

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



May 30, 2012

Susan J. Nelson, AIA  
Regulatory Affairs  
Southern California Edison  
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue, Quad 3D, GO1  
Rosemead, CA 91770

RE: SCE Antelope Transmission Project (Antelope-Tehachapi 500kV and 220kV Transmission Line), Segment 3B/Highwind Material Yard: Modification #1 to Notice to Proceed (NTP) #28

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On May 21, 2012, Southern California Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request for a Modification to Notice to Proceed (NTP) #28 to relocate the northern fence and main entrance for the Highwind Material Yard for Segment 3B Transmission Line (T/L) of the Antelope Transmission Project (ATP) in unincorporated Kern County, California. **This Modification #1 to NTP #28 is approved by the CPUC for the proposed activities based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

SCE requests a Modification to Notice to Proceed (NTP) #28 to relocate the northern fence and main entrance for the Highwind Material Yard for Segment 3B T/L of ATP in unincorporated Kern County, California. Subsequent to approval of the Highwind Material Yard NTPR (NTP #28 dated February 16, 2010) by the CPUC, it was identified that the northern chain link fence of the yard was located incorrectly and is encroaching into the permanent driveway of the adjacent Highwind Substation. As a result, the northern fence line must be shifted 30 feet to the south and the main entrance relocated sixty feet to the south. All work will be within the disturbance limits approved in NTP #28.

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted a letter dated May 21, 2012 by SCE Biologist, Rachael Poston, documenting the biological conditions at the proposed relocation of the northern fence and main entrance for the Highwind Material Yard (Variance Project Component). The Variance Project Component plus a 500-foot buffer is referred to as the Biological Study Area (BSA). Biological resources within the BSA were evaluated during several focused surveys, including 2010 and 2011 rare plant surveys (LSA 2010e, ICF 2011gt); 2008, 2010, and 2011 Swainson's hawk surveys (LSA 2008b, LSA 2010c, ICF and Bloom 2011d); and burrowing owl and American badger burrow surveys in 2010 (LSA 2010d). The Variance Project Component areas were also included in the 2012 focused surveys for special-status plants and Swainson's hawk (surveys on-going or reports pending). A biological survey was also conducted in 2010 as part of the NTPR for the Highwind Yard (BMcD 2010). The biological resources within the BSA were also evaluated during preconstruction surveys for general biological resources (P30) and burrowing owl (Owl30) within and adjacent to the Variance Project Component. Biological monitoring of the yard has been ongoing regularly since the yard began construction in March 2010 and weekly sweeps are being conducted during the 2012 nesting season. Species events and nest events are recorded in the Field Reporting Environmental Database (FRED). Jurisdictional resources within the Variance Project Component were evaluated during the 2011 jurisdictional delineation for Segment 3B (LSA 2011).

Vegetation communities within the BSA include rabbitbrush scrub and disturbed/developed. No special-special status plant species have been observed within the BSA. Northern Harrier (FRED Species Event ID 000006 and 000009; ICF 2011ja) and loggerhead shrike (FRED Species Event ID 000004; ICF 2011ja) have been observed within the 500-foot buffer. A common raven nest has been observed within the 500-foot buffer (FRED Nest ID 000005) and potential burrowing owl feature and/or American Badger den have been observed within the 500-foot buffer (ICF 2011ja). One jurisdictional feature occurs within the 500-foot buffer north of the Highwind Yard and Highwind Substation access road (3B-1-S-1).

No additional impacts to biological resources are anticipated.

- **Cultural Resources:** SCE submitted a memorandum dated May 21, 2012 titled *Southern California Edison Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project Cultural and Paleontological Resources Guidelines for Segment 3B T/L – Variance Request for Relocation of Northern Fence and Main Entrance for the Highwind Material Yard*. The memorandum states that no known cultural resources or paleontological resources will be impacted by this request in support of the TRTP on Segment 3B for relocation of the northern fence and main entrance for the Highwind Material Yard. A cultural record search and survey (Ahmet et al, 2006; Pacific Legacy 2010), and a paleontological literature review as well as a review of paleontological monitoring (Gust and Scott 2009; Aron 2012), have been previously conducted for this area. No cultural resources were found during the surveys. Due to the absence of resources, archaeological monitoring is not required during ground disturbing activities associated with this variance request.

The Paleontological Resources Management Plan (PRMP) indicates that the proposed variance is located within an area that has potential for yielding paleontological resources (Gust and Scott 2009). However, no fossils have been observed during monitoring activities conducted in support of the Highwind Substation, which is located in the same geologic formation as the Highwind Yard. Per the revised and approved recommendations (Aron 2012), a paleontological monitor is required during ground disturbing activities only when those activities involve greater depths that may reach sediments that have the potential for yielding fossils. The nature of the work to relocate and install the fence and main entrance to the yard does not require a paleontological monitor.

No additional impacts to cultural or paleontological resources are anticipated.

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

- All conditions required by NTP #28 shall apply to the subject area and activities.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, NTP #28, and this Modification #1 to NTP #28 shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities where applicable.

Sincerely,



John Boccio  
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen