

Notice of Preparation

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies
(Agency)

(Address)

From: California Public Utilities Commission
(Agency)

505 Van Ness Avenue

(Address)

San Francisco, CA 94102-3298

Subject: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Suncrest Dynamic Reactive Power Support Project Proposed by NextEra Energy Transmission West, LLC

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) will be the lead agency and will prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) for the project identified below. We are requesting the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR and/or subsequent related environmental documents prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the initial study *is* *is not* attached.

Because of the time limits mandated by state law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to suncrestproject@horizonh2o.com or Robert Peterson, CPUC, C/O Tom Engels, Horizon Water and Environment, 180 Grand Avenue, Suite 1405, Sacramento, CA 94612. Please include your name or the name of a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: Suncrest Dynamic Reactive Power Support Project

Project Applicant, if any: NextEra Energy Transmission West, LLC

Date: January 5, 2016

Signature: _____



Title: _____

Project Manager, Energy Division,
Infrastructure Permitting and CEQA

Telephone: _____

(844) 211-7510

Email: _____

suncrestproject@horizonh2o.com

Notice of Preparation
of an
Environmental Impact Report
for the
**Suncrest Dynamic Reactive Power
Support Project Proposed by
NextEra Energy Transmission West, LLC**

California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3298
Contact: Tom Engels
916/790-8548

January 5, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the NOP

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is the lead agency for preparation and review of an environmental impact report (EIR) for NextEra Energy Transmission West, LLC's (NEET West's or the Applicant's) proposed Suncrest Dynamic Reactive Power Support Project (Proposed Project). The Proposed Project would involve construction of a dynamic reactive power support facility and an approximately one-mile-long transmission line connecting to the existing Suncrest Substation in south-central San Diego County, near the community of Alpine.

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) presents general background information on the scoping process, the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR, and the anticipated uses of the EIR. It also briefly describes the Proposed Project as currently envisioned. The project description is subject to refinement during the process of preparing the EIR, depending on, among other things, input received in comments responding to this NOP and revisions to the Proposed Project. The CPUC has prepared this NOP pursuant to Section 15082 of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

Scope of the EIR

This EIR will evaluate potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project. As the lead agency under CEQA, CPUC has determined that the Project may have a significant impact on the environment and has decided to prepare an EIR. Consistent with the basic purposes of CEQA (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15002[a]), the purposes of the EIR will be to:

1. Inform governmental decision makers and the public about the potential, significant environmental effects of the proposed activities;
2. Identify the ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced;
3. Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment through the use of feasible alternatives or mitigation measures.

A preliminary environmental review for the Proposed Project indicated the possibility for several potentially significant impacts and issues, as described in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Possible Impacts and Issues

Resource Topic	Potentially Significant Impact/Issue
Biological Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts to wetlands and/or jurisdictional waters • Impacts to Hermes copper butterfly during Project construction
Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts to buried archaeological resources during Project construction
Hydrology & Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts to downstream water bodies from stormwater discharges during Project construction and operation • Impacts to hydrology and water quality during Project construction
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on existing mitigation sites/conflicts with existing mitigation obligations related to the existing Suncrest Substation
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise impacts during construction
Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse impacts related to fire protection service
Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns regarding inclusion/evaluation of a Project alternative co-located within existing Suncrest Substation site (i.e., concerns that such an alternative wouldn't be evaluated in an MND), which could have reduced environmental impacts

No significance determinations have been made regarding the possible impacts listed in Table 1. The analysis in the EIR ultimately will determine whether these impacts actually could occur, will determine their level of significance, and will propose feasible mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts. Thresholds for determining significant impacts will be based on applicable sections of the State CEQA Guidelines, regulatory agency standards, and the judgment of the CEQA lead agency, CPUC. In addition to the possible impacts identified in Table 1, the EIR will evaluate other potential impacts/resource topics, as described in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Public Involvement

The CPUC is soliciting the views of interested persons and agencies on the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to the Proposed Project. A scoping meeting for the Proposed Project will be held as follows:

Thursday, January 21, 2016, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 Alpine Community Center, Sage Room
 1830 Alpine Blvd.
 Alpine, CA 91901

The scoping meeting will feature a presentation on the Proposed Project and environmental review process and an opportunity for interested members of the public to submit oral or written comments.

Written comments may be submitted any time during the scoping period. All available documents pertaining to the Proposed Project can be located at the following website: <http://cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/horizonh2o/suncrest/index.html>. Because of the time limits mandated by state law, your written comments on the scope and content of the EIR must be ***received no later than February 8, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.*** Please send written comments to the CPUC, to the attention of Rob Peterson, CPUC, c/o Tom Engels, Horizon Water and Environment, 180 Grand Avenue, Suite 1405, Oakland, CA 94612. Please include the name and phone number of the contact person for your agency, if applicable. CPUC will consider and incorporate scoping comments on the Proposed Project in preparation of the EIR as appropriate.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background and Need

The Proposed Project originates from the California Independent System Operator's (CAISO's) 2013-2014 transmission planning process, which identified a need for a 300-million volt-ampere reactive (megavar)¹ dynamic reactive device at the existing Suncrest Substation's 230 kilovolt (kV) bus² to meet California's 33% Renewable Portfolio Standard (CAISO 2014). CAISO determined that the retirement of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station and projected increases in renewable generating capacity in the Imperial Valley would cause loading and voltage stability issues in the transmission system in the area of the existing Suncrest Substation. CAISO conducted a competitive bid solicitation process for the Suncrest dynamic reactive facility and selected NEET West to construct the Proposed Project.

Following its selection by CAISO in January 2015 as the approved project sponsor, NEET West submitted to CPUC a Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) in August 2015, as part of its application (A.15-08-027) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN), as specified in CPUC General Order (G.O.) 131-D.

Project Objectives

The objectives of the Proposed Project as defined by the Applicant are as follows:

- Meet the CAISO's identified need for reactive support¹ at the Suncrest Substation's 230 kV bus;
- Improve and maintain the reliability of the transmission grid;
- Facilitate delivery of renewable energy generation from the Imperial Valley area to population centers to the west;
- Support achievement of the state's 33% Renewable Portfolio Standard.

¹ Volt-ampere reactive (var) is a unit by which reactive power is expressed in an alternating current (AC) electric power system. Reactive power exists in an AC circuit when the current and voltage are not in phase. In an electric transmission system, reactive power serves to support the voltage levels needed to maintain system reliability. Megavar means one million vars.

² A bus or busbar is a metallic strip or bar that conducts electricity within a substation or other electrical apparatus. Buses are often the connection points for incoming transmission lines into a substation.

Project Location

The Proposed Project is located in unincorporated south-central San Diego County, approximately 5.75 miles southeast of the community of Alpine, off of Bell Bluff Truck Trail road. Figure 1 shows the Project location. The lands surrounding the Proposed Project are primarily undeveloped, with some rural-residential development present to the east and south, and the existing Suncrest Substation at the Project's western terminus. The nearest residence is approximately 0.6 mile to the southeast. Interstate-8 is located approximately 1.8 miles to the north of the Project area and Japatul Valley Road (State Highway 79) is approximately 1.2 miles to the southeast. The Proposed Project would be located on private property within the administrative boundary of the Cleveland National Forest.

Proposed Project

The Proposed Project includes two primary components: (1) a Static Var Compensator (SVC) facility, to be located approximately one mile east of the existing Suncrest Substation, and (2) a 230 kV transmission line from the proposed SVC facility to the existing substation. Figure 2 illustrates the primary project components.

SVC Facility

The proposed SVC facility would produce and consume reactive power for voltage support and would interconnect with the Suncrest bus via the proposed transmission line. The facility would be approximately 6 acres in total size (with a fenced area of approximately 2.58 acres) and would be located on an area previously used as a construction staging and materials storage area during construction of the Suncrest Substation (completed in 2012).

The SVC facility would include various structures/pieces of electrical equipment, such as power transformers, power circuit breakers, control buildings, capacitors, and reactors, all of which would be installed on concrete foundations. The four power transformers within the proposed SVC facility would each require a maximum of approximately 10,000 to 12,000 gallons of oil. The tallest structures within the SVC would be the lightning shielding masts, which would be approximately 75-feet-tall.

In addition to the electrical equipment, the SVC facility would include the following components: signage and lighting; access driveway improvements; a stormwater drainage system and detention basin; a retaining wall; approximately 7-foot-high chain link and barb wire security fencing; and transformer oil containment basins. The retaining wall would be installed on the east side of the SVC facility to minimize the potential for erosion and would be approximately 480 feet long and 15 feet tall at its highest point.

Transmission Line

The proposed 230 kV transmission line would be approximately one mile in length and would connect the proposed SVC facility to the existing Suncrest Substation. The proposed

transmission line would be installed primarily underground beneath Bell Bluff Truck Trail road, with the last approximately 300 feet of the line transitioning aboveground via an 85- to 95-foot tall riser pole to connect with the existing substation.

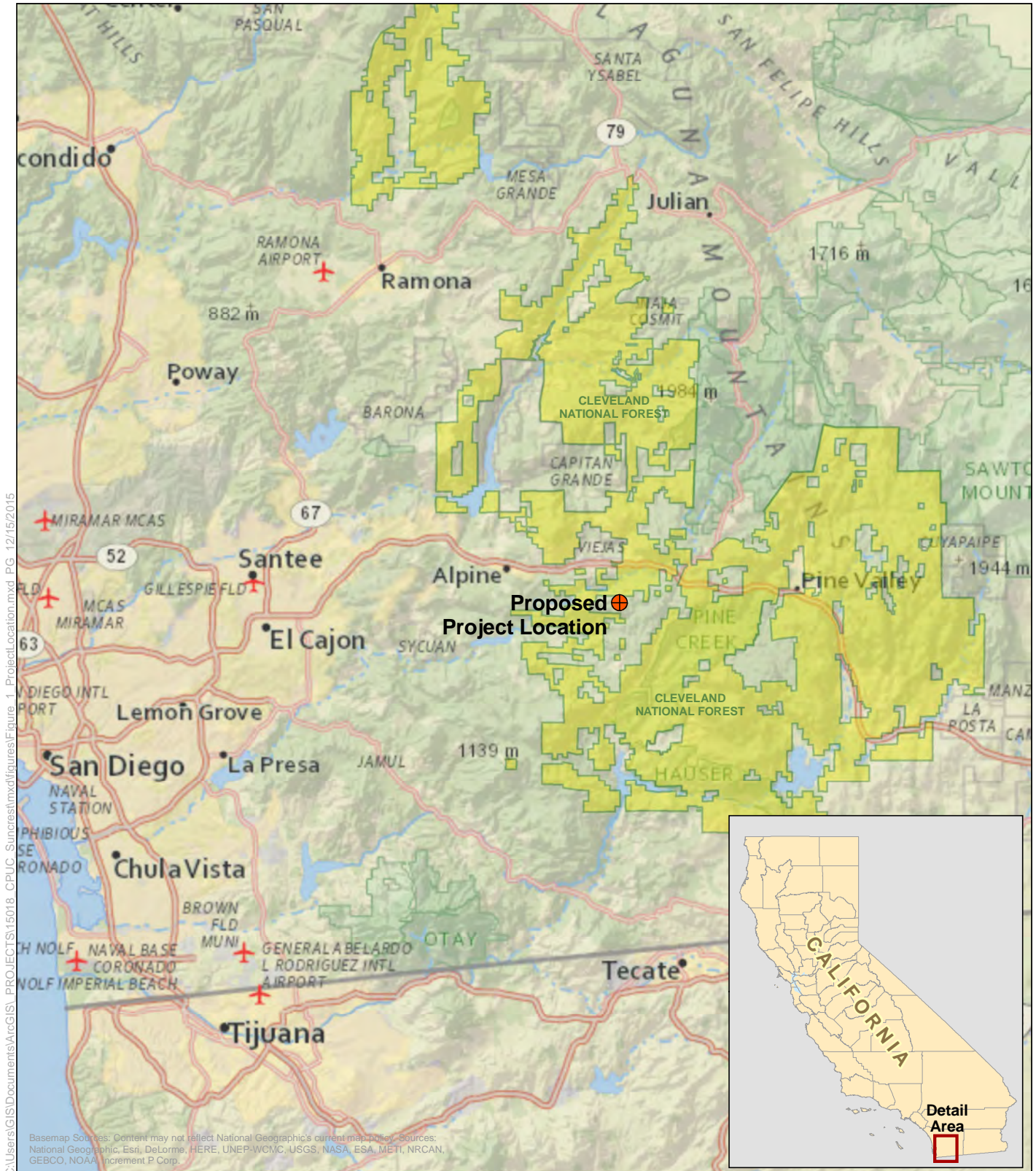
The underground transmission line would be installed in polyvinyl chloride (PVC) conduits within a concrete-encased duct bank system. The bottom of the duct bank would be approximately 5 feet below grade, and the duct bank would be approximately 30 inches wide by 24 inches tall. The underground transmission line would include up to five underground splice vaults spaced roughly every 900 feet to facilitate installation of the underground cables and operation and maintenance of the transmission line. The majority of the underground transmission line would be installed within Bell Bluff Truck Trail; however, installation of the splice vaults may require temporary disturbance outside of the roadbed.

The 85- to 95-foot riser pole, for transition of the transmission line to an overhead span and entry into the existing Suncrest Substation, would be installed north of Bell Bluff Truck Trail. The base of the riser pole would be approximately 7 feet in diameter and require an additional approximately 15-foot radius of permanent disturbance around the riser pole.

Project Construction

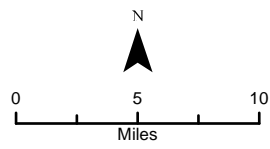
Construction of the SVC facility generally would include site clearing, grubbing, grading, and installation of foundations and electrical equipment. Construction of the underground transmission line would be anticipated to be concurrent with construction of the SVC and would follow a general process of utility line locating; survey; asphalt cutting of pavement; trench excavation; installation of duct bank and vaults; pavement restoration; installation of conductor cables and fiber optic cables (for communications for line relaying, SCADA, and other devices as required); and splicing and testing of the line. Grading for the SVC may result in up to 4,000 cubic yards of excess material, which would be hauled off site. In select locations, where material cannot be excavated using a backhoe and/or bulldozer, material removal may require scraping, ripping, drilling, hammering, cutting and localized low energy blasting. Construction of the Proposed Project would result in approximately 6.2 acres of temporary disturbance, accounting for staging area impacts and trenching for underground transmission line installation. When added to the permanent disturbance area of the SVC, total disturbance from the Proposed Project would be approximately 12.2 acres.

The project would take 10 months to construct and is targeted to be operational by June 2017. Typically, construction would occur 10 hours per day, 6 days per week, Monday through Saturday, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.; however, certain time-sensitive activities and/or activities which are not noise-intensive may occur outside these hours.



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Basemap Sources: Content may not reflect National Geographic's current map policy. Sources: National Geographic, Esri, DeLorme, HERE, UNEP-WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, increment P Corp.





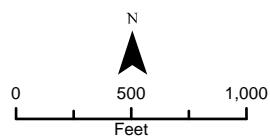
-  Proposed Project Location
-  Cleveland National Forest



Figure 1
Project Location

Suncrest Dynamic Reactive Power Support Project

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- Project Components**
-  Project Area (limit of disturbance)
 -  Underground Transmission Line
 -  Overhead Transmission Line
 -  SVC Area
 -  SVC Footprint
 -  Parcel Boundary (with APN and Owner)

Figure 2
Project Overview



Suncrest Dynamic Reactive Power Support Project

References

CAISO. *See* California Independent System Operator.

California Independent System Operator. 2014. 2013-2014 Transmission Plan. Retrieved from: https://www.caiso.com/Documents/Board-Approved2013-2014TransmissionPlan_July162014.pdf. Accessed December 14, 2015.