

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

July 30, 2012

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 #36)

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On July 25, 2012, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a Notice to Proceed Request (NTPR) seeking authorization from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to conduct geotechnical activities required to support preliminary engineering of Chino Hills underground Options 10 and 11, within Segment 8A Transmission Line (T/L) for the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP), in the Cities of Chino Hills and Chino, San Bernardino County, California. Additional information was submitted on July 27.

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

- SCE submitted the following information:

SCE is requesting a Notice to Proceed to conduct geotechnical activities required to support preliminary engineering of Chino Hills underground Options 10 and 11, within Segment 8A T/L for the TRTP, in the City of Chino Hills, San Bernardino County, California. These geotechnical activities are needed as a result of the Scoping Memo and Ruling of Assigned Commissioner, Michael Peevey, dated July 2, 2012. In particular, the ruling directs SCE to prepare testimony that relied on preliminary engineering of Chino Hills underground Options 10 and 11. To complete preliminary engineering, geotechnical investigatory activities must be performed. These geotechnical activities are not being undertaken in furtherance of construction of Alternative 2 of Segment 8A, but instead are necessary for SCE's development of testimony in response to the Scoping Memo and Ruling of Assigned Commissioner (dated July 02, 2012).

Geotechnical activities to support development of preliminary engineering of Chino Hills underground Options 10 and 11 would primarily occur in the City of Chino Hills. Note that approximately three boring locations would be in the City of Chino. Geotechnical activities are considered preconstruction and are necessary to support preliminary engineering. These geotechnical activities would occur within the Chino Hills area of the new Mira Loma-Vincent double-circuit 500 kV T/L right-of-way (ROW), with the exception of access, which would extend from outside the ROW.

Geotechnical activities would generally include accessing the ROW with a truck-mounted drill rig. Soil borings would be performed using hollow stem auger or direct push soil boring techniques. Soil samples would be collected at the target depths to support engineering design. Boreholes would be backfilled with soil cuttings or slurry material; any excess soil cuttings would be properly disposed offsite. The drilling and sampling activities would be limited to within the identified disturbance area and work area buffer. Some boring locations may need to be adjusted based on field conditions

encountered. Also note that additional boring locations may be needed, as warranted by field conditions.

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted biological resource information with their request to proceed with the Chino Hills Geotechnical Activities. The Chino Hills Geotechnical Activities are located within previously surveyed portions of the Segment 8 Phase 1 transmission line work areas (Structures M60-T1 through M64-T1 and associated wire setup sites [WSS] and access roads). The Geotechnical Activities work areas are referred to as the Project Component. The following surveys have been conducted in the area: bat habitat assessment (April 18-19, 2010 and September 10, 2010), preconstruction burrowing owl survey (August 24-26, 2010; September 28-30, 2010; January 12-14, 2010; and May 17-20, 2010), and biological preconstruction and sweep (August 24-27, 30-31, 2010; September 24, 27, 29-30, 2010; January 11-12, 2011; April 14, 2011; May 4, 9, 2011).

The Geotechnical Activities work areas are primarily located in a developed right-of-way corridor, but also overlap habitat areas characterized as ruderal, bunchgrass grassland, California annual grassland, southern arroyo willow riparian forest, and non-native woodland. Vegetation communities and biological resources located within 500 feet of the Project Component include additional developed land, ruderal grassland, non-native woodland, southern arroyo willow riparian forest, coast live oak woodland, and coastal sage scrub (ICF 2012).

As of July 27, 2012, several active bird nests have been observed within 500 feet of the Project Component. These nests will be surveyed prior to initiation of geotechnical activities and an appropriate disturbance free buffer will be maintained until the nests are determined inactive. The Geotechnical Activities are not located within occupied habitat or critical habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*). However, the Geotechnical Activities are located within 500 feet of suitable and/or occupied least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) habitat. The 500-foot buffer for active least Bell's vireo nest 3522 overlaps the following work components: B-4, E-5, B-5, E-6, E-7, B-6, E-8, and E-9. The following Geotechnical Activities work areas are also located within 500 feet of occupied least Bell's vireo habitat, but no active nests were located during the 2012 riparian bird protocol level surveys (in progress): B-24, E-53, E-54, B-25, E-55, E-56, B-26, and E-57. Work areas within 500 feet of an active least Bell's vireo nest/territory will be seasonally restricted until the nest/territory is determined to be no longer active.

General bat habitat was identified at Geotechnical Activities work areas E-17, B-10, E-18, and E-19, along the access route to E-58, and immediately adjacent to B-4, E-5, B-24, and E-53.

Special-status biological resources will be demarcated in the field by Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) staking where applicable.

Jurisdictional resources are located within the following Geotechnical Activities work areas: Boring E-4, B-4, E-5, E-7, B-6, and E-8, and access route between E-19 and B-10 and E-18. Impacts to jurisdictional resources will be avoided.

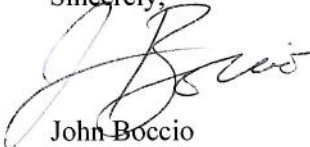
- **Cultural Resources.** SCE submitted a memorandum titled *Cultural Clearance for Chino Hills Geotechnical Activities on Segment 8, Chino Hills, San Bernardino County* dated July 27, 2012. The memorandum states that no cultural resources will be impacted by geotechnical borings between M60-T1 and M64-T2 on Segment 8, Chino Hills, San Bernardino County. The proposed locations fall within the cultural records search and surveyed area for the TRTP (Pacific Legacy 2007, 2010). The cultural records search did not yield any resources, but one historic 220 kV transmission line, the Chino-Mesa, runs through this area. This line was evaluated and determined ineligible for the NRHP and CRHR in 2010. As a result, there will not be any impacts to significant cultural resources. In addition, the paleontological literature review (Gust and Scott 2009) shows this area to lie within the Puente Formation that has a high paleontological sensitivity and quaternary alluvium that has a low

paleontological sensitivity. As a result of the paleontological sensitivities, paleontological monitoring will be required for the geotechnical borings at select locations.

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

- If boring locations need to be added or adjusted based on field conditions encountered, SCE shall provide 24 hour notice to the CPUC along with additional biological and cultural resources information.
- The Chino Hills Geotechnical Activities shall follow all permit requirements of the CDFG ITP (2081) and the USFWS Biological Opinion for TRTP.
- Due to the paleontological sensitivity of portions of the work area, a paleontological monitor shall be on site in locations of high sensitivity for paleontological resources per the PRMP.
- All conditions required by Notice to Proceed (NTP) #11 shall apply to the subject area and activities, including nesting bird surveys prior to and during use of the subject site.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, NTP #11, and this NTP #36 shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities where applicable.

Sincerely,



John Boccio
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen