be placed in a 1.5-inch high-density polyethylene conduit. The fiber optic broadband facility cable will be installed using both directional boring and trenching.

Trenching will occur only where the shoulder width can accommodate the operation without damaging the road surface or shoulder, and where boring cannot be done. In general, the cable will be installed in the far side of the road from the Klamath River, except for short segments where there is not adequate space in the shoulder.

Utility Boxes

Hand hole utility boxes will be installed as access points for subscriber drop, splice points, and grounding locations. The opening of the hand hole boxes will be at ground surface elevation and will be approximately 6 feet 7 inches long by 3 feet 1 inch wide by 4 feet deep with a traffic-rated lid. Boxes will be placed along the fiber optic broadband facility cable route at 2,500-foot minimum spacing to provide rural utilities service grounding. Additional boxes will also be placed as needed along the route to provide access points for each residential subscriber or fiber optic line splices.

Locations along the cable alignment could require digging out of the rocky bank to create a clearing large enough that the box can be opened and closed easily. In areas where digging the bank will be required, the bank will be less than 5 feet high. If needed, a rock retaining wall will be built around the cutout to support any loose impediments such as rocks and debris that might fall on the box or into the roadway.

Right-of-Way Requirements

The Project will be constructed within and adjacent to State Highway 96 right-of-way in Siskiyou County, which is maintained by Caltrans. A minimum construction access width of 10 feet will be required for trench or plow excavation. All construction equipment will remain within existing road-ways or road shoulders.

Project Construction

Underground Cable Installation

Fiber optic broadband facility cable will be installed using both directional boring and trenching. The majority of the Project will be constructed using horizontal (hard-rock) directional boring techniques. Several culverts will be crossed while constructing the Project. If a culvert has a minimum of 4 feet of ground cover, Siskiyou Telephone will trench directly over the culvert. If the culvert has less than 4 feet of ground cover, Siskiyou Telephone will tunnel under the culvert at a minimum depth of 6 feet below the bottom of the culvert invert.

The telephone service cable will be made of fiber optic service line that will be placed in a 1.5-inch high-density polyethylene conduit. Once the conduit is placed the contractor will use a special fiber blowing machine. This requires an air compressor and the fiber is actually blown in riding on this air. Conduit may be routed around a culvert if space allows on the shoulder of the roadway.

Trenching. Trenching will only occur where the shoulder width can accommodate the operation without damaging the road surface or shoulder, and where boring cannot be done. Trenching will be conducted to a width of approximately 1.5 feet and a depth of approximately 4 feet within the road or road shoulder to provide room for the conduit. After the cable and conduit are installed, the trench will be filled with Class II base rock, compacted, and repaved (if necessary) to restore the roadway and road shoulders to preconstruction conditions.

Horizontal Directional Boring. Horizontal directional drilling (HDD) is a highly specialized boring technique that will likely be used to install the cable in areas where there are known State or federally listed species or habitat including jurisdictional waters. HDD is a trenchless method of conduit installation using a surface-launched drilling rig that installs the conduit via a pre-drilled, arc-like bore hole. The HDD process will utilize an entry bore pit and an exit bore pit to contain the drilling mud, each approximately 3 feet in width by 9 feet in length. The initial trenching for each bore pit will be monitored by a Tribal Monitor. The trench spoils will then be hauled to a temporary staging area to be hauled away to Happy Camp. The bore pit will then be backfilled with Class II Base Rock at the end of each day until the bore is completed. The bore pit will then be secured with Base Rock until actual splicing of conduit is completed.

HDD will be performed using the least amount of pressure to minimize the chance of a frac-out, the unintentional return of drilling fluids to the surface during HDD via subsurface fissures. The entire bore route will be monitored to catch any frac-out fluids that might appear in the road shoulder.

Material Storage and Equipment Staging Areas

Siskiyou Telephone has made an agreement with a disposal site located in Happy Camp on State Highway 96 for disposal of stockpiles and temporarily storing equipment (Happy Camp disposal site). Because of the long distance to haul bore spoils, a mud cleaner will be used onsite, and the majority of the mud will be recycled back into the bore machine.

Any remaining refuse will be hauled to a temporary stockpile location and then hauled to the Happy Camp site for final disposal. Trench spoils will be temporarily stockpiled in the larger turnouts along the alignment and hauled out weekly. In the event of inclement weather, stockpiles will be covered to prevent runoff.

Two primary sites for temporary gravel and trench spoils storage are adjacent to State Highway 96 between MP 34.78 and MP 34.59 and between MP 13.21 and MP 13.32. Numerous turnouts along the route will be used as temporary day parking for transportation vehicles while crews work onsite.

All construction equipment, the trencher, backhoes, and plows will remain onsite throughout construction, parked in the same turnouts with safety cones around them so they are visible to traffic. All

construction equipment will be parked so that through-traffic will not be impeded on the roadways after hours. The transportation vehicles will leave with the crews and return when work is resumed.

Work Areas

Work areas in the Project site consist of State Highway 96, which is approximately 32 feet wide. Flaggers will control traffic encountered during construction activities. Traffic delays might be as long as 10 to 15 minutes. In the case of an emergency, or if an emergency vehicle needed to pass, the equipment will move immediately, to maintain emergency vehicle access. One full, 16-foot-wide lane will be available for emergency traffic at all times.

Conduits will be laid out alongside the construction route each morning so that additional vehicles will not impede traffic during construction. Dump trucks will haul trench spoils to the Siskiyou Telephone gravel site turnouts as needed and bring loads of Class II base rock back to the Project site to be used for backfill to meet Caltrans compaction specifications. Additional trucks will then reload trench spoils and haul them to the Happy Camp disposal site for final disposal.

Use and Disposal of Excavated Material

Excavated material from State Highway 96 that meets Caltrans specifications will be used to backfill the trench. Remaining materials that do not meet Caltrans specifications will be removed from the site and transported to the nearest temporary stockpile location, to be reloaded and hauled to the Happy Camp disposal site. Class II base rock will be used to fill the remainder of the trench. After the Class II base rock is placed in the trench, it will be compacted in 1-foot lifts with a mechanical tamper, and the top 1 foot will be compacted with 20,000 pounds of force to meet Caltrans requirements. Caltrans currently requires 95 percent minimum compaction of materials placed in trenches in its roadways.

The excavated materials from the Project will amount to approximately 4,933 cubic yards. Excess trenched materials that are not used to backfill the trench will be disposed of at the Happy Camp disposal site.

CPUC Evaluation of Preconstruction Mitigation Implementation

NTP #3 for the construction and installation of a new fiber optic broadband facility cable within or adjacent to State Highway 96 (Caltrans right-of-way) in the Klamath National Forest from MP 14.36 south to MP 12.15 for the Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project is granted by the CPUC based on the factors described below.

All applicable project mitigation measures (MMs), Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs), compliance plans, and permit conditions shall be implemented. Some measures have on-going/time-sensitive requirements and are required to be implemented prior to and during construction where applicable. The following contains a status of applicable MM and APM required submittals, including any outstanding requirements:

Air Quality: As required by MM AQ-1, Siskiyou Telephone will implement dust control strategies during construction as outlined in the mitigation measure. These requirements include wetting, stabilizing, or covering storage piles; watering active work hours every two hours or more frequently as needed; pre-wetting earthmoving areas and excavated materials; wetting or covering truckloads of spoils or leaving 6 inches from the top of the cargo compartment; and removal of track-out onto public roads at the end of the work day or at least one time per day.

Biological Resources: Consistent with MM B-1, Siskiyou Telephone submitted to the CPUC the resumes for biological monitors for review and approval. The CPUC approved resumes on July 19, 2018 and February 1, 2019.

A Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) has been prepared to educate on-site workers about the Project's sensitive environmental issues in accordance with MM B-1. Throughout the duration of construction, Siskiyou Telephone shall be responsible for ensuring that all on-site project personnel receive this training prior to beginning work. Siskiyou Telephone shall maintain a log of all personnel who have completed the WEAP training. This list shall be provided to the CPUC on a monthly basis and made available for review by CDFW, USFWS, USFS, or other agencies upon request. The WEAP was approved by the CPUC on June 19, 2018.

Per MM B-1, preconstruction survey sweeps of active work areas for special-status species shall be conducted prior to the start of construction each morning by a qualified biologist approved by the CPUC. Biological monitoring shall be conducted during all construction activities near sensitive resources, including active bird nests and creeks. If work is being conducted during light rain, full time biological monitoring shall occur. The monitor will complete daily reports summarizing construction activities and the environmental compliance and weekly reports shall be submitted to the CPUC for review.

Consistent with MM B-2, Siskiyou Telephone will avoid and minimize impacts to special-status plants, wetlands, and riparian zones. This will be accomplished by having a qualified biologist delineate any wetland or water features within the right-of-way as environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) using clear markers; supplying construction crews with maps of ESAs; ensuring no equipment, materials, or spoils encroach into the ESAs; and having a qualified biologist present during construction activities within the vicinity of wetlands, creek crossing, and associated riparian zones. The biologist shall ensure that fencing and/or flagging remains intact and that construction activities do not affect the delineated areas.

Per MM B-3, Siskiyou Telephone prepared a Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Frac-Out Contingency Plan that was approved by CPUC on October 1, 2018. Avoidance and minimization measures required by MM B-3 include ensuring boring operations are situated outside of the wetlands and riparian areas, ensuring drilling is conducted during daylight hours so a frac-out would be visible, and ensuring any frac-outs are handled according to the approved Frac-Out Contingency Plan.

Preconstruction surveys and impact avoidance measures for migratory and nesting birds will be implemented in accordance with MM B-4. A qualified biologist will conduct surveys during the breeding period (from January 31 through August 31) no more than 3 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activity. If active nests are detected during the survey, they will be mapped and a minimum 100-foot disturbance-free buffer (adjustable by the authorized biologist) will be implemented until the nest fledges or fails. Continuous monitoring of the nest site by an authorized biologist shall occur during disturbance activities, and a nest observation log shall be maintained. If active nests for listed birds or raptors are found, a 500-foot buffer will be established around each nest/territory. This buffer may be adjusted in coordination with USFWS, CDFW, and the CPUC.

Siskiyou Telephone obtained a Streambed Alteration Agreement (No. 1600-2018-0043-R1) from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on August 27, 2018. This Agreement permits Siskiyou Telephone to bore under Kennedy Creek at a minimum depth of 30 feet below the streambed if water is actively flowing and 18 feet below if the streambed is dry. This Agreement confines work to the dates of July 1 through October 15. If weather conditions permit and the stream is dry or at its lowest flow, Siskiyou Telephone must submit a written request to CDFW at least five days before the proposed work period variance. Written approval from CDFW for the proposed work period variance must be received prior to the start or continuation of work outside of the above reference work window.

Cultural Resources: The WEAP has been prepared to educate on-site workers about the Project's sensitive cultural and paleontological resources. The WEAP provides training to recognize these resources and identify and address any unearthened human remains during construction. If archaeological (or

paleontological) materials are uncovered, construction activities and excavation will be halted within 100 feet of the resource until a qualified archaeologist (or paleontologist) can assess the find, make any necessary recommendations, including any procedures to further investigate or mitigate impacts on the find as required by law, including CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.4(b)(3)(C). The WEAP was approved by the CPUC on July 19, 2018.

Siskiyou Telephone has stated that a Monitor representing the Karuk Tribe will be on hand daily to observe all aspects of the construction and to observe exposed soil at the bore pits and any trenching materials.

Geology and Soils: Siskiyou Telephone provided a letter from Caltrans dated January 8, 2019 in reference to MM GS-1, which discusses slope stability and worker safety. Siskiyou Telephone and the CPUC are currently working on preparing and approving proposed design/mitigation for each area of potential instability (i.e. relocate line, directional drill, implementation of safety measures, etc.) and applicable safety guidelines.

A Stormwater Pollution and Prevention Plan (SWPPP) has been prepared for the Project and was submitted to the CPUC electronically on August 27, 2018. The Project SWPPP limits construction to the dry season, March 11 to October 15, 2019. Project construction activities will be performed in accordance with the soil erosion and water quality protection measures in the SWPPP.

If work is planned to extend past the October 15th deadline, Siskiyou Telephone will need to revise and resubmit their SWPPP to the CPUC.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: As required by MM H-1, a WEAP has been prepared to educate workers about Project requirements in relation to hazards and hazardous materials, instruction on the individual responsibilities under the Clean Water Act, the Project SWPPP, site-specific Best Management Practices (BMPs), and the location of Material Safety Data Sheets for the Project, as well as personnel contact numbers. The WEAP also includes training on Emergency Release Response Procedures, including hazardous materials handling and clean-up procedures. The WEAP was approved by the CPUC on July 19, 2018.

Per MM H-2, Siskiyou Telephone prepared and submitted a Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Plan to the CPUC for review and approval. The Plan ensures that the project reduces or avoids the use of potentially hazardous materials for the purposes of worker safety; protection from soil, groundwater, and surface water contamination; and proper disposal of hazardous materials. The CPUC approved the Revised Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Plan on October 1, 2018.

Siskiyou Telephone submitted a soil testing report for aerially deposited lead (ADL) as required by MM H-3 on November 9, 2018. No ADL contaminated soils were found. The CPUC approved the soil testing report on December 11, 2018.

Siskiyou Telephone has prepared a Fire Management Plan in accordance with the modified Special Use Permit from USFS that addresses construction activities for this Project. The Fire Management Plan established standards and practices that will minimize the risk of fire danger and, in the case of fire, provide for immediate suppression and notification. The Plan also addresses spark arresters, smoking and fire rules, storage and parking areas, use of gasoline-powered tools, road closures, use of a fire guard, and fire suppression equipment and training requirements. The CPUC approved the Fire Management Plan on September 14, 2018.

Hydrology and Water Quality. A SWPPP has been prepared for the Project and was submitted to the CPUC electronically on August 27, 2018. Project construction activities will be performed in accordance with the soil erosion and water quality protection measures in the SWPPP.

Land Use and Planning. Siskiyou Telephone has obtained a Special-Use Authorization Amendment #15 from USFS of the Klamath National Forest, which was submitted to the CPUC on September 12, 2018. The Caltrans Encroachment Permit for NTP #3 was submitted on August 16, 2019

Noise. BMPs for construction noise management will be implemented as outlined in APM NOI-1 to reduce construction noise exposure at noise-sensitive receptors and to avoid possible violations of local rules, standards, and ordinances during construction. Construction noise shall be confined to daytime, weekday hours (7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.). Work on weekends would need to be coordinated with the Siskiyou County Planning Department.

Public Services. Siskiyou Telephone submitted documentation to the CPUC on January 14, 2019 confirming coordination with local emergency service providers.

Transportation and Traffic. Consistent with APM TRF-1, Siskiyou Telephone has informed residents in Happy Camp of construction activities and potential delays. Documentation of this communication was submitted to the CPUC September 12, 2018.

Conditions of NTP Approval

The conditions noted below shall be met by Siskiyou Telephone and its contractors prior to the start of construction:

- All applicable project mitigation measures, APMs, compliance plans, and permit conditions shall be implemented. Some measures have on-going/time-sensitive requirements and shall be implemented prior to and during construction where applicable.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, and this NTP shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities. All permits and plans shall be made available to the CPUC Environmental Monitors (EMs) upon request.
- Construction techniques within area of potential instability shall be reviewed and approved by CPUC prior to the start of construction
- The Project SWPPP limits construction to the dry season, March 11 to October 15. If construction were to continue past this date, State approval would be required to amend the SWPPP.
- The Project CDFW Agreement No. 1600-2018-0043-R1 requires boring under Kennedy Creek to be confined to the period between July 1 and October 15. If construction were to continue past this date, written approval from CDFW for the proposed work period variance would be required.
- All crew members shall be WEAP trained prior to working on the Project as described by MM B-1, APM CUL-1, and MM H-1. A log shall be maintained on-site with the names of all crew personnel trained. The WEAP training brochure can be provided in Spanish or other languages if appropriate. All participants will receive a hard-hat sticker for ease of compliance verification.
- In accordance with MM B-1, preconstruction surveys for special-status plants and animals shall be conducted prior to the start of construction and submitted to the CPUC EM for review and approval.
- In accordance with MM B-2, any wetlands or water features shall be delineated within the right-of-way and clearly marked for avoidance prior to the start of construction. The CPUC EM shall review and approve documentation of staking and/or flagging of wetlands or water features.
- In accordance with MM B-4, preconstruction surveys for nesting birds shall be conducted during the breeding season (January 31 – August 31). Surveys shall be conducted no more than 3 days prior to the

start of ground-disturbing activity. Surveys shall be submitted to the CPUC EM for review and approval prior to the start of construction.

- If a special-status species is observed within or adjacent to the Project site, the CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.
- If construction debris spill or enter into environmentally sensitive areas, appropriate jurisdictional agencies and the CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.
- In the case of an unanticipated cultural or paleontological resources discovery, the CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.
- Siskiyou Telephone will prepare and distribute a weekly environmental compliance status report for distribution to the CPUC consistent with project permits, mitigation measures, and the Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance and Reporting Plan (MMCRP).
- No movement or staging of construction vehicles or equipment shall be allowed outside of the approved areas. If additional temporary workspace areas or access routes, or changes in mitigation technique or implementation to a lesser level are required, a Temporary Extra Work Space (TEWS) or Minor Project Change (MPC) request shall be submitted for CPUC review. In addition, all water sources and disposal sites not previously identified shall require a TEWS or an MPC.

Sincerely,

Connie Chen

Connie Chen
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen