Nest Buffer Reduction Request #6

To: Billie Blanchard, California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)

Cc: Jeff Thomas (Panorama), Sheila Hoyer (Panorama)

Subject: Mitigation Measure (MM) Biology-7 Nest Buffer Reduction Request

From: Amy Trexler, Qualified Biologist

Date: 05/17/2017

In accordance with MM Biology-7 of the Sycamore-Penasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project (Project) San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) is requesting a nesting bird buffer reduction to accommodate scheduled potholing, saw cutting, and trenching activities associated with construction of the underground alignment of the Project. If granted, the duration of these buffer reductions would be effective from 5/17/2017 until ground disturbing activities are complete within the reduced buffer or the nest becomes inactive, whichever occurs sooner.

One new common bird species nest has been identified between STA 25 + 00 and STA 66+00 as identified in the Nest Survey Report dated May 17, 2017. The attached table contains the following information for each recorded nest SDG&E is requesting a buffer reduction for:

- Species
- Location
- Pre-existing conditions present on site
- Description of the work to be conducted within the reduced buffer
- Size and expected duration of proposed buffer reduction
- Reason for the buffer reduction

Also, please find attached a map showing the location of the documented nest, the standard nest buffer limits identified in MM Biology-7, and the reduced buffer limits being recommended by the Qualified Biologist.

If SDG&E does not receive a response to the request for a buffer reduction within 1 business day, SDG&E will proceed with the buffer reduction recommended by the Qualified Biologist until the CPUC's independent biologist can review and approve or deny the buffer reduction request. If SDG&E proceeds with a reduced buffer, nests will be monitored on a daily basis during construction activities. If the buffer request is denied, or the Qualified Biologist determines that the nesting birds(s) are not tolerant of project activity, the specified buffer(s) listed in MM Bio-7 will be implemented.

If you have any questions regarding the details of this request, please contact the Qualified Biologist making the buffer reduction request at the contact information below:

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Sycamore to Penasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project Nesting Bird Buffer Reduction Request
Date: 05/17/2017

Nest Information									Buffer Reduction Request						
Nest ID[1]	**Species[2]**	**Listing Status[3]**	**Nest Stage[4]**	**Observation Notes[5]**	**Latitude (decimal degrees)**	**Longitude (decimal degrees)**	**Estimated Fledge Date**	**Nesting Bird Behavior**	**Standard Buffer**	**Reduced Buffer Necessary for Construction**	**Pre-Existing Conditions Onsite**	**Reason for Buffer Reduction/Biologist Recommendation**	**Duration of Buffer Reduction**	**Work Activity Description**	**Monitoring Approach**
05172017_BLM_01	Killdeer (KILL)	Common	Building	Observed pair nest building and creating a divot in the ground. Pair was giving off an alarm call and were agitated by surveyors presence when the spot was approached (within 10ft.) to search for eggs.	32.89255	-117.18799	Unknown Standard incubation is 22-28 days; Chicks can walk out of the nest as soon as their feathers dry from hatching.	Appears tolerant of human activity outside of 10ft.	150 feet	30 feet	Nest is located between Carroll Canyon Rd. and a golf course parking lot.	Nest is located near busy, active roadway and golf course. Birds have been exposed to high levels of noise and human activity. Recommendation is to approve buffer with daily monitoring for duration of construction.	For entire duration of proposed work (5/17/17 - 8/31/17), or until nest is no longer active	Nighttime construction activities include saw cutting, pot-holing and excavation and trenching for installation of new underground 230kV line and vaults. Buffer reduction is being requested to allow construction to remain on schedule for completion date per CPUC permit.	Nest will be monitored in the morning within 4 hours of sunrise immediately following construction from a distance using binoculars or a spotting scope whenever possible to minimize nest disturbance. If nest cannot be adequately monitored from a distance, the CPUC qualified biologists (qualified biologist) will approach the nest to gather nest data. When approaching a nest, the qualified biologist will first determine whether there are any potential nest predators nearby, such as raptors, corvids, jays, and brown-headed cowbirds. If no predators are observed, the qualified biologist will approach the nest and collect nest data. The qualified biologist will observe the nest for a sufficient amount of time based on their professional judgment (usually between 30-60 minutes if an adult is not immediately observed on the nest) to determine nest status and will record the nest status (e.g., nest building, incubating, nestlings, etc.), and observe avian behavior (carrying food, agitation or distress, etc.). If the qualified biologist is unable to make a determination on nest status and has not detected the nest pair in the vicinity of the nest, the qualified biologist will continue to monitor the nest daily for a period of 5 days. If the qualified biologist is not able to determine nest status after 5 days due to lack of activity at the nest (including the observation of fledgling groups in the vicinity of the nest), the biologist will determine the nest is no longer active. The qualified biologist will gather appropriate nest data to allow proper documentation of nest stage and recommended buffer effectiveness. The qualified biologist will make assessments based on their experience, professional judgment and the following considerations: incubation period and nestling period (i.e., fledge date) of species, geographic location, existing ambient conditions (human activity such as traffic, jet noise, rail noise, etc.), type and extent of construction within nest buffer, visibility of construction to nest, and other environmental factors such as the species' site-specific level of habituation to disturbance. The nest buffers will be increased or reinstated if there are signs of significant disturbance and risk of project-induced nest abandonment consistent with MM Biology-7.

Legend

Bird Nests

Tracking

Active

Reduced Bird Nest Buffers

Proposed Reduced Buffer

Bird Nest Buffers

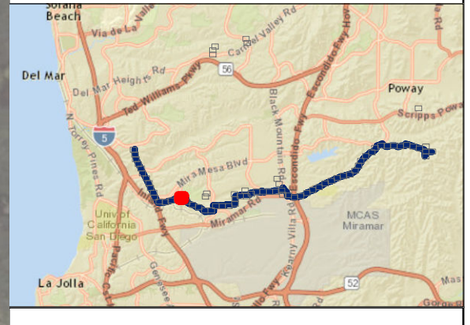
150 ft

Temporary Work Space

Underground Vault

Segment B

Segment 5, Section 4



100 50 0 100 Feet

1:1,200 1 inch = 100 feet

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230kV Transmission Line Project Nesting Bird Survey Buffer Reduction Request

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