

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



November 10, 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) #105

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On November 6, 2011, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request to allow for additional disturbance areas near Constructs 6, 28B, 44, 68, and M113-T3, 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 additional disturbance areas at Constructs 6, 28B, 44, and 68, and M113-T3, 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 additional disturbance areas are needed at several work areas along Segment 5 T/L. The specific proposed changes are described below:

- **Southeast of Construct (CT) 6.** A Wire Setup Site (WSS) would be added southeast of CT 6. The additional new disturbance area associated with this area would be approximately 0.9 acres.
- **West of CT 28B.** The CPUC-approved Minimum Improvement access road leading from CT 28B to CT 28A would be changed to Heavy Improvement. This road is located on a steep slope with a small turning radius. Therefore, the access road needs to be further graded to create a larger turning radius needed for construction equipment access. The additional new disturbance area associated with this change would be approximately 0.2 acre.
- **West of CT 44.** A WSS would be added West of CT 44. The additional new disturbance area associated with this change would be approximately 0.9 acre.
- **South of CT 68.** A WSS would be added between CT 68 and CT M105-T2. The additional new disturbance area associated with this change would be approximately 0.9 acre.
- **West of CT M113-T3.** A WSS would be added west of CT M113-T3. The additional new disturbance area associated with this change would be approximately 0.3 acre.

At each of the proposed WSSs described above, light grading and grubbing would be performed, as needed, to create a level pad to allow equipment and machinery to be safely operated.

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted a biological survey report from ICF, International dated November 4, 2011 titled *Four Proposed Additional Wire Setup Sites and One Proposed Additional Access Road*,



*Segment 5, Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project, Los Angeles County.* The report documents the biological conditions at four proposed Wire Setup Sites (WSS) and one proposed additional access road (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); 2009, 2010, and 2011 riparian bird surveys (AMEC 2009i; ICF 2010ah, 2011cq); 2009 and 2010 California red-legged frog surveys (AMEC 2009h; ICF and BonTerra 2010f); 2009 and 2010 southwestern pond turtle surveys (AMEC 2009b; ICF and BonTerra 2010b); 2009 and 2010 two-striped garter snake and south coast carter snake (AMEC 2009g; ICF and BonTerra 2010a); and 2009 and 2010 burrowing owl 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 6, 28B, 44, 68, and Vincent Substation (ICF 2010mm, 2010pp, 2010bc, 2010bd, 2010bq, 2010br, 2010bt, 2010bu, 2010ch, 2010co, 2010cq2, 2011b, 2011c). A literature review was also performed as part of the Biological Review for Segment 5 (ICF 2010yy). Additionally, a clearance sweep was performed at Site 1 on November 11, 2010, December 9, 28, and 29, 2010; at Site 2 on November 22, 2010, May 4 and 9, 2011; at Site 3 on September 9, 2010, June 2 and 17, 2011; at Site 4 on November 2, 2010; and at Site 5 on August 11, 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).

**Site 1** (Southeast of Construct (CT) 6). Vegetation communities within the Variance Project Component and 500-foot buffer include California annual grassland and disturbed developed. Special-status wildlife species loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) and Northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) were observed within the 500-foot buffer. Jurisdictional feature 5-4-S-4 is located within the 500-foot buffer.

**Site 2** (West of CT 28B). Vegetation communities within the Variance Project Component and 500-foot buffer include California annual grassland, Mojave mixed woody scrub, and disturbed/developed. Special-status plant species Peirson's morning glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*) was observed within the 500-foot buffer. Regulated tree species California juniper (*Juniperus californica*) occurs within the 500-foot buffer. Special-status wildlife species prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) and Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) were observed within the 500-foot buffer. Jurisdictional feature 5-22-S-11 is located within the 500-foot buffer.

**Site 3** (West of CT 44). Vegetation communities within the Variance Project Component include Mojave mixed woody scrub and disturbed/developed. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include California annual grassland, Mojave mixed woody scrub, and disturbed/developed. Special-status plant Peirson's morning glory was observed within the Variance Project Component and 500-foot buffer, and California androsace (*Androsace elongata* ssp. *acuta*) was observed within the 500-foot buffer. Special-status wildlife species Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), prairie falcon, and golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) were observed within the 500-foot buffer.

**Site 4** (South of CT 68). Vegetation communities within the Variance Project Component include Mojavean juniper woodland scrub and Mojave mixed woody scrub. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include Mojave desert wash scrub, Mojavean juniper woodland scrub, Mojave mixed woody scrub, Mojave mixed woody scrub disturbed, ruderal grassland, and disturbed/developed. Special-status plant species short-joint beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *brachyclada*) is within the 500-foot buffer. Special-status wildlife species Cooper's hawk (*Buteo cooperii*) and potential burrowing owl features were observed within the 500-foot buffer. Jurisdictional feature 5-39-S-1 is located within the 500-foot buffer.

**Site 5** (West of CT M113-T3). Vegetation communities within the Variance Project Component include big sagebrush scrub and Mojave desert wash scrub. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include big sagebrush scrub, Mojave desert wash scrub, Mojavean juniper woodland scrub, Mojavean juniper



woodland scrub disturbed, Mojave mixed woody scrub, Mojave mixed woody scrub disturbed, ruderal grassland, and disturbed/developed. Special-status plant species beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*) is within the 500-foot buffer. Special-status wildlife species loggerhead shrike, Cooper's hawk, violet-green swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*) and potential burrowing owl features were observed within the 500-foot buffer. Jurisdictional features 11-2-S-3, 11-2-S-3, 11-2-S-6, 11-2-S-7 are located within the 500-foot buffer.

Jurisdictional resources within the Variance Project Component were evaluated during the 2010 jurisdictional delineation for Segments 4, 5, and 10 (ICF 2010i) and Segments 6 and 11 (ICF 2010aj). No mapped jurisdictional features are located within the Variance Project Component. Jurisdictional features identified within the Site 1, Site 2, Site 4, and Site 5 500-foot buffers will be avoided. Any additional potential jurisdictional features will be staked as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) and flagged for avoidance.

California annual grassland provides potential habitat for Swainson's hawk. Impacts to Swainson's hawk habitat associated with the Variance Project Component total 0.831 acre (0.001 permanent and 0.830 temporary).

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 three cultural and paleontological resources memorandums with the Variance Request, which are described below.

SCE submitted a memorandum from SCE dated September 26, 2011 regarding the *TRTP Variance Request – Segment 5, 5-Additional Wire Stringing Sites (WSS) – Cultural Clearance for Five Additional Wire Stringing Sites on Segment 5*. The five (5) WSS areas are at three (3) locales: WSS 1 is located 100 feet southeast of CT 6, WSS 2 is located 200 feet west of CT 44, and WSS 3 is located south of the Vincent Substation (one area west of tower M113-T3, two areas east of M113-T4). The memorandum states that no cultural resources will be impacted by the proposed five additional WSS 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 this area on Segment 5. This research showed that an area within one of the WSS south of Vincent Substation was not surveyed. The un-surveyed portion of the proposed WSS was surveyed for this Variance (Pacific Legacy 2011). This research and survey identified no cultural resources, but suggested the possibility that paleontological resources may exist in some areas. A small portion within the center of the requested WSS area west of tower M113-T3 was previously un-surveyed. The previously un-surveyed area of this WSS and a 100-foot buffer were surveyed for cultural resources (Pacific Legacy 2011). The survey identified no cultural resources within the proposed WSS. The paleontological indicated that each of the three general WSS areas has a different potential to yield paleontological resources (Gust and Scott 2009). WSS 1: There is a potential for paleontological resources to exist in the WSS area near CT-6. Therefore, paleontological spot-check monitoring is recommended if any ground disturbing excavation in this area exceeds a depth of two (2) feet. WSS 2: The potential for paleontological resources to exist west of CT-44 is low. Therefore, paleontological monitoring is not recommended during project construction activities in this area. WSS 3: There is a potential for paleontological resources to exist in the WSS areas south of Vincent Substation. Therefore, paleontological monitoring is recommended during all ground disturbing project construction activities at this location.

SCE submitted a memorandum from SCE dated October 4, 2011 regarding the *TRTP Variance Request – Segment 5, CT-28B Disturbance Area – Cultural Clearance for an Additional Disturbance Area and Access Road Status Change at CT-28B on Segment 5*. The memorandum states that no cultural resources will be impacted by the proposed additional disturbance area and access road status change 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 this area on Segment 5. This research identified no cultural or paleontological resources. The paleontological review indicated that the proposed disturbance and road improvement area contain soils that have no potential to yield paleontological resources (Gust and Scott 2009). Since the potential for paleontological resources to exist in the area is low, paleontological monitoring is not recommended during project construction activities.

SCE submitted a memorandum from SCE dated August 18, 2011 regarding the *TRTP Variance Request – Segment 5, Vincent Additional Wire Stringing Site (WSS) – Cultural Clearance for an Additional WSS North of Vincent Substation on Segment 5*. The WSS is located on the north side of Vincent Substation and Rockyford Road south of CT-68. The memorandum states that no cultural resources will be impacted by the proposed additional WSS 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 this area on Segment 5. This research showed that the northeast portion of the proposed WSS was not surveyed. The un-surveyed portion of the proposed WSS was surveyed for this Variance (Pacific Legacy 2011). This research and survey identified no cultural resources, but suggested the possibility that paleontological resources may exist. The previously un-surveyed northeastern corner of this WSS and a 100 foot buffer were surveyed for cultural resources (Pacific Legacy 2011). The survey identified no cultural material (prehistoric or historic) within the proposed WSS. The western boundary of previously recorded historic trash scatter site SEG5-04 is located approximately 75 feet east of the proposed WSS. Due to the absence of resources in the requested WSS area, no further cultural studies or monitoring is recommended at this location. The paleontological review indicated that the proposed WSS area contains soil that has the potential to yield paleontological resources (Gust and Scott 2009). Since there is a possibility that paleontological resources exist, paleontological monitoring is recommended during all ground disturbing project construction activities at this location.

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:**

- As proposed, due to the potential for paleontological resources, paleontological monitoring shall be conducted as described above.
- 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