

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



November 22, 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) #108

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On November 18, 2011, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request to expand the disturbance areas at Construct 55, on Segment 5 Transmission Line (T/L), and at Constructs M100-T2A and M100-T3A on the Midway-Vincent No. 3 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 expand the disturbance areas at Construct (CT) 55, on Segment 5 T/L, and at CT M100-T2A (near CT 50 on Segment 5 T/L) and CT M100-T3A (near CT 51a on Segment 5 T/L) on the Midway-Vincent No. 3 T/L of the TRTP in Los Angeles County, California. Subsequent to the approval of the NTPRs (NTP #15 for Segment 5 T/L dated September 10, 2010, and NTP #30 for Segments 4 & 5 Midway-Vincent No. 3 T/L dated June 7, 2011) by the CPUC, project site conditions have been further evaluated and additional disturbance areas are needed at three tower locations. Due to the steep topography in these areas, slope stabilization measures associated with roadway construction require additional work areas. Information for each tower location is provided below.

- **Construct M100-T2A (near CT 50 on Segment 5 T/L).** Additional disturbance areas associated with planned slope stabilization activities are needed on the northwest and south sides of the CPUC-approved tower work area. The total additional disturbance area associated with these changes is approximately 1 acre.
- **Construct M100-T3A (near CT 51a on Segment 5 T/L).** An additional disturbance area associated with planned slope stabilization activities is needed on the northwest side of the CPUC-approved tower work area. The additional disturbance area measures approximately 0.1 acre.
- **Construct 55.** Additional disturbance areas are needed as the result of planned slope stabilization activities. Specifically, on the east side of the CPUC-approved tower work area, slope stabilization is required for the access road. In addition, as a result of the area required for the slope stabilization activities, the tower work area would need to be repositioned slightly to the northwest and an additional disturbance area would be added on the northwest side of this area. The additional disturbance area associated with these changes is approximately 0.8 acres.
- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted a biological resources report from ICF dated November 16, 2011 titled *Proposed Additional Disturbance Areas, Segment 5 and Midway-Vincent Transmission Lines, Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project, Los Angeles County*. The report documents the biological

conditions at three proposed additional disturbance areas, which include Site 1: Midway-Vincent No. 3 T/L M100-T2A (near CT 50 on Segment 5 T/L), Site 2: Midway-Vincent No. 3 T/L M100-T3A (near CT 51a on Segment 5 T/L), and Site 3: Segment 5 T/L CT 55 (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, 2011gu); 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 and preconstruction bat habitat assessment surveys associated with Constructs 50, 51a, and 55 (ICF 2010bq, 2010bs). A literature review was also performed as part of the Biological Review for Segment 5 (ICF 2010yy) and Midway-Vincent T/L (ICF 2011cp). Additionally, a clearance sweep was performed on Site 1 on March 30, 2011; on Site 2 on June 2, 2011; and on the entire Variance Project Component on October 18, 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: Midway-Vincent No. 3 T/L M100-T2A (near CT 50 on Segment 5 T/L)**

Vegetation communities within the Variance Project Component include mixed chaparral and disturbed/developed. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include California annual grassland, mixed chaparral, mixed Mojave woody scrub, scrub oak chaparral, and disturbed developed. Special-status plant species Peirson's morning glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*) was observed within the 500-foot buffer. Regulated tree species Tucker's oak (*Quercus john-tuckeri*) was observed within the 500-foot buffer. Potential burrowing owl feature was observed within the 500-foot buffer.

**Site 2: Midway-Vincent No. 3 T/L M100-T3A (near CT 51 on Segment 5 T/L)**

Vegetation communities within the Variance Project Component include California annual grassland, mixed chaparral, and disturbed/developed. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include California annual grassland, California annual grassland - burned, mixed chaparral, mixed chaparral - burned, scrub oak chaparral, and disturbed/developed. Special-status plant species Peirson's morning glory and Mojave Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja plagiotoma*) was observed within the 500-foot buffer. Potential burrowing owl feature was observed within the 500-foot buffer. Jurisdictional feature 5-29-S-2 is within the 500-foot buffer and will be avoided.

**Site 3: Segment 5 T/L Construct 55**

Vegetation communities within the Variance Project Component include Mojavean juniper woodland and scrub and disturbed/developed. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include Mojavean juniper woodland and scrub, Mojave mixed woody scrub, and disturbed/developed. Regulated tree species Tucker's oak was observed within the 500-foot buffer. Loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) was observed within the 500-foot buffer. Jurisdictional features 5-31-S-1 and 5-44-S-11 are within the 500-foot buffer and will be avoided.

Jurisdictional resources within the Variance Project Component were evaluated during the 2010 jurisdictional delineation for Segments 4, 5, and 10 (ICF 2010l). Any additional potential jurisdictional features will be staked as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) and flagged for avoidance.

There are no impacts to species or suitable habitat for special-status species included in the CDFG Incidental Take Permit (ITP) or their habitats associated with this Variance.

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 from SCE dated November 11, 2011 regarding *TRTP Variance Request – Segment 5, Midway-Vincent GLOTA - Cultural Clearance for*

*Expansion of Midway-Vincent Disturbance Areas at CT-50, 51A, and 55 on Segment 5.* The memorandum states that no cultural resources will be impacted by additional grading limits of tower area (GLOTA) disturbance areas requested at Construction Towers (CT) 50, 51A, and 55 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 in Segment 5. This research showed that two small portions of the requested CT-50 area were not surveyed. The unsurveyed portions of the requested CT-50 CLOTA were surveyed for this Variance (Pacific Legacy 2011). This research and survey identified no cultural or paleontological resources.

The paleontological review indicated that the proposed additional GLOTA disturbance areas 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.

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 and NTP #30 shall apply to the subject area and activities.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, NTP #15, NTP #30, 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