

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



February 8, 2022

Alex Gutierrez
Regulatory Affairs
Southern California Edison
8631 Rush St, General Office 4 – 235E (2nd Floor)
Rosemead, CA, 91770

RE: West of Devers Upgrade Project: Minor Project Refinement #53

Dear Mr. Gutierrez,

On February 3, 2022, Southern California Edison (SCE) submitted a request for Minor Project Refinement (MPR) #53 for an additional work area to install slope stabilizing devices for erosion control at one location. The additional work area is located in Segment 3 in the City of Loma Linda, San Bernardino County. The additional work area would support transmission line activities approved under the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Notice to Proceed (NTP) #4, September 5, 2017, for the West of Devers Upgrade Project in the County of Riverside, California.

The CPUC voted on August 18, 2016 to approve SCE's West of Devers Upgrade Project (Decision D.16-08-017) and a Notice of Determination was submitted to the State Clearinghouse (SCH# 2014051041). The CPUC also adopted a Mitigation, Monitoring, Compliance and Reporting Plan (MMCRP) to ensure compliance with all mitigation measures imposed on the West of Devers Upgrade Project during implementation. The MMCRP also acknowledges that temporary changes to the project, such as final project design and engineering or need for addition workspace, are anticipated and common practice for construction efforts of this scale and that an MPR request would be required for these activities. This letter documents the CPUC's thorough evaluation of all activities covered in this MPR, and that no new impacts or increase in impact severity would result from the requested MPR activities.

MPRs are reviewed for consistency with CEQA requirements and are located within the geographic boundary of the project study area. MPRs do not create new or substantially more severe significant impacts, or conflict with any mitigation measure or applicable law or policy. Also, they do not trigger other permit requirements unless the appropriate agency has approved the change, and clearly and strictly comply with the intent of the mitigation measure or applicable law or policy.

MPR #53 for an additional work area to install slope stabilizing devices for erosion control at one location to support construction activities (approved under NTP #4) is granted by CPUC based on the factors described below.

SCE MPR Request. Excerpts from the SCE MPR request are presented below (indented):

WA-3-3x64-MPR-53

A 0.01-acre temporary work area is required immediately southwest of Tower Site 3S64 for the installation of an extended McCarthy Flume and Gabion Dissipator. This work is required to address on-site erosion and maintain slope stability. Drainage improvements will include re-contouring to repair existing erosional rills and features caused by offsite discharge to the upland area. Prior to installation, loose or yielding soil may be over-excavated and re-compacted. Temporary BMPs will be installed to prevent impacts to the non-wetland

jurisdictional feature to the west of the work area during construction activities. The new work area is located entirely within the existing transmission line right-of-way, in area owned by the City of Loma Linda, consisting of approximately 0.10-acre of grassland/forbland.

CPUC Evaluation of MPR Request

In accordance with the MMCRP, the subject MPR request was reviewed by CPUC to confirm that no new impacts or increase in impact severity would result from the requested MPR activities and that the subject request was within the geographic boundary of the Project study area. Additionally, the subject work has been visited by the CPUC EM numerous times during the course of construction. The following discussion summarizes this analysis for agriculture, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, land use, noise, paleontological resources, traffic and transportation, visual resources, water resources, and wildland fire. A list of bulleted conditions is presented to define additional information and clarifications regarding mitigation requirements. In some cases, these items exceed the requirements of the Mitigation Measures (MMs) and Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) and are based on specific site conditions and/or are proposed conditions by SCE.

Agriculture: No Important Farmland is located within the proposed MPR work area.

Air Quality: During proposed construction, SCE shall implement the Fugitive Dust Control Plan approved by the CPUC on May 22, 2017, as well as the Exhaust Emissions Control Plan approved by CPUC on June 8, 2017. In addition, in compliance with MM AQ-1b, off-road equipment with engines larger than 50 horsepower shall have engines that meet or exceed U.S. EPA/CARB Tier 3 Emissions Standards. No additional impacts to air quality will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Biological Resources: A desktop analysis was conducted for the new work area using aerial imagery, publicly available data, and project biological data. The new work area was covered during previous surveys, including FRED Preconstruction Survey ID 000060 and resurveys of the area.

Desert Tortoise (DETO): The new work area is not located within the range of desert tortoise; therefore, no impacts to DETO are anticipated.

Special-Status Terrestrial Herpetofauna: No special-status terrestrial herpetofauna have been observed within the new work area during project-related surveys. However, many species have the potential to occur throughout the project area. A preconstruction sweep of the active work area will be conducted prior to use. With implementation of mitigation measures and biological monitoring during construction, no significant impacts to special-status terrestrial herpetofauna are anticipated.

Burrowing Owl (BUOW): Burrowing owl (BUOW) habitat in the form of annual and perennial grasslands and scrublands characterized by low-growing vegetation is present throughout the Project area. No occupied burrows or associated buffers currently intersect the proposed work area. Active owl burrows observed during preconstruction surveys and during construction would be mitigated in accordance with the Burrowing Owl Management and Passive Relocation Plan. With implementation of mitigation measures, including appropriate avoidance buffers and biological monitoring during construction, no impacts to burrowing owls are anticipated.

Nesting Birds: – Suitable substrates for nesting birds protected by the California Fish and Game Code and Migratory Bird Treaty Act, including trees, shrubs, man-made structures, and the ground surface, can be found throughout the Project area. The new work area does not currently intersect nesting bird buffers. Preconstruction surveys, including surveys for nesting birds during the avian breeding season (Jan 1 – Aug 31), will be conducted prior to the initiation of construction in the new work area. If active nests are identified, avoidance buffers will be established in accordance with the Nesting Bird Management Plan.

With implementation of mitigation measures, including appropriate avoidance buffers and biological monitoring during construction, no impacts to nesting birds are anticipated.

Listed Riparian Birds: No suitable habitat for riparian birds (least Bell's vireo and Southwestern willow flycatcher) occurs within 500 feet of the new work area. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher (CAGN): No suitable habitat for CAGN occurs within 500 feet of the new work area. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Golden Eagle (GOEA): Based on aerial habitat assessments and protocol surveys conducted for the Project, no suitable nesting habitat for GOEA is located within 2 miles of the new work area. Protocol aerial surveys conducted for the Project in 2019 showed no GOEA nests within 2 miles of the new work area. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Stephen's Kangaroo Rat (SKR): SKR Mapped Suitable Habitat is located approximately 250 feet north of the new work area, but does not intersect the work area. A habitat assessment, pedestrian surveys, and several consecutive years of trapping surveys have been conducted within SKR suitable habitat areas of the Project. Based on a lack of historic data, habitat conditions, and negative results over several years of surveys, SKR are not expected. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Special-Status Bats: No suitable bat roosting habitat or buffers occur within the proposed work area; therefore, no impacts to special-status bats are anticipated.

Special-Status Small Mammals: Special-status small mammals such as the pallid San Diego pocket mouse, northwestern San Diego pocket mouse, American badger, desert kit fox, San Diego desert woodrat, and/or San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit can occur in many parts of the Project area. Ringtail and Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel are not anticipated to occur within the Project area. The work area is located outside the known range of the Palm Springs pocket mouse. No mapped suitable habitat for the Los Angeles pocket mouse occurs in or near the work area. No special-status small mammals have been observed in the vicinity of the new work area during previous preconstruction surveys or construction. A preconstruction survey of the new work area will be conducted prior to use. With implementation of mitigation measures and biological monitoring during construction as outlined in the Special-status Small Mammals Avoidance and Minimization Plan, no significant impacts to special-status mammals are anticipated.

Special Status Plants: No special status plants have been observed in the vicinity of the new work area during previous preconstruction surveys or construction. If special status plants are later identified during preconstruction surveys, clearance sweeps, or monitoring, they will be avoided to the extent feasible. Unavoidable impacts to special status plants will be addressed in accordance with the Special Status Plant Salvage and Relocation Plan.

Regulated Trees: No tree trimming or tree removal is required for construction activities within the new work area. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Jurisdictional Waters: Wetland and non-wetland jurisdictional features are located throughout the Project area; however, no jurisdictional features intersect the new work area. Therefore, no impacts to jurisdictional features are expected to result from use of the new work area.

Cultural Resources:

The new work area is located within the WOD Area of Potential Effect and was covered within the record search data that was conducted during previous WOD surveys and studies. The record search and survey results for the new work area were negative for cultural resources. *Williams, Audry. 2016. Cultural Resources Management Plan for Southern California Edison Company's West of Devers Transmission Line Upgrade Project, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, California. Prepared by Southern California Edison.*

Geology and Soils: SCE conducted geotechnical studies to evaluate faults, landslides and unstable slopes, and soil characteristics as outlined in MMs G-1a, G-2a, and G-5a. The geotechnical survey reports were reviewed and approved by the CPUC on August 17, 2017. No additional impacts to geology and soils will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: As required by MM HH-1a, SCE prepared and submitted a Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Plan to the CPUC on September 27, 2017. Hazardous materials used and stored on site for the duration of construction activities will be managed according to the Plan. A Soil Management Plan has been developed consistent with MMs HH-2a and HH-3a to provide guidance for the proper handling, onsite management, and disposal of impacted soil that might be encountered during construction activities, including soil samples to be collected in construction areas where the land has historically or is currently being used for agriculture and would be subject to ground disturbance by the Project. SCE's Soil Management Plan was combined with the Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Plan described above. Also, SCE's contractor submitted information including written procedures for fueling and maintenance of construction equipment and an Emergency Response Plan. No additional impacts from hazards or hazardous materials will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Land Use: As required by MM LU-1a, a Construction Notification Plan was prepared by SCE and approved by CPUC on May 22, 2017. The Plan identified the procedures to ensure that SCE will inform property and business owners of the location and duration of construction. The Plan includes provisions for public noticing including mailers, newspaper advertisements, public venue notices, and includes the establishment of a public liaison and toll-free information hotline. No additional impacts to land use will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Noise: BMPs for construction noise management will be implemented as outlined in MM N-1a 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 6:00 p.m.) or an alternative schedule developed by SCE based on its coordination with the local jurisdiction(s). Construction traffic and helicopter flights shall be routed away from residences and schools, where feasible. No additional impacts to noise will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Paleontological Resources: The WOD Paleontological Resources Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (PRMMP) requires full-time, qualified paleontological construction monitoring in areas determined to have moderate (PFYC 3) to very high (PFYC 5) sensitivity. Sediments of unknown (PFYC U) sensitivity shall be monitored by a qualified paleontological monitor on a part-time basis and geologic units with very low (PFYC 1) or low (PFYC 2) sensitivity may be spot checked to confirm paleontological sensitivity.

WA-3-3X64-MPR-53 is located within an area of very high PFYC 5 paleontological sensitivity area; therefore, the site requires fulltime qualified paleontological construction monitoring if either grading occurs or holes larger than 2-feet in diameter are drilled.

Traffic and Transportation: Consistent with MM T-1a and MM T-1b, Construction Transportation and Traffic Control Plans have been developed and approved. The Construction Transportation Plan describes

timing of commutes, methods of reducing crew-related traffic, and other methods for reducing construction-generated additional traffic on regional and local roadways. No additional impacts to traffic and transportation will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Visual Resources: The proposed additional work areas described in this MPR are no different than what was described in NTP #4. No additional impacts to visual resources will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Water Resources: As required by MM WR-2a, SCE developed and submitted an Erosion Control Plan to the CPUC and BLM. The Erosion Control Plan was incorporated into the SWPPP, which is kept onsite and readily available on request. SCE submitted the SWPPP to the CPUC on May 25, 2017. Any changes necessitated by this MPR will be incorporated into the SWPPP document. No additional impacts to water resources will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Wildland Fire: SCE submitted a Fire Management Plan on February 10, 2017 to satisfy the conditions of MM WF-1a and the Plan was approved by the CPUC on July 18, 2017. A revised Fire Management Plan was submitted by SCE on October 29, 2018, which was approved by the CPUC on October 30, 2018. The revised Plan was also approved by BLM and State and local fire agencies. No additional impacts to wildland fire will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

The conditions noted below shall be met by SCE and its contractors:

- SCE shall notify the CPUC and provide Collector data for the proposed work areas covered in this MPR prior to the start of construction activities.
- All applicable Project MMs, 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 MPR shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities. All permits and plans shall be made available to the CPUC EM upon request.
- All crew members shall be WEAP trained prior to working on the Project. 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.
- 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 technique and mitigation implementation to a lesser level are required, an MPR request shall be submitted for CPUC review.
- A preconstruction biological survey shall be conducted prior to initiating work in each proposed work area if those sites are no longer active.
- In accordance with the PRMMP, a paleontological monitor shall be on site to monitor ground-disturbing construction activities.

Sincerely,



John Forsythe
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen