

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



October 31, 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) #99

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On October 20, 2011, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request to use the portions of the designated topsoil storage areas that are located outside of the approved structure work area at M56-T3 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 21 and 28, 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 use the portions of the designated topsoil storage areas that are located outside of the approved structure work area at M56-T3 on Segment 8 T/L Chino Hills (Phase 1) of the TRTP, in unincorporated Los Angeles County, California. Topsoil salvage will occur at Structure M56-T3 on Segment 8 Phase 1 in Tonner Canyon. Locations for storing salvaged topsoil have been identified adjacent to M56-T3 and are located partially outside of the approved structure work area. The combined area of the topsoil storage areas adjacent to Structure M56-T3 is approximately 0.169 acres, of which approximately 0.078 acres is located outside of the approved structure work area. This variance request is for approval to use the portions of the designated topsoil storage areas that are located outside of the approved structure work area at M56-T3.

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted a biological survey report by ICF International dated October 17, 2011, titled *Proposed Topsoil Salvage Storage Locations Near M56-T3, Segment 8 Phase 1, TRTP, Los Angeles County*. The letter documents the biological conditions at the proposed topsoil salvage storage locations near M56-T3 (Variance Project Component) and the 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); 2010 and 2011 tree inventory surveys (ICF 2010av, 2011cq); but it is located outside of suitable habitat for wildlife species. Biological resources within the BSA were also evaluated during general preconstruction surveys and bat habitat assessment preconstruction surveys associated with M56-T3 (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 California annual grassland. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include California annual grassland, ruderal grassland, coast live oak woodland, California walnut woodland, mixed chaparral, and disturbed/developed.

Special-status plant species California walnut (*Juglans californica*) and regulated tree coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) were identified within the Variance Project Component and the 500-foot buffer. These environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) will be marked for avoidance.

Bat assessment surveys performed on September 15, 2010 and June 23, 2011 by ICF detected no potential bat roosts within the Variance Project Component. Potential San Diego desert woodrat middens and low potential bat habitat was identified in the 500-foot buffer during surveys and monitoring efforts (ICF 2010at, 2010av, 2011j). The BSA does not overlap USFWS critical habitats or any listed species or listed species occupied habitats.

Jurisdictional resources within the Variance Project Component were evaluated during the 2010 jurisdictional delineation for Segments 7 and 8 (ICF 2010h). No jurisdictional resources occur within the Variance Project Component. Jurisdictional feature 8-32-S-1 occurs within the 500-foot buffer, but will not be impacted. 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.

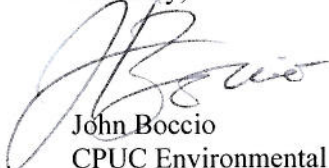
**Cultural and Paleontological Resources:** SCE submitted a memorandum dated October 18, 2011 from Matthew Wetherbee, MSc, RPA, SCE Archaeologist, regarding the TRTP Cultural and Paleontological Resources Guidelines for Segment 8 T/L Phase 1 Variance Request – Topsoil Salvage adjacent to M56-T3. The memorandum states that no cultural or paleontological resources will be impacted by the topsoil salvage and storage areas at Structure M56-T3 on Segment 8 T/L Phase 1 in Tonner Canyon. All of the topsoil salvage and storage areas were included in previous surveys for the TRTP project and no cultural resources were identified at those locations (Pacific Legacy 2007, 2010). Previous paleontological assessments conducted for the TRTP project area indicate that paleontological localities have been previously discovered in the project vicinity and the subsurface sediments are mapped as Puente Formation and have a very high sensitivity for yielding paleontological resources (Gust and Scott 2009; Aron 2010). However, no ground disturbing activities will occur at these storage locations; therefore, the use of these areas for topsoil salvage and storage will not have significant impacts to cultural or paleontological resources, and have a low probability of impacting previously unrecorded cultural resources.

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:**

- ESA fencing shall be installed around the drip line of the California walnut and coast live oak trees within the Variance Project Component to avoid impacts to the trees and their roots.
- 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,



John Boccio  
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen