

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement for the Coolwater-Lugo Transmission Project

Application No. A.13-08-023

August 2014

Introduction

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) intend to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), including an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan, for the Coolwater-Lugo Transmission Project (CLTP) proposed by Southern California Edison (SCE). The CPUC is the lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the BLM is the lead agency for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The CPUC and BLM will prepare a Plan Amendment (PA) & EIR/EIS to comply with both CEQA and NEPA. The CPUC and BLM invite written comments on the scope of the environmental analysis and identification of potential issues related to the PA & EIR/EIS.

The proposed project includes construction of a new high-voltage transmission line extending approximately 63 miles between SCE's existing Coolwater Generating Station Switchyard located in Daggett, California, and SCE's existing Lugo Substation located in Hesperia, California (see the attached Project Location Map).

The purpose of the proposed CLTP is to provide additional transmission capacity to alleviate transmission bottlenecks between the existing Kramer and Lugo Substations, and between the Lucerne Valley area and Lugo Substation. The project would also facilitate the interconnection of planned generation projects in the Kramer and Lucerne Valley areas and provide for full deliverability of the 275-megawatt Mojave Solar Project. Additionally, the project would accommodate future load serving (electrical demand) in the High Desert Region, particularly the Town of Apple Valley, and improve transmission system reliability.

Public Scoping Meetings

The CPUC and BLM will be conduct scoping meetings between August 19-21, 2014, to solicit input from the general public, organizations, and government agencies about issues and topics that should be addressed in the EIR/EIS, including suggestions for potential alternatives and mitigation measures. The meetings will be held at the following locations and times. Additional details are provided on page 5 of this notice.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Tuesday, August 19, 2014	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Barstow City Council Chambers
Wednesday, August 20, 2014	3:30-5:30 p.m. 7:00-9:00 p.m.	Lucerne Valley Community Center Percy Bakker Community Center (Hesperia)
Thursday, August 21, 2014	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Victor Valley Museum (Apple Valley)

Notice of Preparation

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is being sent to the Office of Planning and Research, responsible and trustee agencies, including each federal agency involved in approving the project, and interested of affected agencies. The purpose of the NOP is to inform recipients that the CPUC is beginning preparation of a PA & EIR/EIS for the CLTP and to solicit information that will be helpful in the environmental review process. This notice includes a description of the proposed project, a summary of potential project impacts, information on how to provide comments to the CPUC and BLM, instructions for obtaining additional project information, and information on scoping meetings.

As required by NEPA, the BLM will publish in the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent (NOI) announcing the preparation of the EIR/EIS for the CLTP. Similar to this NOP, the NOI will initiate the public scoping period for the PA & EIR/EIS, provide information about the proposed project, and serve as an invitation for agencies and the public to provide comments on the scope and content of the EIR/EIS.

Summary Description of the Proposed Project

SCE proposes to construct, operate, maintain, and in the future decommission, a new high-voltage electric transmission line extending approximately 63 miles between SCE's existing Coolwater Generation Station Switchyard (Coolwater Switchyard) located in Daggett, California, and SCE's existing Lugo Substation located in Hesperia, California (see the attached Project Location Map). The proposed transmission line would traverse approximately 15.4 miles of lands managed by the BLM, with the remainder on private or other public lands within San Bernardino County. Approximately 43.6 miles of the proposed transmission line would parallel or be within existing overhead utility rights-of-way (ROWS). To enable construction of the proposed transmission line, approximately 43.3 miles of existing 220-kV transmission lines would be removed. The project also includes new substation facilities to support transmission line termination and new telecommunication facilities for a Special Protection System to maintain transmission system reliability. The telecommunications lines would traverse a total of approximately 5.7 miles of BLM-managed lands, as shown in the attached Project Location Map. Details on the main aspects of SCE's proposed project are below.

Project Details

- Construction of approximately 47.2 miles of 220-kV double-circuit structures between the existing Coolwater Switchyard and the new Desert View Substation. This portion of the project crosses land administered by the BLM. It also includes private land and land owned by the California State Lands Commission.
- Construction of approximately 15.7 miles of 500-kV single-circuit structures between the new Desert View Substation and the existing Lugo Substation generally located in an existing transmission line ROW. This line would be built to 500-kV standards, but would initially be operated at 220 kV, and would initially carry the load from the new Coolwater-Desert View 220-kV transmission line and the existing Lugo-Pisgah No. 1 and No. 2 220-kV transmission lines. There are no BLM lands crossed by the 500-kV portion of the project.
- Removal of approximately 27.6 miles of the existing Lugo-Pisgah No. 1 220-kV transmission line from a location southwest of the intersection of Haynes Road and State Route (SR) 247 and the existing Lugo Substation.
- Removal of approximately 15.7 miles of the existing Lugo-Pisgah No. 2 220-kV transmission line between the Desert View Substation and the existing Lugo Substation.
- Construction of a new unstaffed, automated 500/220/115/12-kV Desert View Substation (at full build-out) on an approximately 160-acre site located southeast of the Town of Apple Valley and west of Lucerne

Valley, which would initially be constructed as a switching station. The existing Lugo-Pisgah No. 1 and No. 2 220-kV lines would terminate into this substation. Full build-out of the substation would occur in the future as additional substation components are needed, as dictated by load growth, reliability needs, and generation interconnection requests.

- Installation of new telecommunication lines between the existing Apple Valley Substation and the new Desert View Substation (approximately 10.8 miles) and between the Gale Substation (located near Daggett, CA) and the Pisgah Substation (located between Newberry Springs and Ludlow, CA) (approximately 28.6 miles). The majority of the fiber optic cable would be installed on existing wood and light-weight steel poles, which would require new cross arms.
- Construction of various modifications at both the Coolwater Switchyard and the Lugo Substation to accommodate the Coolwater-Desert View-Lugo transmission line.

The proposed transmission line alignment has been separated into seven distinct segments, as defined by SCE in the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) submitted to the CPUC with SCE's Application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN). The descriptions of the segments are presented geographically from north to south. The Project Location Map provides the proposed alignment of each segment, as well as the proposed telecommunication line alignments (noted above).

- **Segment 12:** Construction of approximately 1.2 miles of double-circuit 220-kV transmission line in new ROW from the west side of the existing Coolwater Switchyard south, crossing the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad track, National Trails Highway, and Interstate 40 (I-40, or "Needles Freeway"), continuing just south of I-40.
- **Segment 1:** Construction of approximately 16.7 miles of double-circuit 220-kV transmission line beginning just south of I-40 and continuing south to the intersection of Power Line Road and Camp Rock Road. Segment 1 would cross under the existing Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) transmission corridor and then parallel the existing transmission lines in a southwesterly direction within new, adjacent ROW to a point just west of Stoddard Wells Road.
- **Segment 2:** Construction of approximately 11.9 miles of double-circuit 220-kV transmission line in new ROW beginning at the intersection of the LADWP transmission corridor and Stoddard Wells Road and continuing briefly south, running parallel to Stoddard Wells Road, before turning southeast to parallel the Lucerne Valley Cutoff Road to a point just west of SR-247.
- **Segment 3:** Construction of approximately 3.9 miles of double-circuit 220-kV transmission line in new ROW beginning at the intersection of Lucerne Valley Cutoff Road and SR-247 and continuing generally south/southeast, paralleling the west side of SR-247, to a point northwest of the intersection of SR-247 and Haynes Road.
- **Segment 5:** Construction of approximately 12.7 miles of double-circuit 220-kV transmission line beginning just northwest of the intersection of Haynes Road and SR-247. The line would proceed generally south within new ROW until crossing under the existing SCE transmission corridor. Segment 5 would then continue southwest within the existing corridor (existing ROW), in place of the Lugo-Pisgah No. 1 line, which would be removed along this portion of the ROW. Segment 5 would cross SR-18 near Bernard Road and continue southwest to a point just west of the intersection of Desert View Road and Milpas Drive.
- **Segment 5A:** Construction of approximately 0.7 mile of double-circuit 220-kV transmission line in new ROW beginning just west of the intersection of Desert View Road and Milpas Drive and continuing generally northwest to terminate on the east side of the new Desert View Substation.
- **Segment 7:** Construction of approximately 15.7 miles of single-circuit 500-kV transmission line (initially energized at 220 kV) extending approximately 0.9 miles in new ROW from the west side of the Desert View Substation southwest to SCE's existing Lugo-Pisgah No. 1 and No. 2 line ROW, and then continuing southwest in this existing transmission corridor.

Construction Schedule

Construction of the proposed project, including initial build-out of the Desert View Substation as a switching station, would take approximately 30 months, and is anticipated to begin in the first quarter of 2016. Construction would include installation of approximately 292 new single-circuit and double-circuit 220-kV and 500-kV transmission structures, and removal or modification of approximately 161 structures associated with the Lugo-Pisgah No. 1 and No. 2 220-kV transmission lines; construction of approximately 25 miles of new access and spur roads, and repairs to existing roads; temporary use and construction of approximately 13 staging yards; and approximately 215 setup areas for conductor pulling and splicing.

Project Alternatives

Potential alternatives to SCE's proposed project have been identified by SCE in the PEA, submitted as part of the CPCN Application to the CPUC. These alternatives include an alternate Desert View Substation site and rerouting portions of SCE's proposed transmission line route, as shown in the Project Location Map (Segments 4, 5B, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11). The CPUC and BLM will consider these alternatives as well as other potential alternatives, including a reroute along SR-247 (Segment 13). In addition, the CPUC and BLM will consider a No Action/No Project Alternative.

Potential Environmental Effects

The EIR/EIS will identify and discuss the significant adverse environmental effects of the CLTP, and will identify mitigation measures to avoid or reduce significant adverse effects to the extent feasible. It also will discuss the significant environmental effects of the alternatives to the transmission line route and mitigation measures to reduce those effects.

Construction and operation of the CLTP may result in significant adverse effects related to the following environmental resource and issue areas, which will be addressed in the EIR/EIS:

- Air Resources
- Biological Resources
- Climate Change
- Cultural Resources
- Environmental Justice and Socioeconomics
- Geology and Soil Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Lands and Realty
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Paleontological Resources
- Recreation
- Transportation and Travel Management
- Utilities and Public Services
- Visual Resources
- Water Resources
- Wildland Fire

Additionally, issues specific to the BLM, including Special Designations, Livestock Grazing, Multiple Use Classes, and Wild Horses and Burros will be addressed.

No determinations have been made as to the significance of these potential effects. Such determinations will be made in the EIR/EIS after the issues are thoroughly analyzed. The CPUC and BLM invite interested parties, and all affected, responsible, trustee, and federal agencies, to suggest specific areas of analysis to be addressed within these general categories, or other issues not included above, to be considered in the EIR/EIS. The EIR/EIS also will analyze the potential for growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative effects of the CLTP in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area.

Agency Comments

The CPUC is seeking comments from all CEQA Responsible and Trustee Agencies and all other public agencies with jurisdiction by law with respect to the project as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIS/EIR. Agency responses should identify the issues to be considered in the EIS/EIR, including significant environmental issues, alternatives, mitigation measures, and whether the responding agency will be a responsible or trustee agency, and the basis for that determination. Due to the time limits mandated by State and federal laws, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but must be postmarked within 30 days from the date of receipt or no later than **September 2, 2014**. Please send your comments to:

Coolwater-Lugo Scoping Comments or CLTP-EIR-EIS@aspeneg.com
c/o Aspen Environmental Group
5020 Chesebro Road, Suite 200
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Additional Information

Project Website. Information about the environmental review process for the CLTP will be posted on the CPUC's website (see address below). This website will be used to post public documents related to the environmental review process and to announce upcoming public meetings.

www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/aspeng/cltp/cltp.htm

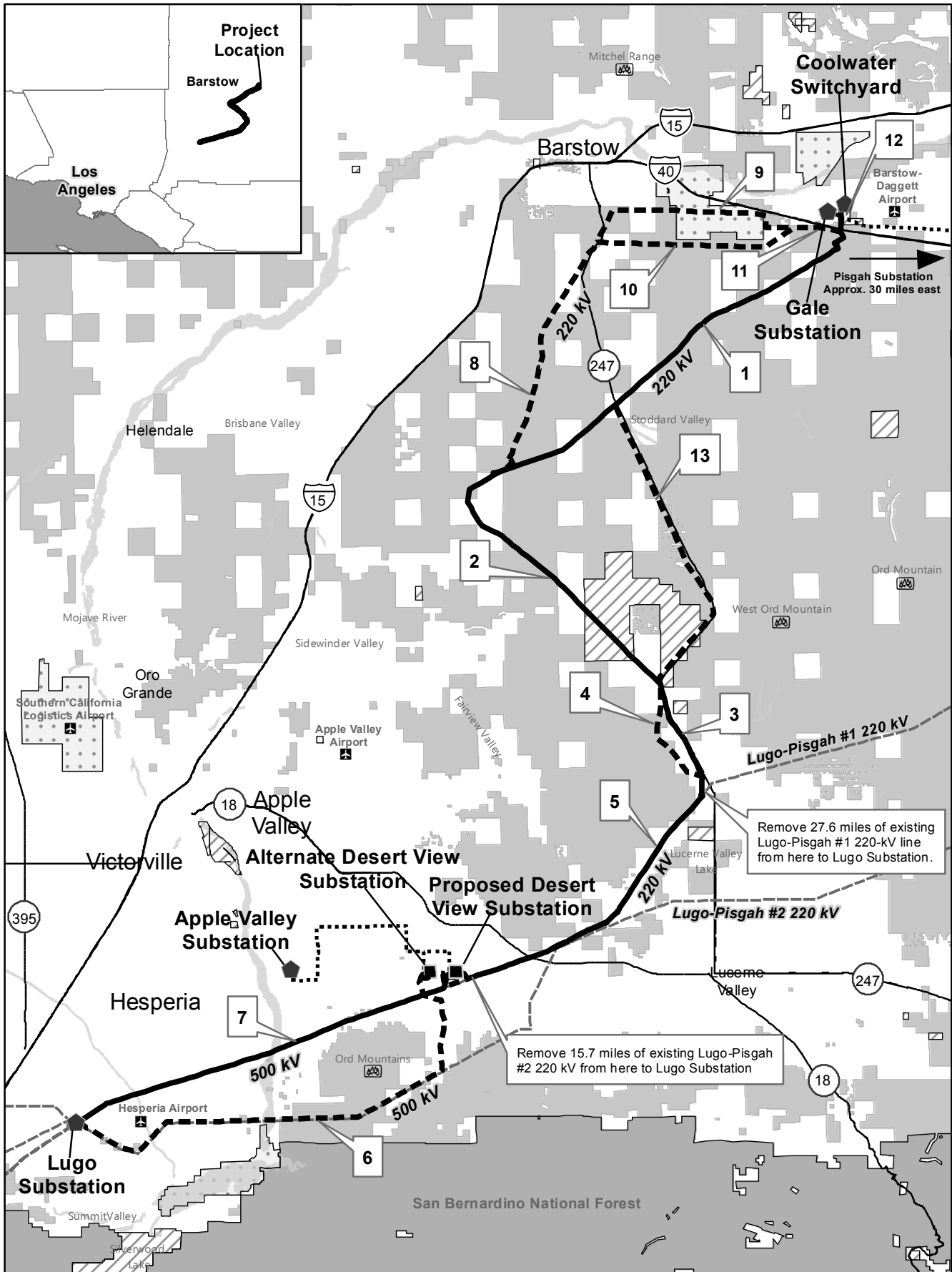
SCE's PEA is currently available for review in electronic format at the website. The PEA includes a full description of the project, as well as SCE's evaluation of the potential impacts of the project.

Project Information Hotline. To request project information, send an e-mail to CLTP-EIR-EIS@aspeneg.com or leave a voice message or send a fax to (888) 423-2220.

Scoping Meetings

The CPUC and BLM will be conduct a series of scoping meetings between August 19-21, 2014, to solicit comments from the general public, organizations, and government agencies about issues and topics that should be addressed in the EIR/EIS, including suggestions for potential alternatives and mitigation measures. The meetings will be held at the following locations and times.

Meeting Dates and Times	Meeting Locations
Tuesday August 19, 2014 6:00-8:00 p.m.	Barstow City Council Chambers 220 E. Mountain View Street, Barstow, CA 92311 (760) 256-3531
Wednesday August 20, 2014 3:30-5:30 p.m.	Lucerne Valley Community Center 33187 Highway 247 East, Lucerne Valley, CA 92356 (760) 248-7048
Wednesday August 20, 2014 7:00-9:00 p.m.	Percy Bakker Community Center 9333 E Avenue, Hesperia, CA 92345 (760) 244-5488
Thursday August 21, 2014 6:00-8:00 p.m.	Victor Valley Museum 11873 Apple Valley Road, Apple Valley, CA 92308 (760) 240-2111



Project Location

Los Angeles

Barstow

Coolwater Switchyard

Barstow

Gale Substation

Pisgah Substation
Approx. 30 miles east

Helendale

Brisbane Valley

Stoddard Valley

Mojave River

Sidewinder Valley

West Ord Mountain

Ord Mountain

Southern California Logistics Airport

Oro Grande

Apple Valley Airport

Fairview Valley

Lugo-Pisgah #1 220 kV

Apple Valley

Alternate Desert View Substation

Proposed Desert View Substation

Remove 27.6 miles of existing Lugo-Pisgah #1 220-kV line from here to Lugo Substation.

Apple Valley Substation

Lugo-Pisgah #2 220 kV

Victorville

Hesperia

7

Lugo Substation

Summit Valley

San Bernardino National Forest



0 2 4 Miles

Transmission and Telecommunication Lines

- Transmission Route Alternative Segments
- Alternative to Segment 9
- Proposed Transmission Route
- ⋯ Proposed Telecommunication Lines
- Existing Transmission Lines

Land Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management
- ▨ State
- ⬢ Military
- Forest Service

**Project Location Map:
Coolwater-Lugo
Transmission Project**