

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



October 11, 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) #94

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On September 28, 2011, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request to widen the curve of an access road leading to Structure M56-T4 on Segment 8 Transmission Line (T/L) Chino Hills (Phase 1) of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP), in unincorporated Los Angeles County, California. Additional information was submitted on October 6, 2011. **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 widen the curve of an access road leading to Structure M56-T4 on Segment 8 T/L Chino Hills (Phase 1) of the TRTP, in unincorporated Los Angeles County, California. This access road is located off of Brea Ridge Mountainway, south of Structure M56-T4. The inside radius of the curve is proposed to be widened approximately ten feet from the edge of the existing road, with an approximate area of 0.04 acres. The outside radius of the curve is proposed to be widened approximately 25 feet from the edge of the existing road, with an approximate area of 0.17 acres. The total area widened would be 0.21 acres. The disturbance needed to utilize the proposed turning radius areas is vegetation removal and medium blading.

The proposed turning radius areas are necessary to ensure larger vehicles and equipment (i.e., tractor-trailer/low boy, large cranes) can negotiate this turn safely and without creating unapproved disturbance outside of the roadway. The widening of this road is necessary for construction only, and would be restored to existing conditions.

Biological Resources: SCE submitted a biological summary letter by ICF International dated September 14, 2011, titled *Proposed Road Widening at M56-T4, Segment 8 Phase 1, TRTP, Los Angeles County*. The letter documents the biological conditions at the proposed road widening near M56-T4 (Variance Project Component) and a 500-foot buffer (Biological Study Area [BSA]). Biological resources within the Variance Project Component and 500-foot buffer were evaluated during several focused surveys, including 2009, 2010, and 2011 rare plant surveys (AMEC 2009o, ICF 2010at, 2011cq); and 2010 and 2011 tree inventory surveys (ICF 2010av, 2011cq). Biological resources within the BSA were also evaluated during general preconstruction surveys and bat habitat assessment preconstruction surveys associated with M56-T4 (ICF 2011ad, 2010cb, 2010fr, 2011j, 2011fi, 2011fo). A literature review was also performed as part of the Biological Review for Segment 8 Phase I (Chino Hills) (ICF 2010ar). Additionally, clearance sweeps were performed on August 2, 2011. Construction monitoring has been ongoing regularly since the site became active, and species events and nest events are recorded in FRED.

Vegetation communities mapped within the Variance Project Component include mixed chaparral and disturbed/developed. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include California annual grassland, coast live oak woodland, mixed chaparral, nonnative woodland, ruderal grassland, and disturbed/developed. California walnut (*Juglans californica*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), and low potential bat habitat was identified in the 500-foot buffer during surveys and monitoring efforts (ICF 2010at, 2010av, 2011j). Environmentally sensitive area (ESA) signs were established for the California walnut (special-status plants) and coast live oak (City of La Habra Heights regulated tree). The BSA does not overlap special-status species USFWS critical habitats or special-status species occupied habitats.

Bat assessment surveys performed by ICF on September 15, 2010 and June 23, 2011, detected no potential bat roosts within the Variance Project Component. Low potential bat roosts were detected within the 500-foot buffer on June 23, 2011 (ICF 2011j).

Jurisdictional resources within the Variance Project Component were evaluated during the 2010 jurisdictional delineation for Segments 7 and 8 (ICF 2010h). Jurisdictional feature 8-33-S-1 occurs within the 500-foot buffer and will not be impacted by the Variance Project Component; no drainages occur within the proposed disturbance areas. Any unmapped features will be flagged and avoided.

No additional impacts to biological resources are anticipated with the implementation of this Variance and the conditions noted below.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources: SCE submitted a memorandum dated September 9, 2011 from Matthew Wetherbee, MSc, RPA, SCE Archaeologist, regarding the TRTP Cultural and Paleontological Resources Guidelines for Segment 8 T/L Phase 1 Variance Request – Road Widening at M56-T4. The memorandum states that no cultural or paleontological resources will be impacted by the proposed road widening located off of Brea Ridge Mountainway and south of Structure M56-T4 on the TRTP, Segment 8 Phase 1. The access road was included in a previous survey for the TRTP and no cultural resources were identified (Pacific Legacy 2010). Previous paleontological assessments conducted for the TRTP indicate that the access road is located within the Miocene Puente Formation, which has a high sensitivity for yielding paleontological resources (Gust and Scott 2009; Aron 2010). In accordance with the Paleontological Resources Management Plan (Gust and Scott 2009), paleontological resources monitoring is required during any ground disturbing activities for the proposed widening of the access road at M56-T4 on Segment 8 Phase 1. Work will not extend beyond the proposed road widening at M56-T4.

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

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

- Paleontological resources monitoring is required during any ground disturbing activities for the proposed widening of the access road at M56-T4 on Segment 8 Phase 1 in accordance with the Paleontological Resources Management Plan.
- All conditions required by Notice to Proceed (NTP) #11 shall apply to the subject area and activities.
- 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,

Handwritten signature of John Boccio in black ink, featuring a stylized 'J' and 'B'.

John Boccio
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen