

# SCOPING REPORT

## Part 1

### Southern California Edison's West of Devers Upgrade Project

Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, California

CEQA Lead Agency:  
**California Public Utilities Commission**  
SCH #2014051041



Prepared by:



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# 1. Introduction

This Scoping Report documents the public scoping effort conducted by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the West of Devers (WOD) Upgrade Project. Southern California Edison (SCE), the project applicant, has filed an application with the CPUC for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for approval to construct the WOD project. As part of the project review process and in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the CPUC and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) that will evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the project.

In compliance with CEQA, the CPUC held a 30-day public scoping period to allow the public and regulatory agencies an opportunity to comment on the scope of the EIR/EIS and to identify issues that should be addressed in the environmental document. This report documents the issues and concerns expressed during the public scoping meetings held in May 2014 and the written comments received from the public, community organizations, and governmental agencies during the May/June 2014 public scoping period.

In compliance with NEPA, the BLM is conducting a separate 30-day public scoping period, which started after publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on July 1, 2014. A public scoping meeting for the BLM scoping period will be held on July 16, 2014, which will be advertised and noticed similar to the process conducted and described in this scoping report. After the close of the BLM scoping period, Part 2 of this Scoping Report will be published.

## 1.1 Purpose of Scoping

The process of determining the focus and content of the EIR/EIS is known as scoping. Scoping helps to identify the range of actions, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in depth, and eliminates from detailed study those issues that are not pertinent to the final decision on the proposed project. The scoping process is not intended to resolve differences of opinion regarding the proposed project or evaluate its merits. Instead, the process allows all interested parties to express their concerns regarding the proposed project and thereby ensures that all opinions and comments are considered in the environmental analysis. Scoping is an effective way to bring together and address the concerns of the public, affected agencies, and other interested parties. Members of the public, relevant federal, State, regional and local agencies, interests groups, community organizations, and other interested parties may participate in the scoping process by providing comments or recommendations regarding issues to be investigated in the EIR/EIS.

Comments received during the scoping process are part of the public record as documented in this scoping report. The comments and questions received during the public scoping process have been reviewed and considered by the CPUC and BLM and will be used (along with comments received during the second scoping period) in determining the appropriate scope of issues to be addressed in the EIR/EIS and in the selection of alternatives to be carried forward for further analysis.

The purpose of scoping for the WOD project was to:

- Inform the public and relevant public agencies about the project, CEQA and NEPA requirements, and the environmental impact analysis process;
- Solicit input on the WOD project for evaluation in the EIR/EIS; and
- Update the mailing list of public agencies and individuals interested in future project meetings and notices.

## 1.2 Summary of the Project

The West of Devers Upgrade Project would be located primarily within the existing West of Devers transmission corridor in the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties including the Morongo Band of Mission Indians reservation and the cities of Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Colton, Grand Terrace, Loma Linda, and Redlands. The West of Devers corridor traverses residential, commercial, agricultural, recreation, and open space land uses.

The WOD project as proposed by SCE includes the following major components:

- **Removal and upgrade** of existing 220 kV transmission lines primarily within the existing WOD corridor in six segments (see Notice of Preparation figures in Appendix A). The project segments are described as follows:
  - **Segment 1: San Bernardino.** Two existing 220 kV double-circuit lines include 45 double-circuit towers (average height 136 feet) that would be removed, and installation of 61 towers (average height 135 feet) that would be installed within the existing right-of-way (ROW).
  - **Segment 2: Colton and Loma Linda.** One existing 220 kV line (average height 139 feet) would be removed and rebuilt, including the removal of 29 double-circuit towers and installation of 35 towers (average height 146 feet).
  - **Segment 3: San Timoteo Canyon.** Removal of three existing sets of 220 kV towers and construction of two sets of towers, requiring removal of 116 individual towers (average height 86 feet for single-circuit towers and 139 feet for double-circuit towers) and installation of 133 towers (average height 143 feet).
  - **Segment 4: Beaumont and Banning.** Removal of approximately 175 structures (average height 90 feet for single-circuit towers and 139 feet for double-circuit towers), and installation of approximately 136 towers (average height 142 feet).
  - **Segment 5: Morongo Tribal Lands and Vicinity.** Six miles of this 9.5-mile segment are on Morongo tribal lands. On the tribal lands, SCE was originally considering two route options, but as of April 7, 2014, the tribe indicated to SCE that it designated Route Option 1 as its preferred route alternative. In this segment, approximately 137 structures would be removed (average height 83 feet for single-circuit towers and 140 feet for double-circuit towers) and approximately 108 structures (average height 144 feet) would be installed. In this segment, three miles of the existing ROW on Morongo land would be abandoned and relocated to the south, near the I-10 Freeway (this route is Option 1).

- **Segment 6: Whitewater and Devers Substation.** Removal of approximately 116 structures (average height 83 feet for single-circuit towers and 141 feet for double-circuit towers) and installation of 93 towers (average height 157 feet).
- **Substation equipment upgrades** at Devers, El Casco, Etiwanda, San Bernardino, and Vista Substations to accommodate increased power transfer on 220 kV lines.
- **Subtransmission upgrades** would include removal and relocation of 2 miles of existing 66 kV lines and upgrades at Timoteo and Tennessee 66/12 kV Substations to accommodate the relocated 66 kV line.
- Electric **distribution line upgrades** would include removal and relocation of 4 miles of existing 12 kV lines.
- Installation of **telecommunication lines** and equipment for the protection, monitoring, and control of transmission lines and substation equipment.

### 1.3 Scoping Report Organization

This scoping report includes four main sections and appendices, as described below:

- Section 1 provides an introduction to the report and describes the purpose of scoping and a brief overview of the WOD project considered for analysis in the EIR/EIS.
- Section 2 provides information on the scoping meetings and outreach resources.
- Section 3 summarizes the comments received and issues raised during the scoping comment period.
- Section 4 describes the next steps in the EIR/EIS process.
- Appendices consist of all the supporting materials used during scoping as well as copies of comment letters. The appendices include copies of the Notice of Preparation, meeting materials provided at the public scoping meetings, newspaper advertisements, and a summary of all comments received during this first public scoping process.

## 2. Project Scoping

This section describes the methods used to notify the public and agencies about the scoping process conducted for WOD. It outlines how information was made available for public and agency review and identifies the different avenues available for providing comments on the project (meetings, fax, email, mail, and phone).

### 2.1 Notice of Preparation

On May 12, 2014, the CPUC issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP), consistent with CEQA Guidelines §15082, that summarized the proposed project, stated its intention to prepare a joint EIR/EIS, and requested comments from interested parties (see Appendix A). The NOP included information on the date, time, and location of the public scoping meetings. The NOP was made available in English and Spanish.

The NOP was filed with the California State Clearinghouse on May 12, 2014 (SCH# 2014051041), which began a 30-day public scoping period. The review period for the NOP ended on June 12, 2014.

The CPUC and the BLM distributed NOPS to approximately 13,300 federal, State, regional, and local agencies, and elected officials, community and environmental organizations, Native American groups, and property owners. The mailing included the following approximate distribution:

- 142 agency representatives (includes over 71 different agencies)
- 37 environmental groups/organizations
- 5 tribal government representatives (2 different tribal governments)
- 30 elected officials
- 12,600 property owners within 600 feet of the project route alignment
- 421 other interested parties

Fourteen (14) additional copies of the NOP were delivered to the local project document repository sites. The NOP includes the list of repository sites that were used for this project. All future project-related documents will be available for review at these repository sites (refer to page 7 of the NOP in Appendix A).

## 2.2 Public Scoping Meetings

The CPUC held four public scoping meetings from May 19 to May 21, 2014. The scoping meetings provided an opportunity for the public, community and interest groups, and government agencies to obtain more information on the project, to learn more about the CEQA and NEPA environmental review processes, to ask questions regarding the project, and to provide comment on the project.

### Meeting Locations and Handouts

Table 1 presents the four scoping meetings held for the West of Devers Upgrade Project. Each of the meetings noted below included a court reporter to transcribe all of the oral public comments presented at the public meetings. The transcripts are included in Appendix B of this report. This report includes oral and written comments presented at the public meetings as well as written comments submitted during the scoping comment period.

Handouts and information materials available at each meeting are listed below. Refer to Appendices A and B for copies of these materials.

- Notice of Preparation
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Project Fact Sheet
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Self-addressed Comment Form
- Speaker Registration Card

**Table 1. Public Scoping Meetings**

Date and Time	Location	Signed-in	Speakers	Comment Letters
<b>Monday, May 19, 2014</b> 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm	<b>Banning</b> Banning City Hall – Council Chambers 99 E. Ramsey Street, Banning, CA 92220	8	3	2
<b>Tuesday, May 20, 2014</b> 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm	<b>Loma Linda</b> Loma Linda Civic Center Community Room 25541 Barton Road, Loma Linda, CA 92354	7	3	0
<b>Wednesday, May 21, 2014</b> 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm	<b>Beaumont</b> Beaumont Civic Center Auditorium/Gym 550 E. 6th Street, Beaumont, CA 92223	14 10	3 4	0 0

Other information was also made available for public review, which included an overview map of the project alignment as well as a series of maps that provided more detailed information of the project segments. Also, at the request of one of the meeting participants, the NOP and the Frequently Asked Questions handout were translated into Spanish; these documents are available on the CPUC’s website.

### Newspaper Advertisements

The release of the NOP and the date and location of the public scoping meetings were advertised in five newspapers. Advertisements provided a brief synopsis of the proposed project, included a map of the project route, and encouraged attendance at the scoping meetings to share comments on the project. The advertisements were placed in the newspapers listed in Table 2 (also see Appendix B).

**Table 2. Newspaper Advertisements**

Publication	Language	Date
The Press-Enterprise	English	May 15, 2014
San Bernardino Sun	English	May 15, 2014
Redlands Daily Facts	English	May 15, 2014
The Desert Sun	English	May 15, 2014
Unidos (La Prensa)	Spanish	May 16, 2014

### Agency and Tribal Government Consultation

During the public scoping period, the CPUC contacted affected public officials and tribal government representatives in an effort to provide information about the proposed project, the EIR/EIS process, and to consult with them regarding potential concerns or issues. Table 3 provides a list of all agencies that were contacted via telephone and/or email by the CPUC.

**Table 3. Agencies and Tribal Government Contacted Via Phone and Email**

Agency / Tribal Government	Contact Name	Contact Position	Project Segment
City of Colton	Mark Tomich Mario Suarez	Director of Development Services Senior Planner	2
City of Grand Terrace	Kenneth Henderson	Interim City Manager	2
City of Loma Linda	T. Jarb Thaipejr Konrad Bolowich	Public Works Director and City Manager Community Development Director and Assistant City Manager	1
City of Redlands	N. Enrique Martinez Fred Mousavipour	City Manager Municipal Utilities & Engineering Director	1, 3

**Table 3. Agencies and Tribal Government Contacted Via Phone and Email**

Agency / Tribal Government	Contact Name	Contact Position	Project Segment
City of Beaumont	Alan Kapanicas Rebecca Deming	City Manager Director of Planning	4
City of Banning	Andy Takata Duane Burk	City Manager Director of Public Works	4, 5
City of Calimesa	Mr. Randy Anstine Mr. Bob French	City Manager Director of Public Works	3, 4
County of Riverside	Mr. Juan Perez Karlene Hernandez	Director of Transportation and Land Management Executive Assistant	3, 4, 5, 6
County of San Bernardino	Gerry Newcombe	Director, Department of Public Works	1, 2, 3
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	Roger Meyer Robert Martin	CEO Chairman	5

As a result of this initial consultation, two local agencies and representatives of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians expressed interest in a face-to-face meeting with the CPUC and its environmental consultants to learn more about the WOD project. The CPUC held the following meetings:

- May 20, 2014 – Roger Meyer, CEO, Morongo Band of Mission Indians
- May 20, 2014 – Don Young, Engineering Manager, City of Redlands
- May 21, 2014 – Kenneth Henderson, Interim City Manager, City of Grand Terrace

During the meetings, the CPUC presented the proposed project to the agencies, answered questions, and solicited informal input on any issues and concerns with the project. The CPUC also provided a project factsheet and identified additional information that the agencies needed regarding the project. This information was provided after the meetings by email and mail to the requesting agencies/tribal government.

## 2.3 Outreach

The CPUC and BLM provided opportunities for the public and agencies to ask questions or comment on the project outside of meetings. A project information hotline, email address, and website were established and available during the public comment period. Information on these additional outreach efforts are described below.

### Project Information Hotline

To offer another opportunity to inquire about the public scoping meetings or the proposed project, a project-specific phone line (888-456-0254) was established to answer questions and take verbal comments from those unable to attend the meetings. Telephone messages were retrieved and all calls were promptly addressed. The phone line also allowed for comments to be submitted in writing by fax instead of mail. Only inquiries (questions) were provided through the phone line; no comments were received through this phone line (voice or fax) regarding the scope of the EIR/EIS.

## **Email Address**

An email address ([westofdevers@aspenerg.com](mailto:westofdevers@aspenerg.com)) was established for the project to provide another means of submitting comments on the scope and content of the EIR/EIS. The email address was provided on meeting handouts and posted on the website. Comments received by email have been considered and incorporated into this report.

## **Internet Website**

The CPUC established a project-specific website established to provide ongoing information about the proposed project. During the scoping period, the website included electronic versions of the project application, NOP, and project-related maps. The website provided, and will continue to provide throughout the project, another public venue to learn about the project. The website will remain a public information resource for the project and will announce future public meetings and hearings. The website address is:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspeng/westofdevers/westofdevers.htm>

## **Distribution List/Database**

The CPUC and BLM have compiled a comprehensive project-specific mailing list with over 13,300 entries. The mailing list/database was updated after the scoping meetings and the scoping comment period; the mailing list was reviewed to confirm all meeting attendees and all individuals, organizations, and agencies that submitted written comments were on the list. This mailing list will continue to be used throughout the environmental review process for the project to distribute public notices and will continue to be updated to ensure all interested parties are notified of key project milestones.

## **3. Scoping Comments**

This section summarizes the key issues raised during the public comment period. A total of 23 written comment letters were submitted and 13 individuals presented oral comments during the public scoping meetings. Appendix C of this report includes a summary of all comments received on the WOD project including the oral comments presented at the public scoping meetings (see transcripts in Appendix B). Appendix D includes copies of the written comment letters submitted on the project. The key issues raised are discussed below.

### **Aesthetics/Visual**

Several commenters expressed concern with the height of the new towers and stated that the added bulk and higher towers would be highly visible from residences and public roadways. A number of commenters also suggested that the lines be undergrounded in certain areas to address visual impacts as well as safety impacts. Visual simulations were requested as part of the aesthetics assessment.

## **Conflicts with Existing Land Uses**

Some of the cities noted that the WOD project could impact their existing plans for development and could impact anticipated road improvement projects.

The project bisects the Colorado River Aqueduct, and thus, there was some concern that the project could impact the ongoing operation, maintenance, and repair of the aqueduct. The Metropolitan Water District requested that design plans be reviewed and approved by them and that the EIR/EIS consider potential impacts to the aqueduct.

The City of Colton expressed concern that the project would impede residential development in the Reche Canyon area by creating a physical barrier and requiring greater setbacks.

The project's potential to impact recreational uses in the Cities of Colton and Grand Terrace were identified as key concerns that should be evaluated in the EIR/EIS. The connectivity of recreational areas between the two cities was an issue that was identified and that the cities requested be evaluated in the EIR/EIS.

One commenter requested that existing land uses within the utility corridor be allowed to continue. In particular an RV storage area that has been in operation for over 10 years.

Several commenters raised a concern with the placement of the towers closer to existing homes and wanted to know why SCE could not place the towers further away from existing residences. Commenters also expressed concern with the use of the easements; one commenter mentioned that his homeowner's group wanted to improve the easement so that they could use it for recreational and other uses but SCE would not allow it.

## **Property Values**

Commenters expressed concern with the project's impact on property values because of towers being moved closer to homes and businesses and the impact of bulkier, taller towers.

## **Fire Risk, EMF, and other Hazards**

Several commenters expressed concern with the potential of the project to increase fire risk and suggested the requirement for mitigation measures such as an emergency response plan and undergrounding of the transmission line.

Southern California Gas noted that the project crosses a number of their pipelines and suggested that SCE contact Underground Service Alert prior to excavating in the project area.

Several concerns were raised regarding the use of the transmission corridor easement and whether or not it was safe for recreational or other uses. One homeowner stated that his children played in the transmission corridor and he was concerned with their safety and wanted to know who was responsible if someone was hurt.

## **Construction-Related (Dust, Noise, Traffic)**

Commenters expressed concern with construction dust especially in high wind areas and requested that dust suppression measures be included in the EIR/EIS.

Local agencies also asked about where or not SCE would be required to abide by local requirements with regard to construction hours and noise standards. Short and long-term noise impacts should be addressed.

Some of the cities were concerned with traffic on local roads and the potential for damaging local roads and increasing traffic. More information was requested on anticipated truck routes on the different project segments, and a request for requiring SCE to coordinate with local agencies on the construction schedule as well as requiring SCE to repair any damage to local roads.

Several commenters requested that the EIR/EIS consider the impact of road closures and limited access to residences, residential streets, and businesses.

### **Geology/Slope Stability**

In the City of Grand Terrace, the Cities of Colton and Grand Terrace expressed concern regarding towers that are currently on unstable soil and near an area that resulted in a deck collapsing from slope failure. Slope stability and erosion should be addressed.

### **Biological Resources Issues**

One of the main issues presented regarding biological resources was the need for the EIR/EIS to evaluate the project's consistency with the two Multiple-Species Habitat Conservation Plans that are in effect in the project area.

Another request was to assess potential impacts to California gnatcatcher and its habitat in Segment 2 and a request to identify mitigation for habitat impacts.

### **Other Comments (Curtailement and Other)**

Five written comment letters (representing nine energy companies) and one commenter at the public scoping meeting addressed concern with curtailement of existing renewable energy production. These commenters expressed concern with SCE curtailing or reducing existing electrical generation for several years while the WOD project is being constructed. They felt it was unfair for them to have to reduce or stop generation in order to allow new generators to enter the system. The letters also stated that the project was not being proposed to stabilize the system but to allow new generators to interconnect to the electrical system. Other requests include limiting the amount of time for curtailement, requiring construction only during low generation periods (Oct-Feb), and requiring that one line be brought up as soon as possible to carry the load of existing lines. They requested compensation for this anticipated curtailement period and requested that this issue be discussed in the EIR/EIS.

One commenter expressed concern with "piecemealing" and stated that the WOD project alignment is one of the alternatives (Northerly Route) identified and rejected in the evaluation of the El Casco Substation EIR.

### **Cumulative Projects**

During agency and tribal government consultation meetings, a number of cumulative projects were identified that will be considered in the EIR/EIS. These projects include:

- Seminole Drive extension, south of Interstate 10
- Interstate 10 bypass, Banning to Cabazon project
- Gateway Center Warehouse (Cherry Valley)
- Outdoor Amphitheater (on Morongo lands)
- Mountain View Avenue Widening Project (Inland Valley Development Agency)
- City of Redlands citywide paving program
- Water project (Inland Valley Development Agency part of Norton Air Force Base reuse)
- City of Redlands Alabama Street widening and relocation of electrical poles
- Redlands Passenger Rail (Alabama Street; San Bernardino Association of Governments)
- Citrus Plaza, Phase II

## Alternatives

On tribal lands, the Morongo tribe has voted on the preferred route within their lands and stated that the EIR/EIS did not need to consider other alternative routes within their lands.

Alternatives suggested during the public scoping period include:

- Move route to the El Casco route (which merges with Morongo line but does not affect homes)
- Place the line underground
- Move towers 200 feet on the north side of the hill, away from homes

## 4. Next Steps in EIR/EIS Process

While scoping is the initial step in the environmental review process, additional opportunities to comment on the WOD EIR/EIS will be provided. The CPUC and BLM will provide for additional public input when the NOI is released, when the Draft EIR/EIS is released, and during public meetings for the Draft EIR/EIS. Table 4 presents a proposed schedule for the EIR/EIS, and identifies where in the process the public and agencies can provide additional input in the environmental review process.

<b>Event/Document</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Approximate Date</b>
<b>Completed Events &amp; Documents</b>		
CPUC Scoping Notice of Preparation	Release of NOP	Notified interested parties and agencies of the CPUC's intent to prepare an EIR.
	Public scoping period	Held 30-day public scoping period on the proposed project to provide for public comments on the scope of the EIR/EIS.
CPUC Scoping Meetings	Held 4 scoping meetings	Presented information on the WOD project and provided opportunity for public and agency comments in a public forum.
Scoping Report, Part 1		Documents public and agency comments on the WOD project and environmental issues of concern to the public and agencies.

**Table 4. EIR/EIS Schedule**

<b>Event/Document</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Approximate Date</b>
<b>Upcoming Events &amp; Documents</b>		
BLM Scoping Notice of Intent	Release of NOI	Notifies federal agencies and interested parties of the BLM and CPUC's intent to prepare an EIR/EIS.
	Public scoping period	A second public scoping period will be provided.
BLM Scoping Meeting	Will hold one scoping meeting	One additional scoping meeting will be conducted approximately two weeks after publication of the NOI in the Federal Register.
Scoping Report, Part 2		Documents public and agency comments made during the BLM scoping period.
Draft EIR/EIS	Release of Draft EIR/EIS	Presents impacts and mitigation for the WOD project and its alternatives.
	Public Review Period	Minimum 45-day public review period on the Draft EIR/EIS.
	Draft EIR/EIS public meetings	Allows for public comment on Draft EIR/EIS in a public venue.
Final EIR/EIS	Release of Final EIR/EIS	Final EIR/EIS, with response to comments, issued by the CPUC and BLM.
Decisions on Project		Commission certifies EIR and issues a Proposed Decision for public review. Full Commission votes and a Decision is published.
		BLM issues Record of Decision.