

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DISTRICT 11

PLANNING DIVISION

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March 1, 2011

11-SD-8  
PM 65.9  
Tule Wind Project  
DEIR

Mr. Iain Fisher  
California Public Utilities Commission  
605 Third Street  
Encinitas CA 92024

Dear Mr. Fisher:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) appreciates the opportunity to have reviewed the Tule Wind Project Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) traversing Interstate 8 (I-8) near Ribbonwood Road/McCain Valley Road, as well as State Route 94 (SR-94). Caltrans has the following comments:

Figure D.9-1 showing that the overhead lines will cross I-8 while connecting from one substation to another. Any utility crossings of highways or freeways (ie: I-8 or SR-94) will need an encroachment permit from Caltrans. Please refer to Caltrans Encroachment Permits Manual ([http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/developserv/permits/encroachment\\_permits\\_manual/index.html](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/developserv/permits/encroachment_permits_manual/index.html)) for guidance on utility encroachment. The following information is contained in Chapter 600, Table 6.7 (page 6-35) of the Encroachment Permit Manual. Line supports for overhead lines crossing freeways must comply with these requirements, they:

1. Should have a minimum lateral clearance of 30' from the edge of a through lane and 30' from the edge of a ramp lane, when possible.
2. Shall be located outside the right-of-way (R/W) or between the R/W line and access control line if different. Any other placement must be approved by the Division of Design, Chief.
3. Should not be permitted in medians.
4. Should not be permitted on cut or fill slopes.
5. Shall not impair sight distances.
6. Shall be compatible with access requirements.

Please refer to Caltrans Encroachment Permits Manual for guidance on Traffic Control on freeways. The following information is contained in Appendix E (page E-42) of the Encroachment Permit Manual. For placement of aerial lines, installation or removal of overhead conductors crossing a freeway requires traffic control by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and usually occur on weekend mornings. The CHP can perform a rolling break in traffic on most highways to allow up to a five-minute clearing. These breaks are adequate for simple cable

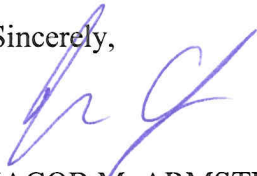
installation. Utility personnel carry the conductors across the freeway lanes and hoist them into place on the opposite side of the freeway. On larger conductor crossings such as transmission lines, 1" or greater in diameter, districts may determine that safety nets are needed to prevent transmission lines from falling on traffic during cabling installations. Temporary safety-net support poles are placed at protected locations outside shoulders and in medians. If locations for temporary supports are not available, the utility company may use K-rail and sand barrel crash cushions. After rope nets are strung during CHP traffic breaks other work is then allowed to proceed. Placement of the aerial line may be by helicopter.

Any work performed within Caltrans R/W must provide an approved final environmental document including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) determination addressing any environmental impacts within the Caltrans' R/W, and any corresponding technical studies. If these materials are not included with the encroachment permit application, the applicant will be required to acquire and provide these to Caltrans before the permit application will be accepted. Identification of avoidance and/or mitigation measures will be a condition of the encroachment permit approval as well as procurement of any necessary regulatory and resource agency permits

Additional information regarding encroachment permits may be obtained by contacting the Caltrans Permits Office at (619) 688-6158. Early coordination with Caltrans is strongly advised for all encroachment permits.

If you have any questions that Caltrans has provided, please contact Trent Clark of the Development Review Branch at (619) 688-3140.

Sincerely,



JACOB M. ARMSTRONG, Chief  
Development Review Branch

Cc: Mr. Greg Thomsen BLM