Notification of Availability
Joint Final Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS)
East County Substation/Tule Wind/Energia Sierra Juarez Gen-Tie Projects

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Lead Agencies: California Public Utilities Commission
United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

ABSTRACT

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have prepared a Joint Final Environmental Impact Report/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIR/FEIS) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for consideration of San Diego Gas & Electric Company's (SDG&E's) application to build and operate the East County (ECO) Substation Project. In addition, the Joint FEIR/FEIS addresses Tule Wind, LLC's application to build and operate the Tule Wind Project and Energia Sierra Juarez U.S. Transmission, LLC's application to build and operate the Energia Sierra Juarez Generator Tie-Line (ESJ Gen-Tie) Project as "connected actions" under NEPA and "whole of the action" under CEQA. Therefore, the ECO Substation Project, Tule Wind Project, and ESJ Gen-Tie Project are collectively referred to as the Proposed PROJECT in the FEIR/FEIS. In addition, the FEIR/FEIS also considers at a qualitative/program level the proposed Campo, Manzanita, and Jordan wind energy projects, which would connect into the proposed Boulevard Substation Rebuild component of the ECO Substation Project. The CPUC and BLM have determined that these three wind energy projects are sufficiently developed to analyze impacts where feasible. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR/EIS, the Campo, Manzanita, and Jordan projects are qualitatively evaluated at a programmatic level because sufficient project-level information has yet to be developed. The proposed Campo, Manzanita, and Jordan wind energy projects will still require project-specific environmental review and evaluation under all applicable environmental regulations once sufficient project-level information is developed. By including these nascent wind projects as components of the Proposed PROJECT, it allows the lead agencies to further consider broad impacts, mitigation, and consequences of the ECO Substation Project specifically and the larger project as a whole.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT/ACTION

The Proposed PROJECT would be located near the unincorporated communities of Jacumba and Boulevard, approximately 70 miles east of downtown San Diego, in the southeastern portion of San Diego County. If approved, the Proposed PROJECT would construct and operate: (1) the ECO Substation Project, including a new 500/230/138-kilovolt (kV) ECO Substation, a new 13.3-mile 138 kV transmission line (connecting the ECO Substation with the Boulevard Substation Rebuild), and would rebuild the existing Boulevard Substation to operate at 138/69/12 kV; (2) the Tule Wind Project, including up to 128 wind turbines and associated facilities, including an aboveground and underground cable collection system, collector substation, and an operations and maintenance facility, and an approximate 9.2-mile 138 kV transmission line to interconnect with the proposed Boulevard Substation Rebuild; and (3) the ESJ Gen-Tie Project, including an approximate 1-mile 500 kV (or 230 kV) gen-tie from the U.S.–Mexico border approximately 4 miles southeast of the community of Jacumba to interconnect with the proposed ECO Substation. Approval of the Campo, Manzanita, and Jordan wind energy projects will require project-level environmental review.

The Joint FEIR/FEIS describes the Proposed PROJECT, evaluates and describes the potential environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed PROJECT, identifies those impacts that could be significant, and presents mitigation measures, which, if adopted, could avoid or minimize these impacts. The Joint FEIR/FEIS also evaluates alternatives to the Proposed PROJECT, including the No Project/No Action Alternative, as required by CEQA and NEPA.

CONTENTS OF THE FEIR/FEIS

Volumes 1 and 2 of the EIR/EIS present changes that were made to the Draft EIR/EIS as a result of comments received during the public review period (which extended from December 24, 2010, to March 4, 2011). Revisions were made to clarify information presented in the Draft EIR/EIS and only minor technical changes or additions have been made. These changes and additions to the EIR/EIS do not raise important new issues related to significant effects on the environment. Such changes are insignificant as the term is used in Section 15088.5(b) of the CEQA Guidelines and under NEPA do not result in new significant circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns or require analysis of a new alternative (40 CFR 1502.9(c)(1)(ii)). Volumes 1 and 2 are completely reprinted from the Draft EIR/EIS and changes made since public review are signified as a replacement, addition, or revision to existing text. Revisions to existing text are signified by strikeout (i.e., ~~strikeout~~) where text is removed and by underlined text (i.e., underline) where text is added for clarification.

Volumes 3 and 4 of the Final EIR/EIS contain responses to comments received in addition to all comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS, which have been bracketed and numbered for ease of review (bracketed/numbered comments correlate to numbered responses in Volume 3).

CHANGES MADE TO THE DRAFT EIR/EIS

In response to comments on the Draft EIR/EIS and through consultation with government agencies, changes have been made in the Final EIR/EIS, as mentioned previously. The following information has been added to or revised in the Final EIR/EIS and is listed by EIR/EIS section.

Section B, Project Description

1. **Tule Wind, LLC Modified Project Layout.** After the Draft EIR/EIS was released for public review in December 2010, Tule Wind, LLC modified the Tule Wind Project layout to reduce the overall size of the project. The modified project as presented and analyzed in the Final EIR/EIS reduces the number of turbines and adjusts the transmission line route and access roads, as well as slightly modifies the layout of some of the turbine locations, as depicted in the Draft EIR/EIS. The table below provides a comparison of the Tule Wind Project analyzed in the Draft EIR/EIS with the Tule Wind modified project. The analysis supporting the evaluation of these modifications for each environmental topic is provided under the "Direct and Indirect Effects" heading under the "Tule Wind Project" discussion in Sections D.2 through D.18 of the Final EIR/EIS.

Comparison of the Draft EIR/EIS versus Modified Tule Wind Project

Component	Draft EIR/EIS Project	Modified Project
Turbines	134 (200 megawatts (MW))	128 (201 MW)
Met Towers	2 (197 feet)	3 (219–328 feet) new tower on northwest ridge on Ewiiaapaayp lands near turbine L-6
Sonic Detection and Ranging (SODAR) unit	SODAR	May include a Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) unit (same location as SODAR)
Batch Plant[1]	on BLM	Location on BLM land moved slightly to the northeast from the location shown in the Draft EIR/EIS
Underground collector system	42–50-inch-deep trench	44–50-inch-deep trench
Overhead collector system	232 poles Temporary impact: 108.2 acres	250 poles Temporary impact: 127 acres
138 kV transmission	100 feet ROW Single circuit	125 feet ROW Double circuit

	108 poles 9.7 miles	80 poles 9.2 miles
Access Roads	New: 36.4 miles Improved: 27.6 miles Total land requirement: 250.3 acres	New: 36.8 miles Improved: 23.4 miles Total land requirement: 236.1 acres
Laydown area locations	38 Temporary fencing would occur	38 – no change in number but some locations are modified Temporary fencing may occur

Notes:
[1] Of the two alternative batch plant locations provided in the modified project layout, the alternative Rough Acres Ranch location for the batch plant is carried forward and considered in Tule Wind Project Alternatives 1 through 4.

These modifications to the Tule Wind Project are not the types of changes in circumstance that would require analysis through supplementation of the Draft EIR/EIS because the modifications reduce the overall size of the Proposed PROJECT. Therefore, these modifications to the Tule Wind Project are within the scope of the original Draft EIR/EIS analysis and such changes are insignificant as the term is used in Section 15088.5(b) of the CEQA Guidelines. Under NEPA, these changes do not result in new significant circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns, or require analysis of a new alternative (40 CFR 1502.9(c)(1)(ii)).

2. **ESJ Gen-Tie Project Water Well Access Road.** In order to access well water for use during construction, approximately 4 miles east of the ESJ Gen-Tie site a new access route (150 by 20 feet) is proposed from Old Highway 80 to an existing well site. The new access road would facilitate access to an existing water well on property owned by the Jacumba Community Services District. This modification in addressed in EIR/EIS Section B and its effects are analyzed in Section D of the Final EIR/EIS.

Section C, Alternatives

1. **SDG&E ECO Substation Project Alternatives.** After release of the Draft EIR/EIS for public review in December 2010, a modification to the ECO Partial Underground 138 kV Transmission Route Alternative was developed through government-to-government Section 106 consultation to reduce environmental effects to cultural resources in the proposed Jacumba National Register District between mileposts (MP) 0.3 and 2.4. In addition, through consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), a modification to the ECO Substation Alternative Site was developed to reduce environmental effects to jurisdictional wetlands and cultural resources.

   The proposed modifications to the ECO Partial Underground 138 kV Transmission Route Alternative and ECO Substation Alternative Site are summarized in Section ES.5.2.1 and are described in detail in Section C, Alternatives, in the Final EIR/EIS. The analysis supporting the evaluation of the modifications of these alternatives for each environmental topic is provided under the headings “ECO Substation Alternative Site” and “ECO Partial Underground 138 kV Transmission Route Alternative” in Sections D.2 through D.18 of the Final EIR/EIS.

   The modifications to the ECO Partial Underground 138 kV Transmission Route Alternative and ECO Substation Alternative Site are not the types of changes in circumstance that would require analysis through supplementation of the Draft EIR/EIS because the modifications minimize or avoid effects on the environment. Therefore, these modifications to the ECO Partial Underground 138 kV Transmission Route Alternative and ECO Substation Alternative Site are within the scope of the original Draft EIR/EIS analysis and such changes are insignificant as the term is used in Section 15088.5(b) of the CEQA Guidelines. Under NEPA, these changes do not result in new significant circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns or require analysis of a new alternative (40 CFR 1502.9(c)(1)(ii)).

2. **Tule Wind Project Alternatives (Alternatives 1 through 4, Gen-Tie Routes 2 and 3 with Collector Station and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Facility on Rough Acres Ranch).** During public review of the Draft EIR/EIS, Tule Wind, LLC proposed an alternative location for the temporary 5-acre batch plant on Rough Acres Ranch. In addition, during the Section 106 government-to-government consultation, a concern was raised by Indian tribes regarding the location of the overhead collector line to the west of Lost Valley Rock (or its Kumeyaay name, "wekatoekush"), a geological feature located to the west of McCain Valley Road that holds cultural value to the tribes. These alternatives address moving the overhead collector line to the east side of Lost Valley Rock to the 138 kV transmission line corridor that is vacated by moving the collector substation and O&M facility to Rough Acres Ranch. These modifications are summarized in Section ES.5.2.2 and are addressed in Section C of the Final EIR/EIS. Their effects are described in EIR/EIS Section D.

   These modifications to the Tule Wind Project Alternatives (Alternatives 1 through 4) are not the types of changes in circumstance that would require analysis through supplementation of the Draft EIR/EIS because the modifications minimize effects on the environment. Therefore, these modifications to the Tule Wind Project Alternatives (Alternatives 1 through 4) are within the scope of the original Draft EIR/EIS analysis and such changes are insignificant as the term is used in Section 15088.5(b) of the CEQA Guidelines. Under NEPA, these changes do not result in new significant circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns, or require analysis of a new alternative (40 CFR 1502.9(c)(1)(ii)).

3. **Tule Wind Project Alternatives (Alternative 5, Reduction in Turbines).** Under this alternative, the proposed Tule Wind Project would consist of 65 turbines with the removal of 63 specific turbines to include 6 turbines adjacent to the In-Ko-Pah Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) being S1, R4, (R8), R8, R9, and R10 and 57 turbines on the western side of the project site including all turbines in the J, K, L, M, N, P, and Q strings. These modifications are described in EIR/EIS Section C and their effects are analyzed in Section D.

Section D, Environmental Analysis

1. **Revised Analysis and Mitigation Measures.** Various text sections have been modified in Section D, Environmental Analysis, or clarified in response to comments (see EIR/EIS Section ES.4.2 for summary of comments received during public review of the Draft EIR/EIS). In addition, Impact FF-1 in EIR/EIS Section D.15, Fire and Fuels Management, was clarified to distinguish this impact from Impact FF-2 and several mitigation measures have been modified for clarity or to ensure their feasibility (see various issue areas in Section D of the Final EIR/EIS).

2. **Consideration of BLM Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.** Pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the BLM is required to conduct and maintain resources inventories for all public lands under its jurisdiction. BLM Instruction Memorandum (IM) 2011-154 reiterates the requirement for offices to conduct and maintain inventories regarding the presence and absence of wilderness characteristics, and to consider identified lands with wilderness characteristics when analyzing projects under NEPA. The BLM conducted an inventory for the Tule Wind Project site and determined that lands with wilderness characteristics are present (see Figure D.5-3, BLM Lands with Wilderness Characteristics). The wilderness characteristics inventory is summarized in EIR/EIS Section D.5, Wilderness and Recreation (see Section D.5.1.1). Impact WR-3a (presence of a project component in BLM lands with wilderness characteristics would substantially compromise wilderness characteristics), has been added to the Final EIR/EIS for the proposed Tule Wind Project and Tule Wind Project alternatives (see Section D.5.3.3, Impact WR-3a, and Sections D.5.5.1 through D.5.5.5, Impact WR-3a).

PROJECT DECISION PROCESS

After the Final EIR/EIS is completed, the CPUC will make a final decision for the ECO Substation Project. For NEPA, the BLM will prepare two separate Records of Decision (one for the ECO Substation Project and one for the Tule Wind Project). The Notices of Availability (NOAs) for the two Records of Decision will be announced in the Federal Register.

Responsible and cooperating agencies, including the County of San Diego, California State Lands Commission, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Ewiiaapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, may also use the EIR/EIS for their permitting processes. Following certification of the EIR/EIS by the CPUC, the County of San Diego could choose to either rely on the CPUC/BLM environmental document to meet their CEQA requirements for its discretionary action under CEQA in their consideration of issuing the major use permits (Major Impact Service Utility) for the Tule Wind and ESJ Gen-Tie projects, as portions of those projects are within their jurisdiction, or amend, supplement, and/or prepare additional documentation to meet their environmental compliance needs. The County Planning Commission will make the final decision in considering and issuing the major use permits. Since portions of the Tule Wind Project will occur on lands under the jurisdiction of the California State Lands Commission and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, they may choose to use the EIR/EIS for consideration of their required discretionary actions, as will responsible resource agencies.

AVAILABILITY OF JOINT FEIR/FEIS

Copies of the Joint FEIR/FEIS are available for review at the following local libraries.

Library	Address
Jacumba Public Library	44605 Old Highway 80 Jacumba, California 91934
Campo-Morena Village Branch Library	31356 Highway 94, Campo, California 91906
Potrero Branch Library	24883 Potrero Valley Road, Potrero, California 91963

The FEIR/FEIS is also available on the CPUC's and BLM's websites at:

http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/dudek/ECOSUB/ECOSUB.htm.
http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/nepa/tule.html

OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE

Additional information related to the EIR/EIS, including a description of public meetings and documents that provide background information on the Proposed PROJECT (including reports from the applicants, data requests, and technical studies prepared) are available online at the project's website (see address above).

For additional information about the EIR/EIS, please contact Ms. Amy Baker, CPUC Project Manager, at (415) 703-1691, or Mr. Greg Thomsen, BLM Project Manager, at (951) 697-5237.