

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Project Overview

On June 15, 2009, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), prepared and distributed for public review the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for Southern California Edison's (the Applicant's) proposed Valley-Ivyglen Subtransmission Line and Fogarty Substation Project (the Project).

If approved, the Project would primarily consist of the construction, operation, and maintenance of a new 25-mile 115 kV subtransmission line to connect the existing Valley and Ivyglen substations. The new Fogarty Substation would also be constructed to provide supplementary electrical services to the City of Lake Elsinore area. In addition, the Project would include the following components:

- Improvements to the Valley and Ivyglen substations to accommodate the proposed subtransmission line, including the installation of new 115 kV switching and protective equipment to terminate the proposed subtransmission line at the respective sites
- Tie-ins between the new Fogarty Substation and existing subtransmission and telecommunications lines
- Installation of a new telecommunications line alongside the proposed subtransmission line
- Transfer of distribution facilities
- Stockpiling and/or disposal of old electrical distribution line poles

The Project would enable the Applicant to build electrical facilities needed to maintain safe and reliable service for customers and meet forecasted electricity demand in the Valley-Ivyglen and Fogarty Electrical Needs Areas in Riverside County.

1.2 Final Environmental Impact Report

Before approving a project, CEQA requires the Lead Agency to prepare and certify a Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR). Pursuant to Section 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines, this Final EIR consists of the following sections:

- **Chapter 1, Introduction:** A brief overview of the Project, organization of the Final EIR document, purpose of responses to comments, and CPUC's decision-making process.
- **Chapter 2, Summary of Public Review Process:** A summary of the environmental and public review process pursuant to CEQA.
- **Chapter 3, Draft EIR Comments and Responses:** A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies that commented on the Draft EIR, comments received during the Draft EIR public review process, and responses to comments received.
- **Chapter 4, Revisions to the Draft EIR:** Revisions made to the Draft EIR.
- **Chapter 5, Updated Cumulative Scenario and Revised Biological Resources Sections:** Revisions made to the Cumulative Scenario and Biological Resources sections of the Draft EIR.

This document, together with the Draft EIR (June 2009), comprises the Project's Final EIR as defined by CEQA Section 15132. The Final EIR has been prepared pursuant to CEQA Section 21000 et seq., California Public Resources Code, and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA Section 15000 et seq., California Code of Regulations, Title 14. The Final EIR will be used by the CPUC as part of its approval process for the Applicant's application for a Permit to Construct (PTC) the Project.

1.2.1 Comment Responses

Chapter 3 of the Final EIR presents all of the comments received on the Draft EIR and responses to those comments. As specified by Section 15088(c) of the CEQA Guidelines, the focus of the responses to comments is on the disposition of significant environmental issues as raised in the comments. Detailed responses are not provided to comments on the merits of the Project. When a comment is not directed at significant environmental issues, the response indicates that the comment has been noted.

Biological Resources

To fully respond to comments in a letter received from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game (Wildlife Agencies, Chapter 3A of the Final EIR), a number of revisions to the Biological Resources section of the Draft EIR were made. To make the revisions, additional biological data from the Applicant was requested and then reviewed and incorporated into the section. Two meetings with the Wildlife Agencies were held: February 18 and April 15, 2010. The first was held prior to revising the section. The second was held to review the revised section.

The revised Biological Resources section concludes that there would be no significant impact on biological resources because of construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project. Although new and revised mitigation measures are presented in the revised section, the significance determinations presented are the same as those in the Draft EIR. The revised Biological Resources section is presented in Chapter 5 of the Final EIR.

Cumulative Scenario

To respond to comments in a letter received from an interested party living in the Project area, Rebecca L. Beemer (Chapter 3B of the Final EIR), the Cumulative Scenario section of the Draft EIR (Section B.7) was updated. Updates were also made to the cumulative analysis sections in Chapter D, Environmental Analysis, of the Draft EIR. To make the updates, the Applicant's proposed Alberhill System Project and other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects in addition to those presented in the Draft EIR were reviewed.

The updated cumulative analysis, however, does not present new cumulatively significant impacts or indicate a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified cumulative impacts. No additional mitigation measures were added to the Final EIR because of cumulative impacts. The updated section is provided in Chapter 5 of the Final EIR.

1.3 Decision-Making Process

Pursuant to Article XII of the Constitution of the State of California, the CPUC oversees the regulation of investor-owned public utilities, including the Applicant. The CPUC is the lead State agency ensuring compliance of the Project with CEQA regulations. This Final EIR will be used by the CPUC, in conjunction with other information developed in the CPUC's formal record, to act on the Applicant's

application for a PTC. Under CEQA, the CPUC will determine the adequacy of this Final EIR and, if adequate, will certify the document as complying with CEQA.

It should be noted that environmental impacts identified for a project may not always be mitigated to a less than significant level. When this occurs, impacts are considered significant and unavoidable impacts. If a public agency approves a project that has significant unavoidable impacts, the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project, based on the Final EIR and any other information in the public record for the project. This is termed a “statement of overriding considerations” and is used to explain the specific reasons why the benefits of a proposed project make its significant unavoidable impacts acceptable. The statement is prepared, if required, after the Final EIR has been completed but before action to approve the project has been taken. The statement of overriding considerations and the CEQA required Findings of Fact (per CEQA Guidelines Section 15091) would be included in the CPUC’s Proposed Decision on the project.