

## PREFACE

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### INTRODUCTION

#### **SDG&E Application**

San Diego Gas and Electric Company (SDG&E) submitted an application to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on September 25, 2013, for a Permit to Construct (PTC) the proposed Salt Creek Substation Project (proposed project). The application included the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) prepared pursuant to Rule 2.4 of the CPUC's Rules of Practice and Procedure. SDG&E seeks to construct, operate, and maintain a new substation and electric power line (transmission line [TL] 6965) in the City of Chula Vista (City) and San Diego County (County), California.

#### **Environmental Review Process**

The CPUC is the lead agency responsible for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). On May 15, 2015, the CPUC issued a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Draft EIR provided information about the environmental setting and impacts of the proposed project and three alternatives. A 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR ended on June 29, 2015.

#### **Purpose of the Environmental Impact Report**

This Final EIR is an informational documents; it does not make a recommendation regarding the approval or denial of the project. The purpose of the Final EIR is to inform the public about the environmental setting and impacts of the proposed project and alternatives to the proposed project. This Final EIR will be used by the CPUC to conduct the proceeding to determine whether to grant SDG&E's requested PTC.

This EIR will be used by other agencies to support their decision on whether to issue permits for the project.

#### **Contents of the Final EIR**

This Final EIR contains the following information consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15132:

- (a) The Draft EIR or a revision of the draft;
- (b) Comments received on the Draft EIR either verbatim or in summary;

## PREFACE

- (c) A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies that commented on the Draft EIR;
- (d) The responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process; and
- (e) Any other information added by the lead agency.

The Final EIR is organized as follows:

- **Volume 1, Draft EIR as revised in Response to Comments.** Includes the entire Draft EIR with revisions noted in strike-through and underlined text.
- **Volume 2, Chapter 1: Introduction.** Provides an overview of the purpose as well as the organization of the Final EIR, and provides a brief description of the Proposed Project.
- **Volume 2, Chapter 2: Public Review Process.** Describes the public review process, the organization of the comment letters and lists the commenters (agencies, individuals, and the applicant).
- **Volume 2, Chapter 3: Comments and Responses.** Contains copies of all the comment letters received on the Draft EIR as well as a copy of the transcript for the public meeting held on June 4, 2015, after publication of the Draft EIR. Individual comments are identified within the comment letter or transcript using an alphanumeric code. Following each comment letter are individual responses directed specifically to each comment.
- **Volume 2, Appendix A.** Provides the Notice of Availability, legal advertisement, Draft EIR public meeting sign-in sheet, and Draft EIR meeting presentation.
- **Volume 2, Appendix B.** Provides supplementary information on the Environmentally Superior Alternative.
- **Volume 2, Appendix C.** Provides USFWS and CDFW review of SDG&E NCCP take authorization.

## SUMMARY OF FINAL EIR

### Summary of Draft EIR Notice and Review

The CPUC released the Draft EIR for a 45-day public review period starting on May 15, 2015 and ending on June 29, 2015. The CPUC mailed over 3,500 notices to agencies, organizations, and individuals regarding availability of the Draft EIR for public review. The CPUC also conducted a public meeting in the City of Chula Vista to provide information on the Draft EIR and accept public comments. The public meeting was held on June 4, 2015.

### List of Commenters

The CPUC received seven comment letters from three federal and state agencies, the Applicant, and three individual members of the public. Comments were also heard at the public meeting held at the Monteville Recreation Center in the City of Chula Vista on June 4, 2015. The CPUC has considered all comments and provides responses in this document to all written comments,

## PREFACE

as well as verbal comments from the public meeting. Table 1 lists the persons and agencies that submitted comments on the Draft EIR.

**Table 1 Commenters on the Draft EIR**

Comment Letter Designation	Date of Letter	Commenter
<b>Federal and State Agencies</b>		
A1	5/22/2015	Therese Bradford, USACE Los Angeles District
A2	6/17/2015	Jacob Armstrong, Caltrans District 11
A3	6/30/2015	Scott Morgan, California State Clearinghouse
<b>Applicant</b>		
B1	6/29/2015	David Geier, SDG&E
<b>Individuals</b>		
C1	6/4/2015	Jonathan Greenwood
C2	6/4/2015	Janice Gutierrez
C3	6/4/2015	Marco Torres
C4	6/4/2015	Transcript from the public meeting for the Draft EIR: Jonathan Greenwood, Marco Torres, Raul Cardenas, and Derrick Roche provided verbal comments

### Summary of Comments

Agency comments included a clarification regarding the timing for submittal of the Highway Closure Plan to Caltrans. Applicant comments included editorial corrections, technical clarifications and corrections, and provision of supplemental data on special-status Hermes copper butterfly. Individual comments included concerns about health and safety, impacts on property values, selection of the environmentally superior alternative, and support for the proposed project.

### Summary of Changes to the Draft EIR

The Draft EIR was revised in response to comments. The information presented in this Final EIR includes minor clarifications and modifications to the Draft EIR. Revisions included:

- Minor modifications to the Proposed Project to reflect comments from the Applicant
- Editorial changes
- Minor changes to mitigation measures
- Technical clarifications

CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(a) requires recirculation of an EIR “when significant new information is added to the EIR after public notices is given of the availability of the draft EIR

## PREFACE

for public review”. The minor modifications and clarifications presented in this Final EIR do not contain new significant information as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5.

### **Environmentally Superior Alternative**

The CPUC identified the Environmentally Superior Alternative, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)2, in the Draft EIR. That conclusion is reiterated in Section ES.2.1. The Environmentally Superior Alternative is Alternative 2: 69/12-kV Substation and Generation at Border and Larkspur Electric Generating Facilities. Alternative 2 is the environmentally superior alternative across the majority of resource categories because it reduces the significant impacts of the proposed project by avoiding construction of a 5-mile-long power line and does not increase any significant impacts of the proposed project or result in new significant and unavoidable impacts.

### **CPUC Process after Final EIR**

CEQA requires that the CPUC provide written responses to public agency comments at least 10 days prior to certifying the EIR (Public Resource Code 21092.5(a)). This is accomplished by sending the Final EIR to all agencies that commented on the Draft EIR.

The CPUC will determine the adequacy of the Final EIR, and if adequate, will certify the document as compliant with CEQA. The CPUC will issue a Proposed Decision on the Salt Creek Substation Project, which will be announced and published concurrent with a scheduled CPUC Commission Meeting. Each Commissioner may draft an Alternate Decision presenting differing conclusions or opinions. All five Commissioners will then vote on the Proposed Decision and any Alternate Decision at a meeting of the full Commission. If the proposed project or an alternative is approved, the CPUC will adopt a mitigation monitoring and reporting program to require monitoring of adopted mitigation measures and definition of mitigation monitoring procedures.