

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



May 2004

To: All Interested Parties

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has prepared the enclosed Final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study (MND/IS) for consideration of Southern California Edison's Application (A.03-03-043) for the proposed Viejo System Project. The Final MND/IS has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and incorporates changes resulting from comments submitted during the public review period (March 10 through April 9, 2004).

**Description of the Proposed Project.** The proposed project would include construction of a new electrical substation within the City of Lake Forest, California, and the addition of a new 66 kV circuit within an existing transmission corridor crossing portions of the Cities of Lake Forest and Mission Viejo, California. The corridor currently contains two 220 kV transmission lines and two 66 kV circuits on lattice steel towers and double-circuited tubular steel poles, respectively. The Viejo System Project proposes to construct H-frame structures to carry the two existing 66 kV circuits and a new 66 kV circuit. These new H-frame structures would replace the existing double-circuited tubular steel poles and would have capacity to carry an additional fourth circuit (a fourth circuit is not proposed). Project components include:

- Construction of the Viejo Substation on a 12.5-acre site adjacent to State Route 241 in the City of Lake Forest
- Addition of a new 3.1-mile 66 kV line between the Chiquita and the proposed Viejo Substations
- Replacement of 19 double-circuit tubular steel poles with 13 H-frame structures
- Replacement of three 220 kV lattice towers to relocate 0.3 miles of 220 kV line into the Viejo Substation.

The Viejo System Project study area includes the proposed substation site and a 3.1-mile segment of the existing 220/66 kV transmission corridor located between the proposed substation site and the Chiquita Substation. The transmission corridor is located within the Cities of Lake Forest and Mission Viejo, and the site of the proposed substation is located in the Foothill Ranch Planned Community within the City of Lake Forest. All portions of the proposed project are located within Orange County, California.

**Contents of the Final MND/IS.** The Final MND/IS consists of a single volume with four main sections, appendices, and an executive summary. Section A of the document contains the Mitigated Negative Declaration statement to be adopted by the CPUC. Section B contains the Initial Study that evaluates the potential significance of project impacts, and Section C contains the Mitigation Monitoring Plan to be approved by the CPUC. Section D presents the written comments received during the public review period and written responses to those comments, including General Responses to frequent comments. Any text inserted into the Initial Study (Section B) after the MND/IS was circulated for public review is underlined and **bold**, and any deleted text is shown in ~~strikeout~~. A new appendix (Appendix 8) has been added to the Final MND/IS in response to concerns raised by the public about the aesthetic effects of the proposed Viejo System Project and requests to consider alternatives that would reduce these effects, including placement of the proposed 66 kV circuit underground.

**Changes Made to the MND/IS.** In response to comments on the proposed MND/IS that was distributed for public review, various changes or additions have been made to the document. The following information has been added or revised in the Final MND/IS:

- Addition of an Executive Summary,
- Minor revisions to Mitigation Measures CR-2 and R-1,
- Incorporation of comment letters received during the public review period and responses to written comments, and
- Addition of Appendix 8, Alternatives Comparison.

**CPUC Actions After Final MND/IS Publication.** There is no comment period for the Final MND/IS. If the Commission agrees with the conclusions of the MND/IS prepared by CPUC staff, it will adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration in accordance with CEQA before taking any action to approve the proposed project. Evidentiary Hearings on the proposed project will be held at the CPUC offices in San Francisco. The CPUC will issue a Decision on the proposed Viejo System Project, which will be announced and published concurrent with a scheduled CPUC Meeting. Within 30 days after the Decision is issued by the CPUC, parties can apply for rehearing. For further information on the CPUC's decision-making process, call the CPUC Public Advisor at (415) 703-2074.

If the CPUC approves the proposed project, the CPUC will implement a Mitigation Monitoring Plan as presented in Section C of the MND/IS. This plan will ensure that the approved project is constructed as defined, and that all adopted mitigation measures and Applicant-Proposed Measures are implemented in order that effects on the environment do not exceed those described in the MND/IS.

**Public Involvement in CPUC General Proceeding.** The CPUC's assigned Administrative Law Judge conducted a Pre-Hearing Conference on the proposed project on March 25, 2004, at the City of Mission Viejo City Hall Council Chamber. In addition, the Administrative Law Judge conducted two Public Participation Hearings on the project at the City of Mission Viejo City Hall Council Chamber on May 25, 2004.

**Availability of the Final MND/IS.** Copies of the Final MND/IS have been mailed to parties to the General Proceeding and public agencies that commented on the proposed MND/IS during the public review period, as well as some members of the public. The document is available on the CPUC's project website at:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/aspen/viejosystem/viejosystem.htm>

The Final MND/IS is also available at the repository locations below:

Mission Viejo Library  
100 Civic Center  
Mission Viejo, CA 92691

El Toro County Branch Library  
24672 Raymond Way  
Lake Forest, CA 92630

Norman P. Murray Community and  
Senior Center  
24932 Veterans Way  
Mission Viejo, CA 92692

Copies of the Final MND/IS on CD may be requested by phone or fax at (949) 606-8494 or by e-mail at [viejosystem@aspeng.com](mailto:viejosystem@aspeng.com). The CPUC also has a limited number of copies of the complete Final MND/IS document available to the public upon request at the above addresses/numbers.

Further information about this document is available from Michael Rosauer, CPUC Project Manager, at (415) 703-2579.