

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

May 12, 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 # 6)

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On March 25, 2010, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a Notice to Proceed Request (NTPR) seeking authorization from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to utilize a marshalling yard referred to as the Mesa Material Storage Yard for the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP) located at 500 Potrero Grande Drive, in the City of Monterey Park, Los Angeles County, California.

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 # 6 is granted by CPUC for the proposed activities based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

SCE is requesting to utilize a material storage yard referred to as the Mesa Material Storage Yard (Mesa Yard) located at 500 Potrero Grande Drive, in the City of Monterey Park, Los Angeles County, California. SCE proposes to use the Mesa Yard as a material and equipment storage yard to support construction activities associated with Segment 7 and the western portion of Segment 8.

The proposed yard is SCE fee-owned property consisting of approximately 32.9 acres. The site is disturbed and is currently being used as a plant nursery. A main access gate will be established near the northeast corner of the yard along Potrero Grande Drive. An additional access gate will be established at the southeast corner of the yard for use by SCE operations and maintenance crews for the transmission lines present within Mesa Yard. This gate is not planned to be used as part of Mesa Yard operations.

Site Facilities/Activities

Proposed facilities at the yard include the following: contractor equipment and material storage areas, office trailers, temporary sanitary facilities, roll-off trash containers, fueling areas, spill kit, vehicle parking area, lighting and security.

Proposed activities at the yard include the following: yard development and operation and maintenance; contractor equipment and material receipt, storage, and shipping; equipment and vehicle fueling, vehicle parking; and security patrol.

Site Work

Site Preparation – The existing grade of Mesa Yard is undulating and will require grading since it is currently terraced with three to five feet of vertical elevation change. In some areas, the terraces will

be leveled to allow for more continuous material storage space. At these locations, the higher elevations will be cut and leveled, with the fill material utilized elsewhere onsite.

Several drainage ditches are present throughout the yard. Vehicle crossings will be situated at existing culvert locations. The culverts will be covered by minimum of 24 inches of soil or road base to prevent culvert damage. A 6-inch layer of road base material (e.g., gravel) will then be placed throughout the yard. The existing entrance to the yard will be improved to allow access to heavy haul vehicle traffic. The drainages will be fenced with construction fencing and fiber rolls and gravel bags will be installed to prevent erosion and discharge of material from the yard into the drainages. Additional BMPs will be installed along the road crossings to prevent erosion of this material into the drainages.

Underground Major Activities – Below grade conduit and power cable will be installed throughout the yard to provide power to the yard lighting. Approximately 9,800 linear feet (approximately 6,800 linear feet for the security lighting and 3,000 linear feet for the work lighting) of trenching to a depth of three (3) feet below ground surface is required for conduit installation. At the drainage ditch crossings, the conduit will be installed underground along the existing culvert crossings or placed aboveground to span over the drainage ditches.

Aboveground Major Activities – Power is available at the existing building onsite. Temporary overhead power lines will be installed to provide electrical power and communications services for yard operation.

Six-foot-high, screened chain link fencing will be erected around the perimeter of the yard (approximately 1,400 linear feet) to protect material and equipment.

Security lights will be installed at 50- to 100-foot spacing around the perimeter of the yard. These 100- to 400- watt lights will be installed 6 to 15 feet above grade, and will have shields or be directed to reduce illumination outside the yard. These lights will be equipped with light sensors for automated turn-on and manual switches to allow them to be turned off at times if not required.

Work lighting will be installed throughout the yard to provide adequate working conditions. The working lights will consist of 100- to 400-watt lights, and will be installed 15 to 30 feet above grade at 100- to 500-foot spacing. The lights will be controlled by a manual switch to allow for the lights to be turned on and off as required. The lights will be switched off while the yard is not in operation. The lights will be aimed downward and point into the yard, and shields will be installed, as needed to reduce illumination outside of the yard. The work lights will be powered by either the electrical service for the yard or portable generators.

General operating hours at the Mesa Yard are planned to be from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

- **Biological Resources.** SCE submitted a Biological Review prepared by ICF International dated March 2010. The Yard was recently used as a commercial nursery comprised of thousands of potted plants, dirt and gravel roads, two small commercial structures, a large distribution yard layered in gravel, numerous electrical towers, scattered mature ornamental trees, and a material storage area. Vegetation supported in the Yard that is not a part of the nursery inventory is composed primarily of ruderal herbaceous plants, but also includes scattered ornamental trees, shrubs and some riparian vegetation. More mature native vegetation, including riparian vegetation, exists adjacent to the northeast side of the Yard. One mature coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) is situated on the west end of the Yard within a drainage feature and will be avoided. The Final Special-Status Plant Species Survey Report for the SCE TRTP Segments 7 and 8 (AMEC 2009a) indicates that a plant survey was conducted on the Yard and no special-status plants were identified. During the field survey, the only special-status species observed was coastal California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica californica*) foraging approximately 475 feet east of the southern part of the Yard in an area mapped as ruderal grassland. The ruderal grassland areas 260 to 500 feet from the Yard does provide suitable foraging habitat and a 300-foot buffer will be implemented during construction to avoid any potential indirect impacts to foraging coastal California gnatcatcher. A pair of coastal California gnatcatchers has just

recently been observed building a nest in a pepper tree approximately 1000 feet from the Yard. At least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) was also seen foraging in and around the Yard. Based on observed conditions on and adjacent to the Yard, the vegetated habitat potentially supports the following special-status species: San Diego coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*), two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*), San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus bennettii*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), coastal California gnatcatcher, and least Bell's vireo.

- **Cultural Resources.** SCE submitted a Phase I Cultural Resources Inventory and Paleontological Assessment prepared by PCR, Services for the Mesa Material Yard dated February 4, 2010. Because the Mesa Material Yard lies outside the existing area of potential effects for the TRTP as defined in the original archaeological survey report (Pacific Legacy 2007), an additional cultural and paleontological resources inventory was completed. The study included a search of California Historical Research Information Systems (CHRIS), cultural resources maps, record forms, and technical reports, a review of historical U.S. General Land Office's (GLO) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) maps. A paleontological study (Gust and Scott 2009) was previously conducted for TRTP Segments 4 through 11 and was reviewed for the current study. Additionally, an on-site pedestrian survey was conducted of the project site by archaeologist Matthew Wetherbee, M.Sc., RPA. There is no indication of prehistoric or historic archaeological resources or paleontological resources in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project. In addition, surface sediments on the property are considered low in sensitivity for paleontological resources. No cultural or paleontological resources are expected to be negatively impacted.

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

- All work boundaries shall be flagged and the drainages fenced prior to yard occupation.
- The Mesa Yard shall be included in the project Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan required by MM B-1a, subject to review and approval by CPUC.
- If helicopters will be using the yard, a biological report shall be submitted regarding potential impacts to sensitive species.
- A biological pre-construction survey shall be submitted to and approved by the CPUC prior to site occupation/disturbance. All 2010 special-status bird sightings and nesting activities shall be included within the biological pre-construction survey and reported to the USFWS and CDFG prior to site occupation. Confirmation of special-status species notifications with the resource agencies shall be submitted to the CPUC prior to site occupation.
- Biological survey sweeps are required to occur immediately preceding and during yard set up and occupation as part of required biological monitoring activities. Sweeps for nesting birds shall include a 500 foot buffer. If active nests are found, a biological monitor shall establish a required buffer around the nest and no activities will be allowed within the buffer until the young have fledged from the nest or the nest fails. For *listed riparian species*, no work will be authorized within 500 feet of an active nest and all activities will stop immediately within 500 feet of the nest (Mitigation Measure B-15). The biological monitor shall conduct regular monitoring of the nest to determine success/failure and to ensure that project activities are not conducted within the buffer until the nesting cycle is complete or the nest fails. The biological monitor shall be responsible for documenting the results of the surveys and the ongoing monitoring. The buffer may be adjusted with the approval of CDFG and USFWS, and with prior knowledge of the CPUC. If special-status plant or animal species or bird nests are observed within the project area, CDFG and the CPUC EM shall be notified immediately (within 24 hours). After complete sweeps 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, biological clearance sweeps shall be re-conducted prior to site occupation, including nesting bird surveys during the breeding season.

- If unanticipated cultural or paleontological resources are detected at the yard, the CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.
- Prior to fuel storage on the subject site, a Fuel Storage Plan shall be submitted to CPUC for review and approval. The Plan shall specify method and location of fuel storage, volumes, demonstration of compliance with regulatory requirements regarding fuel storage, and spill containment and response measures. All fueling of equipment shall be conducted in approved refueling locations only.
- Refueling and fueling locations shall be a minimum of 150-feet away from existing drainages. If construction debris or spills enter into environmentally sensitive areas, the jurisdictional agencies and 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 Boccia
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen