

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

April 30, 2010

Susan J. Nelson, AIA
Project Manager
Southern California Edison
2244 Walnut Grove Ave.
Rosemead, CA 91770

RE: Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (Segments 4-11), Notice to Proceed (NTP #5)

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On March 18, 2010, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) resubmitted a Notice to Proceed Request seeking authorization from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to permanently relocate the telecom route to replace the existing telecom route between Rio Hondo Substation and the intersection of Lower Azusa Road and Rivergrade Road, located within the City of Irwindale, Los Angeles County, California. The existing telecom fiber optic cable (FOC) is currently situated on the Antelope-Mesa 220 kV Transmission Line that will be demolished as part of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP).

The SCE Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (Project) was evaluated in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and a Certification of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) was granted by CPUC Decision 09-12-044, (Application #07-06-031), SCH #2007081156 on December 17, 2009. **NTP #5 is granted by CPUC for the proposed activities based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

SCE is requesting to permanently relocate the telecom route to replace the existing telecom route between Rio Hondo Substation and the intersection of Lower Azusa Road and Rivergrade Road, located within the City of Irwindale, Los Angeles County, California. The existing telecom fiber optic cable (FOC) is currently situated on the Antelope-Mesa 220 kV Transmission Line that will be demolished as part of the TRTP.

The FOC route will start at the Rio Hondo Substation communications room (Mechanical Electrical Equipment Room [MEER]) and continue 325 feet northwest in existing underground facilities to an existing pull box. The route will continue west and northwest in approximately 100 linear feet of new underground duct bank to existing transmission line tower M59-T1B. The FOC will rise approximately 200 feet on the tower to the top. The FOC will be wrapped approximately 1.1 miles on an existing overhead ground wire located on the existing double-circuit Laguna Bell-Rio Hondo/Mesa-Rio Hondo 220 kV transmission line. The FOC will end at existing transmission line tower M60-T2, which is located within an existing plant nursery, and be routed down the tower leg. The route will continue southwest in approximately 50 linear feet of new underground duct bank and end at a new pole location near the intersection of Lower Azusa Road and Rivergrade Road. The FOC will be spliced to the existing FOC, thereby completing the circuit.

The route traverses streets, Interstate 605, the San Gabriel River Channel, and undisturbed land. The majority of the FOC placement will be performed by helicopter. Access to the ends of the route will be along public streets or existing access roads.

Site Facilities/Activities

The following are facilities and activities that will possibly be present or active throughout the construction of this route: material, equipment, and vehicle storage and maintenance at existing facilities; minor underground duct bank installation; wood pole installation, and helicopter and ground-based FOC installation.

Site Work

Site work will include overhead installation of FOC on existing transmission line facilities and underground installation of FOC.

Underground Activities

A total of approximately 475 linear feet of fiber optic cable will be installed in new (approximately 150 linear feet) and existing (approximately 325 linear feet) underground duct bank conduits. For new underground duct bank installation, a trench will be excavated, a duct bank installed, which will be covered with concrete slurry and excavated soil to existing grade.

Aboveground Activities

The aboveground portions of fiber optic cable will be installed on an existing overhead ground wire on the 220 kV transmission line and on existing transmission line towers. A helicopter will be used to support FOC installation. A temporary helicopter landing location will be situated in the northern portion of the project area. It will consist of an approximate 100-foot diameter area.

One new 35-foot-tall wood pole will be installed at the southern end of the Segment 7 telecom route, near the intersection of Lower Azusa Road and Rivergrade Road. Ground disturbance will be limited to vehicle activity associated with the installation and anchor of the new pole within the existing disturbed plant nursery space. The pole will be installed to an approximate depth of 5 to 7 feet below ground surface.

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted a Biological Resources Review prepared by AMEC dated December 18, 2009 for the Segment 7 Early Telecommunications Project. No special-status species are known to have occurred in the Project area; however, nine special-status species were identified as being of potential occurrence: two plants and seven animals. They are: mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata* spp. *Puberula*), Brand's phacelia (*Phacelia stellaris*), San Diego horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*) *blainvillii* population, Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), coastal California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica californica*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), western mastiff bat (*Eurnops perotis californicus*), western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), and big free-tailed bat (*Nyctinomops macrotis*). TRTP protocol-level focused surveys have demonstrated that the two plant species and the federally listed as threatened coastal California gnatcatcher are not present in the Project area at this time. The remaining six species are animals that are not listed as threatened or endangered, but that are considered special-status by the USFWS and/or CDFG. There is a low potential for state- or federally-protected bird species to nest in the area. One special-status vegetation community is present in the Project area: Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub. Two hydrological features are also present: the San Gabriel River and two large inundated gravel pits. Native vegetation communities will be spanned, but none will be removed or impacted. No hydrological features will be disturbed. SCE received concurrence from USFWS (April 25, 2010) that federally listed species will not be adversely affected or are not likely to be adversely affected by this particular portion of the Project. SCE received concurrence from CDFG (April 29, 2010) that the Segment 7 Telecom rebuild has no potential to impact state listed least Bell's vireo and willow flycatcher.

- **Cultural Resources:** SCE submitted a Cultural Resources Review for the Segment 7 Telecom work with the NTPR. The entire project lies within the existing right-of-way for TRTP. The potential for encountering cultural or paleontological resources is low based on literature and records search conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center at California State University, Fullerton and on an intensive pedestrian surface survey of the TRTP right-of-way conducted by Pacific Legacy (2007). The results of the records search indicate that no cultural resources are located within the proposed right-of-way and no cultural resources have been identified within the one-mile radius. Additionally, no new resources were discovered during the surface survey of the TRTP right-of-way. A paleontological study of the area was conducted in 2009 (Gust and Scott 2009) and the results indicate, soils in the area not covered by asphalt or concrete consist of surficial deposits of Recent Alluvium (Qg), predominantly as fluvial deposits derived from the San Gabriel River (McLeod 2009; Scott 2009). Recent Alluvium is too young geologically to have potential to yield significant fossil resources and is therefore assigned low paleontologic sensitivity. Due to the negative results of the records search and field survey within the proposed route, along with the disturbed context of the area, there is a low sensitivity for subsurface archaeological and paleontological resources.
- SCE will be issuing an Authorization to Proceed (ATP) to the yard contractor which will specify the allowed activities, and required mitigation prior to occupation of the work site(s).

The conditions noted below shall be met by SCE and its contractors:

- Biological survey sweeps shall be conducted and results submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to equipment and vehicles mobilizing into an area. After complete surveys have been submitted and approved by the CPUC Environmental Monitor, site occupation can occur; however, if occupation does not occur within seven calendar days of survey submittals, biological clearance sweeps shall be re-conducted prior to site occupation, including nesting bird surveys during the breeding season.
- Segment 7 Telecom sites shall be included in the project Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan required by MM B-1a, subject to review and approval by CPUC.
- If unanticipated biological or cultural resources are detected at the project sites, the CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, and this Notice to Proceed shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities.
- No movement or staging of construction vehicles or equipment shall be allowed outside of the approved areas. If additional temporary workspace areas or access routes, or changes to construction technique or mitigation implementation to a lesser level are required, a Variance Request shall be submitted for CPUC review and approval.

Sincerely,



John Boccio
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen