

**RECORD OF DECISION**  
**SDG&E POWER LINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**  
**LA JOLLA, CAMPO AND PAUMA-YUIMA INDIAN RESERVATIONS**  
**SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS**



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) submitted an initial application to the U. S Forest Service (Forest Service), Cleveland National Forest, to obtain a Master Special Use Permit (MSUP) in 2005. The purpose of the MSUP was to consolidate SDG&E's rights and responsibilities in connection with the continued operation of its electric lines and other existing facilities located within the Cleveland National Forest. As part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process, the Forest Service circulated an Environmental Assessment (EA) for public comment in 2009. In response to public comments received on that EA, the Forest Service determined that additional fire risk reduction measures within the Cleveland National Forest (including fire hardening) and additional undergrounding should be evaluated as part of the MSUP review process and that, as a result, an environmental impact statement (EIS) was required.

After publication of the EA in 2009, SDG&E expanded the scope of the proposed MSUP to include fire hardening, undergrounding, and relocation of improvements both within and outside the Cleveland National Forest. The proposed power line replacement projects will require a Permit to Construct (PTC) from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). The project also crosses other federal jurisdictions, including land managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). SDG&E also proposed new construction within Cuyamaca Rancho State Park (CSP).

The CPUC and Forest Service agreed to develop a joint Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the MSUP/PTC Power Line Replacement Projects. The CPUC is the lead agency under California law and the Forest Service is the lead federal agency. The joint EIR/EIS was prepared to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The joint document is called the "SDG&E Master Special Use Permit and Permit to Construct Power Line Replacement Projects EIR/EIS." The BLM and BIA joined the Forest Service as federal cooperating agencies under NEPA, and the CSP is participating as a responsible agency under CEQA. The Final EIR/EIS was issued July 10, 2015.

When taking actions on a Right-of-Way Grant, the BIA must comply with NEPA but can adopt another agency's environmental review to meet those requirements if it has addressed all the environmental issues associated with the trust land action. The Forest Service Final EIR/EIS fully addressed all of the environmental issues for the Proposed Action. The Final EIR/EIS states that it may be used by other state, local and Federal agencies for those that have portions of the project proposed on lands under their jurisdiction. The BIA relies on the Final EIR/EIS for the entire project in making the decisions in this ROD and adopts the Final EIR/EIS and incorporates by reference necessary related documents to address the NEPA requirements for this Proposed Action.



## **1.2 Forest Service and BLM Decisions**

The Forest Service has authorized and BLM is proposing to authorize the MSUP and Power Line Replacement Projects via the Forest Service ROD and a BLM Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) located on lands under their respective jurisdictions. The Forest Service, based on an evaluation of the information provided by the applicant and a review of the analysis disclosed in the Final EIR/EIS, decided to implement the components of the Federal Preferred Alternative that are located on the National Forest System lands. Similarly, BLM is expected to evaluate applicant provided information and review the disclosed analysis in the Final EIR/EIS in reaching its decision to authorize components of the Federal Preferred Alternative that are located on lands managed by the BLM.

## **1.3 BIA Determination**

This BIA ROD applies only to lands held in trust on the La Jolla, Campo and Pauma-Yuima Indian reservations. In issuing this ROD, BIA adopts the relevant mitigation measures identified in the FEIR/EIS. Based on the analysis in the FEIR/EIS and the entirety of the administrative record, BIA has determined that the Federal Preferred Alternative meets the purpose and need of the BIA and respective tribes.

## **2.0 AGENCY PURPOSE AND NEED**

The BIA purpose is to authorize the power lines and associated upgrades needed to continue electric service to a variety of users within and adjacent to the Indian trust lands in a manner that is consistent with tribal land use goals and policies. The action is needed to amend the existing easements to include the proposed fire hardening measures and locations, and to extend their term.

## **3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

### **3.1 La Jolla Reservation**

The BIA, in consultation with the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, proposes modifications to TL682 and amend existing ROWs where needed on tribal lands as part of the federal proposed action. Under this action, approximately 1,500 feet of TL682 would be placed underground between poles Z118079 to Z118082, through an economic development zone located on the La Jolla Reservation. The transition pole for Z118082 would be moved northeast from its current location. In addition, pole Z118085 would be moved to the south from its current location, and several poles to the west of pole Z118079 would be realigned onto tribal lands to avoid allotted properties on the reservation.



### 3.2 Campo Reservation

The BIA, in consultation with the Campo Kumeyaay Nation, proposes to amend the existing Right-of-Way (ROW) grants to authorize SDG&E's proposed project for TL629. The project includes fire hardening the line, adding an additional circuit, and relocating an existing distribution circuit to the fire hardened TL629. A section of the transmission line would be constructed underground as it enters the Crestwood Substation. The BIA also proposes to amend the existing ROW grants for TL6931 to authorize the fire hardening of the existing line.

### 3.3 Pauma-Yuima Reservation

No amendments or relocation of the existing TL682 is proposed by SDG&E. Activities would be limited to a small section of the existing line to replace wooden poles to steel.

## 4.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Final EIR/EIS evaluated six other alternatives in detail as described below. A comparison of the alternatives considered in detail can be found in the Final EIR/EIS Section E.

**SDG&E's Proposed Project** – SDG&E's proposed project would include issuance of a MSUP for the SDG&E system, including 102 miles of electric lines within the SDG&E system totaling approximately 146 miles both on and off the Cleveland National Forest.

**Federal Proposed Action** – The Federal Proposed Action modifies certain actions proposed by SDG&E on National Forest System lands and the La Jolla Indian Reservation. Under this alternative TL626 would be relocated to the east of the Cedar Creek canyon, and relocated to the east of the Inaja Fire Memorial Overlook. This alternative also requires additional undergrounding for C440 within the Laguna Recreation Area, and also requires a short section of undergrounding for TL682 within the La Jolla Indian Reservation.

**No Action Alternative – No MSUP Issued** – Under this required alternative the Forest Service would not issue a MSUP and the existing permits would terminate according to their terms. SDG&E would be required to remove all the improvements according to the permit terms.

**No Project Alternative** – Under this alternative, which is required under CEQA, the existing alignments within the Cleveland National Forest would be maintained as they are currently, under their approximately 70 separate permits and easements. In addition, none of SDG&E's proposed power line replacement projects including proposed fire hardening activities would be authorized.

**Partial Removal of Overland Access Roads** – This alternative, which is based on the Proposed Project, would remove up to 10.5 miles of regularly maintained access roads that are in general greater than 25% grade and in close proximity to creeks, particularly along TL626 (Boulder Creek) and TL625 (Barber Mountain/Carveacre).

**Removal of TL 626 from Service** – Under this alternative, TL 626 would be removed from service and replaced by one of two options described in the Final EIR/EIS Section C.4.2. The remaining system components would be treated the same as the Proposed Project.



**The Federal Preferred Alternative** – As described in the Final EIR/EIS Section E.6, the federal preferred alternative is a composite of three alternatives. The Federal Proposed Action is the basis of the preferred alternative; however the TL626 relocation option has been replaced by the TL626 Removal From Service Alternative Option 1 (the upgrade to TL6931), combined with the off-grid solution for the Boulder Creek substation. The Federal Preferred Alternative adopts Option 2 for the C157 relocation out of the Hauser Wilderness. The Federal Preferred Alternative also analyzed the conversion of TL626 to 12kV to continue service to the Boulder Creek substation if the off-grid solution was not feasible. The Forest Service ROD does not authorize this conversion. The Federal Preferred Alternative would also convert a 6.8 mile section of TL626 that is co-located with C79 to a 12kV fire hardened line to serve local residences along Boulder Creek Road. The Federal Preferred Alternative adopts Option 2 for C157 relocation out of the Hauser Wilderness. The Federal Preferred Alternative also incorporates the portions of the Partial Removal of Overland Access Roads applicable to TL626/C79, TL625, C442 and TL629. This alternative as modified and adopted in the Forest Service ROD best meets the purpose and need for the reasons described in the decision rationale section.

In addition to the alternatives considered in detail, the Final EIR/EIS evaluated fifteen additional alternatives but eliminated them from detailed study as described in the Final EIR/EIS Section C.5. As described in Section C.5, alternatives that were not carried forward for full analysis did not meet project objectives, feasibility or environmental effectiveness criteria.

## **5.0 MITIGATION AND MONITORING**

SDG&E, as the applicant, proposed numerous measures to protect resources as described in the Final EIR/EIS Section B.7.1. The Forest Service and CPUC, as lead agencies, identified additional measures throughout the Final EIR/EIS Section D. Both the applicant proposed measures and the agencies required mitigation measures will be included in the MSUP as permit requirements, and implemented as part of the Mitigation, Monitoring, Compliance and Reporting Program (MMCRP) described in Section H of the Final EIR/EIS. Applicable mitigation measures for implementation on lands held in trust by the BIA can be found Tables 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12, and 16 of the MMCRP.

## **6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

A notice of intent to prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register on September 23, 2013 (78 FR 58270), and the scoping comment period was open for 45 days. In addition, the proposed action was listed in the Cleveland National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions and updated periodically during the environmental analysis. People were invited to review and comment through direct distribution of a joint Forest Service and CPUC Notice of Preparation and by legal notices published in local papers. A supplemental scoping period was offered starting on January 17, 2014 and ending on March 7, 2014. Public meetings were held in Alpine and Julian during the first scoping period, and in Alpine during the supplemental scoping period. All project information was maintained on the project webpage



(<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/dudek/CNF/CNF.htm>) hosted by the CPUC.

Issues were identified from scoping comments and were summarized in the Scoping Report dated January 16, 2014, and were updated in March 2014 after the supplemental scoping period. The issues significant to the proposed action are summarized Table A-1 of the Final EIR/EIS.

The Draft EIR/EIS was published for review and comment on September 5, 2014 when the Environmental Protection Agency published the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register (79 FR 53061). Notices were distributed to the project mail list, and copies of the Draft EIR/EIS were available on the web, at local libraries, and provided to those who requested copies. Notice of the opportunity to comment was published in the San Diego Union-Tribune on September 5, 2014. A public meeting was held in Alpine on October 1, 2014. The 60 day comment period closed on November 4, 2014.

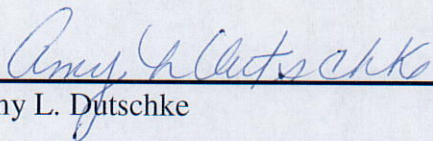
The Forest Service and CPUC received comments on the Draft EIR/EIS from two federal agencies, seven state and local agencies, two Native American tribes, eight community groups, the applicant, and fifteen individuals. The comments and responses are presented in the Final EIR/EIS Volume 2. Summaries of the public participation process are discussed in the Final EIR/EIS Section I.

## **7.0 DECISION TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSED ACTION**

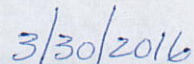
The Bureau of Indian Affairs has determined that it will approve the amendments to the subject ROW Grants to SDG&E for the proposed project on TL682 within the La Jolla Reservation and for the proposed project on TL629 and TL6931 within the Campo Reservation and authorize the wood to steel pole replacements on TL682 within the Pauma-Yuima Reservation. The BIA decision is based on it best meets the purpose and need, the analysis of the environmental impacts identified in the FEIR/EIS with corresponding mitigation and supports the mission of BIA and its policy goals and objectives.

## **8.0 SIGNATURE**

By my signature, I indicate my decision to amend the subject ROW Grants to SDG&E within the La Jolla and Campo Indian Reservations and authorize the wood to steel pole replacements on TL682 within the Pauma-Yuima Reservation.



Amy L. Dutschke  
Pacific Regional Director



Date