

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



March 14, 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) #120

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On March 2, 2012, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request for the use of an existing gate along the fence line for vehicle access to the Vincent North Material Yard, as part of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP), in unincorporated Los Angeles County, California. Additional cultural information was submitted on March 6, 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 for the use of an existing gate along the fence line for vehicle access to the Vincent North Material Yard, as part of the TRTP, in unincorporated Los Angeles County, California. A "drive way" approximately 25 feet wide along the fence, extending 46 feet from the fence to Carson Mesa Road will be established through minor blading to remove a small berm, and crushing and rolling of vegetation. The gate is aligned at the center of the drive way, allowing truck access to remove wastewater from the holding tanks. The holding tanks are located inside of the Vincent North Material Yard and are otherwise inaccessible to the service truck.

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted a biological report titled *Proposed Gate Additional Work Area, Vincent North Material Yard, Segment 6, Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project, Los Angeles County* dated January 12, 2012. The report documents the biological conditions at the proposed Vincent North Material Yard gate additional work area (Variance Project Component) plus a 500-foot buffer. The Variance Project Component and the 500-foot buffer are referred to as the Biological Study Area (BSA). While the Vincent North Material Yard serves Segments 6 and 11, the BSA is located along Segment 5 and was included in Segment 5 focused surveys. 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 2010ac). 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 the overlapping Rodeo Contractor Yard survey area, the Segment 5 survey area, Vincent South Material Yard survey area, and the Vincent North Material Yard survey area (ICF 2010rr, 2010ae, 2010af, 2010be, 2010fk, 2010fl, 2010fm, 2010fn, 2011m, 2011n, 2011bi, 2011bj, 2011bk). Literature reviews were also performed as part of the Biological Review for Segment 5, Vincent North Material Yard, and Vincent South Material Yard (ICF 2010yy, 2010ck, 2010cl). 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).

The Variance Project Component consists of the vegetation community, Mojavean juniper woodland scrub – disturbed. Vegetation communities within the 500-foot buffer include Mojavean juniper woodland scrub,

Mojavean juniper woodland scrub – disturbed, rabbitbrush scrub, ruderal grassland, and disturbed/developed. No special-status plant species or regulated tree species occur within the BSA. The Variance Project Component does not overlap suitable habitat for special-status species as included in the CDFG Incidental Take Permit (ITP) or the USFWS Biological Opinion (BO).

Wildlife species observed within the 500-foot buffer include Loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*), potential desert woodrat midden, and potential burrowing owl features.

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 BSA (ICF 2010I). 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 cultural and paleontological information with the variance request stating that no cultural or paleontological resources will be impacted by the proposed work area changes associated with this variance request for the TRTP. The area proposed for yard access was included in previous cultural resources surveys and records searches for the TRTP (Pacific Legacy 2007, Schneider et al. 2010). One cultural resource, CA-LAN-3536H, was recorded within the area associated with the current variance request. The portion of this site affected by construction of the Vincent Yard North, including the area affected by present variance, was evaluated and determined to not be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). Furthermore, cultural resources monitoring during development of Vincent Yard North did not reveal features or subsurface cultural deposits.

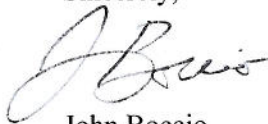
Previous paleontological assessments (Gust and Scott 2009) prepared for the TRTP project areas indicate that no paleontological resources have been previously discovered in the project vicinity. Soils in the vicinity consist of Quaternary Alluvium (Qa), which is classified as a low level of sensitivity for harboring 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) #21 shall apply to the subject area and activities.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, NTP #21, 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