

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



December 9, 2011

Mr. Alan F. Colton  
Manager – Environmental Services  
Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Project  
8315 Century Park Court, CP21G  
San Diego, CA 92123-1550

RE: SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Line Project – Variance Request #32

Dear Mr. Colton,

On November 16, 2011, San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) requested a variance from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for guard structure installations and pull-site modifications for overhead stringing activities (NTP #13, overhead on non-federal lands), of the Sunrise Powerlink Project.

The CPUC voted on December 18, 2008 to approve the SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Line Project ([Decision D.08-12-058](#)) and a [Notice of Determination](#) was submitted to the State Clearinghouse (SCH#2006091071). The BLM issued a [Record of Decision](#) approving the Project on January 20, 2009. The Project also crosses lands under jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and Forest Service on the Cleveland National Forest; the Forest Service issued its Record of Decision and Supplemental Information Report on July 9, 2010.

The CPUC also adopted a Mitigation, Monitoring, Compliance and Reporting Program (MMCRP) to ensure compliance with all mitigation measures imposed on the Sunrise Powerlink Project during implementation. The MMCRP also acknowledges that temporary changes to the project, such as the need for additional workspace, 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 #32 for guard structure installations and pull-site modifications is granted by CPUC based on the factors described below.

**SDG&E Variance Request.** Excerpts from the SDG&E Variance Request, received November 16, 2011, and responses to general and biological review questions received November 23 and 30 are presented below (indented) with CPUC additions in parenthesis and in bold:

SDG&E is submitting this request as a variance to the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (FEIR/EIS) issued October 2008 and the Project Modification Report (PMR) approved on September 22, 2010, by the CPUC to incorporate the following modifications to the Sunrise Powerlink Project (Project) alignment within non-Federal lands:

- a) Extra Workspace for Temporary Guarding Facilities including Access Roads
- b) Line Drop Locations
- c) Pull Site Modification at Structure CP23
- d) Pull Site Modification at Structure EP83

To support these modifications, SDG&E assessed construction methods based on an expedited schedule, identified sensitive resources for avoidance/minimization, and completed additional field verification of the construction engineering design.

These modifications identify proposed changes to the alignment since the PMR. Guard structures will be temporary in nature and will create minimal visual impacts. They are needed for public safety and facility protection during wire stringing operations. Guard structures will be installed for approximately one month and will be removed upon completion of the wire stringing activities. The majority of the guard structures themselves were included and approved in the PMR. Under this variance, SDG&E is requesting temporary work space and access to allow for guarding of areas not specified in the PMR. This variance request describes the changes that will occur at the identified sites and examines the potential for the changes to result in impacts that would: exceed the levels identified in the PMR and the Project's FEIR/EIS and mitigated by the measures specified in the Project's approved plans and permits; or be inconsistent with the FEIR/EIS and PMR.

Based on their locations and the types of the activities at the sites, the proposed locations will result in additional impacts to non-Federal lands and impacts to some sensitive resources as detailed in the individual discussion sections below. The additional impacts are small in scale and are temporary in terms of duration and residual effects. None of the new impacts are different in type or intensity than those identified in the PMR and FEIR/EIS as occurring on non-Federal lands or elsewhere on the Project. All of the additional impacts can be mitigated by the measures already identified and approved for the Project.

Project activities at all of the proposed work areas will be conducted in accordance with the same impact avoidance, minimization, monitoring, and mitigation measures that apply to all other Project impact areas. Identified measures include those specified in the Project's Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance, and Reporting Program (MMCRP), PMR, DNA, and approved plans and permits for specific types of activities.

All impacts associated with this request are temporary in nature. The additional temporary impacts to vegetation communities and non-listed sensitive wildlife species will be mitigated through habitat-based offsite conservation and onsite restoration. Minor impacts to Quino checkerspot butterfly occupied habitat will be mitigated by the conservation of offsite occupied habitat. No other impacts to Federal or state-listed wildlife species occupied or suitable habitat are expected. The additional acreage impacted to vegetation communities, non-listed sensitive wildlife species habitat, and Quino checkerspot butterfly habitat is within the total acreage of off-site conservation identified in the Habitat Acquisition Plan and Habitat Management Plan (HAP/HMP) approved by the USFWS on March 4, 2011. A final accounting of impacts and mitigation will be prepared during the post-construction phase and provided to the CPUC and the other responsible agencies. The entire Powerlink Project impacts approximately 38 acres of Quino Checkerspot butterfly-occupied or critical habitat. SDG&E acquired 284 total acres of occupied Quino checkerspot butterfly habitat as mitigation leaving 245 acres of mitigation credit currently available. Construction activities from the proposed guarding areas and pull site modifications will only temporarily impact approximately 4.5 acres of occupied habitat, rendering total impacts well below the potential impacts previously identified and analyzed and amply covered by the mitigation credit available.

Additionally, impacts to all wildlife species will be avoided and minimized through the compliance of the Project's Mitigation Measures that include environmental training for construction crewmembers, the presence of biological monitors, performing pre-construction and daily wildlife clearance sweeps, vegetation removal timing restrictions, etc. Habitat assessments were performed for each individual work area and are included below under their respective sections. Any temporary impacts to sensitive vegetation communities during construction from these activities shall be restored per the approved Restoration Plan for Sensitive Vegetation in Temporary Impact Areas (RPSV)(March 15, 2011).

SDG&E will implement the approved 2009/2010 Weed Control Plan for the Environmentally Superior Southern Route of the SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink Project (Weed Control Plan) (December 23, 2010).

As required under the MMCRP, pre-construction surveys for special status plant species were conducted for the Project (RECON 2009 and 2010). The surveys covered the entire ROW, plus a minimum 30-foot buffer on either side of the ROW. Additionally, for this variance request, pre-impact habitat assessments were conducted at the extra workspaces

for the guarding structures and the modified pull sites. If sensitive plant species were observed in the vicinity of an extra workspace or modified pull site during the 2009 and 2010 pre-construction surveys, or if sensitive plant species were observed during pre-impact habitat assessments for the variance, the impact minimization and mitigation measures identified in the approved Restoration Plan for Special Status Plants (RPSP) (January 3, 2011) will be implemented. Additionally, off-site mitigation parcels have been acquired to mitigate for impacts to CNPS List 1 and List 2 special status plant species. Note that this variance request will require temporary impacts to San Diego goldenstar, which will not otherwise be impacted by the Project. Therefore, the seed of San Diego goldenstar was collected to facilitate implementation of the RPSP.

SDG&E will consult with wildlife resource agencies for all areas in this variance request that are outside of areas covered by the 2009 and 2010 rare plant surveys. SDG&E has requested agency concurrence for the two pull site modifications and are currently reviewing all sites to identify any other areas in the variance request that were not covered by the 2009 and 2010 surveys. We will request wildlife agency concurrence immediately after identification, if necessary.

### **GUARD STRUCTURES**

SDG&E is submitting this modification to provide temporary work space and access to various transmission line crossings to allow for guarding of facilities such as roads, highways, freeways, railroads, communication lines, electric distribution lines, and electric transmission lines where the Sunrise Powerlink overhead transmission line crosses over these features.

During the construction phase involving wire stringing activities, lines and conductors are pulled from a tension site to a pull site over a sag/pull section (there are typically five to ten supporting structures between two tension structures). Any crossings (roads, trails) beneath these sections will require some means of protection in the event the line or conductor drops below a conventional wire stringing height. This protection is necessary for public safety and prevention of hazardous conditions. To prevent these hazardous conditions, SDG&E requests work areas and access to appropriately guard the structures and facilities that may be crossed during construction of the overhead transmission line. The various methods for guarding wire stringing crossings include installing wood pole guard structures, positioning a mobile crane, **(utilizing "flower-pots")**, or lowering existing overhead utilities to the ground. These methods are described below.

The use of wood pole guard structures will require setting several vertical poles alongside and parallel to the point of crossing and installing a horizontal pole (cross-arm) high up above the crossing between the vertical poles. With the conventional wood pole guard structure, the work crew, materials, and equipment will be transported to the work site using existing access roads. In locations where no road or access exists, crews and equipment will be flown to the locations by helicopter and are indicated in the individual sections below.

Vegetation removal will be required at all locations where direct burial poles will be installed. Trimming and uprooting vegetation will typically be done by hand using hand tools and a chain saw. In some cases a skid steer with mower attachment or a back hoe will be used to clear thick vegetation as appropriate. The estimated area of vegetation removal will be approximately (20 feet x 20 feet) **(per pole)**. The number of poles at each work site will vary depending on the crossing conditions and is described below in individual sections; the number ranges from two to fifteen with an average of six poles per guard structure location. Additional vegetation impacts may be necessary in order to access the work area. Holes for direct burial poles will be dug with a drilling rig/auger machine as 2-foot diameter holes to a depth of 2 feet plus 10 percent of the pole length. Pole lengths will vary depending on the pathway being crossed and the height of the object from the ground surface. Pole lengths range from 45 feet to 75 feet with an average pole length of 50 feet. Poles will be delivered to the work site by truck and trailer and unloaded using a crane. At locations inaccessible by road, the poles will be staged at a nearby construction yard and flown to the work site via helicopter. Similar to unloading and delivering the poles, both the poles and cross-arms will be lifted and set in place by either a crane or helicopter. **(Where applicable) poles (installed by helicopter)** will be cut at the surface level. Crews will then dig down 3 feet below surface level, cut the poles, and remove the stubs. The holes will be backfilled with the excavated material/topsoil and the stubs will be removed by helicopter. Removing the 3-foot stubs is faster and safer than having a helicopter extract a full-depth pole (typically 6 to 8 feet) while hovering over the new Sunrise Powerlink wire and existing energized utilities. Temporary poles will be backfilled using the native soils removed from the drilling process and compacted using either a hydraulic or pneumatic tamper. A few of the conventional guard structures will require guy wires and anchors to support the poles. Holes for these guy anchors will typically be dug by hand using a jackhammer and hand tools. These holes

will be approximately 2 feet in diameter and dug to a depth of 8 feet. A small number of these holes will be dug by a digging machine where acceptable. The guy anchor base plate and rod will be placed into the hole and backfilled. Appropriate environmental monitors will accompany work crews during anchor installation. Micropile foundations may be the best option at sites where rock is present. At these locations installation will require the use of a micropile drilling rig to bore 10-inch diameter holes to a depth of 25 feet. Appropriate environmental monitors will accompany work crews. In instances where micropile foundations are used, a casing will be inserted into the hole along with a threaded rod. The casing will be filled with grout that will secure both the casing and the threaded rod into place. After a curing time of approximately 24 hours, an additional casing extension will be threaded onto the grouted rod. The wood pole will be fastened to an I-beam and this casing extension, using hardware and straps. These guard structures will not require guy wires for support except at all of the Caltrans highway crossings. At Caltrans crossings, Caltrans requires guying to support poles holding up a "guard net" which spans the width of the highway crossing. A guard net required by Caltrans typically consists of a steel net set parallel to the road at approximately 20 to 30 feet above the ground and from guard pole to guard pole. They are typically made of 3/16-inch stainless steel airplane cable with a web opening of approximately 3 feet by 3 feet. The number of guy anchors used for this purpose ranges from 10 to 20 with the average number being 14. The type of guy anchor required for Caltrans crossings is called a screw anchor. This type of anchor is shaped like a 2-foot-diameter screw and is driven into the ground approximately 8 feet deep. It is anticipated that these temporary guard structures will remain in place for as long as one month. Upon completion of the wire stringing activities, the guard structure will be dismantled. Direct burial poles set by crane will be removed and backfilled while those set by helicopter will be cut off one (1) foot (**three feet is required under this variance approval**) below the ground level using a chain saw and will be backfilled with native soil. Micropile foundations will be sawed off even with the surface of the rock. Guy anchors will be unscrewed from the anchor base plate and removed. SDG&E will restore areas temporarily impacted by installation and removal of the guard structures (per the RPSV) and will implement the Weed Control Plan. Six locations have identified potential impacts to jurisdictional waters (GS-NF-4, GS-NF-10, GS-NF-22, GS-NF-24, GS-NF-34, and GS-NF-36). SDG&E will delineate and establish Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) for jurisdictional waters at these locations and avoid all impacts to these jurisdictional waters.

In locations where drilling is not an option, a "flower pot" may be used as a means of supporting the vertical poles upright. The flower pot will be a 5 feet by 5 feet by 4 feet (length x width x height) concrete base placed on a somewhat level surface where the pole is to be erected. The flower pots are concrete blocks which can be one solid block or comprised of 3 pieces stacked together and provides the weight necessary to support the pole. The center of the flower pot has a hole which accepts the pole and allows for wedging to secure and plumb the pole into its final location. No deep excavation is necessary when using flower pot guarding. Some surface leveling may be required using either minor surface grading or capping with aggregate materials to level the surface. In some instances a mobile crane option would require positioning the crane adjacent to the crossing. The crane's boom is raised below the wire stringing and over the existing facility/infrastructure being protected. A steel arm is attached to the boom which is used to intercept any line or conductor a safe height above the infrastructure being protected.

In some cases, utility/communications line owners may elect to guard and protect their own lines in conjunction with SDG&E (or its contractors); therefore, SDG&E (or its contractors) will only coordinate scheduling of the crossing protection with the utility owner. AT&T telecommunications may require additional grounding on their facilities (telephone lines or joint use lines with telephone). The protection methods used by the utility owner cannot be predetermined and may have impacts outside approved work areas which will not be monitored. Historically on the Project, AT&T has allowed Sunrise contractors to guard the facilities for them and has only required notification for the beginning/end of work. If work is not to be conducted by SDG&E, SDG&E will supply the dates for AT&T grounding work to the CPUC EM and a point of contact at AT&T prior to the start of work. If ATT elects to perform work SDG&E is still responsible for impacts and should do a post GS evaluation of impacts created during line lowering. SDG&E agrees to conduct a post-guard structure impact evaluation as a result of line lowering.

Line lowering will be used at locations where it is feasible to take a utility outage for overhead line crossings. SDG&E will coordinate with the utility owner. At locations where the utility owner has approved this option and where a wood pole guard structure will be difficult to install, line lowering is the preferred method of guarding. The line will be physically detached from its supporting structures and lowered down to the ground. Once lowered to the ground, the line will be covered with a protective hardboard material underneath the crossing. The line will be lowered at the start of each work day and will be raised at the end of each work day. In some cases, guy wires will need to be installed to support the existing poles left under tension from the removal and lowering of the line. If guy wires are required, two to four guy

anchors will be installed using the same method as described above for the Caltrans guard netting installations. Every effort has been made to outline work limits and existing pole access for line lowering but in the event of unexpected site conditions, access to additional existing poles may be required to safely and adequately complete the line lowering activity. In such cases, appropriate environmental monitors will accompany work crews. Line lowering, in most cases, will be a low impact activity with walk-in access and hand carried tools.

SDG&E has coordinated with the County of San Diego and has submitted Traffic Control Plans for any County right of way (ROW) crossings or impacts to County-maintained roads. SDG&E coordinated with Bob Bishop from AT&T on August 1, 2011, for any guarding of telephone facilities. Additionally, SDG&E has coordinated with Caltrans and obtained Caltrans permits for any Caltrans crossings. SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink Project coordinated with SDG&E Operations and Distribution groups on April 29, 2011, and May 2 and 4, 2011, regarding guarding of existing utility lines.

**Guard structure work areas and access include the following locations:**

**GS-NF-1**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses a County road and an existing joint use line (electrical and telephone) between structures CP24-1 and CP25-2. The work area is located on both sides of Sycamore Canyon Road approximately 900 feet west of structure CP25-2. Access to the proposed guarding area and access road will be from Sycamore Canyon Road. The guard area to the east will be installed from the right lane of Sycamore Canyon Road and approved traffic control plans have been obtained from the County of San Diego. Guard structure work at this location includes the setting of two poles. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the wood guard poles will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and impacts caused by crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the poles. The mobile crane to the east of Sycamore Canyon Road will be set up on the property owner's lawn and will be utilized to protect the County road, the residential driveway, and palm trees that line the driveway. Temporary impacts at the guarding area include moving and positioning of the mobile guard structure equipment as well as minor clearing for the access road to the site.

Temporary impacts associated with positioning of the mobile guard structure equipment will result from driving and positioning vehicles on site. There will also be minor impacts from access road clearing.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on June 7, 2011. No special status plant species were observed within the proposed site during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. Therefore, no impacts to special status plant species are expected to occur.

Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity during preconstruction surveys included California gnatcatcher, white-tailed kite, coast horned lizard, and Belding's orange-throated whiptail. Although no sensitive wildlife species were observed during the June 2011 habitat assessment, the site occurs within 500 feet of suitable California gnatcatcher habitat. Therefore, if construction work occurs during the California gnatcatcher breeding season a pre-construction survey will be performed within 500 feet to ensure no nesting gnatcatchers are indirectly impacted by proposed work. Impacts to all wildlife species will be minimized through implementation of the Project Mitigation Measures.

**GS-NF-2**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses Sycamore Park Drive, a County road, between structures CP28-1 and CP29-1. The proposed work area consists of one guarding array. The guarding area which will be used to protect Sycamore Park Drive, is located approximately 240 feet east of structure CP28-1. Since installation of the guard poles will be from the northbound lane and shoulder, an approved traffic control plan has been obtained from the County of San Diego. Temporary impacts at the guarding area include hand and/or mechanical digging to set two poles and vegetation clearing of the existing shoulder. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the wood guard poles will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and impacts caused by crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the poles.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on May 20, 2011. No special status plant species were observed within the proposed sites during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact

habitat assessment; therefore, no impacts to special status plant species are expected to occur. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity during preconstruction surveys included California gnatcatcher, white-tailed kite, northern red diamond rattlesnake, coast horned lizard, and Belding's orange-throated whiptail. Although no sensitive wildlife species were observed during the May 2011 habitat assessment, the site occurs within 500 feet of suitable California gnatcatcher habitat. Therefore, if construction work occurs during the California gnatcatcher breeding season a pre-construction survey will be performed within 500 feet to ensure no nesting gnatcatchers are indirectly impacted by proposed work.

#### **GS-NF-3**

The proposed mobile guard structure is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses an existing 69kV transmission line between structures CP31-2 and CP32-2. Access to the proposed mobile guarding area at structure CP31-2 is via the approved tower and pull site approximately one-half mile southeast from Sycamore Park Drive. An existing 69kV maintenance road, east of structure CP31-2, will be used as a work area for set up of a proposed mobile guard structure.

Temporary impacts to the proposed work area will include vegetation trimming to make room for the mobile guard structure, as well as vegetation removal to facilitate positioning of equipment and vehicles, and extension of the current road for proper access. Temporary impacts associated with the mobile guard structure site include damage to vegetation from foot and possibly vehicle traffic, as well as from modification of the access roads.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed mobile guarding area was conducted on May 20, 2011. Species observed in this area included coast live oak. No special status plant species were observed within the proposed sites during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity during the pre-construction biological surveys included California gnatcatcher, northern red diamond rattlesnake, coast horned lizard, and Belding's orange-throated whiptail. No sensitive wildlife species were detected during the pre-impact habitat assessment. The proposed sites were determined to not support potential nesting habitat for California gnatcatcher nesting habitat nor was suitable habitat previously documented within 500 feet.

#### **GS-NF-4**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses Caltrans Highway 67 between structures CP37-2 and CP36-1. The site crosses both north and southbound lanes of Highway 67 and the adjacent vegetated areas to the northwest and southeast of the highway. The proposed guard structure on the northwest side of Highway 67 will be accessed from the road shoulder of the southbound lane of Highway 67. Work at this location will include setting two guard poles and four anchors. The proposed guard structures on the southeast side of Highway 67 will be accessed from the road shoulder of the northbound lane of Highway 67. Work at this location includes the setting of four guard poles and four anchors to protect the highway and an existing joint use line, 12kV and telephone.

Temporary impacts associated with installation of the wood guard poles, anchors, and netting within each guarding area will result from excavation of the pole and anchor holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles and anchors upon completion of wire pulling activities, and impacts caused by crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the poles.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on May 20, 2011. San Diego goldenstar was observed throughout the southeast segment of the proposed guarding area. In May 2011, San Diego goldenstar was past flowering and difficult to see but hundreds of individual plants were detected within and adjacent to the proposed guarding area.

A jurisdictional ephemeral stream occurs within the limits of the proposed guard structure work area on the northwest side of Highway 67. This jurisdictional water, which is approximately 3 feet wide and 3 feet deep, extends parallel to the highway for approximately 300 feet through the northwestern section of the proposed guarding area. This stream will be flagged as an ESA and avoided. The guard structure anchor locations that occur northwest of the jurisdictional ephemeral drainages will be accessed on foot. An area of the channel will be identified for crossing where workers can step over the channel. If walking through the channel becomes unavoidable, a metal plate or wood plank will be set across the drainage for workers to use to avoid any jurisdictional impacts. All parking or equipment staging will occur outside of the jurisdictional drainage. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity of the proposed

guarding area during the pre-construction biological surveys included California gnatcatcher, northern red diamond rattlesnake, coast horned lizard, and Belding's orange-throated whiptail. No sensitive wildlife species were detected during the pre-impact habitat assessment. The proposed sites were determined to not support potential nesting habitat for California gnatcatcher nesting habitat nor was suitable habitat previously documented within 500 feet.

#### **GS-NF-5**

The proposed guarding areas are located within the ROW where the alignment crosses a San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) road between structures CP43-1 and CP42-1. The road is currently being built by SDCWA as depicted by the red dashed lines on Figure GS-NF-5 and will be completed before the wire stringing activities. The road will be connected to the already approved tower access roads. GS-NF-5 is comprised of two sections. The first guarding area is on the south side of the SDCWA road approximately 680 feet northwest of structure CP43-1. The second guarding area spans from east to west over a portion of the SDCWA road, approximately 450 feet further northwest and approximately 1,130 feet from structure CP43-1. Access to both guarding areas will be from the SDCWA road off of Moreno Avenue. Guard structure work at this location includes setting a total of five poles. Three poles will be set in the segment closest to structure CP43-1 and two poles will be set at the second location. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the wood guard poles will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the poles. No additional impacts are expected from use of the access roads.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding areas was conducted on June 4, 2011. No special status plant species were observed within the proposed guarding areas during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. This is a known weed avoidance area. This work site is within occupied Quino Checkerspot butterfly habitat. Although Quino checkerspot butterfly was observed approximately 500 feet upslope to the northwest of CP43-1 during pre-construction biological surveys, no Quino checkerspot butterfly host plants were previously mapped or observed within the proposed guard structure locations. As required by the Project Mitigation Measures, a biologist will be present during all construction activities and a Quino-permitted biologist will monitor all activities in this area during the active larvae and adult flight season. Coronado skink was the only other sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity of the proposed guarding areas during pre-construction biological surveys.

#### **GS-NF-6**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses a SDWCA road and an existing joint use line (electrical and telephone) between structures CP44-1 and CP43-1. The site is composed of one guarding array and one access road. The proposed work area is approximately 350 feet southeast of structure CP43-1 and just south of an existing paved road. Guard poles will be placed on both sides of the existing joint use line and will be close enough to the existing road to provide protection for the road. The access road is an existing paved road within SDCWA and connects to an approved access road 250 feet to the northeast. Temporary impacts at the guard structure site include hand and/or mechanical digging to set four poles and minor vegetation trimming along the proposed access road. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the wood guard poles will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the poles.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on June 4, 2011. No special status plant species were observed in the vicinity during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. This work site is within occupied Quino Checkerspot butterfly habitat. Although Quino checkerspot butterfly was observed approximately 1,500 feet upslope to the northwest of CP43-1 during pre-construction biological surveys, no Quino checkerspot butterfly host plants were observed within the proposed guard structure locations. As required by the Project Mitigation Measures, a biologist will be present during all construction activities and a Quino-permitted biologist will monitor all activities in this area during the active larvae and adult flight season. Other sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity of the proposed work area during pre-construction biological surveys included California gnatcatcher, northern red diamond rattlesnake, coast horned lizard, and Belding's orange-throated whiptail. The proposed sites were determined to not support potential nesting habitat for California gnatcatcher nesting habitat nor was suitable habitat previously documented within 500 feet.

**GS-NF-7**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses two overhead utilities, an existing distribution line and telephone line, as well as a private road between structures CP44-1 and CP43-1. The work area will contain one guarding array. The proposed guarding area will be approximately 400 feet north of the guard house entrance to the SDCWA's San Vicente Dam project area and approximately 830 feet southeast of structure CP43-1. The two guard poles on the west side of the picnic area will be used to guard the existing 12kV line while the two east guard poles will cover an existing telephone line. Access to the work area will be by vehicle via Moreno Avenue through a security gate. Temporary impacts at the guarding area include hand and/or mechanical digging to set four wood poles. Temporary impacts associated with the pole installation will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking around the poles.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on June 4, 2011. No special status plant species were observed within or adjacent to the proposed guarding area during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. This work site is within occupied Quino Checkerspot butterfly habitat. Although Quino checkerspot butterfly was observed approximately 1,800 feet upslope to the northwest of CP43-1 during pre-construction biological surveys, no Quino checkerspot butterfly host plants were previously mapped or observed within the proposed guard structure locations. As required by the Project Mitigation Measures, a biologist will be present during all construction activities and a Quino-permitted biologist will monitor all activities in this area during the active larvae and adult flight season. Other sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity of the proposed work area during pre-construction biological surveys included northern red diamond rattlesnake, coast horned lizard, and Belding's orange-throated whiptail.

**GS-NF-8**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses an existing distribution line between CP47-2 and CP46-2. The work area will contain one guarding array approximately 530 feet southeast of structure CP46-2. The proposed guarding installation will be adjacent to an old access road which is overgrown with vegetation. Due to the remote location and difficult terrain, equipment, personnel and poles will be flown into the area by helicopter. Walk-in access will be from the TSAP at CP46-2 to the guarding work area which is approximately 700 feet down the old access road. Temporary impacts from guarding will include hand and/or mechanical digging to set four wood poles. Temporary impacts associated with the guarding installation will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking around the poles. Since the poles will be installed by helicopter, the poles will be cut 3 feet below the ground elevation and backfilled during the removal process. If an outage can be obtained guard poles will not be installed and the de-energized line will be lowered to the ground. Access will be required to the existing 12kV poles for grounding and line lowering.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on June 4, 2011. No special status plant species were observed in the vicinity during pre-construction biological surveys or pre impact habitat assessments. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity during pre-construction biological surveys included California gnatcatcher, northern red diamond rattlesnake, coast horned lizard, and Belding's orange-throated whiptail. No sensitive wildlife species were detected during the pre-impact habitat assessment. The proposed sites were determined to not support potential nesting habitat for California gnatcatcher nesting habitat nor was suitable habitat previously documented within 500 feet.

**GS-NF-9**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses Wildcat Canyon Road, approximately 875 feet from CP 53-1. The work area will contain one guarding array between tower structures CP54-1 and CP53-1. Site access is from Wildcat Canyon Road onto an unimproved private driveway. The two guard poles furthest to the west will guard an existing joint use line (electrical and telephone) which runs south to north. Additional access, from the existing dirt loop will be required to the south where the poles are situated at a higher elevation above Wildcat Canyon Road. The guard poles to the east will guard another existing joint use line (electrical and telephone) which runs approximately parallel to Wildcat Canyon and will also provide protection for Wildcat Canyon Road, a San Diego County road. These poles will be installed adjacent to the County road on private property. Traffic control plans for

construction have been approved by the County. Impacts at the guard structure site include hand and/or mechanical digging to set four poles as well as minor grading or clearing to improve an existing dirt two-track access road. Temporary impacts from development and use of this location include minor grading or clearing to improve an existing unimproved two-track access road that extends approximately 450 feet to the northwest and loops back to Wildcat Canyon Road. An additional access road will be mowed and driven, as necessary, for vehicle passage. The road will extend the existing road approximately 250 feet southeast to the work space. Temporary impacts include excavation of the four wood pole foundation holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking around the work area. Vegetation clearing or trimming may also result from improvements to the access road.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area (**and road extension**) was conducted on May 11, 2011. No special status plant species were observed during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity during the pre-construction biological surveys included California gnatcatcher, northern red diamond rattlesnake, coast horned lizard, Coronado skink, and Belding's orange-throated whiptail. No sensitive wildlife species were detected during the pre-impact habitat assessment. The proposed sites were determined to not support potential nesting habitat for California gnatcatcher nesting habitat nor was suitable habitat previously documented within 500 feet.

#### **GS-NF-10**

This proposed mobile guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses a 69kV distribution line between structures CP54-1 and CP53-1. The proposed mobile guarding area is approximately 260 feet east of Wildcat Canyon Road and access will be from Wildcat Canyon Road to an existing paved driveway. Temporary impacts to the necessary work area will include general vegetation and oak tree trimming to facilitate transport of the mobile guard structure, potential damage to vegetation as the result of positioning equipment and vehicles, and extension of the existing road to allow for proper access. Vegetation trimming along Wildcat Canyon Road as required by the County of San Diego to improve safe sight distance when exiting and entering the property for construction traffic will also create impacts. Temporary impacts associated with this activity include damage to vegetation from foot and possibly vehicle traffic as well as from extension of the access road. One large coast live oak tree will need to be trimmed. This oak tree is isolated from other trees and not adjacent to the riparian habitat. No riparian trees will be trimmed. In order to access the eastern portion of the work area, including the proposed location of the mobile guard structure, vehicles and crews will cross the jurisdictional intermittent stream via the existing Arizona crossing. The access road/crossing will be maintained to allow vehicular crossing. All parking and equipment staging will occur outside of the jurisdictional drainage and no impacts are expected.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed mobile guarding area was conducted on May 11, 2011. The unpaved portions of the mobile guarding area support coast live oak woodland habitat. No special status plant species were observed during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. The proposed mobile guarding area is not in a known weed avoidance area.

Approximately 30 linear feet of a jurisdictional intermittent stream channel are present along the western boundary of the proposed guarding area. This stream conducts water flows offsite to the southwest and water was present in this stream in May during the habitat assessment. This jurisdictional stream will be flagged as an ESA and avoided during use of the mobile guarding area. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity during pre-construction biological surveys included northern red diamond rattlesnake, coast horned lizard, Belding's orangethroated whiptail, and coastal rosy boa). However, no sensitive wildlife species were detected during the pre-impact habitat assessment.

#### **GS-NF-14**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses an existing joint use line (12kV and telephone) between structures EP10-2 and EP11-3. The guarding area is located approximately 470 feet southeast of EP10-2. Access to the guarding area will be walk-in from the approved EP11-3 access road which is approximately 300 feet to the southwest of the guarding area. Due to the remote location and difficult terrain, equipment and poles will be flown into the area by helicopter. Temporary impacts at the work area include hand and/or mechanical digging to set eight poles. Temporary impacts will result from excavation of the eight pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking around the poles.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on June 2, 2011. No special status plant species were observed within the vicinity during the preconstruction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. The site is not in a known weed avoidance area and no jurisdictional waters or wetlands occur within the proposed guarding area. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity of this guarding area during pre-construction biological surveys included coast horned lizard and Hermes copper butterfly. Additionally, this area occurs within 500 feet of suitable California gnatcatcher habitat. Although no sensitive wildlife species or bird nests were observed during the pre-impact habitat assessment, any vegetation trimming or removal will be completed outside of the California gnatcatcher nesting season to ensure that no new significant impacts occur to this species.

#### **GS-USFS-4/GS-NF-15**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses Lyons Valley Road. The work area will contain two guarding arrays between tower structures EP25-2 and EP24-1. The proposed guarding areas are on the north and south edges of Lyons Valley Road and extend approximately 250 feet northeast to southwest along the shoulders of the road, including some small areas of adjacent native vegetation. The proposed sites are approximately 50 feet wide and have existing vegetation and a dirt road shoulder that will be temporarily impacted. The guard poles will be installed from the shoulder and the appropriate lane along Lyons Valley Road and will require separate lane closures for the northbound and southbound lanes. Approved traffic control plans have been obtained from the County of San Diego. Temporary impacts at the guarding areas will be created from hand and/or mechanical digging to set eight poles as well as some potential grading or clearing to improve the existing dirt shoulder of the access road. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the wood guard poles within the work areas will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking around the poles.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on May 19, 2011. One special status plant species, sticky geranium was documented in the vicinity of the proposed guarding area during pre-construction biological surveys. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity of this guarding area during the pre-construction biological surveys included coast horned lizard and Hermes copper butterfly.

#### **GS-NF-16**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses an existing joint use line (12kV distribution and telephone) between structures EP28-3 and EP27-1. The work area is located south of structure EP27-1 and extends east to west for the width of the ROW and consists of four guard poles. Walk-in access will begin from the approved EP 27-1 tower pad and run 240 feet due south to the guard structure site within the ROW. Temporary impacts at the guarding areas include hand and/or mechanical digging to set four poles. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the wood guard poles within the site will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the poles. The equipment and poles will be flown into the area by helicopter. Also, since the poles will be installed by helicopter, the poles will be cut a foot (**three feet is required under this variance approval**) below the ground elevation and backfilled during the removal process. Jurisdictional feature that occurs south of EP27-1 will not be impacted by the proposed guard structure.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on June 2, 2011. No special status plant species were observed during the pre-impact habitat assessment but sticky geranium was previously documented within the vicinity of this guarding area during pre-construction biological surveys. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity of this guard structure included coast horned lizard, Belding's orange-throated whiptail, and northern red diamond rattlesnake. The proposed site occurs within 500 feet of suitable California gnatcatcher habitat. Therefore, if construction work occurs during the California gnatcatcher breeding season a pre-construction survey will be performed within 500 feet to ensure no nesting gnatcatchers are indirectly impacted by proposed work.

#### **GS-NF-17**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses an existing 12kV distribution line between structures EP32-1 and EP31-1. The proposed guarding area is comprised of one guarding array and will be approximately 320 feet north of EP32-1. Access will be walk-in from the approved tower pad at EP 32-1. The guarding

poles and equipment will be flown to the work area. Temporary impacts include moving and positioning of guard structure materials as well as hand and/or mechanical digging to set four poles. Temporary impacts will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking to and from the work area as well as around the poles. The poles will be cut 3 feet below the ground elevation and backfilled during the removal process.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was completed on May 10, 2011. No special status plant species were observed in the vicinity of the proposed guard area during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. This work site is within occupied Quino Checkerspot butterfly habitat. Quino checkerspot butterfly is the only sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity of this guard structure during the pre-construction biological surveys. Owl's clover, a Quino host plant, was observed within the proposed impact area during the pre-impact habitat assessment. Impacts to Quino checkerspot butterfly will be minimized by the presence of a Quino-permitted biologist during all construction activities. The biologist will direct construction crews to avoid impacts to host plants to the extent feasible. Additionally, the proposed work area occurs within within 500 feet of suitable California gnatcatcher habitat. Therefore, if construction work occurs during the California gnatcatcher breeding season a pre-construction survey will be performed within 500 feet to ensure no nesting gnatcatchers are indirectly impacted by proposed work. No sensitive wildlife species were detected during the pre-impact habitat assessment.

#### **GS-NF-18**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses Barrett Lake Road between structures EP33-1 and EP32-1. The work area is located within and to the south of Barrett Lake Road approximately 335 feet south of structure EP32-1. The proposed guarding area is comprised of one guarding array and access road. Access to the site will be from an extension of the approved road 430 feet further east on Barrett Lake Road beginning from the approved access into EP 32-1. Crews will work directly from the road to install the four guard structures and no additional improvement will be required on Barrett Lake Road. Temporary impacts at the guard structure site included hand and/or mechanical digging to set four poles. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the wood guard poles within the site will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the poles.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on June 6, 2011. No special status plant species have been observed in the vicinity of the proposed guarding area during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. This work site is within occupied Quino Checkerspot butterfly habitat. Quino checkerspot butterfly is the only sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity of this guard structure during the pre-construction biological surveys. However, no Quino checkerspot butterfly host plants were previously mapped or observed within the proposed guard structure locations. As required by the Project Mitigation Measures, a biologist will be present during all construction activities and a Quino-permitted biologist will monitor all activities in this area during the active larvae and adult flight season. Additionally, this guarding area is within 500 feet of suitable California gnatcatcher and least Bell's vireo habitat. Therefore, if construction work occurs during the California gnatcatcher or least Bell's vireo breeding season a pre-construction survey will be performed within 500 feet to ensure no nesting gnatcatchers or vireo are indirectly impacted by proposed work.

#### **GS-NF-20**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses an existing 12kV distribution line that extends north-south between structures EP56-4 and EP54-1. The work area is located northeast of the Kreuzkamp Yard along an existing dirt road, approximately 650 feet from structure EP56-4. The proposed work involves setting up to eight flower pots. If an outage is obtained flower pots will not be installed and the de-energized line will be lowered to the ground. Access to the proposed work area is via an existing single-track dirt road that passes along the northern edge of Kreuzkamp Construction Yard, turns north to the alignment, then turns east and south to the guarding area. The guarding area is in a grazed field west of the access road and will be accessed from the road through an existing gate in the fence line that runs along the western edge of the road. The access road from the gate to the guarding area will be mowed, as necessary, for vehicle passage. The access from the gate to the guarding area will be 150 feet in length. Temporary impacts at the guarding area include hand and/or mechanical placing of eight flower pots and associated poles. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the flower pots include vegetation crushing and soil compaction

from vehicles, flower pots and crew members accessing and walking around the poles. The proposed access road impacts may include vegetation clearing and possibly shallow grading and/or excavation of soil.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on June 13, 2011. No special status plant species were observed during the preimpact habitat assessment, but Tecate tarplant was documented within the vicinity of the proposed work area during the pre-construction biological surveys. No sensitive animal species were observed during the pre-impact habitat assessment. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity during pre-construction biological surveys included northwestern San Diego pocketmouse, western spadefoot toad, tricolored blackbird, and burrowing owl. The area will be surveyed in accordance with mitigation Measure B-7d.

The identified guarding area is within a geological deposit with some potential for paleontological deposits near EP54. There is no potential for impacts to paleontological resources from the proposed activities because no deep excavation is proposed.

#### **GS-USFS-5/GS-NF-21**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses an existing 60kV distribution line between structures EP62A-1 and EP58-2. The guarding area is approximately 270 feet northwest of EP62A-1 and 450 feet southeast of EP 58-2. The guarding poles will be flown to the work area. Access to the guarding area is along an approved existing dirt road extending from the east end of the Kreuzkamp Construction Yard. Two 69kV maintenance roads will be used to connect the dirt road from the Kreuzkamp Construction Yard to the proposed guarding area. The western maintenance road continues north from the approved access road, for approximately 125 feet, where it meets the west end of the proposed guarding area. The second access road travels 330 feet northwest from the approved access road where it meets the east end of the proposed guarding area. An approximately 9,500 square foot staging and parking area is also proposed at the south side of the access road due to the narrowness of the existing access road. Temporary impacts at the proposed work area include hand and/or mechanical digging to set twelve poles, as well as minor clearing and road improvements to connect the existing access roads to the guarding area and create a level parking and staging area. Due to the rocky terrain, several or all of the guard structures may utilize micropiles but the exact number could not be predetermined during the pre-survey of the location. Guard structure work at this site may also include conventional or flower pot installations if field conditions warrant these methods. Temporary impacts from installation of the wood guard poles will result from excavation of the pole holes, drilling for micropiles, placement of the excavated soil/material, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the poles. There will also be temporary impacts from access road clearing. Where micropiles are used, the steel casing will be cut level with the surface of the rock when guard structures are removed.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on May 18, 2011. The existing access roads are sparsely vegetated. No special status plant species were observed during the pre-impact habitat assessment but Tecate tarplant was documented in the guarding area vicinity during the preconstruction biological surveys. The proposed work areas are adjacent to and partly comprised of project features that are known weed avoidance areas. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity during pre-construction biological surveys included coast horned lizard, coast patch-nosed snake, and Coronado skink.

#### **GS-NF-22**

Due to the difficult terrain and site configuration, this site requires the use of micropile guard poles with a line lowering option. The proposed guarding area consists of one guarding array and one line lowering area, as well as a work area with an access road to allow for the line lowering option. Both sites are situated within the ROW where the alignment crosses a distribution line between structures EP79 and EP80. The guarding poles and equipment may be flown to the work area. The proposed work area begins approximately 125 feet north of structure EP79 around an existing distribution pole and spans east-southeast, approximately 700 feet to another existing distribution pole on the other side of the canyon. If the line lowering option is utilized then anchors and guy wires will be installed to compensate for the tension on the existing lines within the work area. Access to the west is on an approved access road to the existing distribution pole from Big Potrero Truck Trail and then on a two-track access road to the site. Access to the east will be on an existing distribution line road which runs 200 feet north from an approved project road. Temporary impacts at the guarding area include hand and/or mechanical digging to set micropiles and eight poles as well as vegetation clearing for equipment access, guy wire anchors, and road expansion. Temporary impacts associated with the installation of the

wood guard poles within the site will result from drilling of the micropiles, placement of the excavated material, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the poles. Where micropiles are used, the steel casing will be cut level with the surface of the rock when guard structures are removed. Damage to vegetation may also occur from access road clearing and line lowering. No vehicle traffic or other ground disturbing activity will occur within this work area.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area including the line drop segment was conducted on May 9, 2011. The eastern edge of the guarding area also contains a perennial jurisdictional stream channel that supports southern sycamore-alder riparian woodland dominated by California sycamore, scrub oak, ripgut brome, and California buckwheat. The stream channel and associated riparian vegetation will be flagged as an ESA and avoided during guard pole installation and removal. No special status plant species were observed in the vicinity during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. No nesting birds or sensitive wildlife species were detected during the habitat assessment. Coastal rosy boa is the only sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity of this work area during the pre-construction biological surveys.

#### **GS-NF-23**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses Lake Morena Drive. The work area is composed of one guarding area immediately east of structure EP84. The proposed guarding area is located on top of a small slope above the west shoulder of Lake Morena Drive, approximately 75 feet east of structure EP84 and extending northsouth along Lake Morena Drive. Access will be from an existing access road for structure EP84. Temporary impacts at the guarding area include hand and/or mechanical digging to set four wood poles. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the wood guard poles will occur as excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking around the poles.

A pre-construction habitat assessment of the proposed guarding areas was conducted on May 9, 2011. No special status plant species were observed in the vicinity of the guarding area during the habitat assessment but sticky geranium was documented within the vicinity of the work area during the pre-construction biological surveys. No nesting birds or sensitive wildlife species were detected during the May 2011 habitat assessment. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity during the pre-construction biological surveys included long-eared owl and western spadefoot toad.

#### **GS-NF-24**

The proposed line lowering area is within the ROW where the existing telephone line will be lowered to the ground between structures EP85-2 and EP84. Walk-in access will begin from Lake Morena Drive. The line to be lowered extends east for approximately 500 feet and then southeast for approximately 300 feet. The existing poles are located where the work area heads southeast. Temporary impacts at the site could include foot traffic and minimal vegetation disturbance around the existing utility pole from dropping line. Temporary impacts associated with the line dropping include damage to vegetation, adding grounds and foot traffic, as well as possible impacts from the line itself being lowered onto the ground. No vehicle traffic or other ground disturbing activity will occur within this work area. If AT&T elects to perform this work, the activity will not be monitored; however, SDG&E will inform the CPUC of the start date and provide a point of contact. SDG&E will also conduct a post line lowering impact evaluation.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed line drop area was conducted on May 9, 2011. Other plant species observed were scrub oak. Approximately 350 individuals of sticky geranium were observed within the proposed line drop area during the pre-impact habitat assessment. One ephemeral jurisdictional stream channel is located adjacent to the line drop area, approximately 25 feet south of the proposed line drop area and extends east from Lake Morena Drive. The jurisdictional stream will be flagged as an ESA and avoided during the line drop activities. No sensitive wildlife species were observed during the May 2011 habitat assessment. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity of this work area during pre-construction biological surveys included long-eared owl and western spadefoot toad.

#### **GS-NF-25**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses an existing distribution line between structures EP85-2 and EP84. The proposal is for one guarding array and access road within the work area. The

proposed guarding array is partially within the work area for structure EP85-2. Access is along an existing dirt road extending west (**SDG&E later corrected that it is east**) and north from Lake Morena Drive. Temporary impacts include hand and/or mechanical digging to set eight poles as well as vegetation clearing for the access road to the guard pole location. There will also be impacts from mowing and driving of the access road within the guarding area. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the wood guard poles within the site will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking around the poles.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on May 9, 2011. The area supports scrub oak chaparral. No special status plants were observed within the vicinity of the proposed work area during the May 2011 habitat assessment but sticky geraniums had been previously documented in the vicinity of this work area during the pre-construction biological surveys. No sensitive wildlife species were observed during the habitat assessment, but sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity of this guard structure during the pre-construction biological surveys included long-eared owl and western spadefoot toad.

#### **GS-NF-28**

The proposed mobile guarding work area is located within the project ROW where the alignment crosses Old Highway 80 between structures EP120-4 and EP119-2. The proposed mobile guarding area is on the north side of Old Highway 80 approximately 100 feet north of structure EP119-2. Access is from an existing access road running north from Old Highway 80 approximately 50 feet, and then west approximately 100 feet. There are also two spur roads off the existing access road, extending approximately 50 feet east and 100 feet north from the middle of the four-way intersection of the proposed access road. Temporary impacts at the work area include moving and positioning the mobile guarding equipment, as well as minor clearing of the access road to the site. A large coast live oak tree and several arroyo willow trees will require trimming to allow for safe completion of this work. Temporary impacts associated with positioning of the mobile guarding equipment will result from driving and positioning vehicles, as well as tree trimming, to make a clear path for the wire stringing operation.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed mobile guarding area was conducted on May 6, 2011. The area supports non-native grassland and a small stand of southern coast live oak riparian forest along the southwestern edge of the site. No special status plant species were observed in the vicinity during the preconstruction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. No jurisdictional wetlands are present within this riparian habitat which is at the southern edge of the floodplain of lower La Posta Creek. La Posta Creek flows west approximately 100 feet north of the proposed work site but no impacts will occur to jurisdictional wetlands or waters within the proposed work area. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented in the vicinity of this work area included the bat species Yuma myotis. The proposed work area also occurs within 500 feet of suitable least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher habitat. Therefore, the proposed mobile guarding and associated tree trimming and vegetation impacts will occur outside of the nesting seasons for both least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher to ensure that no new significant impacts occur to these species. If construction work occurs during the breeding season for these species a pre-construction survey will be performed within 500 feet to ensure no nesting flycatchers or vireo are indirectly impacted by proposed work. No sensitive wildlife species were detected during the habitat assessment.

#### **GS-NF-29**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses Interstate 8 (I-8) between structures EP120-4 and EP119-2. The site is composed of three guarding arrays, one north of the westbound I-8 lanes, one within the median between the west and eastbound lanes, and one south of the eastbound lanes of I-8. The proposed guarding area on the north side of I-8 will be accessed from the dirt shoulder on the north side of westbound I-8. This guarding area (on the north side) will require setting a total of four guard poles and six anchors. The proposed guarding area within the I-8 median will be accessed from both the southern shoulder of westbound I-8 and the northern shoulder of eastbound I-8.

This guarding area within the median will require setting eight guard poles and twelve anchors. The proposed guard array on the south side of I-8 will be accessed from the dirt shoulder on the north side of westbound I-8. The array will require setting four guard poles and six anchors. Depending on subterrain conditions, the guard poles may require the use of micropiles. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the wood guard poles, micropiles, and anchors

within each site will result from excavation of the pole and anchor holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles and anchors upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking around the poles. As per Caltrans requirements, a guard net will be used over Interstate 8.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on May 6, 2011. No special status plant species were observed within the vicinity during the pre-construction biological surveys or pre-impact habitat assessment. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity during the pre-construction biological surveys included coast horned lizard. The southern and median portions of this proposed work area also occur within 500 feet of suitable least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher habitat. Therefore, the proposed mobile guarding and associated tree trimming and vegetation impacts will occur outside of the nesting seasons for both least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher to ensure that no new significant impacts occur to these species. If construction work occurs during the breeding season for these species a pre-construction survey will be performed within 500 feet to ensure no nesting flycatchers or vireo are indirectly impacted by proposed work. No sensitive wildlife species were detected during the habitat assessment.

#### **GS-NF-33**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses an existing distribution line between structures EP221-2 and EP220-1. The site is composed of one guarding array. The proposed work area near structure EP221-2 will be accessed from the associated TSAP, 120 feet southeast of the guard structure work area. Guard poles and equipment will be flown to this location. Temporary impacts associated with the installation of the wood guard poles within the site will result from excavation of the pole holes, micropiles drilling, placement of the excavated material, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, and crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the poles. Where micropiles are used, the steel casing will be cut level with the surface of the rock when guard structures are removed.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on May 5, 2011. One special status plant species, Jacumba milkvetch, was observed in the proposed work area during the pre-impact habitat assessment. A total of 11 Jacumba milkvetch plants were observed within the work area. In addition, desert beauty, Tecate tarplant, and sticky geraea have all been documented in the vicinity of the proposed work area during the pre-construction biological surveys. No sensitive wildlife species were observed within the proposed work area during the habitat assessment, but sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity during the pre-construction biological surveys included northern red diamond rattlesnake and coastal rosy boa.

#### **GS-NF-34**

The proposed guarding area is located within the Project ROW where the alignment crosses the San Diego & Eastern Railway between structures EP238-1 and EP239-1. The proposed work area will be accessed via an approved access road to EP 239-1 and then continue west on approved roads into the guarding work area. Personnel will have walk-in access to the flower pot locations. Equipment, flower pots and poles will be delivered by helicopter. Four flower pots will be set up to guard the railroad. Temporary impacts associated with installation the flower pot guard structures will result in minor leveling of the soil where the structures will be situated and by crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the flower pots. No flower pots will be set up in the wetland area to the west.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on April 16, 2011. The vegetated portions of the proposed work area support disturbed riparian woodland/tamarisk scrub on the west side of the San Diego & Eastern Railway railroad tracks and herbaceous wetland on the east side of the tracks. Jurisdictional wetlands will be flagged as ESAs and avoided during installation and removal of the flower pots and associated poles. Guarding activity including placement of flower pots will be limited to the developed portions of the railroad ROW and the existing dirt road within the adjacent agricultural field; no impacts will occur within the wetlands. No special status plant species were observed in the vicinity of the proposed work area during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. No nesting birds or sensitive wildlife species were observed during the habitat assessment. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity of this work area during the pre-construction biological surveys included loggerhead shrike and vermilion flycatcher.

**GS-NF-35**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses Carrizo Gorge Road between structures EP243 and EP244. The proposed work area is adjacent to the disturbed shoulder of Carrizo Gorge Road and will be accessed directly from a public road leading to an approved Project pull site approximately 250 feet east of Carrizo Gorge Road. County of San Diego regulations do not allow access to the guarding area from Carrizo Gorge Road. Work at this location includes setting four wood guard poles and mowing and driving the proposed access road from the pull site to the guarding area. Temporary impacts will result from excavation of the pole holes, placement of the excavated soil, removal of the guard poles upon completion of wire pulling activities, minor clearing and grading to access the guarding area, and crew members accessing and walking on the areas around the poles.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on April 16, 2011. No special status plant species were observed during the pre-impact habitat assessment but sticky geraea was previously documented in the vicinity during the pre-construction biological surveys. No sensitive wildlife species were observed during the habitat assessment but loggerhead shrike was previously documented in the vicinity of the work area during the pre-construction biological surveys.

**GS-NF-36**

The proposed guarding area is located within the ROW where the alignment crosses Old Highway 80 between structures EP251 and EP252-1. The work areas are adjacent to the north and south sides of Old Highway 80. This guard structure site consists of two sets of five flower pots stationed 20 feet from the fogline per County requirements adjacent to the east and westbound lanes. The flower pots and poles will be installed from the shoulder and the appropriate lane along Old Highway 80 and will require separate lane closures for the eastbound and westbound lanes. Approved traffic control plans have been obtained from the County of San Diego. Temporary impacts associated with installation of the flower pots within each site will result from capping with aggregate material to provide a level area for the flower pot base, matting for setting up the crane outriggers, removal of the flower pots upon completion of the wire pulls, and crew members assessing and walking on the areas around the poles.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed guarding area was conducted on April 16, 2011. No special status plant species were observed in the vicinity of the proposed work area during the pre-construction biological surveys or the pre-impact habitat assessment. The proposed work area contains two well-defined jurisdictional dry washes. One dry wash is on the north side of Old Highway 80 and the other is on the south. These dry washes will be flagged as an ESA and avoided during the guarding process. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity of this guarding area during the pre-construction biological surveys included northern red diamond rattlesnake.

**Pull Site Modification at Structure CP23**

The wire site northeast of structure CP23 is located on a gentle slope. As part of this variance submittal, SDG&E is requesting that this wire site be shifted 180 feet to the east in order to take advantage of a more level work area. This will minimize the potential grading needed at the site and will decrease the angle of the wire pull. No additional space is requested; this request is only to shift the approved work area.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed modified pull site was conducted on June 4, 2011. The modified location is approximately 400 feet northeast of structure CP23 along Sycamore Canyon Road. Spiny redberry, the larval host plant for the Hermes copper butterfly occurs throughout the proposed pull site and on the associated access road. California buckwheat, a commonly used nectar source for the Hermes copper butterfly, is also present. Four coast live oak trees occur near the north edge of the proposed impact areas. No special status plant species were observed in the vicinity of the proposed modified pull site during the pre-construction biological surveys. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity of the wire site during the pre-construction biological surveys included California gnatcatcher, coast horned lizard, Belding's orange-throated whiptail, Coronado skink, northern red diamond rattlesnake, and San Diego black-tailed jack rabbit. The proposed pull site occurs within 500 feet of occupied and suitable California gnatcatcher habitat. Therefore, if construction work occurs during the California gnatcatcher breeding season a pre-construction survey will be performed within 500 feet to ensure no nesting gnatcatchers are indirectly impacted by proposed work.

**Pull Site Modification at Structure EP83**

The current proposed wire site south of structure EP83 is not feasible to use from a constructability standpoint. The wire site is at an acute angle in comparison to the orientation of the structure arms. To lessen this angle and increase safety during wire pulling operations, a different wire set-up site is needed. SDG&E is requesting to move the southernmost approved pull site south of structure EP83 to a location that is more southwest of structure EP83. This shift will include the need to lengthen the proposed temporary road to the pull site. The pull site will maintain the same dimensions and the only additional disturbance area requested is associated with the additional temporary road improvements, which is approximately 9,210 square feet.

A pre-impact habitat assessment of the proposed modified pull site was conducted on June 7, 2011. The proposed pull site and road segment are approximately 950 feet southwest of structure EP83 and approximately 1600 feet west of Hauser Creek Road. Sticky geraea was observed along the proposed access road during the pre-impact habitat assessment and this species has also been documented in the vicinity during pre-construction biological surveys. The proposed access road crosses one ephemeral jurisdictional stream en route to the new pull site area. This stream has been permitted for impacts under the 401 NWP 12 (SCP#98), 401 WQC, and 1602 SAA permits so the requested modification will not require any changes to the existing project waters permits. The requested shift will actually reduce overall temporary impacts to this ephemeral stream channel.

No sensitive wildlife species were observed. Sensitive wildlife species previously documented within the vicinity of this wire site included coast horned lizard.

**(Paleontological and cultural discussions have been consolidated below. In addition specific site information has been omitted for confidentiality purposes):**

**(All of the proposed)** guarding areas **(except for two locations)** are not within a geological deposit with potential for paleontological deposits. There is no potential for impacts to paleontological resources from the proposed activities. GS-NF-35 is in an area of the Project with a geological deposit that has potential for paleontological deposits. There is potential for impacts to paleontological resources from the proposed activities and a paleontological monitor will be present to observe excavation of the foundation holes for the guard poles. The GS-NF-36 guarding area is in an area of the project with a geological deposit that has potential for paleontological deposits. However, there is no potential for impacts to paleontological resources from the proposed activities because the flower pots will not require excavation with the potential to uncover paleontological materials.

**(Areas were)** surveyed for archaeological materials during both pre-construction fielding activities and cultural resources inventory work for the Sunrise Powerlink Final Environmentally Superior Southern Route. At the pull site modification areas and for the **(majority)** of guarding areas proposed no cultural resource sites or features were found. These locations will not impact any NRHP/CRHR eligible sites.

A cultural resource site was identified within the footprint of **(one of the guarding)** work areas; however, no artifacts are recorded where the guard structures are proposed and the use of flower pots will minimize the potential for inadvertent disturbance. The use of flower pots, that will be leveled if necessary with aggregate, will avoid impacts to possible subsurface deposits. All work will follow the Historic Properties Management Plan and the Historic Properties Treatment Plan. Cultural and Native American monitors will be present during installation of the flower pots to ensure proper protection and management of any newly discovered resources.

**(General Provisions)**

Jurisdictional waters at GS-NF-4, GS-NF-10, GS-NF-22, GS-NF-24, GS-NF-34, and GS-NF-36 will be delineated, flagged as an ESA and avoided.

Impacts to all wildlife species will be minimized through implementation of the Project Mitigation Measures.

SDG&E agrees that tree trimming be subject to BIO-APM-16 and MM B-1a.

Where special status plant populations occur, the impact minimization and mitigation measures identified in the approved RPSP will be implemented. Seed from these species was collected in 2011 for implementation of the RPSP after guarding is completed.

The Construction General Permit (CGP) and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs) have been prepared for all construction activities including guard structure sites to mitigate erosion and prevent the transport of sediment and pollutants associated with construction materials from leaving the Project site. These SWPPPs include information on the streams and jurisdictional waters that may be affected downstream from the Project and how to prevent pollution in these waters due to construction. Best Management Practices (BMPs) consistent with the SWPPPs and CGP will be implemented to ensure no impacts to waters will occur. BMPs that would be utilized for the guard structure sites include, but are not limited to, fiber rolls and gravel bag berms. In addition, all other SWPPP and CGP requirements will be implemented to ensure no impacts to streams and jurisdictional waters will occur.

### **CPUC Evaluation of Variance Request**

In accordance with the MMCRP, 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, cultural, paleontological, and hydrological resources, sensitive land uses/noise, and visual. 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 SDG&E.

**Biological Resources.** The CPUC biological consultant conducted a review of Variance Request #32 and provided review comments to SDG&E. SDG&E resolved comments by clarifying information. The CPUC biological consultant provided the following analysis:

While no bird nests or nesting activity was observed during the pre-impact habitat assessments, impacts to nesting birds could still occur if construction was to occur during the nesting season. Therefore, construction will be subject to Mitigation Measure B-8a (Nest Survey Protocol and Nesting Bird Management Plan) to protect nesting birds.

Impact numbers for Variance Request #32 to sensitive vegetation were not provided; although, based on the descriptions of the guard structure installation/removal, access to work areas, and construction methods, it appears that additional impacts to sensitive vegetation would be incremental to those already accounted for in the FEIR/EIS, Project Modification Report (PMR), BLM micro-siting modifications, and previously analyzed variance requests. Temporary impacts (i.e., the on-site 1:1 impacts) to sensitive vegetation are to be mitigated in accordance with the Restoration Plan for Sensitive Vegetation (RPSV) (dated March 15, 2011). The Habitat Acquisition Plan/Habitat Management Plan (HAP/HMP) (dated September 21, 2010) would provide approximately 8,800 acres of sensitive vegetation mitigation land. The total impacts to sensitive vegetation from the PMR (approximately 743 acres), coupled with the increases in impacts from previous Variance Requests and BLM micro-siting modifications, would increase the total project impact acreage to less than 800 acres. It is expected that Variance Request #32 would add only incrementally to this impact total. Therefore, the HAP/HMP provides all of the mitigation that would be required for the PMR and the additional impacts to sensitive vegetation from Variance Request #32. As proposed, a final accounting of impact acreages and mitigation will be prepared during the post-construction phase and provided to the CPUC and other responsible agencies.

Pre-construction surveys for special status plant species and implementation of appropriate avoidance/minimization/compensation measures is required in accordance with Mitigation Measure B-5a. While pre-construction surveys were conducted in May and June, the surveys conducted in June (for

GS-NF-1 , GS-NF-5, GS-NF-6, GS-NF-7, GS-NF-8, GS-NF-14, GS-NF-16, GS-NF-18, GS-NF-20, and pull site modifications at both CP23 and EP83) may have been too late to detect special status, annual plant species. Mitigation Measure B-5a states: *“A qualified biologist shall survey for special status plants in the spring of a year with adequate rainfall prior to initiating construction activities in a given area. If a survey cannot be conducted due to inadequate rainfall, then SDG&E shall consult with the Wildlife Agencies... to determine if construction may begin in the absence of survey data and what mitigation would be required, or whether construction would not be allowed until such data is collected.”* Since the biological surveys conducted in June may not qualify as being conducted in the spring, as conditioned below, SDG&E consult with the Wildlife Agencies.

If tree trimming is required during the applicable avian and raptor breeding season, nest surveys will be conducted per the Nest Survey Protocol and the Nesting Bird Management Plan.

Variance Request #32 would not represent substantial changes to the FEIR/EIS or PMR and would not create new significant impacts to biological resources. The types of potential impacts were already assessed in the FEIR/EIS as Class I or Class II, so they would not present new significant impacts that would require additional CEQA/NEPA analysis. The significance of the impacts listed in the FEIR/EIS also would not change (i.e., Class I impacts would remain as Class I impacts, Class II impacts would remain as Class II impacts, etc.), and no new mitigation measures would be required. All applicable mitigation measures would still apply, as conditioned below.

**Hydrological Resources.** Jurisdictional waters occur at GS-NF-4, GS-NF-10, GS-NF-22, GS-NF-24, GS-NF-34, and GS-NF-36 and per the request will be delineated, flagged as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) and avoided. SDG&E provided that the CGP and SWPPPs have been prepared for all construction activities including guard structure sites to mitigate erosion and prevent the transport of sediment and pollutants associated with construction materials from leaving the Project site. These SWPPPs include information on the streams and jurisdictional waters that may be affected downstream from the Project and how to prevent pollution in these waters due to construction. BMPs consistent with the SWPPPs and CGP will be implemented to ensure no impacts to waters will occur. BMPs that would be utilized for the guard structure sites include, but are not limited to, fiber rolls and gravel bag berms. In addition, all other SWPPP and CGP requirements will be implemented to ensure no impacts to streams and jurisdictional waters will occur.

State Water Resources Control Board staff reviewed SDG&E’s request for Variance #32 and provided their approval for work occurring in or near the sited jurisdictional resources with implementation of the conditions below:

- State Water Resources staff assumes that California Department of Fish and Game upland and riparian mitigation measures will be followed for the affected sensitive habitats reported in this variance request.
- All sites described in the request for Variance #32 that have not been previously surveyed for noxious weeds/invasive plant species, will be surveyed by qualified botanists. Any new populations reported will be treated as described in the project 2009/2010 Weed Control Plan of December 23, 2009, as revised.
- All aquatic resources described in the request for Variance #32 that are not currently listed in the WRA index of affected aquatic resources for the project will be identified, assigned an index number, and added to the WRA index. This will facilitate more accurate reporting of mitigation compliance.

- As provided by SDG&E all resources will be avoided and impacts at GS-NF-4, where an ephemeral stream is present, will be "minimized".

**Cultural and Paleontological Resources.** The CPUC cultural consultant reviewed the request and provided review comments on November 18, 2011.

Based on the Final Paleontological Monitoring and Discovery Treatment Plan, accepted on June 17, 2010, the potential to encounter paleontological resources within the proposed guard structure locations ranges from no, to low, to high. Therefore, in accordance with Mitigation Measure **PAL-01c: Conduct full-time paleontological construction monitoring**, full-time construction monitoring will be conducted by a qualified paleontologist in areas determined to have a moderate to high paleontological sensitivity. In addition, **PAL-01c: Conduct part-time monitoring of sediments with low, marginal, undetermined sensitivity**, states that construction work in areas determined to have a low, marginal, and/or undetermined paleontological resource sensitivity will be monitored on a part-time basis as determined by a qualified paleontologist. It should be noted that regardless of paleontological sensitivity, areas in which micro pile work will be conducted will not require a paleontological monitor, due to the small bore hole size. In addition, areas in which "flower pots" will be used to support poles will not require a paleontological monitor due to minimal ground disturbance. However, drilling for direct burial pole placement for proposed guard structures at the following structure locations shall be monitored as follows: GS-NF-9 (part-time monitoring); and GS-NF-35 (full-time monitoring).

The Final Inventory Report of the Cultural Resources was accepted on June 2, 2010. For most of the guard structure areas and both pull modifications, no known cultural resources were identified within the proposed guard structure sites and no NTP conditions are recommended at these locations. Specific resource locations have been omitted from the cultural discussion below.

Cultural sites have been identified near four of the identified guard areas. Therefore, in accordance with Mitigation Measure **C-01b: Erect protective flagging or other markers for ESA**; sites will be flagged off with temporary orange fencing and designated as ESAs and sites will be protected as an exclusionary zone. Mitigation Measure **C-01e: Implement archaeological monitoring at cultural ESAs**, states that Project-wide archaeological and Native American monitors are to be on-site during the temporary fencing of ESAs. In addition, any ground disturbing activities near the designated ESA will be monitored full-time by an archaeologist and Native American monitor. Mitigation Measures set forth in the Final Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) will be implemented during construction, as required.

Two of the proposed guard structure areas are located within the boundaries of cultural resource sites; therefore, all guard activity must be confined to the detailed work areas with no excavation or disturbance. Guarding shall be accomplished through an outage, usage of "flower-pots", line-lowering, or alternatively, using a mobile crane. Also, in accordance with Mitigation Measure **C-01b: Erect protective flagging or other markers for ESA**; sites will be flagged off with temporary orange fencing and designated as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA). Mitigation Measure **C-01e: Implement archaeological monitoring at cultural ESAs**, states that Project-wide archaeological and Native American monitors are to be on-site during the temporary fencing of ESAs. In addition, any ground disturbing activities near the designated ESAs will be monitored full-time by an archaeologist and Native American monitor. Data recovery fieldwork, including collection of surface artifacts within the guard structure location, will be completed and approved prior to initiation of any ground disturbance as described in the Historic Properties Treatment Plan.

In three guard structure locations no known cultural resources were identified within the proposed areas; however, the areas are highly sensitive for buried sites. Therefore, in accordance with Mitigation Measure **C-03a: Implement archaeological monitoring**, archaeological and Native American monitors will be on-site during drilling or ground disturbance. Mitigation Measures set forth in the Final Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) will be implemented during construction, as required.

In the event of an unanticipated discovery of archaeological or paleontological materials, all ground-disturbing work within the immediate area of the discovery will be suspended. Any new discoveries shall be managed in compliance with the procedures and guidelines for Treatment for Unanticipated Discoveries set forth in the HPMP and Final Paleontological Monitoring and Discovery Treatment Plan (PMDTP).

**Traffic/Sensitive Land Uses/Noise.** Traffic impacts for use of the proposed areas have been assessed, and SDG&E and its contractor have coordinated with CalTrans, California Highway Patrol, and San Diego County.

**Visual.** The guard structure areas are temporary and no visual concerns are noted.

**Conditions of Variance Approval.**

The conditions presented below shall be met by SDG&E and its contractors:

1. All applicable project mitigation measures, APMs, compliance plans, permit conditions and conditions of NTP #13 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 alternate access route.
3. Conduct biological monitoring in compliance with Mitigation Measure B-1c. "Biological survey sweeps" are required to occur during active use of the subject sites as part of required biological monitoring activities.
4. If active nests are found, follow protocols in MM B-8a, Nest Survey Protocol and Nesting Bird Management Plan. A biological monitor shall establish an appropriate 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 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. The biological monitor shall be responsible for documenting the results of the surveys and the ongoing monitoring. The buffer may be adjusted with the approval of CDFG and USFWS, and with prior knowledge of the CPUC. A chronology of nesting activity, including any buffer reductions, specific construction activity nearby, and bird behavior shall be noted in the project nesting log to be submitted on a weekly basis.
5. If tree trimming or vegetation removal are required during the applicable avian and raptor breeding season, activities will be conducted per the Nest Survey Protocol and Nesting Bird Management Plan.
6. SDG&E will control the spread of invasive plant species by implementing the 2009/2010 Weed Control Plan at all Project areas. All sites described in the request for Variance #32 that have not been previously surveyed for noxious weeds/invasive plant species will be surveyed by qualified

botanists. Any new populations reported will be treated as described in the project 2009/2010 Weed Control Plan of Dec. 23, 2009, as revised.

7. An accounting of oak tree trimming for work proposed under this variance shall be submitted to the CPUC.
8. Where special status plant populations occur, the impact minimization and mitigation measures identified in the approved RPSV will be implemented. Seed from these species was collected in 2011 for implementation of the RPSV after guarding is completed.
9. Since the biological surveys conducted in June may not qualify as being conducted in the spring, SDG&E will consult with the Wildlife Agencies prior to work at GS-NF-1, GS-NF-5, GS-NF-6, GS-NF-7, GS-NF-8, GS-NF-14, GS-NF-16, GS-NF-18, GS-NF-20, and pull site modifications at both CP23 and EP83. Documentation of consultation must be supplied to the CPUC prior to work at these areas.
10. If construction work occurs at GS-NF-1, GS-NF-2, GS-NF-16, GS-NF-17 and pull site modification CP23 during the California gnatcatcher breeding season, a pre-construction survey will be performed within 500 feet to ensure no nesting gnatcatchers are indirectly impacted by proposed work.
11. At GS-NF-14 any vegetation trimming or removal will be completed outside of the California gnatcatcher nesting season to ensure that no new significant impacts occur to this species.
12. GS-NF-18 is within 500 feet of suitable California gnatcatcher and least Bell's vireo habitat. Therefore, if construction work occurs during the California gnatcatcher or least Bell's vireo breeding season, a pre-construction survey will be performed within 500 feet to ensure no nesting gnatcatchers or vireo are indirectly impacted by proposed work.
13. At GS-NF-28 and GS-NF-29 the work areas occur within 500 feet of suitable least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher habitat. Therefore, the proposed mobile guarding and associated tree trimming and vegetation impacts will occur outside of the nesting seasons for both least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher to ensure that no new significant impacts occur to these species. If construction work occurs during the breeding season for these species a pre-construction survey will be performed within 500 feet.
14. At GS-NF-20 the area will be surveyed for burrowing owl within 30 days prior to construction in accordance with mitigation Measure B-7d.
15. At GS-NF-5, GS-NF-6, and GS-NF-7 a biologist will be present during all construction activities and a Quino-permitted biologist will monitor all activities in this area during the active larvae and adult flight season
16. At GS-NF-17 owl's clover, a Quino host plant, was observed within the proposed impact area during the pre-impact habitat assessment. Impacts to Quino checkerspot butterfly will be minimized by the presence of a Quino-permitted biologist during all construction activities. The biologist will direct construction crews to avoid impacts to host plants to the extent feasible.
17. If the application of water is needed to abate dust, SDG&E shall use the least amount needed to meet safety and air quality standards and prevent the formation of puddles, which could attract wildlife to

construction sites (as requested by USFWS). Conditions of the Dust Control Plan will be implemented and enforced.

18. Six locations have been identified as having potential impacts to jurisdictional waters which occur at GS-NF-4, GS-NF-10, GS-NF-22, GS-NF-24, GS-NF-34, and GS-NF-36. SDG&E will delineate and establish ESAs for jurisdictional waters at these locations and avoid all impacts to these jurisdictional waters. SDG&E will install BMPs as detailed in the SWPPPs and CGP.
19. All aquatic resources described in the request for Variance #32 that are not currently listed in the WRA index of affected aquatic resources for the project will be identified, assigned an index number, and added to the WRA index.
20. As proposed, a final accounting of impact acreages and mitigation will be prepared during the post-construction phase and provided to the CPUC and other responsible agencies.
21. SDG&E shall delineate nearby cultural ESAs and install exclusion fencing. Project-wide archaeological and Native American monitors are to be on-site during the temporary fencing of ESAs, drilling and ground disturbance at highly sensitive areas and during ground disturbing activities near ESAs. Appropriate fencing shall be verified by the CPUC EM prior to area occupation.
22. Two of the proposed guard structure areas are located within the boundaries of cultural resource sites; therefore, all guard activity must be confined to the detailed work areas with no excavation or disturbance. Also, sites will be flagged off with temporary orange fencing and designated as ESAs. Project-wide archaeological and Native American monitors are to be on-site during the temporary fencing of ESAs. In addition, any ground disturbing activities near the designated ESAs will be monitored full-time by an archaeologist and Native American monitor. Data recovery fieldwork, including collection of surface artifacts within the guard structure location, will be completed and approved prior to initiation of any ground disturbance as described in the HPTP.
23. Drilling for direct burial pole placement for proposed guard structures will be monitored part-time by a paleontological monitor at GS-NF-9 and full time at GS-NF-35.
24. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of archaeological or paleontological materials, they shall be managed in compliance with the procedures and guidelines for Treatment for Unanticipated Discoveries set forth in the HPMP and PMDTP.
25. All unanticipated cultural, paleontological, and biological discoveries shall be immediately reported to the CPUC EM.
26. All complaints received by SDG&E in regard to use of the areas, shall be logged and reported immediately to the CPUC. This includes complaints relevant to traffic, noise and dust, etc. Complaints should also be forwarded immediately to San Diego County.
27. All temporary installations shall be completely removed (wooden poles) or cut off at least three feet below ground surface. Micropiles in rock shall be cut off at the rock face and will be inspected by the CPUC EM.

28. AT&T telecommunications may require additional grounding on their facilities. SDG&E will need to supply to the CPUC EM the dates of the AT&T grounding and a contact for AT&T prior to the start of work. If ATT elects to perform work SDG&E is still responsible for impacts and should do a post guard structure evaluation of impacts created during line lowering. SDG&E agrees to conduct a post-guard structure impact evaluation as a result of line lowering.
29. Please note that the use of “flower pots” for guarding may be utilized in the place of any of the proposed guarding techniques at all of the areas in the request and a modification to the variance would not be required only an e-mail notification.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

*Billie Blanchard*

Billie Blanchard  
CPUC Environmental Project Manager  
Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Project

cc: Daniel Steward, BLM El Centro Field Office  
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Bob Hawkins, Forest Service  
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