

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



February 7, 2011

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) #32

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On February 4, 2011, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request to allow for the use of an additional temporary offsite equipment loading/unloading and parking area near the Whirlwind Substation on Segment 9 of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP) in Kern County. **This Variance Request is approved by CPUC based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

SCE requests a variance to allow for an addition of a temporary offsite equipment loading/unloading and parking area near the Whirlwind Substation on Segment 9 of TRTP in Kern County. As specified in the NTPR for Whirlwind Substation, access to the site would occur from the east along 170<sup>th</sup> Street West and/or Rosamond Boulevard. Subsequent to submittal of the NTPR, it was determined that construction vehicles and equipment greater than 26,000 pounds could not be directly driven over the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's (LADWP) underground water aqueduct pipeline, which is situated along the west side of 170<sup>th</sup> Street West. In response, SCE plans to construct a permanent below-grade support structure ("bridge") over the aqueduct pipeline; an addendum for the support bridge, which is situated south of the area addressed in this variance request, is forthcoming. In the interim and in order to allow construction activities to commence, SCE proposes to use a crane to lift construction equipment over the aqueduct. The purpose of this variance request is to request the temporary use of an unpaved, disturbed area adjacent to the Whirlwind Substation property to perform these activities. This area would be used to temporarily park a crane that would transport construction vehicles and equipment from this staging area over the underground water aqueduct pipeline owned by LADWP. The crane would mobilize and demobilize from the site, as needed. Additionally, this area would be used to temporarily park construction vehicles and/or unload materials off trucks.

These activities are needed to allow substation construction activities to commence prior to and during installation of the permanent below-grade support structure ("bridge") over the aqueduct pipeline located under and along 170<sup>th</sup> Street West to the south of this intersection.

The proposed disturbance area associated with the loading/unloading and parking area is approximately 0.75 acres. This area is unpaved and previously disturbed; no grading would be required. SCE has obtained a Temporary Entry Permit (TEP) for use of the area.

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted a memornadum dated February 4, 2011 regarding the proposed crane staging area near the Whirlwind Substation. The Project Component is an existing disturbed area connected with several access roads and is surrounded by Mojave creosote bush scrub, Mojave mixed woody scrub, and disturbed/developed areas. Biologists have been on site full time to perform clearance

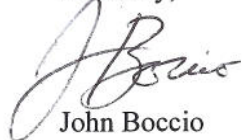
sweeps and monitoring the Whirlwind Substation and the proposed crane area. During a preconstruction sweep on January 25, 2011, one special-status species, burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), was observed outside the requested area. The burrowing owl was observed flying within the Whirlwind Substation footprint. Burrows are currently being collapsed within the Whirlwind Substation footprint per the CDFG approved burrowing owl and desert kit fox passive relocation plans. No additional resources or habitat were observed with the requested area. No CDFG jurisdictional drainages were identified within the requested area. Temporary desert tortoise fencing will be installed around the perimeter of the requested loading/unloading and parking area. CDFG finds the use of the additional work space consistent with the 2081 Initial Take Permit (ITP). USFWS has no objection to the use of the additional work space. No additional impacts to biological resources are anticipated.

- **Cultural and Paleontological Resources:** SCE states that no cultural resources will be affected by temporarily parking heavy machinery and storing equipment at the variance request area. No ground disturbance will occur with the use of this area for parking and equipment staging. This area has been covered by two previous cultural resources surveys for the TRTP, and no cultural resources were identified in the vicinity of the proposed temporary work space (Pacific Legacy, 2007 and 2009). No additional impacts to cultural or paleontological resources are anticipated.

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

- USFWS concurs with SCE that preconstruction and clearance surveys should be conducted and desert tortoise exclusion fencing installed prior to use of the area.
- All conditions required by NTP #26 shall apply to the subject area and activities.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, NTP #26, 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