

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



September 12, 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) #87

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On September 9, 2011, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request to allow use of the existing access road from 90th Street West to Tower 6 on Segment 10 Transmission Line (T/L) of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP) in Kern County, California. **This Variance Request is approved by CPUC based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

SCE submitted a request for a Variance to allow use of the existing access road from 90th Street West to Tower 6 on Segment 10 T/L of the TRTP in Kern County, California. Subsequent to the approval of the NTPR (NTP #27 dated March 8, 2011) by the CPUC, project site conditions have changed and the planned access road to Tower 6 on Segment 10 needs to be modified. The CPUC-approved access road from 90th Street West to Tower 6 was planned to be a heavy improvement road. Recently, improvements to this road were performed by a separate, non-SCE construction project. Also, the eastern portion of this road was realigned southeasterly. SCE plans to utilize this road in its current condition and no further modifications or improvements are planned.

Biological Resources: SCE submitted a biological memorandum with the Variance Request dated September 9, 2011, regarding the *Proposed Use of Existing Access Road near Construct S10-6*. The memorandum notes previous surveys and clearance sweep results for the Segment 10 Construct 6 Existing access Road (Project Component).

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, rabbitbrush scrub, and disturbed/developed areas.

Preconstruction and burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) surveys were completed on August 8th and 11th, respectively. No resources were observed within the vicinity of the proposed existing road. No desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), Mohave ground squirrel (*Spermophilus mohavensis*), or active nests have been observed in the vicinity.

A preconstruction sweep was performed by ICF International on September 7, 2011. No special-status species were observed inside the proposed area. No additional resources were observed within the proposed area. No California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) jurisdictional drainages were identified within the proposed area.

No additional impacts to biological resources are anticipated with the implementation of this Variance.

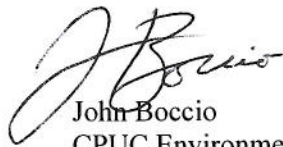
Cultural and Paleontological Resources: SCE submitted a memorandum dated September 9, 2011, titled *TRTP Variance Request – Seg 10, CT-6 Access Road – Cultural Clearance for Use of an Existing Access Road at CT-6 on Segment 10* with the Variance Request stating that no cultural resources will be impacted by the requested use of an existing gravel road at CT-6 on Segment 10 as part of this Variance Request in support of the TRTP. A cultural record search and surveys (Pacific Legacy 2007, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b) showed that this area on Segment 10 is within cultural resource CA-KER-7218, a prehistoric artifact scatter. Site excavation was conducted by Pacific Legacy (2011c), who recommended the resource as not significant. This recommendation received Agency agreement and State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurrence. A paleontological literature review was also conducted for this area (Gust and Scott 2009). Paleontological research suggests the possibility that fossil resources may exist in this area. SCE proposes to utilize this new road in its current condition with no further modifications. Because the road travels through cultural resource CA-KER-7218, the sides of the road will be staked as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) in areas where the road is within the site boundary. In addition, the Construction Phase Management Plan (CPMP) will be updated to include information associated with this Variance.

No additional impacts to cultural or paleontological resources are anticipated with the implementation of this Variance.

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

- As proposed, due to the presence of cultural resource CA-KER-7218, the sides of the road will be staked as an ESA in areas where the road is within the site boundary.
- All conditions required by Notice to Proceed (NTP) #27 shall apply to the subject area and activities.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, NTP #27, 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