Decision 83 04 019 APR 6 1983

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON COMPANY for a Certificate that the present and future public convenience and necessity require or will require construction and operation of a 220 kV transmission line between Devers and Mirage Substations located in Riverside County, California.

ORIGINAL

Application 61149
(Filed December 22, 1981; accepted January 21, 1982)

William T. Elston, Philip Walsh, and Marlene Leiva, Attorneys at Law, for Southern California Edison Company, applicant.
Gary Wiedle and Pam Summers, for Coachella Valley Association of Governments, and Leslie F. Crist, for City of Desert Hot Springs, interested parties.
Mary F. McKenzie, Attorney at Law, and Robert Penny, for the Commission staff.

## O P I N I O N

By Application (A.) 61149 filed December 22, 1981 and accepted January 21, 1982, Southern California Edison Company (SCE) requests an order granting it a certificate of public convenience and necessity permitting it to construct and operate a 220 kV transmission line between its Devers and its proposed Mirage substations (Project) located in the Coachella Valley in Riverside County.

By A.60936 filed September 24, 1981 SCE originally sought a certificate of the same Project.

By letter dated October 23, 1981, our Executive Director informed SCE that A.60936 was incomplete and listed the deficiencies. In response, SCE filed additional information as a supplement to A.60936 on December 22, 1981, which was docketed as A.61149 and accepted on January 21, 1982.

By Decision (D.) 82-02-087 dated February 17, 1982 we dismissed A.60936 and transferred the file and pleadings by reference to A.61149.

Project Description

SCE proposes to construct the Project line easterly from its Devers substation on an existing right-of-way for 14.3 miles and angle southerly for 0.9 miles into its proposed 220/115 kV Mirage substation.

SCE proposes to build its Project along an alignment which extends a total of 15.2 miles from the Devers substation to the proposed Mirage substation. The proposed route parallels and is adjacent to the existing Devers-Julian Hinds 220 kV line easterly from Devers substation for 1.5 miles. The route angles southeasterly through the North Palm Springs area for 3 miles, through the Morongo Wash for 1.3 miles, and continues for 3.3 miles across Flat Top Mountain. The route proceeds for 5.2 miles through two sections of Agua Caliente Indian Reservation land and angles southerly, leaving the existing right-of-way for 0.9 miles on a new right-of-way into the proposed 220/115 kV substation.

The proposed transmission line would be constructed on 70 double circuit, lattice steel towers. The average height of the towers would be 120 feet and spans would average 1,200 feet. Tower footings would occupy .045 acres of land. The line will be designed for an ultimate two-bundle 1,033,500 circular mil aluminum conductor-steel reinforced cables per phase; however, only one circuit of single conductor would be installed for this Project. The line would

be operated at a nominal voltage of 220 kV with a rated capacity initially of 460 million volt-amperes.

At Devers substation, a new breaker and one-half position would be added to terminate the new line. The incoming 220 kV line to the new Mirage substation (30 acre site) would be terminated on a new H-frame, wood pole, dead-end structure. Other Mirage facilities would include a 220/115 kV transformer and disconnect switches. Modifications and additions would be made to the telecommunications system. A new 115 kV wood pole line would be built between Mirage and SCE's existing Tamarisk substation.

Alternative Routes

Three alternative transmission line routes and two alternative sites for the Mirage substation were proposed by SCE for the Project.

Alternate Route A has a total distance of 17.9 miles. It runs east from Devers substation following SCE's existing right-of-way for 1.5 miles and then parallels an existing Imperial Irrigation District (IID) 92.5 kV wood pole line for 10.2 miles to the north, and is 1 to 1.5 miles south of Desert Hot Springs. The route leaves the IID's right-of-way in the vicinity of Fun Valley, heads south through the Indio Hills and into Mirage substation. This segment (6.2 miles) would require a new right-of-way.

Alternate Route B follows SCE's existing right-of-way for about 5.9 miles, heads due east through the Seven Palms Valley-Willow Hole area and through the Indio Hills over 6.3 miles of new right-of-way, and joins the Alternate A route to Mirage substation over the new right-of-way for 5.0 miles.

Alternate C is the same as the proposed route except for a 4.3 mile dog-leg loop to the north over the southern portion of Edom Hill. A new right-of-way would be required. This alternate avoids

Agua Caliente Indian Reservation lands crossed by 4.1 miles of the existing SCE right-of-way on the proposed route.

Mirage Substation Site 2

Mirage substation Site 2 is located 1 mile east of Thousand Palms, and directly adjacent to the existing SCE's right-of-way on the south side.

Mirage Substation Site 3

Mirage substation Site 3 is located 3.5 miles south-southwest of Thousand Palms, and 1 mile southwest of Interstate Highway 10. Site 3 would require extending the Devers-Mirage 220 kV line over the new right-of-way for 3.4 miles south of the proposed site (Site 1) and crossing Interstate Highway 10.

Environmental Procedure

In compliance with General Order 131-B, the application contains a Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA). Based on the PEA, a scoping meeting was held in the area. After an independent assessment by the Commission staff (staff) of the environmental impacts associated with applicant's preferred and alternate transmission line routes, a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was issued on September 15, 1982. Following the receipt of comments and public hearing, a Final EIR was issued on February 15, 1983 and received in this record as Exhibit 8.

Hearing

A duly noticed prehearing conference (PHC) and four days of public hearings were held before Administrative Law Judge J. J. Doran. The PHC was held in San Francisco on July 26, 1982. Hearings were held in Los Angeles on August 17 and 18, 1982, and in Desert Hot Springs on November 1 and 2, 1982. The matter was submitted on reply briefs due January 10, 1983.

Evidence was presented on behalf of SCE by Terry Lutwen, transmission project engineer; James Halbur, senior planning

engineer; and Fred Klumb, chief transmission design engineer. Staff evidence was presented by Gary Loo, utilities engineer; Teresa Burns, environmental planner; Greg Zitney, environmental consultant; and Allan Jones, consulting electrical engineer. The City of Desert Hot Springs made a statement and participated in cross-examination. Many members of the public presented statements, generally opposing alternate Route A (discussed later).

Public Testimony

A public hearing on the DEIR was held in Desert Hot Springs on November 1 and 2, 1982. Thirty-one members of the public gave verbal statements. Of those, 29 expressed opposition to Alternate Route A, B, or both A and B. One opposed any project at all and raised the question as to whether the need for the project had been demonstrated. One raised the question of undergrounding. The City of Desert Hot Springs questioned whether an adequate needs analysis was completed. In our Los Angeles hearing four members of the public also spoke against Alternate Route A and one person wanted the line underground.

Comparison of Routes

SCE's transmission project engineer testified that the proposed route is the least expensive and would cause the least environmental impact of the several described. The line length is shorter and access roads are less than the alternate routes. Accordingly, it was selected as the preferred route. Alternate Route A would generally parallel the IID's 92 kV line on the north side of Dillon Road and angle south into the Mirage site. During the route selection process for the Devers-Palo Verde 500 kV line, significant opposition in terms of visual impact and land use was raised against this route by residents living along the east-west portion of the corridor. The north-south portion of the route would require new

access roads and crosses more rugged terrain than the proposed route. This route would have greater overall impact, is 2.7 miles longer, and is more expensive than the proposed route.

Alternate Route B would follow the proposed route, angle easterly around the north side of the Indio Hills, and angle southerly into the Mirage site. This route could have significant visual and land use impacts near the north side of the Indio Hills and into the Mirage site since it would open a new corridor and road system, although a portion of the route would pass through the proposed Edom Hill RV Park. Moderate biological and cultural resource impacts might be expected because of a low presence of human activity. Construction would be more difficult and expensive due to the need for a new road system, rugged terrain, and a length 2.1 miles longer than the proposed route.

The Edom Hill Bypass segment would replace the adjacent portion of the proposed route if land use negotiations with the Agua Caliente Indians would not permit timely construction of the new line through their lands.

The staff's environmental witness and the EIR determined that the clear choice of a preferred route is the route proposed by SCE. He further testified that Alternate Route A and B do have very substantial environmental disadvantages.

Cost of Project and Construction Schedule

SCE's transmission project engineer testified that the total cost of the Project is $12,285,000. The estimated cost for the 220 kV transmission line is $6,298,000. The estimated costs for additional facilities at Devers substation and the new facilities at Mirage substation are $2,460,000 and $3,527,000, respectively.

The witness presented the following detailed schedule for construction of the new facilities.

| Activity | Start | Complete |
|---|---|---|
| Roads and Clearing | 9-1-84 | 11-1-84 |
| Tower Footings | 10-1-84 | 1-1-85 |
| Tower Assembly and Erection | 12-1-84 | 2-15-85 |
| Conductor and Groundwire | 1-15-85 | 4-1-85 |
| Devers Substation | 5-1-84 | 1-1-85 |
| Mirage Substation | 6-1-84 | 11-1-84 |
| Operating Date | 5-1-85 | |

The staff utilities engineer testified that SCE's estimates are preliminary and within 25% accuracy. He recommended cost monitoring. SCE should file advance engineering construction costs for each phase so that the staff can review the prudency of the construction expenditures prior to rather than after the Project is completed. SCE will be required to report on cost monitoring. We expect to limit the rate base treatment for this project to the estimated costs provided in the application since these are the figures used to justify the project, absent a strong showing by Edison that higher costs were reasonable.

Need for Project

SCE's senior planning engineer testified that the Devers substation load has grown at a rate of 6.3% per year from 1971-1975, 9.7% from 1975-1980, and projected the growth for the Devers load from 1980-1985 to be 6.4% and from 1985-1990 to be 4.5% per year. A significant portion of this load growth is expected to occur in the southeastern portion of SCE's Palm Springs District, particularly in the areas of Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, and Cathedral City.

There are over 85,000 customers served from the Devers substation. The 1981 peak was 410 MW, and the 1985 peak is estimated to be 526 MW.

The high growth in these areas will cause excessive loading on existing transmission and substation facilities by 1985. This

Project is needed to avoid overloads projected on both the 220/115 kV transformers at Devers and many of the 115 kV transmission lines providing service to this high growth area.

Construction of the Devers-Mirage 220 kV line and installation of a 220/115 kV transformer bank at Mirage, in conjunction with construction of a 115 kV line between Mirage and Tamarisk substation, by May 1, 1985 will provide relief of the overloads mentioned above.

The staff's utilities engineer and the staff's consulting electrical engineer testified in agreement with the need for the Project. The Final EIR presents data supporting the need for the Project.

Discussion

Several individuals representing themselves and local organizations expressed opposition to Alternate Routes A and B. The City of Desert Hot Springs and an individual questioned the need for the Project. Two individuals raised the undergrounding question.

The record clearly demonstrates the need for the proposed project. The staff of our Utilities Division and Legal Division support the Project.

The construction of the 500 kV portion of the project within the existing right-of-way of SCE's 220 kV transmission line would result in substantially less environmental impact than construction using the alternate routes in the PEA or Final EIR. The Final EIR fully describes and supports the proposed route, and shows that undergrounding is not economically feasible. There are no transmission lines, existing or proposed, which could provide transmission service of the type for which the Project is designed. SCE's proposd route is found to be the preferred route and will be adopted. The staff environmental witness testified that Alternative Routes A and B have very substantial environmental disadvantages, and we agree.

The EIR identifies the impacts of the proposed project and its alternatives. The staff recommends that the proposed mitigation measures identified in both the EIR (Section 5) and in SCE's PEA be adopted. SCE agrees that the proposed mitigation measures found in the EIR are necessary, with one exception. It disputes the need for the land acquisition measure proposed to mitigate the impact on the lizard. SCE objects to the mitigation measure which would order Edison to purchase and donate, as part of an ecological reserve, 30 acres of prime Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard (Uma inornata) (lizard) sand dune habitat within the designated Critical Habitat.

Impact on the Lizard

The EIR compared the three possible Mirage substation sites. A primary environmental concern in the selection of the preferred site is the potential impact to the lizard. California law classifies this species as endangered and federal law classifies it as a threatened species. Giving primary consideration to the protection of the lizard's habitat, the EIR and the staff recommend SCE's preferred site, Site 1, as the site for the Mirage substation.

The staff witness recommended the following mitigation measure to protect the lizard:

> "Purchase and donate, as part of an ecological reserve, 30 acres of prime fringe-toed lizard sand dune habitat within the designated Critical Habitat. The Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management are attempting to establish such a reserve in the southeast portion of the Critical Habitat which is generally bounded on the east by Washington Street and on the south by Avenue 38 (K. Franzrieg, FWS, pers. comm.)." (Draft EIR, p. 120.)

The staff witness testified that substation Site 1 is located in a portion of federally-designated Critical Habitat. (Figure 4.5-2 in EIR.) The designated Critical Habitat occupies 19 square miles of land area and basically consists of two areas which

are divided by Ramon Road. South of Ramon Road is considered prime habitat for the species. The substation site is in the area north of Ramon Road which is included in the designated Critical Habitat as the source of blow sand. The lizard depends on blow sand for replenishment of its sand dune habitat.

The staff witness testified that construction of the proposed Mirage substation would have a low but probably still significant impact on the lizard. He explained that the term significant in this case meant any impact on the species because of its designation as a threatened or endangered species. The lizard is known to exist only in the Coachella Valley. It has suffered substantial loss of its habitat through agricultural and other development and preservation of its remaining habitat is the only known means of preventing its extinction.

The main impact on the lizard from the construction of the substation would be the possible interference with transport of the blow sand critical to the lizard's habitat. For that reason, the witness stated that the construction of the substation could have a significant impact on the lizard even if no lizards actually live on the proposed site. The witness has never seen a lizard in the site.

The witness stated that based on his discussions with biologists from the California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and a sand transport expert, Don Weaver, he concluded that land acquisition was a reasonable mitigation measure and recommended establishing a 30-acre preserve in the designated Critical Habitat area as one of the most effective means of preserving the lizard's remaining habitat.

SCE's position is that the expected impact on the habitat caused by the construction of the Mirage substation on Site 1 is low. Further, SCE states that the habitat which will be lost due to

the construction of the substation is marginal fringe-toed lizard habitat, at best. SCE states that mitigation of this expected low impact by ordering Edison to purchase and donate 30 acres of prime habitat is too extreme a measure.

The California Department of Fish and Game stated in its comment on the Draft Environmental Document:

> "Your Draft EIR adequately describes the resources to be affected by the project as well as the impacts on them and will fully meet the requirements of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act if the mitigation measures described on pages 116, 120, and 121 are included in the certified version of the Final EIR.
>
> "It is particularly important that the mitigative measures outlined on page 121 to purchase and donate 30 acres of prime sand dune habitat of the Coachella fringe-toed lizard within the designated Critical Habitat for this state endangered species be implemented."

Mitigation

The staff environmental consultant testified about the DEIR. The EIR identified the environmental impacts of the Project and alternatives to the Project.

Recommendations have been made in the EIR to mitigate potential impacts in the following areas: geology (p. 104-105), soil resources (p. 108), hydrology (p. 111), vegetation (p. 116), wildlife (p. 120-121), air quality (p. 122), visual impacts (p. 135-136), archaeology (p. 149), and native American resources (p. 152).

SCE will be required to undertake all of the mitigation measures. SCE will be required to follow the design concept of the open type substation depicted in the PEA.

Further, SCE will be required to file reports to implement our monitoring of the Project.

Conclusion

A comprehensive record on environmental matters was developed in this proceeding through issuance of the DEIR and Final EIR, consultation with public agencies and others, and public hearings. All are elements in the environmental process which culminated in the issuance of the final document.

Public safety, health, comfort, convenience, and necessity require the installation, maintenance, operation, and use of the Project. The Project does not compete with any person, firm, or public or private corporation in the public utilities business for furnishing or supplying electric service to the public in or adjacent to the territory in which the Project shall be located. The mitigation measures recommended in the PEA, in the Final EIR, and in this decision have been designed to reduce Project impacts and are adequate to protect the environment. We have reviewed the record, the Final EIR, and comments filed and conclude that the project should be authorized subject to implementing the mitigation and monitoring measures in the PEA, Final EIR, and in this decision.

Findings of Fact

1. The Devers substation load growth has been 6.3% per annum from 1971-1975 and 9.7% from 1975-1980 and is estimated to be 6.4% from 1981-1985 and 4.5% from 1985-1990.

2. The 1981 peak was 410 MW, and the 1985 peak is estimated to be 526 MW.

3. By 1985, without the Project, excessive voltage could occur and could cause extensive service interruptions and possible damage to customer equipment.

4. SCE requests authority to construct and operate its proposed double-circuit 220 kV transmission line Project from its Devers substation to its proposed Mirage substation, a distance of approximately 15.2 miles.

5. The proposed line will reinforce SCE's transmission system in the Palm Springs area, and should provide a greater level of reliability by eliminating the prospect of interruptions which result from overloaded transmission facilities.

6. Estimated cost of the SCE Project including transmission line, substation facilities, and right-of-way is $12,285,000.

7. SCE's proposed route was fully discussed in the Final EIR.

8. Several alternatives were identified in the Final EIR.

9. Undergrounding of the 220 kV transmission line is not an economically feasible alternative to overhead construction.

10. The proposed mitigation measure to purchase 30 acres of land for ecological reserve is not warranted in this case for the construction of the Mirage Substation.

11. The most environmentally acceptable and least costly route between Devers substation and the Mirage substation is the proposed route on the existing Devers-Julian Hinds 220 kV right-of-way for 14.3 miles and angle southerly for 0.9 mile on a new 250-foot right-of-way into a new Mirage 220/115 kV substation.

12. The transmission line would be constructed of double circuit, lattice steel towers, with an average height of 120 feet, and an average span of 1,200 feet.

13. The transmission line is designed for an ultimate two-bundle, 1,033,500 circular mil ACSR cable per phase; however, only one circuit of single conductor would be initially installed.

14. A new breaker and one-half position would be added at Devers substation. The new line would terminate on an H-frame wood pole dead-end structure at Mirage. Other Mirage substation facilities would include a 220/115 kV transformer and disconnect switches.

15. Mitigation measures required to minimize the project impacts as contained in the PEA, Final EIR and in this decision are reasonable and adopted.

16. The proposed Project is essential to meet future public convenience and necessity.

17. There are no feasible alternatives to the Project.

18. Monitoring of construction costs and mitigation measures will ensure that our decision is fully implemented.

19. The Project could have a significant effect upon the environment; however, such effect is far outweighed by the beneficial effects of the Project.

20. We have reviewed the record, the Final EIR, received on February 15, 1983, and the comments filed and find that the Project, subject to the mitigation measures set forth, will not produce an unreasonable burden on natural resources, aesthetics of the area in which the proposed facilities are to be located, public health and safety, air and water quality in the vicinity of park, recreational, and scenic areas, historic sites and buildings, or archaeological sites.

Conclusions of Law

1. Present and future public convenience and necessity require the construction and operation of the Project by 1985.

2. The Final EIR has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. We have reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR in reaching this decision. The Notice of Determination for the Project is attached as Appendix A to this decision.

3. The route identified in the Final EIR as the proposed route is clearly preferred when considering all environmental factors on a collective basis and represents the most feasible and reasonable route.

4. The mitigation measures set forth in the PEA, in the Final EIR and in this decision, should be conditions of authorization.

5. Mitigation measures have been or will be adequately implemented by Project design, proposed construction, operation methods, modifications of the Project, and the required conditions.

6. Any remaining environmental impacts are outweighed by the beneficial effects of the Project.

7. The action taken should not be considered as indicative of amounts to be included in future proceedings for the purpose of determining just and reasonable rates.

8. SCE should be required to file reports setting forth (a) its pre- and post-construction plan for implementing the required Project mitigation measures, and (b) its pre-construction capital cost estimates of the Project.

9. SCE should be required to file quarterly reports setting forth (a) the status of mitigation program, and (b) actual Project costs compared with its estimates.

10. Under Public Utilities Code Section 1001, a 220 kV transmission line from SCE's Devers substation to its proposed Mirage substation should be authorized as set forth in the following order.

## O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. A certificate of public convenience and necessity is granted to Southern California Edison Company (SCE) to construct and operate its double-circuit 220 kV transmission line Project (Project) between its Devers substation and its proposed Mirage substation along the adopted (proposed) route in this proceeding subject to the mitigation measures recommended in the Proponent's Environmental Assessment, Final Environmental Impact Report, and in this decision.

2. A variation of one-quarter mile from each side of the centerline of the adopted route is authorized for the final alignments.

3. Within 90 days from the effective date of this order, SCE shall undertake and file with the Commission reports setting forth:

   a. Details of its pre- and post-construction plan for implementing the mitigation measures required by this order. SCE shall use

qualified engineering, cultural, and ecological resources personnel in conducting all surveys and in selecting all sites. The plant shall set forth the qualifications of personnel that will be used in the preconstruction surveys and in selecting all access roads, tower sites, pulling and tensioning sites, and all other construction sites involving ground disturbance.

b. Details of its pre-construction capital cost estimates of the Project. All reasonable costs related to the mitigation monitoring program shall be considered as reasonable construction expenses related to this project.

4. The Executive Director shall evaluate the need for a construction cost-monitoring program prior to commencement of this project and shall implement such a program as he sees fit. His evaluation shall include the explicit consideration of a goal-oriented "milestones" approach to cost monitoring, wherein estimates of costs for the various phases of the project are compared with actual costs as the project unfolds.

5. SCE shall file quarterly reports with the Commission's Docket Office setting forth in detail the status of its mitigation program and actual Project costs compared with its estimates.

6. SCE shall file with the Commission's Docket Office a detailed statement of the capital cost of the transmission line project within one year following the date it is placed in commercial operation.

7. The authorization granted in this decision shall expire if not exercised within two years from the effective date of this order.

8. After the exhaustion of all administrative remedies in this proceeding, the Executive Director of the Commission shall file a Notice of Determination for the Project as set forth in Appendix A to this decision with the Secretary of Resources.

This order becomes effective 30 days from today.

Dated April 6, 1983, at San Francisco, California.

LEONARD M. GRIMES, JR.
President
VICTOR CALVO
PRISCILLA C. GREW
DONALD VIAL
Commissioners

I CERTIFY THAT THIS DECISION WAS APPROVED ABOVE COMMISSIONERS TODAY.

Joseph E. Bodovitz, Executive Director

A.61149 /ec

APPENDIX A

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

TO: Secretary for Resources
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1312
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: California Public Utilities Commission
350 McAllister Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code

---

Project Title

SCE's Devers-Mirage 220 kV Transmission Line Project, A.61149

State Clearinghouse Number (If submitted to State Clearinghouse)

SCH 82021506

Contact Person — Telephone Number

Teresa Burns — (415) 557-2374

Project Location

Riverside County

Project Description SCE - a double circuit 220 kV T/L from its existing Devers Substation to its proposed Mirage Substation, all new facilities located in the Coachella Valley, Riverside County.

This is to advise that the California Public Utilities Commission (Lead Agency or Responsible Agency) has approved the above described project and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project:

1. The project [X] will have a significant effect on the environment
   [ ] will not
2. [X] An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
   [ ] A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

   The EIR or Negative Declaration and record of project approval may be examined at 350 McAllister St., San Francisco, CA
3. Mitigation measures [X] were [ ] were not made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A statement of Overriding Considerations [ ] was [X] was not adopted for this project.

Date Received for Filing _____

Executive Director

Date _____

The witness presented the following detailed schedule for construction of the new facilities.

| Activity | Start | Complete |
|---|---|---|
| Roads and Clearing | 9-1-84 | 11-1-84 |
| Tower Footings | 10-1-84 | 1-1-85 |
| Tower Assembly and Erection | 12-1-84 | 2-15-85 |
| Conductor and Groundwire | 1-15-85 | 4-1-85 |
| Devers Substation | 5-1-84 | 1-1-85 |
| Mirage Substation | 5-1-84 | 11-1-84 |
| Operating Date | 5-1-85 | |

The staff utilities engineer testified that SCE's estimates are preliminary and within 25% accuracy. He recommended cost monitoring. SCE should file advance engineering construction costs for each phase so that the staff can review the prudency of the construction expenditures prior to rather than after the Project is completed. SCE will be required to report on cost monitoring.

Need for Project

SCE's senior planning engineer testified that the Devers substation load has grown at a rate of 6.3% per year from 1971-1975, 9.7% from 1975-1980, and projected the growth for the Devers load from 1980-1985 to be 6.4% and from 1985-1990 to be 4.5% per year. A significant portion of this load growth is expected to occur in the southeastern portion of SCE's Palm Springs District, particularly in the areas of Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, and Cathedral City.

There are over 85,000 customers served from the Devers substation. The 1981 peak was 410 MW, and the 1985 peak is estimated to be 526 MW.

The high growth in these areas will cause excessive loading on existing transmission and substation facilities by 1985. This Project is needed to avoid overloads projected on both the 220/115 kV

transformers at Devers and many of the 115 kV transmission lines providing service to this high growth area.

Construction of the Devers-Mirage 220 kV line and installation of a 220/115 kV transformer bank at Mirage, in conjunction with construction of a 115 kV line between Mirage and Tamarisk substation, by May 1, 1985 will provide relief of the overloads mentioned above.

The staff's utilities engineer and the staff's consulting electrical engineer testified in agreement with the need for the Project. The Final EIR presents data supporting the need for the Project.

Discussion

Several individuals representing themselves and local organizations expressed opposition to Alternate Routes A and B. The City of Desert Hot Springs and an individual questioned the need for the Project. Two individuals raised the undergrounding question.

The record clearly demonstrates the need for the proposed project. The staff of our Utilities Division and Legal Division support the Project.

The construction of the 500 kV portion of the project within the existing right-of-way of SCE's 220 kV transmission line would result in substantially less environmental impact than construction using the alternate routes in the PEA or Final EIR. The Final EIR fully describes and supports the proposed route, and shows that undergrounding is not economically feasible. There are no transmission lines, existing or proposed, which could provide transmission service of the type for which the Project is designed. SCE's proposd route is found to be the preferred route and will be adopted. The staff environmental witness testified that Alternative Routes A and B have very substantial environmental disadvantages, and we agree.

6. Any remaining environmental impacts are outweighed by the beneficial effects of the Project.

7. The action taken should not be considered as indicative of amounts to be included in future proceedings for the purpose of determining just and reasonable rates.

8. SCE should be required to file reports setting forth (a) its pre- and post-construction plan for implementing the required Project mitigation measures, and (b) its pre-construction capital cost estimates of the Project.

9. SCE should be required to file quarterly reports setting forth (a) the status of mitigation program, and (b) actual Project costs compared with its estimates.

10. Under Public Utilities Code Section 1001, a 220 kV transmission line from SCE's Devers substation to its proposed Mirage substation should be authorized as set forth in the following order.

## O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. A certificate of public convenience and necessity is granted to Southern California Edison Company (SCE) to construct and operate its double-circuit 220 kV transmission line Project (Project) between its Devers substation and its proposed Mirage substation along the adopted (proposed) route in this proceeding subject to the mitigation measures recommended in the Proponent's Environmental Assessment, Final Environmental Impact Report, and in this decision.

2. A variation of one-quarter mile from each side of the centerline of the adopted route is authorized for the final alignments.

3. Within 90 days from the effective date of this order, SCE shall undertake and file with the Commission reports setting forth:

   a. Details of its pre- and post-construction plan for implementing the mitigation measures required by this order.

b. Details of its pre-construction capital cost estimates of the Project.

4. SCE shall file quarterly reports with the Commission's Docket Office setting forth in detail the status of its mitigation program and actual Project costs compared with its estimates.

5. SCE shall file with the Commission's Docket Office a detailed statement of the capital cost of the transmission line project within one year following the date it is placed in commercial operation.

6. The authorization granted in this decision shall expire if not exercised within two years from the effective date of this order.

7. After the exhaustion of all administrative remedies in this proceeding, the Executive Director of the Commission shall file a Notice of Determination for the Project as set forth in Appendix A to this decision with the Secretary of Resources.

This order becomes effective 30 days from today.

Dated APR 6 1983, at San Francisco, California.

LEONARD M. GRIMES, JR.
President
VICTOR CALVO
PRISCILLA C. GREW
DONALD VIAL
Commissioners