

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

August 20, 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 # 12)

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On July 23, 2010, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a Notice to Proceed Request (NTPR) seeking authorization from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to temporarily use five contractor yards during construction of Segments 4, 5 and 10 of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP) located in Los Angeles County, California. Additional information, including biological survey reports, was submitted August 8<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup>.

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

- Following are excerpts from SCE's NTPR:

SCE is requesting to utilize the proposed Segments 4, 5, & 10 Contractor Yards (Contractor Yards) referred to as West Avenue D, West Avenue J, Rodeo North, Rodeo South, and Racetrack Yards, located in Kern and Los Angeles Counties, California.

**Site Locations and Conditions****West Avenue D Contractor Yard**

The West Avenue D Contractor Yard is owned by SCE and consists of approximately 5.9 acres in the City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California. The yard is at the intersection of West Avenue C-8 and 140<sup>th</sup> Street West. A road traverses the property in a northwest-southeast direction, along existing transmission lines. One existing structure, a transmission tower, is present at the southeast corner of the yard. A new access gate will be established at the yard along 140<sup>th</sup> Street West on the east side of the yard.

**West Avenue J**

The West Avenue J Contractor Yard consists of approximately 4.8 acres of leased property in the City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California. The yard is at the southeast corner of the intersection of West Avenue J and 105<sup>th</sup> Street West. An access gate will be established along West Avenue J on the north side of the yard.

**Rodeo North Contractor Yard**

The Rodeo North Contractor Yard consists of approximately 2.6 acres of leased property in the City of Acton, Los Angeles County, California. The yard is near the intersection of Highway 14 and Mountain Springs Road. One access gate will be established on the south side of the yard along Mountain Springs Road.

### **Rodeo South Contractor Yard**

The Rodeo South Contractor Yard consists of approximately 1.7 acres of leased property in the City of Acton, Los Angeles County, California. The yard is near the intersection of Highway 14 and Mountain Springs Road. One access gate will be established on the north side of the yard along an existing road.

### **Racetrack Contractor Yard**

The Racetrack Contractor Yard consists of approximately 4.0 acres of leased property in the City of Rosamond, Kern County, California. The yard is near the intersection of 75<sup>th</sup> Street West and Rosamond Boulevard. One access gate will be established along 75<sup>th</sup> Street West.

### **Project Components**

The Contractor Yards are planned to serve as the daily operating locations for construction field personnel associated with Segments 4, 5 and 10 transmission lines. Operating hours for the Contractor Yards are planned to be from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. SCE has established a TRTP toll-free information line (877-795-8787) and website ([www.sce.com/tehachapi](http://www.sce.com/tehachapi)). The information line is the designated public notification contact for the TRTP.

### **Site Facilities/Activities**

Proposed facilities at the yards include the following: contractor equipment parking and material storage areas, office trailers, tool storage trailers, shipping containers, trash containers, fire equipment and spill kit storage, potential helicopter landing area, temporary sanitary facilities (which may include aboveground water and sanitary waste holding tanks), fueling areas, vehicle parking areas, steam cleaners with containment, welders, and lighting and security.

Proposed activities at the yards include the following: yard development and operation and maintenance, contractor equipment and material receipt and storage, vehicle parking, concrete and concrete waste disposal, equipment repair and steam cleaning, welding and cutting, potential helicopter operations, equipment, vehicle, and potential helicopter fueling.

### **Site Work**

**Site Preparation** – Site preparation activities at the West Avenue D, West Avenue J, Rodeo North, and Rodeo South Contractor Yards will include clearing and removal of weeds and brush, soil compacting, and placement of road base material (e.g., gravel). The Racetrack Contractor Yard was previously compacted and road base material is on the ground surface. Road base material will be added at this yard, as needed.

**Underground Major Activities** – No underground major activities are planned at the Contractor Yards.

**Aboveground Activities** – At each of the contractor yards, a new access gate with shaker plates and a diesel fuel storage tank with a spill containment berm will be installed. Electrical power and communication services will be provided to the office trailers at each Contractor Yard via a nearby distribution power line. Fencing and privacy fence screening will be installed at each Contractor Yard.

### **Other Activities**

While helicopter use is not currently anticipated at the Contractor Yards, there is a potential that it may be performed in the future. In the event helicopter activity is needed, SCE will coordinate with CPUC, and provide supplemental information and appropriate survey reports.

- **Biological Resources:** The USFWS Biological Opinion (BO) was issued on July 31, 2010. The CDFG 2081 Incidental Take Permit is expected to be issued in late-August 2010. The 2081 is required at West Avenue D and West Avenue J Contractor Yards for Swainson's hawk.

**Rodeo Contractor Yard, North & South:** SCE submitted a report titled *Preconstruction Biological Survey Report for SCE's TRTP, Segment 5 Rodeo Contractor Yard Project, Located in Soledad Canyon, South of the City of Palmdale, Los Angeles County, California* prepared by ICF dated August 13, 2010. The report summarizes the biological conditions of the north and south yards, and compiles and summarizes the results of a biological review (ICF 2010oo), as well as focused surveys and preconstruction field visits completed by ICF. A preconstruction survey was conducted on August 5, 2010, using meandering transects with surveyors spaced 10 to 20 meters apart. The weather was recorded at the start and end of the survey, and all wildlife species were recorded on survey datasheets. In addition, burrowing owl surveys were conducted on June 18, 24, 30, 2010 and July 3, 7, 9, 2010. No nesting birds or special-status species were detected in the survey area during the August 5<sup>th</sup> survey. Approximately 38 potential burrowing owl burrows have been identified within the 500-foot buffer, however, no burrowing owls or sign of the species were detected during the 2010 ICF surveys. No state or federally threatened, endangered, proposed, petitioned, or candidate plants were observed during the preconstruction survey. One individual short-joint beavertail (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *brachyclada*), (CNPS List 1B.2) was identified outside the Project Component, but within the northwestern portion of the 500-foot survey buffer (ICF 2010m) and four short-joint beavertail cacti were also identified outside the Project Component, but within the southern portion of the 500-foot buffer during the 2009 focused surveys (AMEC 2009). These cacti will not be affected by development of the yard. No other special-status plants were detected in the yard disturbance footprint during the ICF 2010 focused surveys.

On August 18, 2010, SCE submitted a report titled *Results of a Preconstruction Survey for Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) for SCE's Segment 5 Rodeo Contractor Yard Project, Located in Soledad Canyon, South of the City of Palmdale, Los Angeles County, California* prepared by ICF International for SCE's TRTP dated August 17, 2010. ICF biologists conducted six burrowing owl surveys within the Project Component during June and July 2010 (ICF 2010o). Additionally, ICF biologists conducted a habitat assessment and three focused preconstruction surveys within the Project Component and surrounding 500-foot buffer during August 2010. No burrowing owls or signs of the species were detected within the Project Component or surrounding 500-foot buffer during the 2010 ICF surveys, including the three preconstruction surveys in August.

**West Avenue J Yard:** SCE submitted a report titled *Preconstruction Biological Survey Report for SCE's TRTP, West Avenue J Contractor Yard Project, located in the City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California* prepared by ICF International dated August 17, 2010. ICF performed a preconstruction survey and evaluated the biological resources within a 500-foot buffer survey area around and including the Project Component using a previously completed biological review (ICF 2010uu). The preconstruction survey was conducted on August 5, 2010, using meandering transects, with surveyors spaced 10 to 20 meters apart. Weather data was recorded at the start and end of the survey, and all wildlife species were recorded on survey datasheets. In addition, a biological field review, Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) surveys (AMEC 2009ah, ICF 2010m), and a preconstruction burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) surveys have been conducted. No nesting birds or special-status species were detected in the survey area. No Swainson's hawks were observed within the Project Component or 500-foot buffer during the 2010 ICF focused surveys (BBI 2010d) or the preconstruction survey. No burrowing owls or sign of the species were detected during the 2010 ICF preconstruction surveys; however, potential burrowing owl burrows were detected along the northern portion of the site and within the 500-foot buffer. No state or federally threatened, endangered, proposed, petitioned, or candidate plants were observed during the preconstruction survey.

On August 20, 2010, SCE submitted a report titled *Results of a Preconstruction Survey for Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) for SCE's TRTP, West Avenue J Contractor Yard Project, located in the City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California* prepared by ICF International dated August 17, 2010. ICF biologists have conducted four burrowing owl surveys within the Project Component (ICF

2010o) and also have conducted a habitat assessment and three preconstruction surveys within the Project Component and a 500-foot buffer. During the 2010 ICF surveys, which included the three preconstruction surveys, no burrowing owls or signs of the species have been detected within the contractor yard area or surrounding 500-foot buffer.

**West Avenue D Yard:** SCE submitted a report titled *West Avenue D Contractor Yard Biological Review* prepared by ICF International for SCE's TRTP dated July 2010. The Project Component and surrounding area are dominated by moderately dense rabbitbrush scrub habitat and agricultural areas. Rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*) is the dominant rabbitbrush species and typical subdominant plant species observed included goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*) and California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*). Previous focused surveys have been completed in areas of the Project Component and a 500-foot biological survey area (BSA) buffer. No special-status plants or animals were identified during previous focused surveys (burrowing owl, AMEC 2009a; desert tortoise, AMEC 2009e; Swainson's hawk, AMEC 2009ah and Bloom Biological, Inc. (BBI) 2010e; field survey and habitat assessment, ICF 2010k). As summarized in the July 2010 report, 2010 focused surveys for rare plants, burrowing owl, and Swainson's hawk have been completed. Four special-status plant species are known to occur within 5 miles of the Project Component; however, none were observed within the site during prior focused surveys (AMEC 2009ae). Completed 2010 plant surveys confirmed the Project Component does not provide suitable habitat for special-status plants.

A burrowing owl habitat assessment and burrow survey (Phase I and II) were conducted in accordance with the California Burrowing Owl Consortium (1993). Focused surveys (Phase III and IV) were completed in 2010 within the Project Component. No burrowing owls or sign were detected within the Project Component; however, the site does support suitable habitat for burrowing owls. No burrows or other potentially suitable nesting features were observed on the site or within the buffer (ICF 2010k). Because of the potential occurrence of burrowing owl on site, mitigation in the form of preconstruction surveys will be conducted within 30 days prior to the start of construction.

Focused surveys were conducted within the Project Component and a surrounding 2-mile radius for Swainson's hawk (BBI 2010e). Swainson's hawk was not observed during the site visit on April 28 (ICF 2010k) and no potential nesting features are present on or adjacent to the Project Component. Focused surveys indicate that the site contains good foraging habitat but no nesting habitat. The surrounding 2-mile radius has high quality nesting and foraging habitat. The 500-foot buffer and vicinity support suitable habitat for some special-status species, including foraging for raptors such as prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), and California horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum frontale*). The Project Component does not support any sensitive vegetation communities (ICF 2010m) or designated critical habitat for any sensitive species. No jurisdictional features are located in the Project Component and buffer.

The 2010 focused surveys applicable to the West Avenue D Yard include surveys for rare plants (MM B-23) and burrowing owl (MM B-29). These reports have yet to be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval.

**Racetrack Yard:** SCE submitted a report titled *Preconstruction Biological Survey Report for SCE's TRTP, Racetrack Contractor Yard Project, located in the City of Rosamond, Kern County, California* prepared by ICF International dated August 17, 2010. ICF performed a preconstruction survey and evaluated the biological resources within a 500-foot buffer survey area around and including the Project Component using a previously completed biological review (ICF 2010tt). The preconstruction survey was conducted on August 5, 2010, using meandering transects, with surveyors spaced 10 to 20 meters apart. Weather data was recorded at the start and end of the survey, and all wildlife species were recorded on survey datasheets. In addition, a biological field review, a burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) habitat assessment, and Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) surveys have been conducted. No nesting birds or special-status species were detected in the survey

area. ICF biologists have conducted focused Swainson's hawk surveys and preconstruction burrowing owl surveys within the 500-foot buffer in 2010. No suitable nesting or foraging habitat occurs within the Project Component, but potential foraging habitat is present within the 500-foot buffer. Potential burrowing owl burrows were recorded during the biological field review conducted in January 2010 (ICF 2010tt); however, no ground squirrel burrows of the size needed by burrowing owls were observed within the Project Component or the 500-foot buffer during the burrowing owl habitat assessment (BBI 2010) or the preconstruction survey. Additionally, no owls, white-wash, feathers or pellets were observed suggesting no current use of the site by this species. No Swainson's hawks were observed within the Project Component or the 500-foot buffer during the 2010 ICF focused surveys or the preconstruction survey. No state and federally threatened, endangered, proposed, petitioned, and candidate plants were observed during the preconstruction surveys performed as part of the report. A completed focused survey for special-status plants, which included the Project Component, was conducted in 2010 with negative results (ICF 2010c).

**Cultural Resources.** SCE has submitted the following Cultural Resources Survey Reports for Segment 4, 5 and 10 Contractor Yards (review status of each report is noted in parenthesis following the report name):

- *Supplemental Archaeological Resources Survey for the Avenue D West Contractor Yard, Work Package 1, TRTP, Los Angeles, CA.* (Comments provided in AE memorandum dated 8-19-10.)
- *Archaeological Survey Report, Southern California Edison, TRTP, Segment 5, Avenue J Contractor Yard, Los Angeles County, California.* (Under review.)
- *Archaeological Survey Report, Southern California Edison, TRTP, Segment 5 Rodeo Contractor Yard, Los Angeles County, California.* (Under review.)
- *Negative Archaeological Resources Survey for the Racetrack Contractor Yard, Work Package 1, TRTP, Rosamond, CA.* (Comments provided in AE memorandum dated 8-19-10.)

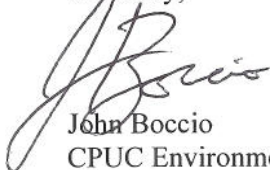
**The conditions noted below shall be met by SCE and its contractors:**

- All sensitive resource buffers shall be flagged prior to construction/site occupation. Resource flagging shall be field verified by the CPUC EM prior to site use.
- Prior to commencement of construction activities or site occupation, SCE shall submit the preconstruction biological survey report for West Avenue D Contractor Yard to the CPUC for review and approval. In addition, the 2010 focused surveys applicable to the West Avenue D Yard include surveys for rare plants (B-23) and burrowing owl (B-29). These reports have yet to be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval.
- No construction or site occupation shall occur at West Avenue D or West Avenue J Contractor Yards until the CDFG 2081 Incidental Take Permit is issued and all applicable conditions for Swainson's hawk are implemented.
- The West Avenue D and West Avenue J Contractor Yards 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(s), a biological report shall be submitted to the CPUC regarding potential impacts to sensitive species.
- Prior to commencement of construction activities, all crew personnel including haul truck and concrete truck drivers shall be appropriately trained on environmental issues including protocols for air quality, hazardous materials, biological resources, known and unanticipated cultural materials, as

well as SWPPP BMP's. A log shall be maintained on site with the names of all crew personnel trained.

- Biological survey sweeps are required to occur immediately preceding and during project area 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. 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 EM, 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.
- Prior to site occupation and/or construction, SCE shall have all cultural resources reports reviewed and approved by the participating agencies. Conditions noted within the subject reports shall be implemented.
- Continuous monitoring of earth moving activities in areas characterized by high to very high paleontological sensitivity shall be conducted.
- If unanticipated biological, cultural or paleontological resources are detected, the CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.
- Prior to fuel storage on the subject sites, a Fuel Storage Plan shall be submitted to CPUC 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 100-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 Boccio  
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen