

# MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY  
PICO SUBSTATION PROJECT  
State Clearinghouse No. 99041047

*Prepared for:*

## CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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# PREFACE

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On April 9, 1999, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) distributed the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the San Diego Gas & Electric Company Pico Substation Project.

In accordance with Section 15105(b) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, a 30-day review and comment period for the Draft MND began April 12, 1999 and ended May 12, 1999. In addition, a pre-hearing conference was held in the City of San Clemente's City Hall on April 23, 1999 to receive oral comments on the Draft MND and on the project.

As a result of public comment, changes have been made to the Draft MND. The sole intent of the Final MND and purpose is to provide corrections to certain facts set forth in the Draft MND to ensure accuracy. No new significant environmental impacts are created with revisions made to the MND text. Additional mitigation measures have been included in the MND as a result of public comment. No mitigation measures presented in the Draft MND are deleted or substituted by the additional measures presented. Changes in text are either signified as a replacement, addition, or revision to existing text. Revisions to exiting text are signified by ~~strikeout~~ where text is removed, and by shaded text (**shaded text**) where text is added for clarification.

# SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 SUMMARY OF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) is a public utility corporation engaged principally in the business of providing electric service to a portion of Orange County, California, and electric and gas service to San Diego County, California. In providing electrical power sources to the City of San Clemente and southern Orange County, SDG&E currently operates two distribution substations. A recent SDG&E area planning study indicates that additional electrical system capacity is required to serve new development in San Clemente and Forster Ranch and future development in the Talega Valley area of southern Orange County.

On December 17, 1998, SDG&E filed Application No. 98-12-023 pursuant to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Order No. 131-D requesting authority for a permit to construct the Pico Substation project. The Pico Substation project site is located in the Talega Valley Development in southern Orange County, within the City of San Clemente's sphere of influence. The proposed substation at ultimate configuration is planned to be 120 MVA with four 30 MVA transformers and sixteen 12 kV (kilovolt) circuits. A 10- to 12-foot high wall will enclose the substation area (approximately 340 feet by 230 feet) and landscaping will be established from the beginning of the project (see *Section 2, Project Description*, for further details).

The objective of the proposed Pico Substation is to provide additional electricity to meet expected load growth and prevent potential outages or disruption of service to existing and new customers in SDG&E's San Clemente service area.

## 1.2 AUTHORITY TO PREPARE A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The CPUC is the lead CEQA agency responsible for authorizing the construction of the Pico Substation Project.

Based on the findings of the Initial Study/Environmental Evaluation (see *Section 4, Initial Study/Environmental Checklist* and *Section 5, Discussion of Environmental Impacts*) prepared for this project, the CPUC has made the determination that a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is the appropriate environmental document to be prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As provided for by CEQA §21064.5, an MND may be prepared for a project subject to CEQA when an Initial Study has identified potentially significant effects on the environment but revisions in the project have been made where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur.

This ~~draft~~ MND has been prepared in conformance with §15070, subsection (a), of the State CEQA Guidelines. The purpose of the MND and the Initial Study/Environmental Evaluation is to determine the potential significant impacts associated with the proposed Pico Substation Project and incorporate mitigation

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measures into the project design as necessary to reduce or eliminate the significant or potentially significant effects of the project (see *Section 3, Proposed Finding of No Significant Effect, and Mitigation and Monitoring Measures* included in the *Project to Avoid or Reduce Potentially Significant Effects*).

### 1.3 OTHER AGENCIES THAT MAY USE THE NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

This MND is intended to be used by responsible and trustee agencies that may have review authority over the project. SDG&E will obtain all permits as required by law. Based on the analysis in *Sections 4 and 5* of this document, other permits by responsible agencies with jurisdiction over the proposed project include Regional Water Quality Control Board Natural Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for stormwater discharge and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for impacts to endangered species pursuant to the U.S. Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act.

### 1.4 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

In accordance with CEQA, a good faith effort has been made during the preparation of this MND to contact affected agencies, organizations and persons who may have an interest in this project. The distribution list for the MND is provided in Appendix A.

The CPUC will also be providing a notice of availability to property owners within 300 feet of the project and will also be publishing this notice in the local newspaper, in accordance with the CPUC Rule 17.1 of the rules of Practice and Procedures. This document is also being made available on the CPUC's website at the following address: <http://www/cpuc.ca.gov>.

In reviewing the MND and Initial Study/Environmental Evaluation, affected public agencies and the interested public should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project are proposed to be avoided or mitigated.

~~Comments may be made on the MND in writing before the end of the comment period.~~ A 30-day review and comment period from April 12, 1999 to May 12, 1999 has been established, in accordance with §15105(b) of the CEQA guidelines. Following the close of the public comment period, the CPUC will consider this MND and comments thereto in determining whether to approve the proposed project. Written comments on the MND ~~should be~~ **include those** sent to the following address by 5:00 PM **on May 12, 1999**.

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California Public Utilities Commission  
Energy Division, Analysis Branch  
505 Van Ness Avenue, Room 4007  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
*Attention: Beth Shipley*

## SECTION 2.0

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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#### 2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located in southern Orange County within the City of San Clemente's sphere of influence. The site is located on Parcel 26 of the Talega ~~Town Center~~ and Business Park within the Talega Valley Development. The Talega ~~Town Center~~ and Business Park is bounded on the north by Avenida Pico and the developing residential portion of the Talega Development project, south by proposed open space and the Pacific Golf Club located within Rancho San Clemente, west by the southernmost portion of the Champion Hills development, and east by ~~the Forster Ranch development~~ and the proposed Foothill Transportation Corridor-South **and undeveloped property in the unincorporated County of Orange**. *Figure 1* shows the regional location of the project, *Figure 2* shows the project site location on the USGS topographic map, and *Figure 3* provides an aerial photograph of the project site and vicinity. *Figure 4* provides a local vicinity map illustrating the Talega Valley Development Project and Talega Business Park.

The 2.33-acre project site is located on an irregularly shaped and rough-graded site. The site is bounded by the future Vitrina Street to the north, south by a major SDG&E and Southern California Edison (SCE) transmission corridor and east and west by graded parcels. The project site's existing primary access is from the southwest at Interstate 5 at Avenida Pico in the City of San Clemente. Secondary access also exists from Cristianitos Road off of Ortega Highway from the north.

Land uses in the vicinity of the substation are currently in various phases of development, ranging from construction of street and utility improvements, residential and commercial. The nearest planned residences are located approximately 1,000 feet north of the northerly side of the proposed substation site.

#### 2.2 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed site plan is shown in *Figure 5* and *Figure 6* provides substation equipment elevation. The proposed substation at ultimate configuration is planned to be 120 MVA with four 30 MVA transformers and sixteen 12 kV circuits shown on the site plan. The substation design is a low profile design with a maximum equipment height of 13 feet. **The substation structures and equipment to terminate the incoming and outgoing transmission lines have a maximum height of 40 feet.** The existing 138 kV tie line TL13836 will be routed into the proposed substation overhead. Initially, two new steel poles will be placed in the SDG&E right-of-way and used to loop in the 138 kV line into the substation. The new steel poles will be approximately the same height as the existing lattice towers (maximum height, ~~40~~ **80** feet). Distribution circuits will be installed underground.



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Figure 1 Regional Map

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Figure 2 Vicinity Map

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Figure 3 Aerial Photograph of the Project Site and Vicinity

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Figure 4 Local Vicinity Map/Talega Business Park

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Figure 5 Site Plan

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Figure 6 Substation Equipment Elevation

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A perimeter wall will be built around the substation. Two sliding gates will be provided on the north side of the perimeter wall. The height of the wall is expected to vary between 10 to 12 feet high. The substation perimeter wall will enclose an area approximately 340 feet by 230 feet and will be designed to have the appearance of a single-story industrial-style building to screen transformers, distribution circuits, and other facility improvements from view. ~~It~~ The substation perimeter wall will be designed to comply with architectural guidelines of the Talega Town Center and Business Park Design Guidelines. The site will be landscaped at initial development of the station and will be done in accordance with the landscape guidelines of the development. See *Figures 7* and *8* for the proposed concept landscape plan. Pole and substation design will also meet CPUC General Order for seismic standards. Access to the substation will be from Vitrina Street to the north of the station.

### 2.3 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

The site will be developed to accommodate an ultimate capacity of 120 MVA; however, only one transformer and switchgear will be installed initially. Site development work would include excavation, compacting and final grading. The final grade of the site will be about one to two percent, for good drainage to the point of collection and disposal. The access drive to the station would also be rough graded at this time. Wall construction and underground 12 kV duct installation would then be performed on the substation property. After this phase is completed, the landscape and irrigation would be installed.

Following site development, actual construction of the substation equipment foundations will commence. This is the only activity within the substation enclosure until it becomes operational. Once the enclosure is completed, the major equipment is placed on their foundation and structures are anchored in their final position. The grounding grid installation follows and wiring the equipment controls and protection devices are performed concurrently. By this time, the foundation for the replacement double circuit cable pole is completed and the cable pole is staged onsite. Setting the new cable poles are performed in rapid sequence to minimize the duration of outages of the 138 kV transmission line. No electric service interruptions to customers in the area are expected as a result of the construction of the substation. No new access roads would be needed to remove the existing lattice structure and install the steel cable poles or for future maintenance.

All construction equipment, vehicles, personnel and materials staging areas would be accommodated within the property lines of the proposed substation property. Construction equipment would include tractors, scrapers, loaders and trucks for excavating, compacting and grading the site. Portable cranes and heavy hauling trucks would be employed for the 138/12 kV transformer and steel poles. Concrete trucks, backhoes, crew trucks and pick-up trucks would be coming and going to the site during the installation of the foundations, ground grid and underground ducts. Crew trucks, boom trucks and pick-up trucks would be going to and from the site daily for the balance of the construction activities, testing and check out, final transmission tie-ins and 12 kV circuit cabling until the station is energized. *Table 1* provides an estimate of the number of vehicle types required during construction and the duration of use.

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Figure 7 Concept Landscape Plan



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Figure 8 Concept Landscape Elevations

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**TABLE 1**  
**ESTIMATED VEHICLE TYPES AND DURATION OF USE**

Vehicle Type	Estimated Number Required	Duration
Tractor	3	1 month
Scraper	2	1 month
Loader	2	1 month
Truck (22 cubic yard end dump)	40 (during surcharging and import of decomposed granite/maximum 4 trips per truck/day)	2 weeks
Crane	2 (during raising of wall panels)	1 month
	2 (to set steel pole and transformer)	2 days
Concrete trucks	10 (maximum two trips per truck/day)	2 months
Backhoe	2	1 month
Crew trucks	3	5 months
Boom truck	1	3 months
Pick-up truck	3	5 months
Personal vehicles	15	9 months

It is anticipated that six to eight workers would be employed for the site development phase of the project and eight to fifteen workers during the balance of construction of the transmission, substation and distribution infrastructure until just prior to control wiring check-out and testing. At this stage of construction, approximately four to six electricians would be onsite. Final activities including final tie-ins and energizing the station would utilize about six to eight electricians and two to four engineers.

Construction is anticipated to begin in September 2000 with an in-service date of June 2001. It is anticipated that the ultimate capacity of the Pico Substation would be developed within 6 – 10 years after construction.

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### 2.4 FACILITY OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The substation will be unmanned, and electric equipment within the substation also will be controlled automatically. The equipment can be controlled remotely from SDG&E's central operations facilities. The substation wall will be of sufficient height and texture to prevent unassisted and unauthorized entrance. The entrance gate will be locked and warning signage will be posted on the perimeter wall. Entry to an operational substation will be restricted to authorized

SDG&E personnel. Maintenance will include equipment testing, equipment monitoring and repair, as well as emergency and routine procedures for service continuity and preventive maintenance. It is anticipated that maintenance would require about four trips per year with a two to four-person crew. One pick-up truck with one troubleman could visit the station once per day.

Substation lighting will be provided by six 300-watt tungsten-quartz lamps. These lights are intended to provide safety lighting inside the station during emergency only when a troubleman may require night lighting. It is anticipated that these lights would not be used more than once a year. Otherwise, the only night lighting would consist of one 100-watt yellow, outside floodlight installed at the entry gate on a pole about seven feet above finished grade. The lamp housing will be adjusted to shine out and down. The light will be controlled by a dusk to dawn timer and will remain on during the night hours.

## SECTION 3.0

### PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANCE EFFECT

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The potential environmental effects of developing the 2.33-acre site proposed for the Pico Substation were evaluated in the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Talega Valley Specific Plan (EIR 84-02) by the City of San Clemente in 1988. EIR 84-02 evaluated the environmental effects of the Talega Valley Specific Plan as proposed within the City of San Clemente and within the County of Orange. Moreover, the County of Orange prepared its own Final EIR for the portion of the project within unincorporated Orange County (EIR 482) in 1988. The City of San Clemente prepared an addendum to EIR 84-02 for the mass grading of Increment I of the Talega Valley development (including the area for the proposed Talega ~~Town Center~~ ~~Center~~ and Business Park) in March 1988. The County of Orange prepared an addendum to EIR 482 for a Feature Plan Amendment in October 1998. EIR 84-02 is available for review at the City of San Clemente Planning Department, 910 Calle Negocio, San Clemente, California. EIR 482 is available for review at the Orange County Environmental Management Agency, Santa Ana, California.

SDG&E's Pico Substation project proposes no changes to the grading or land use plans previously approved with the Talega Valley Specific Plan for which EIR 84-02 and EIR 482 were certified. Therefore, the CPUC has tiered its environmental analysis of the Pico Substation project with EIR 84-02 and EIR 482, as defined and authorized in Public Resources Code Sections 21068.5 and in CEQA Guidelines Section 15152 and as encouraged by the Legislative findings and policy set forth in Public Resources Code 21093.

The CPUC has prepared an Initial Study/Environmental Checklist to analyze to what extent the prior EIRs 84-02 and 482 are still sufficient, and whether the proposed Pico Substation project will cause significant effects on the environment not examined in EIR 84-02 or EIR 482.

The CPUC finds that the project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment based on the results of the Initial Study/Environmental Checklist (see *Section 4*) and the Environmental Evaluation Discussion (see *Section 5*). Some potentially significant effects have been identified and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project to ensure that these effects remain at less than significant levels. A Mitigated Negative Declaration is therefore proposed to satisfy the requirements of CEQA (PRC 21000 *et. seq.*, 14 Cal. Code Regs. 15000 *et. seq.*). This conclusion is supported by the following:

### 3.1 NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT FINDING

1. **Land Use:** SDG&E's Pico Substation project would not change any land use or grading plans previously approved. Therefore, the proposed project would be compatible with the existing and planned land uses adjacent to and surrounding the project site. Measures have been incorporated into the project design to conform with the architectural and landscaping guidelines of the approved Talega ~~Town Center~~ ~~Center~~ and Business Park (see *Section 3.2, Mitigation Measures Incorporated Into the Project* as well as *Section 5.1, Land Use and Planning – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*).

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2. **Population and Housing:** The proposed project would not generate additional population, therefore, the approval of the project would have a less than significant effect on human population and housing. See discussion under *Section 5.2, Population and Housing – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.
3. **Geology and Soils:** EIR 84-02 identified potential constraints and impacts onsite due to geologic hazards and soils. Extensive mitigation measures were adopted to address these constraints. Compliance with these measures reduced the level of impact to less than significant. Measures have been incorporated into the project design to reduce risks associated with geologic hazards to below a level of significance. See discussion under *Section 5.3, Geologic Problems – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.
4. **Hydrology and Water Quality:** Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce project effects associated with potential discharge of sediments and runoff to less than significant. See *Section 3.2, Mitigation Measures Incorporated Into the Project*, as well as *Section 5.4, Water – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.
5. **Air Quality:** Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce short-term construction effects associated with generation of particulate matter less than 10 microns (PM10) to less than significant. Project operation will not generate air emissions. See *Section 3.2, Mitigation Measures Incorporated Into the Project*, as well as *Section 5.5, Air Quality – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.
6. **Transportation and Circulation:** During operation, the proposed project is expected to generate approximately one to two vehicle trips per day. This limited number of vehicle trips would result in less than significant impacts to traffic or traffic congestion.

During construction, testing and energizing the station (approximately nine months), traffic will be generated by construction crews and equipment/material deliveries. Short-term construction traffic will not have a significant effect on study area roadway segments or intersections. See *Section 5.6, Transportation and Circulation – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.

7. **Biological Resources:** The proposed substation would be developed on a site that is primarily graded and dominated by non-native plants. The new proposed steel poles would result in both temporary (approximately 0.01 acre) and permanent (approximately 0.03 acre) impacts to disturbed coastal sage scrub habitat currently known as foraging areas for the federally-threatened California gnatcatcher. Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce biological impacts to less than significant. Measures to reduce permanent impacts include deducting credits at a 2:1 ratio from SDG&E's Conservation Bank in accordance with SDG&E's approved Section 10(a) permit and Subregional Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) and USFWS and CDFG requirements. Mitigation for temporary impacts will come in the form of reseeded impacted areas and a two-year monitoring

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program to determine success. **Additionally, construction activities will be limited to outside the gnatcatcher breeding season.** See *Section 3.2, Mitigation Measures Incorporated Into the Project*, as well as *Section 5.7, Biological Resources – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.

The Pico Substation project is designated as low quality habitat under the South Orange County NCCP and therefore is not anticipated to conflict with ongoing preserve designs being conducted as part of the South Orange County NCCP.

8. **Energy and Mineral Resources:** The proposed project would not require long-term energy or natural resource use. See *Section 5.8, Energy and Mineral Resources – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.
9. **Hazards:** The proposed project is not anticipated to generate hazardous materials; therefore, no significant impacts due to public hazards would occur. See discussion under *Section 3.2, Mitigation Measures Incorporated Into the Project*, and *Section 5.9, Hazards – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.
10. **Noise:** Impacts resulting from both construction and operation noise were determined to be less than significant. See *Section 5.10, Noise – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.
11. **Public Services:** The proposed project would not generate a demand for public services; therefore, no impact to public services would occur. See *Section 5.11, Public Services – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.
12. **Utilities and Service Systems:** No impacts to utilities and service systems would occur. See *Section 5.12, Utilities and Service Systems – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.
13. **Aesthetics:** The change in visual appearance as a result of project implementation was identified as a significant impact in final EIR 84-02. Both design and landscape mitigation measures were adopted which would reduce the impacts to a level of less than significant. Design and landscaping measures have been incorporated into the project. These measures would make the project consistent with the visual considerations outlined in the Talega ~~Town Center~~ and Business Park Design Guidelines, thereby effectively reducing long-term visual quality impacts to less than significant. See *Section 3.2, Mitigation Measures Incorporated Into the Project*, and *Section 5.13, Aesthetics – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.

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14. **Cultural and Paleontological Resources:** The project site does not contain cultural or paleontological resources. Therefore, it is anticipated that there is no potential for encountering important paleontological or archaeological resources as a result of project construction. See *Section 5.14, Cultural Resources – Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.
15. **Recreation:** There are no parks or other public recreational facilities on the project site. Therefore, the project would not affect recreational opportunities. See *section 5.15, Recreation– Discussion of Environmental Impacts*.
16. **Cumulative Impacts:** As revealed by the previous discussions for each environmental category, impacts from the proposed project are considered to be less than significant or no impact. Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce impacts associated with geological resources, hydrology and water quality, air quality, biological resources, hazards, and visual resources impacts to less than significant (see *Section 3.2, Mitigation Measures Incorporated Into the Project*). No long-term significant impacts are associated with the project. In the absence of significant impacts, incremental accumulation of significant effects would not occur.

### 3.2 MITIGATION MEASURES INCLUDED TO AVOID SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

SDG&E has incorporated as part of its proposed project a number of measures to reduce or avoid potential environmental impacts associated with project construction and maintenance. These measures are considered part of the proposed project and are summarized below.

#### General

- ! Prior to substation site development, SDG&E will submit project grading, landscaping and street improvement plans **and plans and elevation for the substation perimeter wall** to the City of San Clemente and County of Orange for review and comment. Prior to project construction, should the City of San Clemente achieve a boundary change which would include the proposed Pico Substation, then plans will not be submitted to the County of Orange for review and comment. The plan submittal will follow a typical building permit and grading permit submittal process, with the exception that SDG&E will not receive building, grading, electrical or plumbing permits from the City or County. SDG&E will incorporate the plan check comments into the project, where those comments do not conflict with, or compromise, the CPUC's General Orders regulating the location, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the substation.

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### Geotechnical

- ! Consistent with mitigation measures required in EIR 84-02, appropriate grading and construction standards based on the site-specific conditions identified in the Applicant's Geotechnical Report (*Woodward-Clyde, January 1994*) will be incorporated into design and construction of the proposed facilities.

### Water

- ! Measures to control sedimentation and erosion will be employed during the construction phase to control erosion, including the short-term use of sandbags, matting, mulch, berms, hay bales, or similar devices along all graded areas to minimize sediment transport. The exact design, location and schedule of use for such devices will be determined pursuant to direction and approval by the Orange County Flood Control District as required by the State Water Resources Control Board.
- ! SDG&E shall submit a plan for drainage to the County of Orange Civil Engineering Department, Drainage Division, identifying the manner in which storm flows will be accommodated. If it is determined that storm flow quantities offsite will be increased after development, SDG&E shall ensure that construction of improvements are in place to accommodate runoff generated onsite under developed conditions, and to control runoff downstream.
- ! SDG&E will comply with the Regional Water Quality Control Board's (RWQCB) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit which consists of wastewater discharge requirements for stormwater and urban runoff. In compliance with the NPDES permit, a Best Management Practices (BMPs) program for stormwater pollution control will be created. BMPs appropriate to the substation project will be employed to reduce pollutants available for transport or to reduce the amount of pollutants in runoff prior to discharge.

### Air Quality

- ! SDG&E will comply with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 403 to reduce fugitive dust emissions, including implementing the following:
  - ! All unpaved construction areas will be sprinkled with water or other acceptable SCAQMD dust-control agents during dust-generating activities to reduce dust emissions. Additional watering or acceptable SCAQMD dust-control agents will be applied during dry weather or windy days until dust emissions are not visible.
  - ! Trucks hauling dirt and debris will be covered to reduce windblown dust and spills.



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- ! On dry days, dirt or debris spilled onto paved surfaces will be swept up immediately to reduce resuspension of particulate matter caused by vehicle movement. Approach routes to construction sites will be cleaned daily of construction-related dirt in dry weather.
  
- ! Onsite stockpiles of excavated material will be covered or watered.

#### **Biological Resources**

- ! The new proposed steel poles would result in both temporary and permanent impacts to coastal sage scrub habitat currently known as foraging areas for the California gnatcatcher. Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce biological impacts to less than significant. Measures to reduce permanent impacts include deducting credits at a 2:1 ratio from SDG&E's Conservation Bank in accordance with SDG&E's approved Subregional Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) and USFWS and CDFG requirements. Mitigation for temporary impacts will come in the form of reseeded impacted areas and a two-year monitoring program to determine success. If habitat enhancement is not successful, then deduction from SDG&E's Conservation Bank would be made for temporary impacts.
  
- ! Construction activities (defined as site development work, e.g., excavation, compaction and grading as well as setting new cable poles and removal of existing lattice structures) shall occur outside the gnatcatcher breeding season, February 15 to August 30.

#### **Hazards**

- ! The project will comply with State Title 22 and federal Title 40 requirements, including the oil spill control and countermeasure plan (SCCP) required by Title 40 CFR Section 112.7.

#### **Visual Resources**

- ! The substation perimeter wall ~~will have the appearance of a single-story industrial-style building to~~ will be 10- to 12-foot high designed to screen transformers, distribution circuits, and other facility improvements from view. It will be designed to comply with architectural guidelines of the Talega Town Center and Business Park Design Guidelines. Plans and elevations for the perimeter wall and landscaping will be distributed to the City of San Clemente for review and comment (see General Mitigation Measures).
  
- ! The site will be landscaped at initial development of the station and will be done in accordance with the landscape guidelines of the development.
  
- ! During normal operation, night lighting will consist of only one 100-watt yellow, outside floodlight

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### **San Diego Gas & Electric Company Pico Substation Project**

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that will be installed at the entry gate on a pole about seven feet above finished grade. The lamp housing will be adjusted to shine out and down. Other substation lighting will be used during emergencies only.

#### **Paleontological Resources**

- ! A county-certified paleontologist will attend a pre-grading conference, establish procedures for surveillance and halting or redirection of work, provide onsite observation of grading activities, fossil evaluation, salvage and report of findings.

## SECTION 4.0 INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PROJECT INFORMATION	
<b>1. Project Title:</b>	Pico Substation Project Application No. 98-12-023
<b>2. Lead Agency Name and Address:</b>	California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Energy Division 505 Van Ness Avenue San Francisco, CA 94102
<b>3. Contact Person and Phone Number:</b>	Beth Shipley, Regulatory Analyst Energy Division TEL: (415) 703-1729
<b>4. Project Location:</b>	The project is located on a rough graded 2.2-acre parcel in Orange County within the City of San Clemente's sphere of influence, on the south side of Avenida Pico. The site is in the Talega Town Center and Business Park within the Talega Valley development project. The site is generally bounded by Avenida Pico on the north, SDG&E transmission corridor on the south, and graded parcels on the east and west.
<b>5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address:</b>	San Diego Gas & Electric Company 101 Ash Street San Diego, CA 92101
<b>6. General Plan Designation:</b>	County of Orange —planned business park in the Rolling Hills Specific Plan (County portion of the Talega Valley Development).
<b>7. Zoning:</b>	Commercial development.
<b>8. Description of Project: (Describe the entire action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or offsite features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)</b>	
<p>The proposed Pico Substation is designed for four 138/12 kV, 30 MVA (mega volt-ampere) transformers. The site will be developed to accommodate an ultimate capacity 120 MVA; however, only one transformer and associated switchgear will be installed initially. A perimeter wall and landscaping will be installed. Adjacent to the southerly side of the site is an existing 150-foot wide SDG&amp;E electric transmission line right-of-way which contains three 138 kV transmission lines, two on double-circuit steel lattice towers and one on single-circuit wood pole H-frame structures, and one 69 kV transmission line on wood poles. Two new steel poles will be placed in the right-of-way to support overhead drops of the 138 kV transmission line into the substation. Two to four 12 kV circuits will be installed underground in conduit extending up to approximately 1,500 feet in Business Park streets from the Substation to Avenida Pico. Ultimately, sixteen 12 kV distribution circuits will emanate from the Substation. It is anticipated that within 6-10 years after construction, a second transformer bank and up to four additional distribution circuits will be required to serve future load. Construction is scheduled to begin in September 2000 with an in-service date of June 2001.</p>	

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## San Diego Gas & Electric Company Pico Substation Project

### PROJECT INFORMATION

**9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting: (Briefly describe the project's surroundings)**

Currently, the project site is located within the Talega ~~Town Center~~ and Business Park. The Talega ~~Town Center~~ and Business Park is located within the southern portion of the Talega Valley Development. The Talega ~~Town Center~~ and Business Center is bounded on the north by Avenida Pico and the developing residential portion of the Talega Valley Development project, south by proposed open space and the Pacific Golf Club located within Rancho San Clemente, west by the southernmost portion of the Champion Hills development, and east by the ~~Forster Ranch development~~ and the proposed Foothill Transportation Corridor-South **and undeveloped property in the unincorporated County of Orange**. Currently, the surrounding lands are in various phases of development, ranging from construction of street and utility improvements and residential, commercial and industrial construction. The closest residences to the proposed substation pad are currently under construction approximately 1,000 feet to the north.

**10. Other public agencies whose approval is required: (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement)**

- ! Regional Water Quality Control Board National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for discharge of stormwater.
- ! Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game pursuant to the U.S. Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act.

**ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:**

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- |   |                                       |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>G</b> Land Use and Planning              | <b>G</b> Transportation/Circulation   | <b>G</b> Public Services               |
| <b>G</b> Population and Housing             | <b>G</b> Biological Resources         | <b>G</b> Utilities and Service Systems |
| <b>G</b> Geological Problems                | <b>G</b> Energy and Mineral Resources | <b>G</b> Aesthetics                    |
| <b>G</b> Water                              | <b>G</b> Hazards                      | <b>G</b> Cultural Resources            |
| <b>G</b> Air Quality                        | <b>G</b> Noise                        | <b>G</b> Recreation                    |
| <b>G</b> Mandatory Findings of Significance |                                       |  |

**DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Lead Agency)**

I find that the proposed project <b>COULD NOT</b> have a significant effect on the environment, and a <b>NEGATIVE DECLARATION</b> will be prepared.	<b>G</b>
I find that although the proposed project <b>COULD</b> have a significant effect on the environment, there <b>WILL NOT</b> be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on an attached sheet have been added to the project. A <b>MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION</b> will be prepared.	<b>:</b>
I find that the proposed project <b>MAY</b> have a significant effect(s) on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets, if the effect is a "potentially significant impact" or is "potentially significant unless mitigated." An <b>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT</b> is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.	<b>G</b>

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**PROJECT INFORMATION**

**DETERMINATION** (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there **WILL NOT** be a significant effect in this case because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR pursuant to applicable standards and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project.

**G**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Beth Shipley, Regulatory Analyst, California Public Utilities Commission

Print Name

Title

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**EXPLANATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM**

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the entire action involved including offsite as well as onsite, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect is significant. IF there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. “Potentially Significant unless Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level.
5. “Less than Significant Impact” applies where impacts are expected to be adverse but not significant. Impacts which are less than significant do not require mitigation and will not be discussed in detail in the EIR.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated. A source list should be attached, and other sources used, or individuals contacted, should be cited in the discussion.
7. This checklist has been adapted from the form in Appendix I of the State CEQA Guidelines, as amended effective January 1, 1998 and the additional provisions of the CPUC’s Rule 17.1 for implementing CEQA.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES <i>Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts</i>				
Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>1. LAND USE AND PLANNING. Would the proposal:</b>				
a) Conflict with general plan designation or zoning?	9	9	9	:
b) Conflict with applicable environmental plans or policies adopted by agencies with jurisdiction over the project?	9	9	9	:
c) Be incompatible with existing land use in the vicinity?	9	9	:	9
d) Affect agricultural resources or operations (e.g., impacts to soils or farmlands, or impacts from incompatible land uses)?	9	9	9	:
e) Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community (including a low-income or minority community)?	9	9	9	:
<b>2. POPULATION AND HOUSING. Would the proposal:</b>				
a) Cumulatively exceed official regional or local population projections?	9	9	9	:
b) Induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly (e.g., through projects in an undeveloped area or extension of major infrastructure)?	9	9	9	:
c) Displace existing housing, especially affordable housing?	9	9	9	:
<b>3. GEOLOGIC PROBLEMS. Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving:</b>				
a) Fault rupture?	9	9	9	:
b) Seismic ground shaking?	9	9	:	9
c) Seismic ground failure, including liquefaction?	9	9	:	9
d) Seiche, tsunami, or volcanic hazard?	9	9	9	:
e) Landslides or mud flows?	9	9	:	9
f) Erosion, changes in topography or unstable soil conditions from excavation, grading, or fill?	9	9	:	9
g) Subsidence of the land?	9	9	9	:
h) Expansive soils?	9	9	:	9
i) Unique geologic or physical features?	9	9	9	:

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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES <i>Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts</i>				
Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>4. WATER.</b> Would the proposal result in:				
a) Changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface runoff?	9	9	:	9
b) Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?	9	9	:	9
c) Discharge into surface waters or other alterations of surface water quality (e.g., temperature, dissolved oxygen, or turbidity)?	9	9	:	9
d) Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body?	9	9	:	9
e) Changes in currents, or the course or direction of water movements?	9	9	9	:
f) Change in the quantity of groundwater, either through direct additions or withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations, or through substantial loss of groundwater recharge capability?	9	9	:	9
g) Altered direction or rate of flow of groundwater?	9	9	9	:
h) Impacts to groundwater quality?	9	9	:	9
i) Substantial reduction in the amount of groundwater otherwise available for public water supplies?	9	9	9	:
<b>5. AIR QUALITY.</b> Would the proposal:				
a) Violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation?	9	9	:	9
b) Expose sensitive receptors to pollutants?	9	9	9	:
c) Alter air movement, moisture or temperature, or cause any change in climate?	9	9	:	9
d) Create objectionable odors?	9	9	9	:



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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES <i>Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts</i>				
Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>6. TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION.</b> Would the proposal result in:				
a) Increased vehicle trips or traffic congestion?	9	9	:	9
b) Hazards to safety from design features (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	9	9	9	:
c) Inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses?	9	9	9	:
d) Insufficient parking capacity on-site or off-site?	9	9	9	:
e) Hazards or barriers for pedestrians or bicyclists?	9	9	9	:
f) Conflicts with adopted policies supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	9	9	9	:
g) Rail, waterborne, or air traffic impacts?	9	9	9	:
<b>7. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.</b> Would the proposal result in impacts to:				
a) Endangered, threatened or rare species or their habitats (including, but not limited to, plants, fish, insects, animals, and birds)?	9	:	9	9
b) Locally designated species (e.g., heritage trees)?	9	9	9	:
c) Locally designated natural communities (e.g., oak forest, coastal habitat, etc.)?	9	9	:	9
d) Wetland habitat (e.g., marsh, riparian and vernal pool)?	9	9	:	9
e) Wildlife dispersal or migration corridors?	9	9	:	9
<b>8. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES.</b> Would the proposal:				
a) Conflict with adopted energy conservation plans?	9	9	9	:
b) Use non-renewable resources in a wasteful and inefficient manner?	9	9	:	9
c) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and state residents?	9	9	9	:

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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES <i>Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts</i>				
Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>9. HAZARDS.</b> Would the proposal involve:				
a) A risk of accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to, oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation)?	9	9	:	9
b) Possible interference with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	9	9	9	:
c) The creation of any health hazard or potential health hazard?	9	9	:	9
d) Exposure of people to existing sources of potential health hazards?	9	9	:	9
e) Increased fire hazard in areas with flammable brush, grass, or trees?	9	9	:	9
<b>10. NOISE.</b> Would the proposal result in:				
a) Increases in existing noise levels?	9	9	:	9
b) Exposure of people to severe noise levels?	9	9	:	9
<b>11. PUBLIC SERVICES.</b> Would the proposal have an effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered government services, in any of the following areas:				
a) Fire Protection?	9	9	9	:
b) Police Protection?	9	9	9	:
c) Schools?	9	9	9	:
d) Maintenance of public facilities, including roads?	9	9	:	9
e) Other governmental services?	9	9	9	:
<b>12. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS.</b> Would the proposal result in a need for new systems or supplies, or substantial alterations to the following utilities:				
a) Power or natural gas?	9	9	9	:
b) Communications systems?	9	9	9	:

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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES <i>Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts</i>				
Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Local or regional water treatment or distribution facilities?	9	9	:	9
d) Sewer, septic systems, or wastewater treatment and disposal facilities?	9	9	9	:
e) Storm water drainage?	9	9	:	9
f) Solid waste materials recovery or disposal?	9	9	:	9
g) Local or regional water supplies?	9	9	:	9
<b>13. AESTHETICS.</b> Would the proposal:				
a) Affect a scenic vista or scenic highway?	9	9	9	:
b) Have a demonstrable negative aesthetic effect?	9	9	:	9
c) Create adverse light or glare effects?	9	9	:	9
<b>14. CULTURAL RESOURCES.</b> Would the proposal:				
a) Disturb paleontological resources?	9	9	:	9
b) Disturb archaeological resources?	9	9	9	:
c) Affect historical resources?	9	9	9	:
d) Have the potential to cause a physical change which would affect unique ethnic cultural values?	9	9	9	:
e) Restrict existing religious or sacred uses within the potential impact area?	9	9	9	:
<b>15. RECREATION.</b> Would the proposal:				
a) Increase the demand for neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities?	9	9	9	:
b) Affect existing recreational opportunities?	9	9	:	9

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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES <i>Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts</i>				
Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>16. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of rare or endangered plants or animals, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	9	:	9	9
b. Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?	9	9	:	9
c. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	9	9	:	9
d. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	9	9	:	9
<b>1.17 EARLIER ANALYSES</b>				
<p>Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, one or more effects have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration [State CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(c)(3)(d)]. In this case, a discussion should identify the following on attached sheets.</p> <p>a) <b>Earlier analyses used.</b> Identify earlier analyses and state where they are available for review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>! Rolling Hills Final EIR 482 certified by the County of Orange May 4, 1998. State Clearinghouse Number 87111111. This document is available at the Orange County Environmental Management Agency, Santa Ana, California 92702-4048.</li> <li>! Talega Valley Specific Plan EIR 84-02 certified by the City of San Clemente, August 26, 1988. State Clearinghouse Number 84100322. This document is available at the City of San Clemente Planning Department, 910 Calle Negocio, San Clemente, California 92673.</li> <li>! Addendum to EIR 84-02 Talega Valley Development Increment 1, prepared March 1998.</li> <li>! Addendum to EIR 482 Talega Valley Development Feature Plan Amendment prepared October 1998.</li> </ul>				

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## San Diego Gas & Electric Company Pico Substation Project

**ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

*Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts*

**Discussion of Environmental Impacts**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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- b) **Impacts adequately addressed.** Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of, and adequately analyzed in, an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards. Also, state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.

The Rolling Hills Final EIR, SCH No. 87111111 concluded that potential impacts with respect to land use, earth resources, hydrology/water quality, paleontological resources, cultural resources, noise, and public services/utilities, were either not significant or would be mitigated to below significant levels.

- c) **Mitigation measures.** For effects that are checked as "Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address project-specific conditions.

**Geology.** EIR 84-02 identified potential geological constraints and impacts within the Talega Valley Development (Increment 1) that could be mitigated to below a level of significant. Grading of the project site in 1990 implemented these measures. Subsequently, in 1994, a site-specific geotechnical report was prepared with anticipation of project development. This report includes site-specific conditions for any future earthwork and is included as Appendix B of SDG&E's PEA (1998). Implementation of these measures reduces potential geological impacts to below a level of significant.

**Aesthetic/Visual Resources.** The change in visual appearance resulting from development of the Talega Valley Specific Plan was identified as a significant impact in EIR 84-02 that could be mitigated to below a level of significant. In EIR 482, the grading associated with development of that portion of the Specific Plan in the County was determined to be significant, not mitigated. Although the Substation project site is located in the County, the grading for the site occurred as a result of grading associated with road development which was addressed in EIR 84-02.

The proposed project grading is less than 500 cubic yards and will not significantly alter existing conditions. The proposed project incorporates Concept Landscape Plan guidelines developed in 1993 (after grading had occurred in 1990) that are consistent with the design guidelines and plant palette established in the approved Talega Valley Specific Plan and EIR 482. They are also consistent with the Design Guidelines for the Business Park Development included in the proposed 1998 Talega Specific Plan Amendment (not approved).

**Paleontology.** The proposed project incorporates mitigation measures established in EIR 482 to reduce potential paleontology impacts to a less than significant level. These measures include attendance at a pre-grading conference and establishment at the time of grading procedures for surveillance and halting or redirection of work, onsite observation of grading activities, fossil evaluation, salvage, and reporting of findings by a County-certified paleontologist, as appropriate.

Authority: Public Resources Code Sections 21083 and 21087.  
 Reference: Public Resources Code Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21082.1, 21083, 31083.3, 21093, 21094, 21151; *Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino*, 202 Cal. App. 3d 296 (1988); *Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors*, 222 Cal. App. 3d 1337 (1990).

## SECTION 5.0

# DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

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The following provides a discussion of the environmental impacts that are anticipated to occur as a result of constructing the proposed Pico Substation project. This section provides a brief explanation for the answers provided in the Initial Study/Environmental Checklist.

### 5.1 LAND USE PLANNING

**a) Would the proposal conflict with general plan designation or zoning?**

**No impact.** The proposed project is consistent with the adopted plans, policies, and goals of the Rolling Hills Feature Plan (1988), Orange County General Plan, and City of San Clemente Comprehensive Planning and Implementation Program (1988). The proposed substation site is part of the planned business park where a wide range of business and light industrial uses are anticipated (County of Orange 1988). The current zoning code stipulates that energy generation and distribution facilities are a **conditionally** permitted use in an industrial land use zone. The Talega Specific Plan (September 1998) currently under review at the City of San Clemente and the County of Orange identifies utility substations (**assuming issuance of a Conditional Use Permit**) as an allowed use in the Business Park Land Use Standards chapter (Chapter 5, Section 503, C). Therefore, the project is not considered in conflict with local general plan designations or zoning. It should be noted that the CPUC has exclusive jurisdiction over the proposed project and any local zoning permit (**e.g., Conditional Use Permit**) requirements are not applicable to the project.

**b) Would the proposal conflict with applicable environmental plans or policies adopted by agencies with jurisdiction over the project?**

**No impact.** The project has incorporated measures which would comply with state environmental plans or policies as well as adopted plans, policies and goals of the City of San Clemente and County of Orange (*refer to Applicant's Mitigation Measures*). Please refer to *response 5.1-a* and *response 5.7-a*.

**c) Would the proposal be compatible with existing land use in the vicinity?**

**Less than significant impact.** The project site is located in unincorporated Orange County, within the sphere of influence of the City of San Clemente and within the approved Rolling Hills Feature Plan. The Feature Plan provides for residential, commercial, business park, golf course and open space uses. Surrounding land uses includes the Pacific Golf Course south of Avenida Pico, Forster Ranch to the **northwest**, Prima Deshecha Landfill to the north, and Rancho Mission Viejo property and the locally preferred alignment of Foothill Transportation Corridor-South (FTC-South) to the east. The

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### **San Diego Gas & Electric Company Pico Substation Project**

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designated land uses surrounding the project site are consistent with the approved and proposed uses on the Talega Valley project.

The project site and immediate vicinity are part of the planned business park where a wide range of business and light industrial uses are anticipated (County of Orange 1988). Currently, the project site and vicinity are generally vacant and in various phases of development. Future residential uses are located 1,000 feet or more to the north and separated by intervening business park and Avenida Pico. The FTC-South project, a proposed six-lane highway that would extend from Oso Parkway to Interstate 5 in the vicinity of the Orange/San Diego County line is currently in the environmental review process. Two primary project alternatives are currently being considered – the CP and the BX alignments. The proposed substation would not conflict with either the CP or BX alignments. However, other alternatives could be evaluated at some point through the environmental process, but no other alternatives have been officially identified for evaluation at this time.

As discussed under response 5.1-a, no new land uses or land use designation changes are proposed as part of the project; therefore, the project would not conflict with adjacent, existing or planned land uses.

**d) Would the proposal affect agricultural resources or operations (e.g., impacts to soils or farm lands, or impacts from incompatible land uses?)**

**No impact.** The project site is not within an agricultural preserve and no agricultural operations occur on or adjacent to the project site. Additionally, the site is zoned for development as a business park and the proposed project is consistent with existing plans and zoning.

**e) Would the proposal disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community (including a low-income or minority community)?**

**No impact.** The proposed project is consistent with existing and planned land uses for the project site and therefore would not disrupt or divide the existing community (*see responses 5.1-a and 5.1-c*).

## **5.2 POPULATION AND HOUSING**

**a) Would the proposal cumulatively exceed official or local population projections?**

**No impact.** Residential, retail, commercial and light industrial projects in the area around Avenida Pico are in various stages of development. SDG&E anticipates requests for electric demand from these projects will soon exceed capacity of existing facilities in the area. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide electricity for planned and approved new development in the Talega Valley area of southern Orange County. This additional electricity will meet the load and growth projections

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anticipated within SDG&E's southern Orange County service area. No portion of the project would result in the generation of additional population. The project will not provide additional long-term employment opportunities. No residences are proposed as part of the proposed project, and no extension of services beyond that currently planned for is associated with the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate additional population or cumulatively exceed official regional or local population projections, nor would it induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly.

- b) **Would the proposal induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly (e.g., through projects in an undeveloped area or extension of major infrastructure)?**

**No impact.** See response 5.2-a.

- c) **Would the proposal displace existing housing, especially affordable housing?**

**No impact.** The project site is located on a rough graded site within Talega Town Center and Business Park commercial development. No housing will be displaced or otherwise affected by the proposed project.

### 5.3 GEOLOGIC PROBLEMS

- a) **Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving fault rupture?**

**No impact.** A geotechnical investigation has been prepared for the project (*Woodward-Clyde 1994*). Based on a review of this report, there is no known active faults that cross or project towards the site. Therefore, the potential for fault rupture is considered extremely low. In addition, the potential for injuries to people at the substation site is minimal because no workers are typically present, and the site is fenced and locked.

- b) **Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving seismic ground shaking?**

**Less than significant impact.** The project site will likely be subject to ground shaking in response to either a local moderate or more distant large magnitude earthquake as identified in EIR 84-02. Extensive mitigation measures were adopted to address these constraints. Project design has incorporated the following measures to reduce geologic hazards to less than significant.

- ! Project design will meet or exceed existing earthquake design standards.
- ! Pole and substation construction will meet CPUC's General Order for seismic standards.



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! Adherence to the “Guide Specifications for Earthwork” provided in the geotechnical engineering study (*Woodward-Clyde 1994*) will reduce potential impacts to below a significant level.

c) **Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving seismic ground failure, including liquefaction?**

**Less than significant impact.** Proposed grading of the site will be entirely in fill soils. The site is not located on a known recent or ancient landslide, but due to the numerous slope failures in nearby urbanized areas of the City of San Clemente and neighboring communities, specifications for earthwork have been included to mitigate potential effects which may occur (*see response 5.3b*). Liquefaction is not considered likely to occur onsite due to the nature and distribution of the earth materials present. These hazards tend to occur chiefly on noncohesive materials of uniform size, such as river sands, none of which are known to occur within the property site (*FEIR 482, Addendum to EIR 84-02*).

d) **Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving seiche, tsunami, or volcanic hazard?**

**No impact.** The proposed project is located in an area subject to offshore seismicity; however, based on the elevation of the site (approximately 325 feet above sea level) and the fact that the site encompasses no enclosed bodies of water, the potential for seiche or tsunami is nonexistent. The probability for volcanic eruption or volcanic hazard is considered low and, therefore, less than significant.

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- e) **Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving landslides or mud flows?**

**Less than significant impact.** See *response 5.3-c*. Several recent and ancient landslides have been mapped in the project vicinity, through none on the project site. Impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of “Guide Specifications for Earthwork” (*Woodward-Clyde 1994*).

- f) **Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving erosion, changes in topography or unstable soil conditions from excavation, grading or fill?**

**Less than significant impact.** Construction of the project could result in some erosion due to soil disturbance while grading the site. Measures have been incorporated into the project to reduce potential soil erosion to a less than significant level (*see Applicant’s Mitigation Measures*).

The existing ground surface will not be substantially modified by grading of the site. The substation pad will be about 329 feet MSL in the southeastern corner and 323 feet MSL in the northwestern corner. Hence, topographic modification of the existing graded area for the substation pad is considered less than significant.

Portions of the project site contain undocumented fill. Appropriate grading and construction standards (especially for uncompacted fill soils) based on the site-specific conditions identified in the Geotechnical Investigation (*Woodward-Clyde 1994*) will be incorporated into the design and construction of the proposed facilities (*see Applicant’s Mitigation Measures*). Measures include:

- ! Removal or compaction of all loose or porous soils to a depth specified by the geotechnical engineer,
- ! Subgrade preparation for paved areas,
- ! Backfill requirement for trenches and walls.

Specifications for the placement and spreading and compaction of general fill material. It is anticipated that implementation of grading and construction standards as recommended in the Geotechnical Investigation (*Woodward-Clyde 1994*) will reduce any potential due to unstable soil excavation to less than significant.

- g) **Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving subsidence of the land?**

**No impact.** As identified in the Geotechnical Investigation (*Woodward-Clyde 1994*), the proposed substation is not located in an area that will be subject to land subsidence.

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- h) **Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving expansive soils?**

**Less than significant impact.** As identified in the Geotechnical Investigation (*Woodward-Clyde 1994*), the project site contains moderately expansive soils. As discussed under *Response 5.3-f*, it is anticipated that appropriate grading and construction standards identified in the Geotechnical Investigation will reduce potential adverse impacts result in from expansive soils to below a significant level.

- i) **Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving unique geologic or physical features?**

**No impact.** As identified in the Geotechnical Investigation (*Woodward-Clyde 1994*), no unique geological or physical features are located within the proposed project site. Therefore, no exposure of people to unique geologic features would occur.

#### 5.4 WATER

- a) **Would the proposal result in changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface runoff?**

**Less than significant impact.** The proposed substation would result in an increase of impermeable surface (approximately 340 feet by 230 feet) on the site, thereby affecting absorption rates and runoff. The proposed substation would be constructed on a rough-graded site within the planned Talega Town Center and Business Park. The project will not change the current, course, or direction of water within any water bodies or streams located in the vicinity of the site. The final EIR (482) for the Talega Valley Development identified that the increased runoff prior to mitigation could significantly impact the downstream Segunda Deshecha Cañada channel and the Cristianitos Canyon watershed. Degradation of water quality was also identified as a significant impact. Mitigation measures identified in the final EIR (482) have reduced these impacts to a level considered less than significant. No new impacts are anticipated with the implementation of the proposed project because the overall land coverage would not be substantially altered. Implementation of the following mitigation measures are consistent with those identified in the final EIR (482) and will reduce impacts pertaining to surface runoff to a level less than significant:

- ! SDG&E shall submit a plan for drainage to the County of Orange identifying the manner in which storm flows will be accommodated. If it is determined that storm flow quantities offsite will be increased after development, SDG&E shall ensure that construction of improvements are in place to accommodate runoff generated onsite under developed conditions, and to control runoff downstream. See response 5.4-c for additional measures to control runoff.

- b) **Would the proposal result in exposure of people or property to water-related hazards such as**

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**flooding?**

**Less than significant impact.** The final EIR (482) did not identify the potential for the project to expose people or property to water-related hazards. Given that the uses have not substantially changed and drainage improvements will be incorporated into the development, no impact is anticipated. Refer also to *response 5.4-a*.

- c) **Would the proposal result in discharge into surface waters or other alterations of surface water quality (e.g., temperature, dissolved oxygen, or turbidity)?**

**Less than significant impact.** All project runoff will be directed to the approved stormwater system in a manner consistent with mitigation measures identified in the FEIR No. 482 and in accordance with final approvals to be granted by the Orange County Flood Control District as engineering plans are finalized. In addition, implementation of short-term construction best management practices (BMPs) and adherence to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit required for development of the site will reduce potential water quality impacts to an insignificant level. No local, state, or federal water quality standards will be violated (*FEIR 482; Guide Specifications for Earthwork, Woodward-Clyde 1994; Addendum to EIR 84-02*). See *response 5.4-a*.

- d) **Would the proposal result in changes in the amount of surface water in any water body?**

**Less than significant impact.** See *response 5.4-a*.

- e) **Would the proposal result in currents, or the course or direction of water movements?**

**No impact.** See *response 5.4-a*.

- f) **Would the proposal result in change in the quantity of groundwater, either through direct additions or withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations, or through substantial loss of groundwater recharge capability?**

**Less than significant impact.** Final EIR 482 identified potentially significant groundwater quality impacts due to the introduction of urban runoff. Though not anticipated to be a significant impact, the quantity of groundwater could also be affected because of the increased amounts of impervious surfaces would result in greater and faster runoff. The proposed project would not alter the type or intensity of uses proposed for the Talega Valley Development; therefore, the level of impact associated with the proposed project would not be greater than the level of impact addressed in Final EIR 482. The mitigation measures that were adopted reduced the impact to a level of less than significant. Mitigation measures to control runoff are incorporated into the project. See *responses 5.4-a* and *5.4-c*.

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Therefore, impacts to groundwater are expected to be less than significant.

**g) Would the proposal result in altered direction or rate of flow of groundwater?**

**No impact.** The proposed project involves only surface or near-surface improvements which should have no effect on groundwater flows. The project also does not involve any groundwater withdrawals or additions.

**h) Would the proposal result in impacts to groundwater quality?**

**Less than significant impact.** See *response 5.4-f*.

**i) Would the proposal result in substantial reduction in the amount of groundwater otherwise available for public water supplies?**

**No impact.** See *responses 5.4-f* and *5.4-g*.

## 5.5 AIR QUALITY

**a) Would the proposal violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation?**

**Less than significant impact.** The proposed project is not expected to release any air emissions during operation. Construction activities would result in emissions of carbon monoxide, reactive organic hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide and particulate matter less than 10 microns (PM10). Project emissions are not anticipated to exceed the significance thresholds for these pollutants established by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQWD) for construction activities due to the short-term nature of construction (no more than three months) and total grading of approximately two acres. Additionally, measures to reduce fugitive dust impacts during construction as required by the SCAQWD have been incorporated into the project (*see Applicant's Mitigation Measures*). Therefore, short-term construction activities are expected to have a less than significant impact to air quality.

**b) Would the proposal expose sensitive receptors to pollutants?**

**No impact.** There are no sensitive receptors currently located in the project vicinity. The closest planned sensitive receptor (residences) will be located approximately 1,000 feet north of the project site. As discussed in *response 5.5-a*, the proposed project is not expected to release any air emission during operation and short-term emission during construction are expected to be less than significant.

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In addition, measures are incorporated into the project to abate dust levels. Therefore, emissions associated with the proposed project are expected to have a less than significant impact to sensitive receptors.

**c) Would the proposal alter air movements, moisture or temperature, or cause any change in climate?**

**Less than significant impact.** Construction of the proposed project would not result in alteration of climate, air movement or moisture as the project dimensions are not substantial and therefore will not affect prevailing climatic conditions nor is the substation a large producer of heat.

**d) Would the proposal create any objectionable odors?**

**No impact.** Construction and operation of the project would not result in the creation of objectionable odors.

**5.6 TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION**

**a) Would the proposal result in increased vehicle trips or traffic congestion?**

**Less than significant impact.** During operation, the proposed project is expected to generate approximately one to two vehicle trips per day. This limited number of vehicle trips would result in less than significant impacts to traffic or traffic congestion.

During construction, testing and energizing the station (approximately nine months), traffic will be generated by construction crews and equipment/material deliveries. The following provides estimated vehicle types and duration of use.

**ESTIMATED VEHICLE TYPES AND DURATION OF USE**

Vehicle Type	Estimated Number Required	Duration
Tractor	3	1 month
Scraper	2	1 month
Loader	2	1 month
Truck (22 cubic yard end dump)	40 (during surcharging and import of decomposed granite/maximum 4 trips per truck/day)	2 weeks
Crane	2 (during raising of wall panels)	1 month
	2 (to set steel pole and transformer)	2 days
Concrete trucks	10 (maximum two trips per truck/day)	2 months

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Vehicle Type	Estimated Number Required	Duration
Backhoe	2	1 month
Crew trucks	3	5 months
Boom truck	1	3 months
Pick-up truck	3	5 months
Personal vehicles	15	9 months

All construction equipment, vehicles, personnel and material staging areas would be accommodated within the property lines of the proposed substation property. Access to the property would be from Vitrina Street to be installed by the developer of the Business Park. Construction equipment would include tractors, scrapers, loaders, trucks for excavating, compacting, and grading the site, portable cranes and heavy hauling trucks. Concrete trucks, backhoes, crew trucks and pick-up trucks would be coming and going to the site during the installation of the foundations, ground grid and underground ducts. Crew trucks, boom trucks and pick-up trucks would be going to and from the site daily for the balance of the construction activities. It is expected that this short-term construction-related traffic would not create a substantial impact on traffic volumes nor change traffic patterns in such a way that congestion and delay would be substantially increased on street segments or at intersections.

**b) Would the proposal result in hazards to safety from design features (e.g, sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g, farm equipment)?**

**No impact.** All construction activities, equipment and staging areas would be accommodated within the proposed project site and pole location. Access to the property would be from a planed street. No construction activities would occur on existing roads, therefore, no design features of the project would pose a safety hazard to traffic or transportation systems.

**c) Would the proposal result in inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses?**

**No impact.** See *response 5.6-b*. The project will not close access to any property or affect existing roads, therefore, no impacts to emergency access or access to nearby uses are expected due to the project.

**d) Would the proposal result in insufficient parking capacity onsite or offsite?**

**No impact.** Parking areas onsite are sufficient to accommodate construction and operation of the proposed project. Therefore, no impacts to parking capacity onsite or offsite would occur due to the project.

**e) Would the proposal result in hazards or barriers for pedestrians or bicyclists?**

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**No impact.** See response 5.6-b.

- f) **Would the proposal result in conflicts with adopted policies supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?**

**No impact.** Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with adopted policies or involve elimination of facilities supporting alternative transportation such as bus turnouts or bicycle racks.

- g) **Would the proposal result in rail, waterborne or air traffic impacts?**

**No impact.** Water, air and rail traffic are not located on the project site.

## 5.7 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- a) **Would the proposal result in impacts to endangered, threatened or rare species or their habitats (including, but not limited to, plants, fish, insects, animals and birds)?**

**Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated.** The proposed project site and SDG&E right-of-way adjacent to the southern boundary of the site were surveyed for biological resources (PEA 1998). As shown in *Figure 9*, the site is primarily a graded lot with no remaining native habitat. The minimal grading required to construct the substation and driveway will not impact any sensitive biological resources on the site.

In order to route the existing 138 kV line in and out of the proposed substation, two new steel poles will be interset in the existing 150-foot right-of-way adjacent to the southern property boundary (see *Figure 5*). The existing right-of-way is disturbed coastal sage scrub dominated by cardoon, coyote brush, and California sage brush (*Artemisia californica*). Also, within the easement, a small drainage is present about 50 feet from the project site southern boundary. Species present include mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), and coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*).

As shown on *Figure 5*, one new steel pole will replace the existing tower near the southwest corner of the site. The other new steel pole will be placed within the right-of-way approximately 35 feet from the southern property boundary near the southeast corner of the project site. Construction would result in both temporary and permanent impacts to coastal sage habitat currently known as foraging areas for the federally-threatened California gnatcatcher. As shown in *Figure 10*, in the spring of 1998, two pairs of California gnatcatchers were recorded within the project vicinity (Orange County 1998).



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Figure 9      Project Site and SDG&E Right-of-Way Vegetation

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Figure 10 Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys for Talega Valley

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It is assumed that the current access road and maintenance pad are adequate for the replacement steel pole. The total permanent impacts for the two steel poles are anticipated to be 0.03 acre of coastal sage scrub and temporary impacts amount to 0.01 acre of coastal sage scrub. At the time final construction plans are developed, permanent and temporary impacts will be recalculated and mitigated as explained below.

Mitigation for these impacts will be in accordance with the SDG&E Subregional Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP). The CDFG and USFWS on December 18, 1995 approved this Plan. As created, this Plan allows for “incidental take” under Section 10(a) of the U.S. Endangered Species Act and under Sections 2081 and 2800 *et. seq.* of the California Endangered Species Act. According to the SDG&E Plan, “incidental take” is allowed for utility actions relating to maintenance and construction of new facilities. Mitigation is provided by deducting credits from the Plan’s Conservation Bank.

Under the terms of the Plan, SDG&E will notify the resource agencies of the project and its potential impacts. Reporting will come in the form of an Environmental Field Survey which describes the project, location, existing habitat, impacts, recommendations to minimize impacts, and form of mitigation. More specifically, mitigation for temporary impacts will come in the form of reseeded impacted areas and a two-year monitoring program to determine success. Mitigation for permanent impacts will come in the form of a deduction from SDG&E’s Conservation Bank at a 2:1 ratio. Mitigation measures as identified above are anticipated to reduce impacts to less than significant.

#### **Southern Orange County Subregional NCCP/HCP**

Relevant to the project site is the fact that the County of Orange is in the process of preparing a multi-habitat-based Subregional Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP)/Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) program for the southern subregion to ensure the long-term survival of the gnatcatcher and other sensitive coastal sage scrub-dependent plant and animal species in accordance with state-sanctioned NCCP program guidelines. For the most part, the Talega Development site (the Business Park is located in the southern portion of the 1,400-acre site) habitat is dominated by annual grassland and disturbed habitat with a few small patches of coastal sage scrub. Several reserve concepts currently are being analyzed and a preferred reserve design will be proposed in the next several months. The Pico Substation site area is designated as low quality habitat under the South Orange County NCCP and therefore, it is anticipated that the project would not conflict with the South Orange County NCCP Subregional Plan.

**b) Would the proposal result in impacts to locally designated species (e.g., heritage trees)?**

**No impact.** See *response 5.7-a.*

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- c) **Would the proposal result in impacts to locally designated natural communities (e.g., oak forest, coastal habitat, etc.)?**

**No impact.** See response 5.7-a.

- d) **Would the proposal result in impacts to wetland habitat (e.g., marsh, riparian and vernal pool)?**

**Less than significant impact.** See response 5.7-a.

- e) **Would the proposal result in impacts to wildlife dispersal or migration corridors?**

**Less than significant impact.** See response 5.7-a.

## **5.8 ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES**

- a) **Would the proposal conflict with adopted energy conservation plans?**

**No impact.** The proposed project is a planned public utility substation to serve the electrical load growth of the Talega Valley area of southern Orange County and therefore would not conflict with adopted energy conservation plans.

- b) **Would the proposal use non-renewable resources in a wasteful and inefficient manner?**

**Less than significant impact.** Project construction and operation would result in a small increase in the use of non-renewable resources (i.e, fuel and oil for construction equipment). However, any project-related use of non-renewable resources would not be wasteful or inefficient.

- c) **Would the proposal result in the loss or availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and state residents?**

**No impact.** The project site is underlain by compacted fill over older alluvium and the Monterey Formation. The fill soils reportedly range from a few feet to about 60 feet in thickness consisting predominantly of silt and clay derived from the Monterey Formation. There is no valuable mineral resource under the project site. Consequently, no significant loss of availability of a known mineral resource will occur as a result of construction of the proposed substation.

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**5.9 HAZARDS**

- a) **Would the proposal involve a risk of accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to, oil, pesticides, chemicals or radiation)?**

**Less than significant impact.** The project will be in compliance with state Title 22 and federal Title 40 requirements, including the oil spill control and countermeasure plan (SCCP) required by Title 40 CFR Section 112.7. No extraordinary risk of accidental explosion or the release of hazardous substances is anticipated with development and implementation of the proposed substation.

- b) **Would the proposal involve possible interference with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

**No impact.** Construction activities would not interfere with emergency response plans or evacuation plans. See *response 5.6-a*.

- c) **Would the proposal involve the creation of any health hazard or potential health hazards?**

**Less than significant impact.** See *response 5.9-a*.

- d) **Would the proposal involve exposure of people to existing sources of potential health hazards?**

**Less than significant impact.** The project site is underlain by fill soils reportedly ranging from a few feet to about 60 feet in thickness consisting predominantly of silt and clay derived from the Monterey Formation. There is no known existing sources of health hazards on the site. Consequently, exposure of people to existing health hazards is not anticipated.

- e) **Would the proposal involve increased fire hazard in areas with flammable brush, grass or trees?**

**Less than significant impact.** The heaviest vegetated area is along the power line route. Although energized lines that fall to the ground would be automatically de-energized by protective relays, the possibility of a brush fire still exists. Because the project basically involves the replacement of existing lines with new lines, the potential for brush fires ignited by power lines would remain unchanged. It is expected that construction and maintenance in accordance with SDG&E's standard specifications will ensure that impacts related to increased fire hazard will remain below a level of significance.

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#### 5.10 NOISE

a) **Would the proposal result in increases in existing noise levels?**

**Less than significant impact.** Construction and operation of the proposed project would result in an increase in existing noise levels due to construction equipment and operation of transformers.

**Construction Noise.** The proposed project will produce short-term noise during the construction stage of development of the facility. Short-term construction noise tend to occur in discrete phases dominated initially by site clearing and grading, then by foundation construction, and finally by building and facility construction.

The project site and surrounding vicinity are currently vacant. Construction noise impacts would not affect sensitive receptors (e.g., residences) and therefore are anticipated to be less than significant.

**Operational Noise.** Operation of the proposed facilities will result in the production of long-term noise from transformers. The County's noise ordinance does not specify an acceptable noise level for industrial properties; however, the City of San Clemente's noise ordinance specifies a noise level of 70 dB(A) at the property boundary as the acceptable limit during the evening and nighttime hours. The noise analysis prepared for the project assumed each transformer will generate maximum sound level of 61 dB(A) at approximately six feet. For point sources such as transformers, noise decreases by approximately 6 dB for each doubling of distance for a hard, flat site (no topography). The worst case noise level is projected to be approximately 45 dB(A) at the property line, which would comply with the City of San Clemente's noise ordinance. The closest residence would be located approximately 1,000 feet to the north. Therefore, noise impacts resulting from project operation are anticipated to be less than significant.

b) **Would the proposal result in exposure to people to severe noise levels?**

**Less than significant impact.** See response 5.10-a.

#### 5.11 PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the proposal have an effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered government services, in any of the following areas:

a) **Fire protection?**

**No impact.** The structures proposed by this project would not create any new fire hazard and therefore would not require additional fire suppression personnel or equipment. The proposed project

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does not include uses that generate building floor area or increased population. Thus, additional fire protection services will not be needed.

**b) Police protection?**

**No impact.** As discussed under *response 5.2-a*, the proposed project would not generate population growth; therefore, no new demand would be placed on police protection.

**c) Schools?**

**No impact.** As discussed under *response 5.2-a*, the proposed project would not generate population growth; therefore, no new demand would be placed on schools.

**d) Maintenance of public facilities, including roads?**

**Less than significant impact.** As discussed under *response 5.2-a*, the proposed project would not generate population growth; therefore, no new demand would be placed on public facilities. Heavy trucks used during construction and maintenance of project facilities may result in a minimal increase in the need for roadway maintenance.

**e) Other governmental services?**

**No impact.** Implementation of the project can be accommodated through the existing government framework. As a result, implementation of the proposed project is not expected to have an effect on, or result in, a need for additional governmental services.

## 5.12 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the proposal result in a need for new systems or supplies, or substantial alterations to the following utilities:

**a) Power or natural gas?**

**No impact.** The proposed project itself is responding to a local need for an electrical power distribution upgrade. The result of the upgrade will not create a need for new or altered power or natural gas systems.

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b) **Communications systems?**

**No impact.** The proposed substation would not result in new or increased demand for public or private communication systems.

c) **Local or regional water treatment or distribution facilities?**

**Less than significant impact.** The project will require some water for dust abatement during construction and approximately 0.43 acre feet per year for irrigation purposes. It is anticipated that this water can be provided by the Santa Margarita Water District and would not significantly affect local or regional water treatment or distribution facilities.

d) **Sewer, septic systems, or wastewater treatments and disposal facilities?**

**No impact.** The proposed project would not result in new or increased demand for public or private sewer facilities.

e) **Stormwater drainage?**

**Less than significant impact.** It is anticipated that the stormwater system developed as part of the planned Talega Business Park will accommodate the project such that no additional stormwater systems will be needed. See *response 5.4-a*.

f) **Solid waste materials recovery or disposal?**

**Less than significant impact.** The project will generate a limited amount of solid waste during construction. It is anticipated that the solid waste generated by project construction would have a less than significant impact on local solid waste facilities.

g) **Local or regional water supplies?**

**Less than significant impact.** See *response 5.12-c*.

### 5.13 AESTHETICS

a) **Would the proposal affect a scenic vista or scenic highway?**

**No impact.** The County of Orange and the City of San Clemente do not identify any designated scenic highway within the project area. Therefore, the project would not affect any designated scenic highway.



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b) **Would the proposal have a demonstrable negative aesthetic effect?**

**Less than significant impact.** The 2.33-acre graded project site is visible to motorists as they travel along Avenida Pico and from adjacent properties. The project site is adjacent to the open space/urban fringe back country area of San Clemente. The overall visual environment is characteristic of southern California coast foothills, exhibiting primarily grassy, and rolling terrain. The graded site is currently undeveloped with some roadway improvements at the periphery of the project site.

The project site is within the planned Talega ~~Town Center~~ and Business Park. The change in the visual character of the project area was evaluated in EIR 482 and determined to be an unavoidable impact of development. Approval of the Talega Valley Development included a number of mitigation measures to minimize the aesthetic impacts of urbanization including landscaping, architectural design and protection of natural features where feasible. As discussed below, the proposed substation includes landscaping and architectural design that is compatible with approved design guidelines and will not impact natural features.

! The substation design will conform to approved **Design Guidelines and Development Standards contained in the City of San Clemente's Talega Specific Plan.** ~~and Equipment will be enclosed by a 10- to 12-foot-high block wall, in neutral or earth tones. The enclosure will prevent views to the interior of the substation.~~ **The substation perimeter wall will be designed to screen transformers, distribution circuits and other facility improvements from view. It will be designed to comply with architectural guidelines of the Talega Business Park Design Guidelines.** No parking is planned for outside the wall. Two new steel poles are required for the initial development of the substation to loop-in the existing transmission line T113836. The maximum height of the steel poles will be approximately the same height as the existing lattice towers (80 feet). On the north side of the substation, the new 12 kV circuit ducts will be run underground to new underground 12 kV vaults located in the planned Vitrina Street.

! In 1993, Clark & Green Associates prepared a conceptual landscape plan for the proposed Pico Substation project that is consistent with the design guidelines and plant palette established for the Talega ~~Town Center~~ and Business Park. See *Figures 7 and 8.*

Design and landscaping measures, as described in the *Applicant's Mitigation Measures*, have been incorporated into the project. These measures would make the project consistent with the visual consideration established for the Talega ~~Town Center~~ and Business Park, thereby effectively reducing long-term visual quality impacts to less than significant.

c) **Would the proposal create adverse light or glare effects?**

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**Less than significant impact.** Depending upon construction techniques and hours, new sources of light and glare may be present during project construction. However, due to the short-term nature of construction, any light or glare effects are anticipated to be less than significant.

During operation, shadows and glare are not expected to be a problem as project facilities would generally be constructed of non-reflective materials.

As described in the *Applicant's Mitigation Measures*, night lighting will consist of one 100-watt yellow floodlight. Other substation lighting would be used during emergencies only. Light and glare effects from night lighting associated with the project are therefore considered to be less than significant.

#### 5.14 CULTURAL RESOURCES

a) **Would the proposal disturb paleontological resources?**

**Less than significant impact.** In 1991, the project site was mass graded in anticipation of development, at which time a County-certified paleontologist was retained by the applicant to observe grading activities and salvage fossils as necessary. Proposed improvements on the graded or filled project site are unlikely to result in any impact to a paleontological resources. Subsurface excavation beyond the fill material, however, could result in a significant impact to fossil resources. Mitigation requirements include attendance at a pre-grading conference, establishment of procedures for surveillance and halting or redirection of work, onsite observation of grading activities, fossil evaluation, salvage, and reporting of findings by a County-certified paleontologist, as appropriate. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce potential paleontological impacts to below a level of significance.

b) **Disturb archaeological resources?**

**No impact.** As discussed in *response 5.14-a*, the project site was mass-graded in 1991. A reconnaissance survey was conducted on the site and determined that no cultural resources are present at the project site or the SDG&E right-of-way adjacent to the southern boundary of the site (PEA, November 1998). The project site does not contain any site or area listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A record search of the sacred lands filed by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) failed to indicate the presence of Native American cultural resources in the immediate project area.

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- c) **Would the proposal affect historical resources?**

**No impact.** See *response 5.14-a*.

- d) **Would the proposal have the potential to cause a physical change which would affect unique ethnic cultural values?**

**No impact.** See *response 5.14-a*.

- e) **Would the proposal restrict religious or sacred uses within the potential impact area?**

**No impact.** No known religious or sacred uses occur within the potential project impact area.

#### 5.15 RECREATION

- a) **Would the proposal increase the demand for neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities?**

**No impact.** As discussed under *response 5.2-a*, no population would be generated by the proposed project. Therefore, no demand for recreational facilities would occur.

- b) **Would the proposal affect existing recreational opportunities?**

**Less than significant impact.** There are no parks or other public recreational facilities on or immediately adjacent to the project site. A regional bicycle/equestrian trail is planned for the open space located south of the SDG&E right-of-way adjacent to the southern boundary of the project site. Development of the substation will not interfere with the proposed trail system. Views from trail users of the proposed substation would not be significantly affected as the existing SDG&E right-of-way provides for a 150-foot buffer between the substation and the proposed trail. Additionally, as discussed under *response 5.13-a*, design and landscaping measures have been incorporated into the project to make the project consistent with the visual considerations established for planned development on and surrounding the site. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant effect on existing or planned recreational opportunities.

#### 5.16 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

- a) **Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or**

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**restrict the range of rare or endangered plants or animals, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?**

**Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated.** As discussed in *response 5.14-a*, the project would cause no impacts to archaeological resources; however, as discussed in *response 5.7-a*, the project would cause significant impacts to biological resources, specifically to coastal sage scrub habitat currently known as foraging areas for the California gnatcatcher. Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce biological impacts to less than significant. Measures to reduce permanent impacts include deducting credits at a 2:1 ratio from SDG&E's Conservation Bank in accordance with SDG&E's approved Subregional Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) and USFWS and CDFG requirements. Mitigation for temporary impacts will come in the form of reseeded impacted areas and a two-year monitoring program to determine success. If habitat enhancement is not successful, then deduction from SDG&E's Conservation Bank would be made for temporary impacts.

- b) **Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals?**

**Less than significant impact.** The project is being proposed in response to an existing need for an upgraded power delivery system in the project area. The project includes measures incorporated into the project to reduce environmental impacts and should have no significant adverse effect on long-term environmental goals.

- c) **Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects).**

**Less than significant impact.** As revealed by the previous discussions for each environmental category, impacts from the proposed project are considered to be less than significant or no impact after the incorporation of mitigation measures. Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce impacts associated with geological resources, water quality, air quality, biological resources, paleontological resources, hazards and visual resource impacts to less than significant (*see Applicant's Mitigation Measures*). No long-term significant impacts are associated with the project. In the absence of significant impacts, incremental accumulation of effects would not occur. Therefore, the proposed project does not incrementally contribute to cumulative impacts.

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- d) **Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?**

**Less than significant impact.** Based on the analysis of all the above questions, it has been determined that there would be no significant direct or indirect effect on human beings.

## SECTION 6.0

### ELECTRIC MAGNETIC FIELDS (EMF)

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During the last several years, representatives of the public have expressed concern about the potential health risk associated with power frequency electric and magnetic fields (EMF). Numerous internationally recognized scientific organizations and independent regulatory advisory groups have conducted scientific reviews of the EMF Research Institute. The results of this research are inconclusive and public concern and scientific uncertainty remain regarding the potential health effects of EMF exposure.

In January 1991, the CPUC issued an Order Instituting Investigation to develop policies and procedures for addressing potential health effects of magnetic fields from utility facilities. The CPUC formed the California Consensus Group (CCG), a committee of 17 stakeholders representing diverse interests and perspectives, to provide guidance on interim EMF measures the CPUC might have adopted while waiting for resolution of scientific uncertainties. In March 1992, the CCG issued its report. In part, the report recommended that the CPUC authorize utilities to implement magnetic field reduction techniques if those techniques could be implemented at little or no cost. In November 1993, the CPUC issued Decision 93-11-013 adopting interim policy regarding EMF. California's electric utilities were authorized to implement no- and low-cost (low cost is defined as 4% of total project cost) field management techniques to reduce EMF levels from new and upgraded electrical facilities if a noticeable reduction could be achieved.

The proposed project incorporates measures to reduce EMF exposure in compliance with CPUC Decision 93-11-013. SDG&E's EMF Design Guidelines for Transmission Distribution and Substation Facilities (EMF Design Guidelines) describe engineering techniques for reducing exposure to magnetic fields created by its electric facilities in compliance with CPUC Decision 93-11-013. Field management techniques/guidelines for the Pico Substation project include:

- 1) Locate substation equipment as close to the center of the substation as possible.
- 2) Use metal clad switchgear for 12 KV bus work which reduces phase spacing and produces lower magnetic fields.
- 3) Locate Pico Substation as close to the existing transmission right-of-way as possible.
- 4) Rephase existing overhead transmission conductors to achieve a lower magnetic field configuration in the existing transmission corridor immediately adjacent to the Pico Substation.

**SECTION 7.0**  
**REPORT PREPARATION PERSONNEL**

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## SECTION 8.0 REFERENCES

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- ! Woodward-Clyde, *Geotechnical Investigation, SDG&E Pico Substation. January 1994.*
  
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