

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



January 12, 2012

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) #110

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On January 10, 2012, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request to widen the curve of an access road intersection to allow safe vehicle access to Structures M55-T2 and M56-T1 from Running Branch Road on Segment 8 Transmission Line (T/L) (Phase 1) of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP), in unincorporated Los Angeles County, California. Additional biological information was submitted on January 11, 2012. **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 intersection to allow safe vehicle access to Structures M55-T2 and M56-T1 from Running Branch Road on Segment 8 T/L Chino Hills (Phase 1) of the TRTP, in unincorporated Los Angeles County, California. The proposed turning radius areas are located approximately 85 feet south of the limits of the City of Diamond Bar. The intersection curve widening is needed to allow oversized vehicles east and west access from Running Branch Road, which connects to an unnamed access road leading to Structure M55-T2 (west) and M56-T1 (east). The intersection at the end of Running Branch Road meets the unnamed road in a T-configuration. A wide turning radius at both junctures of the T-configuration would allow for larger vehicles to safely navigate the intersection. The disturbance within the proposed turning radius areas would be temporary and would include drive and crush and blading the area to the existing road grade. The proposed turning radius areas consist of two irregular polygons, totaling approximately 690 square feet: 470 square feet for the western polygon and 220 square feet for the eastern polygon. The total proposed turning radius areas are approximately 0.016 acres: 0.005 acres for the western polygon and 0.011 acres for the eastern polygon.

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted a biological survey report by ICF International dated January 10, 2012, titled *Proposed Segment 8 Phase 1 M55-T2 and M56-T1 Intersection Curve Widening Variance Biological Report, TRTP*. The letter documents the biological conditions at the proposed Segment 8 Phase 1 M55-T2 and M56-T1 intersection curve widening (Variance Project Component) and the 500-foot buffer (Biological Study Area [BSA]). Biological resources within the Variance Project Component and 500-foot buffer (BSA) 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); and 2009, 2010, and 2011 coastal California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica*) surveys (AMEC 2009m; ICF 2010ww, 2011gq). Biological resources within the BSA were also evaluated during general preconstruction surveys and bat habitat assessment preconstruction surveys (ICF 2010ce, 2010ez, 2010fr, 2011y, 2011ad, 2011fi, 2011fo). A literature review was also performed as part of the Biological Review for Segment 8 Phase I (Chino Hills) (ICF 2010ar). A general biological preconstruction survey was performed on July 20, 2011 (ICF 2011fo) and a clearance sweep was performed on August 2, 2011.

Construction monitoring has been ongoing regularly since the sites became active, and species events and nest events are recorded in the Field Reporting Environmental Database (FRED).

Vegetation communities within the Variance Project Component include coastal sage scrub, nonnative woodland, and disturbed/developed. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include coast live oak woodland, coastal sage scrub, California walnut woodland, mixed chaparral, nonnative woodland, and disturbed/developed. No special-status plant species or regulated tree species were identified within the Variance Project Component. Special-status plant species California walnut (*Juglans californica*) and intermediate mariposa lily (*Calochortus weedii* var. *intermedius*) were identified within the 500-foot buffer. Regulated tree species California scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*) and coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) were identified within the 500-foot buffer.

No special-status wildlife species, nests, or special-status habitats were identified within the Variance Project Component. San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*) and San Diego desert woodrat potential midden were identified within the 500-foot buffer. Potential colonial bat roost habitat, medium potential bat roost habitat, and potential solitary bat roost habitat/low potential bat roost habitat were identified within the 500-foot buffer. The Variance Project Component does not overlap coastal California gnatcatcher occupied habitat or critical habitat or least Bell's vireo occupied habitat.

Jurisdictional resources within the Variance Project Component were evaluated during the 2010 jurisdictional delineation for Segments 7 and 8 (ICF 2010h). No jurisdictional features were mapped within the BSA. Subsequently identified potential jurisdictional features will be staked and flagged as Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESAs) 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 December 15, 2011 from Matthew Wetherbee, MSc, RPA, SCE Archaeologist, regarding the SCE TRTP Cultural and Paleontological Resources Guidelines for Segment 8 T/L Phase 1 Variance Request – M55-T2 and M56-T1 Intersection Curve Widening. The memorandum states that no cultural or paleontological resources will be impacted by the proposed intersection curve widening to Structures M55-T2 and M56-T1 on Segment 8 T/L Phase 1 of the TRTP. The proposed intersection curve widening area provided in the variance request was included in the previous survey for the TRTP and no cultural resources were identified (Pacific Legacy 2010). Previous paleontological assessments conducted for the TRTP indicate that the proposed intersection curve widening area 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 Resource Management Plan (Gust and Scott 2009), paleontological resources monitoring is required during any ground disturbing activities for this variance request.

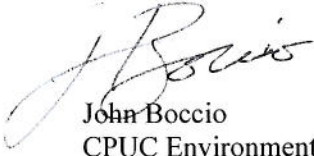
No additional impacts to cultural or paleontological resources are anticipated with the implementation of this Variance and the conditions noted below.

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

- Due to the high sensitivity for the Miocene Puente Formation to yield paleontological resources, and in accordance with the Paleontological Resources Management Plan, paleontological resources monitoring is required during any ground disturbing activities.
- 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Boccio", written in a cursive style.

John Boccio
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen