

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

December 20, 2010

Susan J. Nelson, AIA  
Regulatory Affairs  
Southern California Edison  
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue, Quad 3D, GO1  
Rosemead, CA 91770

RE: Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP), Segments 4-11: Variance Request (VR) #24

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On December 17, 2010, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance requesting use of an existing concrete parking area/pad in Tonner Canyon as a helicopter landing zone and equipment staging and parking area, Segment 8, Phase I, Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP). **This Variance Request is approved by CPUC for the proposed activities based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

The Contractor has requested access and use of an existing concrete parking area/pad located below Tower M58-T1 as a helicopter landing zone and for equipment staging and parking. This area was previously approved as a Temporary Extra Work Space (TEWS).

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted a report titled *General Biological Survey and Focused Preconstruction Burrowing Owl Report for the Proposed Helicopter Landing Zone/Equipment Staging Area (And Associated Access Road) Variance For TRTP, Segment 8 Chino Hills (Phase I) Transmission Line, Los Angeles County, California* dated December 14, 2010 by ICF International. Biological resources within a portion of the biological survey area (BSA = Variance Project Component and 500-foot buffer zone) were evaluated during previous surveys, including focused species surveys and preconstruction biological surveys (ICF 2010). A literature review was also performed as part of the biological review.

Vegetation communities within the BSA include coast live oak woodland, coastal sage scrub, California annual grassland, California walnut woodland, mixed chaparral, bunchgrass grassland, ruderal grassland, and disturbed/developed. Bunchgrass grassland and California walnut woodland are State regulated plant communities. California black walnut (*Juglans californica*) is a special status plant species and Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) is a regulated tree. Potential habitat (coastal sage scrub) for coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*) was identified in the BSA and confirmed to be absent of coastal California gnatcatcher during the focused surveys in 2009 (AMEC 2009m) and 2010 (ICF 2010ww). Previous focused burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) surveys in 2010 for Segment 8 (ICF 2010xx) did not result in the mapping of suitable burrow habitat, and no burrowing owls or sign of the species were observed. Preconstruction surveys conducted as part of this report identified potential burrowing owl burrows within the 500-foot buffer portion of the BSA, but a focused preconstruction burrowing owl survey conducted as part of this report confirmed their absence. Previously completed preconstruction surveys for bats (ICF 2010cb) did not include the entire BSA being analyzed in this report. The coast live oak woodland and California walnut woodland habitat within the BSA was identified as providing potential roost habitat for solitary bat species during the preconstruction survey conducted as part of this report. No

jurisdictional features are mapped within the BSA (ICF 2010h). No additional impacts to biological resources are anticipated.

**Cultural and Paleontological Resources:** SCE submitted a letter from Matthew Wetherbee, Senior Archaeologist for PCR, dated October 29, 2010. A cultural resources records search was previously conducted for the TRTP project area which encompasses the subject site (Pacific Legacy 2007). Results of the records searches indicate that no cultural resources have been recorded within the project variance area or within a one-mile radius. The area was surveyed by PCR archaeologist, Matthew Wetherbee, on October 29, 2010. Results of the survey indicate that the original ground surface has been heavily impacted by the placement of the concrete slab currently used for a parking area. In addition, a survey of 100 foot buffer of the area was conducted as per the Programmatic Agreement for equipment areas. The field survey was conducted by walking north-south transects spaced 15 meters apart. Ground visibility was 100 percent within the buffer area. No cultural resources were identified as a result of this field survey. No additional impacts to cultural or paleontological resources are anticipated.

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

- All conditions required by NTP #11 shall apply to the subject area and activities.
- The requirements of Mitigation Measure B-5 shall be implemented regarding helicopter use during the nesting season.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, NTP #11, and this Variance shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities where applicable.

Sincerely,



John Boccio  
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen