STATE OF CALIFORNIA ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

May 22, 2009

Donald Johnson
Project Manager
Southern California Edison
2131 Walnut Grove Ave.
Rosemead, C 911770

RE: SCE Antelope-Pardee 500 kV Transmission Project, Segment 1 – Variance Request #45

Dear Mr. Johnson,

On April 28, 2009, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance requesting an alternative access route to Wire Stringing Site (WSS) 23 in the Angeles National Forest (ANF) on Segment 1, Section 2 of the Antelope-Pardee Project, in Los Angeles County. **This Variance Request is approved by CPUC for the proposed activities based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

  SCE is requesting a variance for an alternate access route to Wire Stringing Site (WSS) 23 in the Angeles National Forest (ANF). A modified access road to WSS 23 is being requested to avoid disturbing nearby residences and impacting oak trees lining the street. WSS 23 is located on Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) property below the Bouquet Canyon Reservoir Dam and located between Construct 65 and 66 of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project. The previously proposed route to WSS 23 is directly off Bouquet Canyon Road and impacts nearby residences and oak trees lining the street. The new route is approximately three miles long and extends from north of the Bouquet Reservoir, to just below the Bouquet Canyon Reservoir Dam. LADWP owns a substantial portion of the three mile access road. The remaining sections of road cross the ANF. All required traffic procedures will be used while entering and exiting from Spunky Canyon Road.

- SCE submitted a letter dated April 24, 2009, by LSA titled *Biological Clearance Survey of Reservoir Access Road to Wire Stringing Site 23 for the Antelope-Pardee 500 kV Transmission Project, Segment 1, Section 2 in the Angeles National Fores, Los Angeles County, California.* Biological surveys were conducted on March 16, 18, and 19, 2009, by LSA and Burns & McDonnell biologists. Biological surveys included the reservoir access road from the termination of existing pavement, near Spunky Canyon Road, to WSS 23, near Bouquet Canyon Road. The entire width of maintained roadway was also considered the study area. A 100-foot buffer on each side of the road was visually covered during the biological clearance survey. A 500-foot buffer from the disturbance area was not surveyed due to the absence of burrowing owl habitat, the limited proposed use of the roadway, and the minimal proposed disturbance. The survey consisted of biologists walking on either edge of the roadway scanning for the presence of special-status plants, reptiles, amphibians, bird nests, bats, and American badgers. The surveying biologists recorded all special-status plant and animal species locations using a handheld Garmin Global Positioning System (GPS). The survey focused on biological issues as described in the mitigation measures of the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (Aspen 2006). Results of the surveys included the presence of middens from the big-eared woodrat (*Neotoma macrotis*) and/or the San Diego desert woodrat (*N. lepida*) (a CDFG species of special concern and a special-status species) and small populations of undetermined species of mariposa lily (*Calochortus* sp.). Fifty-three (53) woodrat middens and 13 mariposa lily subpopulations were observed within the 100-foot buffers on either side

of the roadway. All woodrat middens and lily populations in proximity to the road are outside of the maintained road prism and are therefore unlikely to be disturbed by the proposed road improvement activities. Sections of the road that are adjacent to these resources have been flagged with red-and-white striped flagging to identify the locations of sensitive resources. Several oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*) adjacent to the road have canopies that overhang the maintained road prism. Per APM BIO-2, the oaks have been flagged with red-and-white striped flagging to identify their locations. Bats are known to occur in the survey area since bats were observed during a March 12, 2009 evening bat survey for WSS 23 (LSA email from Jill Carpenter dated March 16, 2009). No other sensitive biological resources or habitats were observed. No significant impacts to biological resources are anticipated with the implementation of the measures noted below.

- SCE submitted a report by Cogstone Resource Management Inc. titled *Supplemental Archaeological and Paleontological Assessment, Segment 1, Section 2, Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project – Variance for Alternative Access to WSS 23, Los Angeles County, California* dated March 2009. Archaeological and historical background contexts were developed for Segment 1 of the TRTP by ECORP Consulting, Inc. (Ahmet et al. 2006). The proposed project area is undeveloped and except for the construction of the Bouquet Reservoir and dam, the area has no known historic uses. A search for archeological and historic records for Segment 1 of the TRTP was conducted by ECORP Consulting, Inc. (Ahmet et al. 2006). ECORP consulted the South Central Coastal Information Center, the Angeles National Forest Heritage Resources Section, the National Register of Historic Places, the California Inventory of Historic Resources, California Points of Historical Interest and the California Historical Landmarks. The proposed project area falls within the one-mile search radius and four cultural resources are located within one quarter mile of the proposed new route. The Paleontolgical Resources Management Plan – Segment 1 of the TRTP was prepared by Cogstone Resource Management Inc. (Scott and Gust 2008). The proposed new access road is located entirely within Pelona Schist. This metamorphic formation has no potential to contain paleontological resources. Cogstone Resource Management Inc. conducted the survey of the proposed project area on March 23, 2009. The survey consisted of one person walking the project area while closely inspecting the ground surface. Transects were walked at 5 meter intervals. The survey area consisted of the access road and the work area. Survey location data was recorded using a Garmin Etrex handheld GPS. Less than 50 feet from the proposed road, near WSS 23, is a building foundation of layered rocks. This resource is on land owned by LADWP. It was recorded as P-19-003848. The foundation measures 11.33 feet wide by 21.6 feet long. No other archaeological, historical, or paleontological resources were observed. Although several previously recorded resources are known within the vicinity of the proposed project area, none will be directly impacted by the proposed project. To ensure avoidance, all resources should be flagged prior to construction and monitoring is recommended if road improvements occur along the route within 30 yards of the resources. There is no sensitivity for paleontological resources.

- On May 20, ANF approved the use of the alternative access road. Conditions of the approval are incorporated below.

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

- All project mitigation measures, compliance plans, and permit conditions shall be implemented during construction activities. Some measures are on-going/time-sensitive requirements and shall be implemented prior to and during construction where applicable.

- Biological surveys shall be re-conducted and results submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to equipment and vehicles mobilizing to the project area. After complete surveys have been submitted and approved by the CPUC, site occupation can occur; however, if occupation does not

occur within seven calendar days of survey submittals, biological clearance sweeps shall be conducted prior to site occupation, including nesting bird surveys.

- SCE has assigned Biological Monitors to the Project. They are responsible for ensuring that impacts to special-status species, native vegetation, wildlife habitat, or unique resources are minimized to the fullest extent possible. The Biological Monitor shall be on-site to monitor all work and shall conduct sweeps of the approved areas which will be impacted. If breeding birds with active nests are found, a biological monitor shall establish a 300-foot buffer around the nest and no activities will be allowed within the buffer until the young have fledged from the nest or the nest fails. The 300-foot buffer may be adjusted to reflect existing conditions including ambient noise and disturbance only with the approval of the CDFG and/or USFWS (Please note that the CPUC must be notified prior to the onset of construction). The biological monitor shall conduct regular monitoring of the nest to determine success/failure and to ensure that project activities are not conducted within the buffer until the nesting cycle is complete or the nest fails. If nesting birds move into the work area SCE will monitor the nest to ensure that their activities do not result in the loss or failure of the nest. A preliminary 300-foot buffer area around the nest will be established and SCE shall coordinate with the CPUC, CDFG and/or USFWS.

- Per SCE's variance request and MM B-2 and APM BIO-2, construction within the driplines of oak trees, and incidental trimming or damage to trees along the proposed route shall not occur until the trees are evaluated by a qualified arborist who shall identify appropriate measures to minimize oak tree loss. Every effort should be made to minimize vegetation removal and permanent loss at construction sites. Trimming or damage to trees shall be reported to the CPUC EM.

- Per ANF, no trees shall be trimmed on the previously approved route accessing WSS 23 from Bouquet Canyon Road.

- Per SCE's variance request and MM B-24, bats are known from the area so protection measures shall be implemented to minimize or eliminate disturbance to roosting bats. If special-status wildlife species are present, SCE will submit a monitoring plan with compliance measures determined in consultation with USFWS and/or CDFG. SCE shall provide the CPUC with USFWS and/or CDFG approval of proposed plan prior to work in the area.

- Per SCE's variance request and MM B-8b, G-2, H-1a, several drainages occur along the existing roadway and pass under the existing road. If drainages will be impacted by heavy equipment or necessitate improvements, SCE shall consult with the ANF on ANF lands, and LADWP and CDFG on LADWP lands prior to moving heavy equipment across the drainages or conducting improvements at the drainages.

- After use, all areas proposed under this Variance shall be completely restored to preexisting conditions following the construction activities.

- If construction debris or spills enter into environmentally sensitive areas, the jurisdictional agencies and CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.

- If not already provided, copies of all landowner agreements/lease agreements shall be submitted to the CPUC prior to use.

- Written LADWP approval of access road use shall be provided to the CPUC and ANF prior to use of access road.

- Per ANF, the roads will be used in an "as is" condition. No grading, widening, surfacing or other maintenance or improvements is approved at this time. If such work becomes necessary, an additional request for approval must be submitted to the Forest Service.

- A separate written approval from LADWP will be required prior to any road improvements on LADWP lands.

- To ensure avoidance to historical resources, all resources should be flagged prior to construction and monitoring is recommended if road improvements occur along the route within 30 yards of the resources.

- Per ANF, in order to fully achieve the stated objective of avoiding disturbance to private residences near Bouquet Canyon Road, the Forest Service requests that all traffic accessing WSS 23 use this alternate route.

- Prior to the commencement of construction activities, all crew personnel including crane, haul truck and concrete truck drivers shall be appropriately WEAP trained on environmental issues including protocols for air quality, hazardous materials, biological resources, known and unanticipated cultural materials, as well as SWPPP BMPs. A log shall be maintained on-site with the names of all crew personnel trained.

- All work boundaries shall be flagged prior to construction. No movement or staging of construction vehicles or equipment shall be allowed outside of the approved areas.

- Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be implemented at all times during the use of the project area, as will Best Management Practices. Implementation of all necessary erosion control devices will be properly installed and maintained throughout the duration of project area use. A copy of the SWPPP will be available on-site for reference.

- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, 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