

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



January 18, 2012

Ms. Suzan Benz  
Environmental Project Manager  
Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Project  
6 Point Drive, 1st Floor  
Brea, CA 92821-6320

RE: SCE Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Line Project – Variance Request #20

Dear Ms. Benz,

On January 13, 2012, Southern California Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for use of two water sources in the Cabazon area for transmission line construction needs along the Devers-Valley segment of the Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 (DPV2) Transmission Project.

The CPUC voted on January 25, 2007 to approve the SCE DPV2 Transmission Line Project ([Decision D.07-01-040](#)). On May 14, 2008, SCE filed a Petition for Modification (PFM) of the existing Certificate for Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) approved per Decision D.07-01-040. SCE requested that the CPUC authorize SCE to construct DPV2 facilities in only the California portion of DPV2 and the Midpoint Substation (now called the Colorado River Substation) near Blythe, California. The CPUC approved SCE's PFM on November 20, 2009 in [Decision D.09-11-007](#).

After the CPUC's 2009 Decision regarding the PFM, several large solar power projects were proposed in the Blythe and Desert Center areas. SCE filed Permit to Construct applications addressing expansion of the Colorado River Substation and construction of a new Red Bluff Substation. These components were not covered in the original DPV2 Final EIR/EIS, because the solar power projects had not yet been proposed, and supplemental environmental review has been conducted. The Colorado River Substation Expansion and the Red Bluff Substation were both approved by the CPUC on July 14, 2011 in Decisions D.11-07-011 and D.11-07-020, respectively.

The BLM issued a Record of Decision approving the Project on July 19, 2011 and approved exclusionary fencing activities on August 23, 2011. The Project also crosses lands under jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service on the San Bernardino National Forest within an existing Forest Service-issued easement. The Forest Service will issue a revised easement signed by the Forest Supervisor. The area requested under this variance does not fall under Forest Service jurisdiction.

The CPUC also adopted a Mitigation, Monitoring, Compliance and Reporting Program (MMCRP) to ensure compliance with all mitigation measures imposed on the DPV2 Project during implementation. The MMCRP also acknowledges that temporary changes to the project are anticipated and common practice for construction efforts of this scale and that a Variance Request would be required for these activities. This letter documents the CPUC's thorough evaluation of all activities covered in this variance, and that no new impacts or increase in impact severity would result from the requested variance activities.

Variance #20, which approves the subject transmission line water sources, is granted by CPUC for the proposed activities based on the factors described below.

**SCE Variance Request.** SCE has requested a variance under NTPs #7 and #10 for two water locations in the City of Cabazon along the Devers-Valley segment. Excerpts from the SCE Variance Request, received January 13, 2012, are presented below (indented):

Southern California Edison (SCE) requests a variance for the DV1 Minor Relocation and Devers to Valley Transmission Line, identified in NTPs # 7 and #10 for use of offsite water hydrants identified by the contractors for dust suppression during construction. This variance request includes two high priority offsite water hydrants in the Cabazon area as noted in the following table. Hydrants will be equipped with a water meter and will be utilized as a source for water on the Devers-Valley and DV1 Minor Relocation portion of DPV2. Potential activities to occur at water hydrant locations include driving of water trucks and parking of additional support vehicles and equipment during project hours. Aerial maps and photos for the hydrant locations are attached.

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**Hydrant Locations**

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Site Location	City	Water District	Latitude	Longitude
15201-15299 Elm St	Cabazon	Cabazon Water District	N33.89967	W116.75460
50160 Esperanza Ave	Cabazon	Cabazon Water District	N33.90339	W116.78706

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**CPUC Evaluation of Variance Request**

In accordance with the MMRP, the subject variance request was reviewed by CPUC to confirm that no new impacts or increase in impact severity would result from the requested variance activities. The following discussion summarizes this analysis for biological resources, cultural resources, paleontological resources, noise/sensitive receptors, water resources, and other issue areas. A list of conditions is presented below to define additional information and clarifications regarding mitigation requirements. In some cases, these items exceed the requirements of the Mitigation Measures and Applicant Proposed Measures, and are based on specific site conditions and/or are proposed conditions by SCE.

**Biological Resources.** The water sources have been reviewed in the field. The subject hydrants are located in disturbed areas immediately adjacent to public streets; therefore, there are no biological resources concerns associated with this variance.

All mitigation measures, APMs, and conditions of the Biological Opinion (BO) should be implemented along the water haul routes. This includes, but is not limited to, providing a qualified USFWS, CPUC, and BLM approved tortoise biologist, pre-construction clearance sweeps, and maintaining speed limits.

**Cultural Resources.** Based on background research and a site visit, there is no potential to encounter cultural resources at the two offsite water hydrants identified for dust suppression. The water sources are existing and would also be accessed via existing roadways by truck. All trucks will remain on existing roads and no ground disturbance is required. Therefore, there are no specific cultural resources conditions applicable to this variance.

**Paleontological Resources.** Based on the Paleontological Monitoring and Treatment Plan, submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission on April 20, 2011, the potential to encounter paleontological resources within the identified offsite water sources is low. In addition, no ground disturbing activities will be required. Therefore, there are no specific paleontological resources conditions applicable to this variance.

**Noise/Sensitive Receptors.** Although the two hydrants would be located nearby to residences, use of the two water sources would have similar noise-generating activities to those that will occur for use at

the construction yards and transmission line work areas. Appropriate noise and land use mitigation measures would apply. In addition, the contractors would be accessing existing fire hydrants and the overall scope and duration of construction activities has not changed as a result of the variance.

**Water Resources.** Under this variance, SCE would utilize two existing fire hydrants. There would be no ground disturbance or new impervious surfaces required under this variance and overall water usage would not change. The hydrants would be equipped with a meter and water would be obtained from the Cabazon Water District. No additional groundwater would be utilized. Therefore, there are no specific water resources conditions applicable to this variance.

**Other Issue Areas.** No concerns noted under this variance.

**Conditions of Variance Approval.**

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

1. All applicable project mitigation measures, APMs, conditions of the Biological Opinion, compliance plans, permit conditions and NTP conditions shall be implemented. Some measures have on-going/time-sensitive requirements and shall be implemented prior to and during construction where applicable.
2. Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, and this Variance approval shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities.
3. The CPUC EM shall be notified immediately of any unanticipated cultural, paleontological, or biological resource discoveries.
4. All crew members shall be Safe Worker and Environmental Awareness Program (SWEAP) trained prior to working on the project. A log shall be maintained on-site with the names of all crew personnel trained. For any crew members with limited English, a translator shall be on-site to ensure understanding of the training program. In place of a translator, the SWEAP training brochure can be provided in Spanish or other languages as appropriate. All participants will receive a hard-hat sticker for ease of compliance verification.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Billie Blanchard  
CPUC Environmental Project Manager  
DPV2 Transmission Project

cc: Ryana Parker, Southern California Edison  
Patty Nevins, Southern California Edison  
Sylvia Granados, Southern California Edison  
Vida Strong, Aspen Environmental Group  
Hedy Koczwara, Aspen Environmental Group  
Jamison Miner, Aspen Environmental Group  
Jenny Slaughter, Aspen Environmental Group  
Rosina Gallego, Aspen Environmental Group  
Ryann Loomis, Aspen Environmental Group