

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



November 9, 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) #103

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On November 4, 2011, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request to allow for the realignment of two CPUC-approved guard pole areas near Construct 45, on Segment 5 Transmission Line (T/L) of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP) in Los Angeles 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 for the realignment of two CPUC-approved guard pole areas near Construct 45, on Segment 5 T/L of the TRTP in Los Angeles County, California. Subsequent to the approval of the NTPR (NTP #15 dated September 10, 2010) by the CPUC, project site conditions have been further evaluated and two guard pole areas need to be realigned along Segment 5 T/L. The two CPUC-approved guard pole areas southeast of Construct 45 need to be realigned closer to the roadway. This realignment would allow each area to be directly accessed from the existing road. Light grading and grubbing would be performed in the proposed guard pole areas to create level pads. The total new disturbance area associated with these changes would be approximately 0.3 acres.

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted a biological survey report from ICF, International dated November 4, 2011, titled *Proposed Guard Pole Realignments near Construct 45, Segment 5, TRTP, Los Angeles County*. The report documents the biological conditions at the proposed guard pole realignments near Construct 45 (Variance Project Component) and the 500-foot buffer (Biological Study Area [BSA]). Biological resources within the BSA were evaluated during several focused surveys, including 2009, 2010, and 2011 rare plant surveys (AMEC 2009c; ICF 2010ag, 2011cq); 2010 and 2011 tree inventory surveys (ICF 2010bf, 2011ga); and 2009 and 2010 burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) surveys (AMEC 2009f; ICF 2010cq1). The biological resources within the BSA were also evaluated during general preconstruction surveys, burrowing owl preconstruction surveys, and preconstruction bat habitat assessment surveys associated with Constructs 45 and 46 (ICF 2010bc, 2010bt). A literature review was performed as part of the Biological Review for Segment 5 (ICF 2010yy). Additionally, a clearance sweep was performed on September 29, 2010. Construction monitoring has been ongoing regularly since the sites became active, and species events and nest events are recorded in the SCE Field Reporting Environmental Database (FRED).

Vegetation communities within the Variance Project Component include California annual grassland and disturbed/developed. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include California annual grassland, Mojave mixed woody scrub, and disturbed/developed. Special-status plant species Peirson's morning glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*) and California androsace (*Androsace elongate ssp. acuta*) were observed within the 500-foot buffer. No special-status wildlife species were detected within the Variance

Project Component. An inactive American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) nest (FRED Nest ID 001337) is located within the 500-foot buffer. Potential burrowing owl features were identified within the 500-foot buffer, but none were identified as active or occupied. Preconstruction bat assessment surveys performed on September 27 and October 6, 2010, by ICF detected no potential bat roosts within the Variance Project Component.

Jurisdictional resources within the Variance Project Component were evaluated during the 2010 jurisdictional delineation for Segments 4, 5, and 10 (ICF 2010I). No mapped jurisdictional features are located within the Variance Project Component. Any additional potential jurisdictional features will be staked as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) and flagged for avoidance.

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 22, 2011 regarding *TRTP Variance Request – Segment 5, CT-45 Guard Pole Reconfiguration - Cultural Clearance for an Equipment Staging and Storage Area near CT-18 on Segment 5*. The memorandum states that no cultural resources will be impacted by the proposed movement of two guard pole areas on Segment 5 as part of this Variance Request in support of the TRTP. A cultural record search and surveys (Ahmet et al. 2006; Pacific Legacy 2007, 2010a, 2010b), and a paleontological literature review (Gust and Scott 2009) have been previously conducted for these areas on Segment 5. This research identified no cultural or paleontological resources. The paleontological review indicated that the two guard pole areas contain soils that have no potential to yield paleontological resources (Gust and Scott 2009).

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:

- All conditions required by Notice to Proceed (NTP) #15 shall apply to the subject area and activities.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, NTP #15, 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