

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



January 31, 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) #114

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On January 24, 2012, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request to expand the disturbance area at Construct 86A, on Segments 4 & 5 Midway-Vincent No. 3 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 expand the disturbance area at Construct (CT) 86A, on Segments 4 & 5 Midway-Vincent No. 3 T/L of the TRTP in Los Angeles County, California. Subsequent to the approval of the NTPR (NTP #30 dated June 7, 2011) for Segments 4 & 5 Midway-Vincent No. 3 T/L by the CPUC, project site conditions have been further evaluated and an additional temporary disturbance area is needed along the access road leading to Construct 86A. (Note that this structure is referred to as M100-T2A in the original NTPR figure.) Due to the steep topography in this area, slope stabilization measures associated with roadway construction require additional work area. This area comprises approximately 0.4 acre.

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted a biological resources report from ICF dated January 19, 2012 titled *Proposed Additional Disturbance Area near Construct 86A, Segments 4 & 5 Midway-Vincent Transmission Line, Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project, Los Angeles County*. The report documents the biological conditions at the proposed additional disturbance area near Construct 86A of the Segments 4 & 5 Midway-Vincent No. 3 T/L (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 Segment 5 Constructs 48-58 general preconstruction surveys and preconstruction bat habitat assessment surveys associated with Construct 86A (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 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).

Vegetation communities within the Project Component include mixed chaparral. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include mixed chaparral, mixed Mojave woody scrub, scrub oak chaparral, and disturbed/developed. Special-status plant species, Peirson's morning glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*), occur

within the 500-foot buffer. Regulated tree species, Tucker's oak (*Quercus john-tuckeri*), occurs within the 500-foot buffer. Potential burrowing owl features were observed 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 2010). Jurisdictional feature, 5-29-S-1, occurs within the 500-foot buffer and will be avoided. 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 the USFWS Biological Opinion (BO) 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 dated December 22, 2011 regarding *TRTP Variance Request – Midway-Vincent Upgrade Tower 86A Disturbance Area Expansion - Cultural Clearance for the Disturbance Area Expansion for Access to Midway-Vincent Upgrade Tower 86A near CT-50 on Segment 5*. The memorandum states that no cultural resources will be impacted by the requested Midway-Vincent tower 86A Disturbance Area Expansion near CT 50 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 and survey identified no cultural or paleontological resources near the proposed disturbance area.

The paleontological review indicated that the proposed Midway-Vincent Tower 86A expanded disturbance area contains soil that has 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 #30) shall apply to the subject area and activities.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, 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