

Comment Set A1 – Betty Courtney, Environmental Program Manager, California Department of Fish and Wildlife



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
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EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



June 16, 2016

Ms. Lisa Orsaba
California Public Utilities Commission
RE: Mesa 500kV Substation Project
c/o Ecology and Environment, Inc.
505 Sansome Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94111
Email: Mesa.CPUC@ene.com

Dear Ms. Orsaba:

Southern California Edison Mesa 500-kV Substation (Project)
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (DEIR)
SCH# 2015061014

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a Notice of Availability of a DEIR from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Lead Agency) for the Project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines¹.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code.

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California's Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State. (Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a).) CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species. (*Id.*, § 1802.) Similarly for purposes of CEQA, CDFW is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments as a Responsible Agency under CEQA. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381.) CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As proposed, for example, the Project may be subject to CDFW's lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority. (Fish & G. Code, § 1600 et seq.) Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed

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¹ CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

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may result in “take” as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.), or state-listed rare plant pursuant to the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA; Fish and Game Code §1900 et seq.) related authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code will be required.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Proponent: Southern California Edison (SCE)

Objective: The primary objectives of the proposed Project would include:

- Construction of the new 500/220/66/16-kV Mesa Substation and demolition of the existing 220/66/16-kV substation, which would result in increasing the substation’s footprint from 22 acres to 69 acres;
- Replacement (removal and installation) and modification of transmission lines, subtransmission lines, and distribution structures to accommodate the new 500/220/66/16-kV Mesa Substation;
- New telecommunications lines and modifications to an existing line, mostly on existing poles and in existing ducts;
- Temporary modifications to 220-kV equipment at several existing substations to prevent electrical outages during construction;
- Relocation and replacement of an existing 72-inch-diameter waterline with an 84-inch-diameter waterline on the substation site;
- Electrical and/or telecommunications equipment upgrades at 27 existing substations; and
- Undergrounding of three spans of overhead streetlight conductor.

A1-2

The majority of the region is extensively developed and includes a mixture of residential and 26 commercial developments, industrial and commercial nursery areas, and disturbed habitat. Areas around groundwater and surface water sources within the main Project area have been extensively developed. Local hydrology has been altered for previous development purposes with the exception of a portion of the Project’s telecommunications route, which passes through Bosque Del Rio Hondo (a recreational area) and Whittier Narrows Recreation Area. These recreational areas are important habitat for wildlife.

Construction activities would result in direct and indirect impacts on special status species and their habitat, including, but not limited to, Nevin’s barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), black walnut (*Juglans californica*), southern tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *australis*), intermediate mariposa lily (*Calochortus weedii* var. *intermedius*), western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*), Belding’s orange-throated whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra*), western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*) or (pond turtle), coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*), least Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii pusilus*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), and western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). These impacts would be significant without avoidance or mitigation measures.

The DEIR has identified that the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable adverse impacts to aesthetics, air quality, and noise. The DEIR concludes that impacts to biological resources would be less than significant or could be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed in the DEIR.

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In addition to the No Project Alternative, the DEIR identifies three alternatives: The One 1600-MVA Transformer Alternative; The GIS Alternative Footprint Alternative; and The Two 1120-MVA Transformer Alternative. The One 1600-MVA Transformer Alternative is considered the Environmentally Superior Alternative with the least impact to biological resources.

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Location: The proposed project would be constructed primarily in the cities of Monterey Park, Montebello, Rosemead, South El Monte, Commerce, Bell Gardens, Pasadena, Industry, Santa Clarita, and in portions of unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Timeframe: Construction of the proposed Mesa Substation Project is anticipated to start in 2017 and would take approximately 4.5 years.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CDFW offers the comments and recommendations below to assist the CPUC in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the Project's significant, or potentially significant, direct and indirect impacts on fish and wildlife (biological) resources. Editorial comments or other suggestions may also be included to improve the document.

COMMENT #1 Executive Summary, Page ES-7, Special Status Plant Communities

A1-3

Issue: The Department is concerned that Mitigation Measure (MM) BR-3, which describes habitat restoration and mitigation for special status vegetation communities, does not address the temporal loss of special status plant communities. MM BR-3 states, "SCE shall develop a Habitat Restoration and Mitigation Plan that shall include an estimate of the total area of sensitive natural communities, including all coastal California gnatcatcher habitat and riparian habitat. With the consultation and review of the USFWS, CDFW, and CPUC, SCE shall prepare the plan to ensure restoration of all temporary impact areas and to ensure mitigation for permanent impacts on sensitive natural communities and coastal California gnatcatcher habitat. California gnatcatcher habitat that is not coastal sage scrub or another sensitive natural community shall be mitigated at a 1:1 ratio. Mitigation for permanent impacts shall be completed through one of the following methods: 1. Establishing the natural community within the proposed project areas (onsite); 2. Establishing the natural community outside the proposed project areas (within one mile of the project area); or 3, if Options 1 and 2 are not feasible, SCE shall purchase credits and/or mitigation lands at a ratio of 2:1 from an entity approved by CDFW and USFWS, as appropriate."

Specific impact: Project induced population declines or local extirpation of special status plant communities may result from immediate death or injury to all or a portion of individual plants making up the community, habitat fragmentation, increased competition with exotic invasive weeds, altered soil chemistry, and reduce photosynthesis and reproductive capacity. The effects of these impacts would occur over several years.

Why impact would occur: MM BR-3 does not adequately account for the unavoidable temporal loss of special-status plant communities or the uncertainties and often failures of revegetation practices for special status plants using transplanted stock or seed.

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Impacts to special status plant communities as a result of vegetation trimming, removal, or crushing and compaction or excavation of soils would occur as an immediate impact within Project areas:

- Where structures related to the proposed Mesa Substation and associated transmission, sub transmission, distribution, and telecommunications lines are proposed;
- Used for operations (e.g., access roads);
- Used for staging yards, lay down yards, tower removals and pull and tensioning sites; and
- Used for restoration after construction has been completed.

Construction activities also have the potential to degrade surrounding habitats by introducing or spreading populations of noxious or invasive weed species that could out-compete native special status plant communities. As a result, the establishment of such species has the potential to limit the functionality of plant communities by significantly altering the native species composition.

Evidence impact would be significant: The mitigation ratios recommended in MM BR-3 could continue to result in a substantial adverse effect on sensitive natural communities (e.g., riparian habitat, coastal sage scrub, oak woodlands, non-jurisdictional wetlands) identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the CDFW or United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Absent adequate mitigation, the ecosystem function of special status plant communities, including their contribution to breeding, feeding, and cover habitat for wildlife, will be compromised during the several-year period that it will take to restore these communities to their pre-project or better condition.

Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure(s)

Mitigation Measure: The Department recommends the revegetation plan proposed for mitigation for special status plant communities be submitted to the Department for review and comment. The mitigation for unavoidable impacts to special status plant communities should strive to develop a more superior habitat quality and quantity than that which was impacted by the Project to offset the temporal loss of several growing seasons that would likely occur while achieving any revegetation success criteria. This could include higher mitigation ratios of areas occupied by targeted special status plant communities and increased level of protection of revegetated areas to prohibit human-caused degradation.

Mitigation Measure: CDFW recommends areas of nonnative vegetation that are impacted by the Project and observed to be utilized by coastal California gnatcatcher be revegetated with appropriate coastal sage scrub species and included in the Habitat Restoration and Mitigation Plan.

COMMENT #2 Executive Summary (ES), Page ES-9, Special Status Plant Species

Issue: The Department is concerned that MM BR-8, which describes habitat restoration and other mitigation for special status plants, does not address interim loss of special status plants. MM BR-8 describes measures that reduce Project impacts to special status plant species to

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A1-4

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less than significant and states, "In the event that populations or individuals cannot be avoided, the applicant shall develop and implement a restoration plan for each plant, which will be submitted to CPUC and CDFW for review and comment no less than 60 days prior to construction activities within the work area where impacts would occur. For temporary impacts to special status plants, restoration shall occur after construction and to an extent such that "no net loss" is ensured for all special-status plants in the proposed project component areas. The number of plants at seven years will be equal to or greater than the number destroyed. Mitigation for permanent impacts shall be completed by: 1. Establishing individual plants within the proposed project areas (onsite); 2. Establishing individual plants outside the project areas (offsite); or 3. Purchase of credits and/or mitigation lands at a ratio of 2:1 from an entity approved by CDFW."

A1-4
cont.

Specific impact: Project induced population declines or local extirpation of special status plants may result from immediate death or injury, habitat fragmentation, increased competition with exotic invasive weeds, altered soil chemistry and reduce photosynthesis and reproductive capacity. The effects of these impacts would occur over several years.

Why impact would occur: MM BR-8 does not adequately account for the unavoidable temporal loss of special status plants or the uncertainties and often failures of revegetation practices for special status plants using transplanted stock or seed.

Impacts to special status plants could occur as a result of vegetation crushing, trimming or removal and the erosion, crushing and compaction or excavation of soils in areas:

- Where structures related to the proposed Mesa Substation and associated transmission, subtransmission, distribution, and telecommunications lines are proposed;
- Used for operations (e.g., access roads);
- Used for staging yards, lay down yards, tower removals and pull and tensioning sites; and
- Used for restoration after construction has been completed.

Construction activities also have the potential to degrade surrounding habitats by introducing or spreading populations of noxious or invasive weed species that could out-compete native special status plants. As a result, the establishment of such species has the potential to limit the establishment and persistence of special status plants.

Evidence impact would be significant: MM BR-8 would continue to result in a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS. Absent adequate mitigation, the ecosystem function of special status plant including their contribution to breeding, feeding and cover habitat for wildlife will be compromised during the several-year period that it will take to restore these communities to their pre-project or better condition.

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Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure

Mitigation Measure: The Department recommends that the Department review and approve any revegetation plan proposed for mitigation for special status plant species. The mitigation for unavoidable impacts to special status plants should strive to result in superior habitat quality and quantity than that which was impacted by the Project to account for the several growing seasons that may be required to achieve any revegetation measure success criteria. This could include a larger mitigation ratio area occupied by targeted special status species revegetation and providing a level of protection of revegetated areas to prohibit human caused degradation.

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cont.

COMMENT #3 Section 4.3.3.3, Page 4.3-35, Western Spadefoot

Issue: The DEIR describes that SCE would implement MM BR-1, which requires pre-construction surveys to detect presence or absence of western spadefoot (spadefoot) in order to implement avoidance measures that may result in injury or mortality. Because MM BR-1 does not describe survey methodology, CDFW is concerned that MM BR-1 may not include measures to maximize detection of spadefoot.

A1-5

Specific impact: Impacts to western spadefoot may include direct mortality or injury, lower reproductive success, loss of foraging and aestivation habitat, habitat avoidance, lower carrying capacities of remaining suitable habitats, and altered fire regime.

Why impact would occur: Lack of comprehensive detection methods of spadefoot during survey and monitoring efforts could result in adverse impacts to undetected spadefoot or their habitat on the Project site. Impacts to spadefoot could result from vehicles and equipment use; hazardous material spills; alteration of drainage hydrology, erosion, crushing and compaction or excavation of soils; and fires caused by construction crews occurring in areas:

- Where structures related to the proposed Mesa Substation and associated transmission, subtransmission, distribution, and telecommunications lines are proposed;
- Where structures related to the proposed Mesa Substation and associated transmission, subtransmission, distribution, and telecommunications lines are proposed;
- Used for operations (e.g., access roads);
- Used for staging yards, lay down yards, tower removals and pull and tensioning sites; and
- Used for restoration after construction has been completed.

Evidence impact would be significant: MM BR-1 does not describe survey methodology and so may not adequately detect spadefoot for avoidance and mitigation purposes. This may lead to lack of detection of western spadefoot, which could allow the Project to continue to have substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS. Absent adequate mitigation, the ecosystem function of special status plants including their contribution to breeding, feeding and cover habitat for wildlife will be compromised during the several-year period that it will take to restore these communities to their pre-project or better condition.

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Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure(s)

Mitigation Measure: To maximize spadefoot survey detection, CDFW recommends that MM BR-1 also include pre-construction surveys at any time of the year where Project-related vibrations and artificial wetting of ground surface may result in spadefoot emergence and detection to occur.

A1-5
cont.

COMMENT #4 Section 4.3.3.3, Page 4.3-37, Western Pond Turtle

Issue: MM BR-1 requires pre-construction surveys to identify whether pond turtle is present within the work area. CDFW is concerned that MM BR-1 does not identify survey methods to maximize detection of this species.

Specific impact: The Project may result in to adverse impacts to pond turtle and their habitat, including increased mortality or injury, lower reproductive success, loss of foraging nesting and aestivation habitat, habitat avoidance, lower carrying capacities of remaining suitable habitats, and altered fire regime.

Why impact would occur: Lack of comprehensive detection methods of pond turtle during survey and monitoring efforts could result in adverse impacts to undetected pond turtle and their habitat on the Project site. Impacts to pond turtle could result from vehicles and equipment use; hazardous material spills; alteration of drainage hydrology, erosion, crushing and compaction or excavation of soils; and fires caused by construction crews from Project activities occurring in areas:

- Where structures related to the proposed Mesa Substation and associated transmission, subtransmission, distribution, and telecommunications lines are proposed;
- Where structures related to the proposed Mesa Substation and associated transmission, subtransmission, distribution, and telecommunications lines are proposed;
- Used for operations (e.g., access roads);
- Used for staging yards, lay down yards, tower removals and pull and tensioning sites; and
- Used for restoration after construction has been completed.

Evidence impact would be significant: MM BR-1 may not adequately detect pond turtle for avoidance and mitigation purposes, which would allow the Project to continue to have substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS.

A1-6

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Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure(s)

Mitigation Measure: In order to maximize detection of pond turtle, CDFW recommends that MM BR-1 include live trapping in areas where water depth and dense vegetation growth near water compromises visual observations within selected survey habitat areas to be disturbed by the Project.

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cont.

COMMENT#5: Section 4.3, Page 4.3-60, Open Trenches

Issue: MM BR-10 describes measures to avoid species being entrapped near open trenches and states, "SCE shall ensure that all steep-walled trenches, auger holes, or other excavations are covered at the end of each day or completely fenced off at night in such a way that wildlife cannot become entrapped." CDFW is concerned that MM BR-10 does not maximize avoidance of wildlife entrapment hazards from water lines and fences utilization on the Project site.

A1-7

Specific impact: Wildlife can become injured or killed when entrapped within various materials used on construction sites, including fence posts and pipes.

Why impact would occur: Open-ended pipes such as various fencing supports, roof ventilation pipes, chimneys, and vault toilets may entrap wildlife because these structures mimic the natural cavities preferred by various bird species and other wildlife for shelter, nesting, and roosting. Raptor's talons can become entrapped within the bolt holes of metal fence stakes, which could result in mortality. Wildlife may shelter within construction materials or other types of pipe sections prior to the sections being placed in the trench and attached together thereby causing entrapment.

Evidence impact would be significant: MM BR-10 appears to only address entrapment of wildlife from deep excavation trenches without considering other types of entrapment hazards associated with the project thereby causing the Project to continue to have the potential for adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS.

Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure(s)

Mitigation Measure: To reduce impacts to less than significant, CDFW recommends that MM BR-10 include a biological monitor who would check sections of pipe/construction materials for the presence of wildlife sheltering within them prior to the sections being placed in the trench and attached together. Alternatively, the pipe sections shall have the ends capped while stored on site so as to prevent wildlife from entering. Once each pipe section is attached to one another, whether in the trench or not, the exposed end(s) of the pipeline shall be capped at the end of each day during construction to prevent wildlife from entering and being trapped within the pipeline. Open-ended pipes such as various fencing supports, roof ventilation pipes, chimneys, and vault toilets should be capped to prevent wildlife entrapment and mortality. Metal fence stakes should be plugged with bolts or other plugging materials to avoid entrapment hazards to raptors. Further information on this subject may be found at http://kern.audubon.org/death_pipes.htm.

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ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a database, which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e).) Accordingly, please report any special status species and natural communities detected during Project surveys to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). The CNDDDB field survey form can be found at the following link:

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/pdfs/CNDDDB_FieldSurveyForm.pdf. The completed form can be mailed electronically to CNDDDB at the following email address: CNDDDB@wildlife.ca.gov. The types of information reported to CNDDDB can be found at the following link: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/plants_and_animals.asp.

A1-8

FILING FEES

The Project, as proposed, would have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and an assessment of filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the fee is required in order for the underlying project approval to be operative, vested, and final. (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 753.5; Fish & G. Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089.)

A1-9

CONCLUSION

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the DEIR to assist CPUC in identifying and mitigating Project impacts on biological resources.

Questions regarding this letter or further coordination should be directed to Scott Harris, Environmental Scientist, at (805) 644 -6305 or scott.p.harris@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Betty J. Courtney
Environmental Program Manager I

ec: Ms. Betty Courtney, CDFW, Santa Clarita
Ms. Erinn Wilson, CDFW, Los Alamitos
Mr. Scott Harris, CDFW, Ventura
Ms. Kelly Schmoker, CDFW, Mission Viejo
Ms. Victoria Chau, Los Alamitos

cc: Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse, Sacramento

Responses to Comment Set A1: Betty Courtney, Environmental Program Manager, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

- A1-1 Permits that may be required, including permits under section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code, are listed in Table 2-11 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15088 requires the lead agency to respond to comments raising environmental issues. This comment does not raise an environmental issue with the analysis in the Draft EIR; therefore, no additional response is required.
- A1-2 The project details, description of construction activities, identification of adverse impacts, alternatives, and timeframe provided in the comment reflect those provided in the Executive Summary and Chapter 1, "Introduction," of the Draft EIR. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) notes in this comment that while the region surrounding the proposed project is extensively developed and much of its local hydrology altered, the Bosque del Rio Hondo and Whittier Narrows Recreation Area remain important habitat for wildlife. These habitat areas were considered in the Draft EIR and are discussed in Section 4.3.1.1, "Regional Context."
- A1-3 The Draft EIR assessed "potential temporal and spatial effects on habitats and organisms within the project area" (Section 4.3.3.1) and included mitigation, including Mitigation Measure (MM) BR-3, for impacts on special status vegetation communities. Both CDFW and USFWS commented on the Draft EIR's mitigation of the impact from the temporal loss of habitat and ecosystem function on special status vegetation communities during the period of time the community is removed until it is re-established (see comment A3-2). CDFW and USFWS commented that the impact from temporal loss of these communities, including communities that support coastal California gnatcatcher, is still significant with the mitigation level provided by the Draft EIR's MM BR-3 and that mitigation for these communities should strive to result in habitat that is superior in both quality and quantity to that which was impacted to account for temporal loss. Text has been added to the Draft EIR, and MM BR-3 has been modified to address these comments. Specifically, MM BR-3 has increased the level of mitigation for impacts from the temporal loss of special status vegetation communities as recommended by CDFW and USFWS. Revisions to MM BR-3 presented in the response also include revisions made in response to other comments on the Draft EIR.

Page 4.3-39:

As described further in Table 4.3-4, temporary impacts to 1.89 acres of USFWS designated gnatcatcher critical habitat along Telecommunications Route 3 may occur. Impacts due to the temporal loss of designated gnatcatcher critical habitat could occur; the ecosystem function of the community, including its contribution to breeding, feeding, and cover habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher, would be compromised during the time period it would take to restore or mitigate for the habitat. Indirect impacts would be significant.

Page 4.3-40:

Implementation of APM-BIO-02, APM-BIO-03, and APM-BIO-04 would reduce

impacts to coastal California gnatcatcher and its habitat, but impacts would still be significant because these APMs may not adequately mitigate the spread of invasive species, do not mitigate fully for temporal loss of gnatcatcher habitat, and do not provide training for workers with regards to identifying coastal California gnatcatcher.

Page 4.3-45:

As detailed in Table 4.3-6, 3.61 acres of riparian habitat would be temporarily impacted during construction activities and 2.19 acres would be permanently disturbed. Impacts due to the temporal loss of riparian vegetation community could occur; the ecosystem function of the community, including its contribution to breeding, feeding, and cover habitat for wildlife, would be compromised during the time period it would take to restore or mitigate for the community. Indirect impacts may also occur through the generation of fugitive dust that hinders vegetation's ability to photosynthesize and through the introduction of non-native species that out compete native riparian species.

Page 4.3-46:

Direct impacts from the removal of this community would be significant. Impacts due to the temporal loss of Southern sycamore-alder riparian woodland vegetation community could occur; the ecosystem function of the community, including its contribution to breeding, feeding, and cover habitat for wildlife, would be compromised during the time period it would take to restore or mitigate for the community. Indirect impacts from disturbance that encourages non-native species recruitment and from air emissions and dust that cover plants in this community and decrease their ability to photosynthesize, and impacts due to the temporal loss of the community, would be significant.

Page 4.3-47:

Staging yard activities can also introduce the spread of non-native and invasive plant species, which could impact the woodland community. Impacts due to the temporal loss of Southern coast live oak woodland vegetation community could occur; the ecosystem function of the community, including its contribution to breeding, feeding, and cover habitat for wildlife, would be compromised during the time period it would take to restore or mitigate for the community. Direct and indirect impacts would be significant.

Page 4.3-48:

Coastal sage scrub within the proposed project area provides habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher, a federally and California endangered species. Impacts due to the temporal loss of coastal sage scrub vegetation community could occur; the ecosystem function of the community, including its contribution to breeding, feeding, and cover habitat for wildlife (e.g., coastal California gnatcatcher), would be compromised during the time period it would take to restore or mitigate for the community. Direct and indirect impacts to Diegan coastal sage scrub would be

significant.

Pages ES-7, 4.3-56-57, and 8-8:

MM BR-3: Habitat Restoration and Mitigation. Prior to construction of the proposed project the applicant shall ensure that seasonally-appropriate surveys of vegetation are completed by a qualified botanist familiar with these vegetation associations. SCE shall develop a Habitat Restoration and Mitigation Plan that shall include an estimate of the total area of sensitive natural communities, including all coastal California gnatcatcher habitat and riparian habitat. With the consultation, ~~and review, and comment from~~ of the USFWS, CDFW, and CPUC, SCE shall prepare the plan to ensure restoration of all temporary impact areas and to ensure mitigation for permanent impacts on sensitive natural communities and coastal California gnatcatcher habitat. The plan must be submitted 60 days prior to the planned start of construction. CPUC approval is required before the plan is implemented. Required plan details include but are not limited to:

- All temporarily impacted areas shall be restored. All temporary disturbances to sensitive natural communities shall be restored with the pre-disturbance natural community (except for areas burned in the 2015 “Lincoln” fire, which shall be restored to the pre-fire natural community). All other temporarily impacted areas observed to be utilized by the coastal California gnatcatcher shall be restored with the appropriate coastal sage scrub community if feasible ~~and appropriate~~. Temporary impacts on sensitive natural communities and habitat utilized by gnatcatchers shall be mitigated by restoration at a minimum ratio of 1.5:1; if restoration is not feasible within 1 mile of the project area, SCE shall purchase credits and/or mitigation lands at a minimum ratio of 2.5:1 from an entity approved by CDFW and/or USFWS, as appropriate. Areas that do not provide habitat to coastal California gnatcatcher, other special-status species, or sensitive resources may be restored to the conditions agreed upon between the landowner and the applicant.
- The restoration plan shall specify how each type of vegetation community, including sensitive natural communities, shall be addressed in terms of the following restoration details: topsoil segregation and conservation; vegetation treatment and removal; revegetation methods, including seed mixes, rates, appropriate habitat structure, and transplants; criteria to monitor and evaluate revegetation success (minimum of four years of monitoring and 80% successful native plant establishment~~cover for sensitive natural communities~~); and compensation and remedial measures to be implemented as needed.
- For sensitive natural communities, mitigation of permanent impacts shall occur after construction at a minimum level of 1.5:1. In addition, permanent disturbances to coastal California gnatcatcher habitat that is not coastal sage scrub or another sensitive natural community shall be mitigated at a minimum 1.5:1 ratio with appropriate coastal sage scrub. Mitigation for permanent impacts shall be completed through one of the following methods:
 1. Establishing the natural community within the proposed project areas (onsite);

2. Establishing the natural community outside the proposed project areas (within one mile of the project area); or
3. If Options 1 and 2 are not feasible, SCE shall purchase credits and/or mitigation lands at a minimum ratio of 2.5:1 from an entity approved by CDFW and USFWS, as appropriate.

For Options 1 and 2 (onsite and offsite), the plan shall specify restoration details, including that post-construction monitoring shall be performed for a minimum of four years, a success criteria of 80% successful ~~cover~~native plant establishment shall be met, and remedial measures shall be implemented if success criteria are not met.

- Impacts on areas that were previously restored for SCE's TRTP shall be avoided if possible. The plan shall identify any impacts on areas that were previously restored for TRTP and provide detailed restoration plans for these areas. Restoration in these areas shall follow restoration criteria that are consistent with the goals and criteria of TRTP restoration, per TRTP Mitigation Measure B-1a: Provide restoration/compensation for impacts to native vegetation communities.

With CPUC approval, requirements described in this mitigation measure and the Habitat Restoration and Mitigation Plan may be satisfied through compliance with permit conditions, if these requirements are equally or more effective.

SCE shall also minimize the removal of coastal sage scrub or other suitable coastal California gnatcatcher habitat, particularly within designated critical habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher. To minimize the removal of vegetation in habitat areas of the coastal California gnatcatcher, SCE shall ensure that trimming of all native vegetation, riparian vegetation, and vegetation that provides potential habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher is monitored by a qualified biologist approved by the CPUC. Trimming of native trees and native arborescent shrubs shall be completed outside of the nesting bird season and shall be monitored by a qualified ~~arborist~~biologist.

- A1-4 The Draft EIR assessed "potential temporal and spatial effects on habitats and organisms within the project area" (Section 4.3.3.1, "Methodology and Significance Criteria") and contained mitigation, including MM BR-8 for impacts on special status plant species. CDFW commented on the level of the Draft EIR's mitigation of the impact from the temporal loss of habitat and ecosystem function on special status plants during the period of time plants are removed until they are re-established. CDFW commented that the impact from temporal loss of special status plants is still significant with the mitigation level in the Draft EIR's MM BR-8 and that mitigation for special status plant species should strive to result in habitat quality and quantity superior to that which was impacted to account for temporal loss. CDFW also noted challenges in re-establishing special status plant species after construction-related disturbance, including competition with noxious or invasive weed species. Discussion of this impact has been clarified in Section 4.3.3.3, "Environmental Impacts," and MM BR-8 has been modified to address these comments. Specifically, MM BR-8 has increased the level of mitigation for impacts from the temporal loss of special status plants as recommended by CDFW and added that CPUC will coordinate with CDFW

before the restoration plan is approved.

Page 4.3-30:

As a result, the establishment of such species has the potential to result in the loss of special-status plants and, in general, limit the functionality of plant communities by significantly altering native species composition. Impacts due to the temporal loss of special-status plant species could occur; the ecosystem function of the community, including its contribution to breeding, feeding, and cover habitat for wildlife, would be compromised during the time period it would take to restore or mitigate for the species. These impacts would be significant.

Page 4.3-32:

MM BR-5 would require workers receive training in plant identification, the proposed project's environmental commitments, and how best to avoid impacting sensitive plant species. If a Southern tarplant is found within the proposed project area, MM BR-8 would require avoidance or mitigation. Implementation of identified APMs, MM BR-1, MM BR-2, MM BR-4, MM BR-5, and MM BR-8 in combination with the APMs identified above would reduce impacts on Southern tarplant to a less than significant level.

Page 4.3-34:

Plummer's Mariposa-lilies, if found on site, may be damaged or destroyed if pre-construction surveys are not completed closer to construction. Therefore, the applicant would be required to implement MM BR-1, which requires pre-construction surveys; MM BR-2, which would require delineating work areas; MM BR-5, which would require that workers receive training in plant identification, the proposed project's environmental commitments, and how best to avoid impacting sensitive plant species; and MM BR-8, which would require mitigation for impacts to Plummer's Mariposa lily at a minimum 1.5:1 ratio. With the implementation of applicable APMs, and MM BR-1, MM BR-2, MM BR-5, and MM BR-8, impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

Page 4.3-34:

Although the applicant has committed to implementing APM-BIO-01, APM-BIO-02, and APM-BIO-03, these APMs would not reduce impacts to this species to less than significant because success criteria for replanting and replacement ratios are not included, and worker training to identify the resource is not included. Therefore, the applicant would be required to implement MM BR-1, which would require pre-construction surveys; MM BR-2, which requires delineating work areas occurring in the vicinity of sensitive species; MM BR-5, which require that workers receive training in plant identification, the proposed project's environmental commitments, and how best to avoid impacting sensitive plant species; and MM BR-8, which would require mitigation for impacts to intermediate mariposa lily at a minimum 1.5:1 ratio. With the implementation of MM BR-1, MM BR-2, MM BR-5, and MM BR-8, in combination with the APMs identified above, impacts would be

reduced to less than significant.

Page ES-9, 4.3-59, and 8-10:

MM BR-8: Restoration of Special-status Plants. The applicant shall complete pre-construction surveys during the appropriate blooming period to identify special-status plants, including Coulter's Matilija poppy, Plummer's mariposa lily, intermediate mariposa lily, and Southern California tarplant populations in the proposed project component areas where suitable habitat is present. Special-status plants shall be identified by a qualified biologist and flagged or surrounded with fencing in such a way that disturbance of the populations or individuals shall be avoided. In the event that populations or individuals of special-status plants (other than Southern California black walnut—see MM BR-7) cannot be avoided, the applicant shall develop and implement a restoration plan for each plant, which will be submitted to CPUC and CDFW for review and comment no less than 60 days prior to construction activities within the work area where impacts would occur. The CPUC will coordinate with CDFW, and CPUC approval is required before the plan is implemented. In the case of Southern California black walnut trees, a restoration plan will be completed and approved as described in MM BR-7.

For temporary impacts to special-status plants, restoration shall occur after construction at a minimum ratio of 1.5:1 and to an extent such that "no net loss" is ensured for all special-status plants in the proposed project component areas. The number of plants at seven years will be a minimum of 1.5 times equal to or greater than the number destroyed.

Mitigation for temporary and permanent impacts shall be completed by:

1. Establishing individual plants within the proposed project areas (onsite);
2. Establishing individual plants outside the project areas (offsite); or
3. Purchase of credits and/or mitigation lands at a ratio of 2.5:1 from an entity approved by CDFW.

For Options 1 and 2 (establishing plants onsite or offsite), the plan shall include the following elements: planting/seeding palettes; monitoring and contingency program; monitoring schedule, including duration (seven years) and performance criteria (no net loss minimum of 1.5 times the number destroyed); and any specific measures that will be required to ensure success of the restoration effort. This mitigation measure may be coordinated with areas restored for MM BR-3 if appropriate.

A1-5 CDFW is concerned that MM BR-1, which requires pre-construction surveys to identify western spadefoot, does not identify survey methodology to maximize detection of the species. CDFW indicates that measures to maximize western spadefoot detection are necessary to adequately detect this species. MM BR-1 has been modified to maximize detections.

Pages ES-5, 4.3-55, and 8-7:

MM BR-1: Pre-construction Surveys. Prior to construction and activities in a new work area that may include vegetation clearing, staging, and stockpiling, or other activities with the potential to directly or indirectly affect wildlife, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist approved by the CPUC to conduct pre-construction surveys for sensitive biological resources, including special-status plant species and special-status wildlife, and nesting birds in all areas of temporary and permanent disturbance. Preconstruction surveys shall be species and resource appropriate and typically conducted a maximum of 14 days prior to construction, as approved by the CPUC; If there is no work in an area for 14 days or more, the area shall be considered a “new work area” if construction begins again. Nesting bird and burrowing owl pre-construction surveys shall be consistent with the timing specified in the Nesting Bird Management Plan required by MM BR-11. Additional western spadefoot surveys shall be conducted at any time of year where project activities cause vibrations and where artificial wetting of ground surface may result in spadefoot emergence. Western pond turtle pre-construction surveys shall include live trapping in areas where visual observation may be compromised due to water depth or dense vegetation growth near water. The information gathered from these surveys shall be used to develop site- and resource- specific actions to minimize impacts on sensitive resources from project-related activities.

Additionally, a CPUC-approved qualified biologist shall conduct pre-construction clearance sweeps for special-status species at all access, staging, and laydown/work areas where suitable habitat is present within approximately 24 hours of construction activities each day.

- A1-6 CDFW is concerned that MM BR-1, which requires pre-construction surveys to identify western pond turtle, does not identify survey methodology to maximize detection of this species. CDFW indicates that measures to maximize western pond turtle detection are necessary to adequately detect this species. MM BR-1 has been modified in order to maximize detections. Please see response to comment A1-5 for changes to MM BR-1.
- A1-7 CDFW is concerned that MM BR-10 does not address the potential entrapment impact on wildlife created by open-ended piping and by fencing supports. MM BR-10 has been modified to address this potential impact, consistent with the recommendations in this comment.

Pages ES-10, 4.3-60, and 8-11:

MM BR-10: Open Trenches and Pipes. To prevent entrapment of wildlife, SCE shall ensure that all steep-walled trenches, auger holes, open-ended piping, or other excavations are covered at the end of each day or completely fenced off at night in such a way that wildlife cannot become entrapped. For open trenches only, these may instead have wildlife escape ramps within the trench maintained at intervals of no greater than 100 feet. These ramps shall have a maximum slope not to exceed 2:1. SCE’s biological monitor, approved by the CPUC, shall inspect all trenches, auger holes, or other excavations a minimum of three times per day and immediately prior to backfilling. During working hours, all construction materials with open-ended piping, including but not limited to pipe sections and fencing

supports, shall be left capped when not planned for use the same day. During active construction, open piping shall be inspected for wildlife by SCE's biological monitor before the material is moved, buried, or capped. All non-special-status wildlife species found will be safely removed and relocated out of harm's way, through the use of suitable tools such as a pool net when applicable. For safety reasons, under no circumstance will biological monitors enter open excavations.

- A1-8 The comment addresses data collection for the California Natural Diversity Database and requests submission of field survey reports detecting special status species, and cites Public Resources Code §21003 (e), which declares state policy. The comment does not raise a significant environmental issue regarding the analysis in the Draft EIR.
- A1-9 CDFW states its current policy regarding fees upon filing the Notice of Determination. The comment is noted; necessary fees would be paid by the CPUC.

Comment Set A2 – Deanna Watson, Branch Chief California Department of Transportation

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

EDMUND G. BROWN Jr., Governor

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 7-OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
100 S. MAIN STREET, MS 16
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*Serious drought.
Help save water!*

June 1, 2016

Ms. Lisa Orsaba
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3298

RE: Mesa 500 kV Substation Project
Vic. LA-60/PM R5.909 to 9.476
LA-164/PM 2.412
SCH # 2015061014
Ref. IGR/CEQA No. 150620AL-NOP
IGR/CEQA No. 160504AL-DEIR

Dear Ms. Orsaba:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The project proposes to construct the Mesa 500-kilovolt (kV) Substation Project. The proposed project would involve rebuilding the Mesa Substation and upgrading a portion of its transmission infrastructure in the Western Los Angeles Basin.

This SCE (Southern California Edison) Mesa 500 KV station will undoubtedly cause inconvenience and delay for the motoring public at various times during the duration of construction activities even with mitigation measures in place. The following locations are identified in the Draft DEIR as having significant impacts during the duration of the Mesa project for phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3 for the AM and PM Hours.

- 1 Garfield Avenue / Pomona Blvd.
- 2 Garfield Avenue / Via Compo
- 3 Markland Drive / Via compo / SR-60 EB on ramp
- 4 Markland Drive / Potrero Grande – SR-60 WB off ramp
- 5 Wilcox Avenue / Pomona Blvd.
- 6 Paramount BL / Neil Armstrong St. – SR-60 WB on and off ramps

The proposed mitigation measures as outlined in the DEIR are as follows:

- 1 SCE will develop and submit for approval the master peak period traffic management plan prior to construction to help alleviate traffic congestions at identified significant impact locations due to construction activities.

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to enhance California's economy and livability"*

A2-1

Ms. Lisa Orsaba
June 1, 2016
Page 2

- 2 Limit delivery trucks, construction vehicles, oversized vehicles trips to off peak hours to lessen traffic impacts at significant impact locations.
- 3 Require carpooling for employees to reduce trips during the peak commuting hours.
- 4 SCE to adhere to Caltrans standards for roadway closures and detours (no closure between 5 AM and 10 PM).

A2-1
cont.

Since the project may encroach on State right-of-way, please be reminded that any work performed within the State Right-of-way will require an Encroachment Permit from Caltrans. Any modifications to State facilities must meet all mandatory design standard and specifications.

A2-2

Storm water run-off is a sensitive issue for Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Please be mindful that projects should be designed to discharge clean run-off water. Additionally, discharge of storm water run-off is not permitted onto State highway facilities without a storm water management plan.

A2-3

As stated in the EIR, SCE is responsible for damages to Caltrans facilities, such as, roadway pavement, traffic signs, delineations, markers and so on. Construction vehicles transporting materials (dirt, debris, trash) on freeway/highway need to have cover over them. Transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials, which requires the use of oversized-transport vehicles on State highways, will require a transportation permit from Caltrans. It is recommended that large size truck trips be limited to off-peak commute periods. Scheduling construction works on the weekends and after hours to help relieve traffic congestions during work day peak hours is strongly recommended.

A2-4

A2-5

A2-6

A2-7

Caltrans concurs that a truck/traffic construction management plan is needed for this project. Traffic Management Plans involving lane closures or street detours which will impact the circulation system affecting traffic to and from freeway on/off-ramps should be coordinated with Caltrans.

A2-8

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Alan Lin the project coordinator at (213) 897-8391 and refer to IGR/CEQA No. 160504AL.

Sincerely,



DIANNA WATSON
Branch Chief
Community Planning & LD IGR Review

cc: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse

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to enhance California's economy and livability"*

Response to Comment Set A2: Deanna Watson, Branch Chief California Department of Transportation

A2-1 The comment notes that construction of the proposed project will cause inconvenience and delay for the motoring public but does not raise any significant environmental issues regarding the adequacy of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or its analyses and conclusions. Therefore, no further response is required.

To clarify and summarize, Impact TT-1 discusses the potential impacts on performance of the circulation, including increased delay to motorists. Significant impacts to intersections are summarized here. The EIR concludes that the following intersections would be significantly impacted during construction phase 1:

- AM peak hour
 - Markland Drive/Via Campo – State Route (SR) 60 east bound (EB) on-Ramp
- PM peak hour
 - Garfield Avenue/Pomona Boulevard
 - Garfield Avenue/Via Campo
 - Wilcox Avenue/Pomona Boulevard
 - Markland Drive/Via Campo – SR 60 EB on-Ramp
 - Paramount Boulevard/SR 60 WB Ramps – Neil Armstrong Street

The EIR concludes that the following intersections would be significantly impacted during construction phase 2:

- PM peak hour
 - Garfield Avenue/Pomona Boulevard
 - Garfield Avenue/Via Campo
 - Markland Drive/Via Campo – SR 60 EB on-ramp
 - Paramount Boulevard/SR 60 WB ramps – Neil Armstrong Street

The EIR concludes that the following intersections would be significantly impacted during construction phase 3:

- PM peak hour
 - Garfield Avenue/Pomona Boulevard
 - Garfield Avenue/Via Campo
 - Markland Drive/Via Campo – SR 60 EB on-ramp
 - Paramount Boulevard/SR 60 WB ramps – Neil Armstrong Street

The EIR concludes that these impacts would be less than significant with implementation of measures to reduce impacts to AM and PM peak period traffic as described in Mitigation Measure (MM) TT-1.

Note that California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15126.2 requires that “[a]n EIR . . . identify and focus on the significant environmental effects of the proposed project.” CEQA Guidelines section 15358 requires that effects analyzed under CEQA be related to a physical change. Inconvenience to motorists is not physical

change in the environment and therefore is not considered in the EIR.

A2-2 Table 2-11 and Section 4.14.2.2 of the Draft EIR state that an encroachment permit would be required from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for all work done within a state highway right-of-way (ROW). MM TT-1 (Traffic Control Plan) has been revised to include requirements of MM TT-3 and also states that no work shall occur in Caltrans ROW until Caltrans issues the encroachment permit and approves the Highway Closure Plan:

Pages ES-23, 4.14-38, and 8-22:

MM TT-1: Traffic Control Plan. SCE shall prepare and implement a Traffic Control Plan consistent with the California Joint Utility Traffic Control Manual. SCE shall submit the Traffic Control Plan to Caltrans, the City of Monterey Park, and the City of Montebello for review and comment prior to submitting it to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction. The Traffic Control Plan shall include at a minimum, measures to ensure that:

1. Significant impacts to affected intersections during the AM or PM peak hours (and during the specified phase) are reduced to less than significant levels, i.e., reduce the V/C increase resulting from the proposed project at each identified intersection to at or below the applicable threshold. Primary measures may include:
 - Limiting project-related heavy truck trips during peak hours (e.g., through scheduling deliveries outside of peak hours) so as to reduce trips occurring during peak hours; and
 - Limiting project construction worker vehicle trips during peak hours (e.g., through requiring carpooling) so as to reduce trips occurring during peak hours.
2. Significant impacts on SR 60, Greenwood Avenue, Loveland Street, and other nearby roadways are reduced to less than significant levels, i.e., reduce excessive interruptions in traffic flow resulting from temporary lane closures. Primary measures may include the following:
 - SCE shall follow recommended considerations of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD) latest edition, including proper signage, avoiding abrupt changes in geometrics, reducing traffic volume by using alternate routes scheduling work in off-peak hours, and complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and
 - No work shall occur in Caltrans ROW until Caltrans issues the encroachment permit and approves the Traffic Control Plan.
3. Significant impacts on Potrero Grande Drive, East Markland Drive, and other nearby roadways are reduced to less than significant levels, i.e., reduce hazards from slow moving vehicles entering and exiting the substation site. Primary measures may include the following:
 - SCE shall post slow truck warning signage at appropriate locations during truck delivery and exit hours (e.g., along Potrero Grande Drive) when there is a possibility for slow trucks to exit the substation site to warn drivers of

slow trucks exiting the substation site onto East Markland Drive and Potrero Grande Drive. Signage shall adhere to the CA MUTCD.

4. Significant impacts to affected roadways used by overweight or oversized vehicles are reduced to less than significant levels, i.e., repair to pre-project conditions any roads or road infrastructure (e.g., curbs and medians) damaged by project-related vehicle traffic. SCE shall comply with local permit conditions related to road damage to reduce impacts to less than significant. Primary measures may include the following:
 - Documenting roadway conditions with photographs prior to the project along roads identified for heavy vehicle use in the project's Traffic Impact Analysis; and
 - Taking photographs after the project and after any repairs that document restoration of pre-project pavement conditions. Documentation of original conditions and repair shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and verification within 30 days of repair completion.
5. Significant impacts to local emergency service providers are reduced to less than significant levels, i.e., maintain access for emergency service vehicles. Primary measures may include the following:
 - Maintaining good public relations by assessing the needs of road users, abutting property owners, and emergency service providers (law enforcement, fire fighters, and medical medical) and cooperating with various news media;
 - SCE shall notify local emergency service providers (i.e., police departments, ambulance services, and fire departments) of road closures at least one week prior to the closure;
 - SCE shall notify the emergency service provider of the location, date, time, and duration of closure; and
 - SCE shall also make provisions to maintain emergency vehicle access at all times in coordination with local emergency service providers, such as keeping metal plates available to cover open trenches.
6. Significant impacts to public transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists are reduced to less than significant levels, i.e., maintain safe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists during construction of the proposed project. The project shall allow for safe vehicle, bicyclist, and pedestrian passage through construction zones in consideration of basic safety principles to route roadway users through construction zones using roadway geometrics and features and traffic control devices comparable to normal roadway situation as possible. The Traffic Control Plan's level of detail shall be appropriate to the complexity of the project work, and primary measures may include:
 - Notifying LA Metro and other public transit providers of construction along existing public transit routes. SCE shall work with transit providers to temporarily relocate transit stops during construction, if needed;
 - Providing pedestrians with reasonably safe, convenient, and accessible paths that replicate as nearly as possible the most desirable characteristics

of the existing paths (e.g., maintaining sidewalk and bicycle access on at least one side of affected streets during construction);

- Laying out plans for notifications and a process for communication with affected transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists prior to the start of construction. Advance public notification shall include posting of notices and appropriate signage of construction activities. The written notification shall include the construction schedule, the exact location and duration of activities within each street (i.e., which transit routes, bus stops, sidewalks, and bicycle routes would be affected on which days and for how long), and a toll-free telephone number for receiving questions or complaints;
 - Posting detour signs during construction of alternative routes for pedestrians and bicyclists, applying the CA MUTCD principles for proper marking, signing, and flagging; and
 - Installing steel plates over open trenches in inactive construction areas to maintain existing bicycle and pedestrian access after construction hours.
7. Significant impacts to the Whittier Narrows park-and-ride lot are reduced to less than significant levels, i.e., maintain safe entrance and egress from the Santa Anita Avenue entrance. Primary measures may include the following:
- SCE shall coordinate with Los Angeles County and the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area so that SCE can provide traffic control for two-way traffic at the Santa Anita Avenue entrance to the Whittier Narrows park-and-ride lot during the Durfee Avenue exit closure.

In addition, the Traffic Control Plan shall ensure that:

- Acceptable levels of operation for all transportation modes are provided and routine day and night inspections of the plan's elements are implemented;
- Roadside safety is maintained during the life of the project to accommodate disabled vehicles, run-off-the-road incidents, and emergency situations; and
- Appropriate field workers and management personnel receive training appropriate to the job decisions each individual is required to make.

Specific measures would depend on the final construction schedule and residing location of construction workers. Measures implemented as part of the plan shall not result in exceedance of applicable thresholds as described in this document at other impacted intersections. The plan shall also demonstrate that mitigation would not result in V/C to exceed thresholds at significantly impacted and non-significantly impacted roads and intersections. Roadway, highway, and lane closure plans shall be prepared and implemented as required and in coordination with the applicable local and Caltrans jurisdictions. Appropriate advance notifications shall be made to the affected jurisdictions and affected property owners; copies of all coordination and notification shall be provided to the CPUC.

The plan shall describe locations and durations of:

- Full road closures

- Lane closures
- Bicycle lane closures
- Sidewalk or pedestrian path closures
- Transit stop closures
- Parking lot and Park-N-Ride lot closures

To the extent that compliance with applicable permit requirements, e.g., obtaining required encroachment permits from Caltrans and/or other agencies with jurisdiction over work done within roadways, would reduce identified significant traffic impact(s) consistent with the performance standards set forth in MM TT-1, SCE may submit such permit(s) in lieu of addressing that impact or impacts in the Traffic Control Plan, subject to review and approval by the CPUC prior to the start of construction.

Caltrans' comment that modifications to state facilities must meet all mandatory design standards and specifications is noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. Table 2-11 has been revised to note this requirement.

Page 2-84:

Caltrans requires that all work done within, under or above a state or interstate highway ROW obtain an encroachment permit. A Transportation Permit required for oversize and/or overweight truck loads that exceed the limits of a legal load as defined by Division 15 of the California Vehicle Code. Modifications to state facilities must meet mandatory design standards and specifications.

A2-3 Storm water runoff is discussed in the Draft EIR under Impact HY-1. MM HY-1, Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) (described on page 4.8-28 of the Draft EIR), requires the applicant to prepare a SWPPP to reduce the potential for water pollution and sedimentation from construction. MM HZ-3 requires preparation and implementation of a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan. MM HZ-4 would require preparation and implementation of a Contaminated Soil Contingency Plan. With implementation of these mitigation measures, impacts to water quality during from storm water runoff construction would be less than significant.

During operation, there would be no new ground disturbance that would result in impacts to storm water runoff. There is a potential for a hazardous materials spill due to presence of additional mineral oil at the Substation. The applicant would be required to update its Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures Plan in accordance with the Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act and Clean Water Act, which would ensure that impacts would be less than significant.

Storm water drainage is discussed in the Draft EIR under Impact PSU-4. During construction of the proposed project, storm water discharges would be directed toward natural drainages. The Draft EIR concludes that, if not properly managed, these discharges may result in significant environmental impacts. These impacts would be reduced to less than significant by preparation and implementation of a SWPPP (MM HY-1) and preparation and implementation of a drainage plan (MM HY-3).

During operation, storm water would be directed toward a detention basin at the Mesa Substation site that would be constructed as part of the proposed project. MM HY-4 requires that the storm water detention basin be designed according to techniques in the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works Hydrology Manual. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

A2-4 MM TT-1 (Traffic Control Plan) requires that Southern California Edison (SCE) repair road damage caused directly as a result of ground disturbing activities, as well as damage caused by project vehicle traffic. Note that MM TT-1 has been revised to include the requirements of Draft EIR MM TT-7 (see response to comment D2-206 as well as the full text of the revised measure in response to comment A2-2).

A2-5 It appears that the commenter is referring to California Vehicle Code section 23115(a), which requires vehicles transporting dirt, debris, or other waste items to be covered when traveling on state highways.

California Vehicle Code section 23115(a) has been added to Section 4.14.2.2 of the EIR:

Page 4.14-13:

California Vehicle Code

California Vehicle Code section 23115(a) states:

No vehicle transporting garbage, swill, used cans or bottles, wastepaper, waste cardboard, ashes, refuse, trash or rubbish, or any noisome, nauseous, or offensive matter, or anything being transported for disposal or recycling shall be driven or moved upon any highway unless the load is totally covered in a manner that will prevent the load or any part of the load from spilling or falling from the vehicle.

A2-6 Table 2-11 of the Draft EIR sets forth the federal, state, and local permits that may be required for the proposed project, including the requirement to obtain a transportation permit from Caltrans to operate or move a vehicle or combination of vehicles or special mobile equipment of a size or weight of vehicle or load exceeding the maximum limitations on state highways.

A2-7 MM TT-1 requires SCE to prepare and implement a Traffic Management Plan to reduce impacts during peak hours. Primary measures that may be implemented to reduce impacts to less than significant levels include limiting project-related heavy truck trips during peak hours and limiting project construction worker vehicle trips during peak hours.

A2-8 Caltrans' concurrence with the need for a traffic management plan is noted and included in the record for decision makers. MM TT-1 requires the applicant to prepare and implement a Traffic Control Plan and requires that the Traffic Control Plan be submitted to Caltrans for review and comment prior to submitting to the California Public Utilities Commission for review and approval. The Traffic Control Plan would include measures to reduce significant impacts from temporary lane closures. MM TT-1 further states, as revised, that no work shall occur in Caltrans ROW until Caltrans

issues the encroachment permit and approves the Traffic Control Plan. MM TT-1 also states, "Roadway, highway and lane closure plans shall be prepared and implemented as required and in coordination with the applicable local and Caltrans jurisdictions."

Comment Set A3 – Christine Medak, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

From: Medak, Christine [mailto:christine_medak@fws.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 19, 2016 2:21 PM
To: Rachowicz, Lara
Cc: Black, Kristi; Jonathan Snyder
Subject: Re: CEQA review of SCE's proposed Mesa Substation

Lara,

We received notification of the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Mesa 500-kV Substation Project (DEIR) on April 29, 2016. We appreciate the extension of the public comment period to allow additional time for our review of the document.

A3-1

We previously submitted comments on Southern California Edison's (SCE) application to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) (No. A.15-03-003) on October 8, 2015. Based on our review of the biological resources section of the DEIR, it appears the vast majority of our concerns regarding potential impacts to biological resources have been addressed. We have the following additional comments/clarifications regarding mitigation measures included in the DEIR:

1) MM BR-3: Impacts to habitat for the federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica californica*, gnatcatcher) are addressed (in part) by MM BR-3. According to this measure, permanent impacts to gnatcatcher habitat will be mitigated after construction at a ratio of 1:1 within 1 mile of the project area or 2:1 if credits or lands are purchased offsite (i.e., greater than 1 mile from the project area). It appears the measure is intended to encourage the applicant to mitigate impacts to habitat on site, to the extent possible. We will continue to encourage onsite habitat restoration during the consultation period (assuming the Corps initiates section 7 consultation with our agency) in support of recovery of the northern range of the species.

A3-2

The restoration of coastal sage scrub, habitat for the gnatcatcher, requires about 5 years or more (depending on rainfall/restoration methods) to reach a minimum of 80% cover. The restoration of coastal sage scrub will also likely involve the conversion of one type of vegetated open space (e.g., grasslands) to another (e.g., coastal sage scrub). The proposed ratios do not appear to account for the temporal loss of habitat for the gnatcatcher or the loss of the existing vegetation community that will be converted to habitat for the gnatcatcher during restoration. We also acknowledge that some of the areas identified as gnatcatcher habitat in the DEIR are of lower quality (i.e., non-native vegetation that is supporting gnatcatcher foraging/sheltering) and mitigation of permanent impacts to these areas with coastal sage scrub will increase the quality of habitat available for the gnatcatcher. In consideration of the above factors, we recommend the ratios are increased to 1.5:1 for habitat restored within 1 mile of the project site and 2.5:1 for mitigation completed offsite (i.e., greater than 1 mile from the project area). A 1:1 ratio is appropriate in cases where restoration occurs prior to impacts and where developed areas/bare ground are converted to habitat.

A portion of the proposed project area burned in the "Lincoln Fire" on August 16, 2015. While the burned area may not currently support the same quality of habitat for biological resources as it did prior to the fire, we would expect the vegetation to recover in about 5 years, in absence of

proposed project-related disturbances. Therefore, we recommend vegetation surveys completed prior to construction (i.e., for the purpose of developing a habitat restoration and mitigation plan), take into consideration the natural vegetation communities present before the fire.

A3-2
cont.

2) MM BR-11: Impacts to nesting birds are anticipated to be avoided during construction as a result of implementation of a Nesting Bird Management Plan. We recommend this plan also address potential operational impacts to nesting birds, including federally listed species (i.e., gnatcatcher and vireo) and birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Vegetation management and certain facilities maintenance (i.e., in or adjacent to natural vegetation communities) have the potential to disturb nesting birds if conducted during the bird breeding and nesting season.

A3-3

We appreciate your continued coordination on the project. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this message.

Christine L. Medak
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2177 Salk Avenue, Suite 250
Carlsbad, CA 92008
Phone: (760) 431-9440 ext. 298
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Follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/USFWSPacSWest>

"I'd like to offer a plug for actually having the natural processes instead of having to simulate them."

— Nadav Nur, PRBO Conservation Science

Response to Comment Set A3: Christine Medak, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

A3-1 Comment noted.

A3-2 See response to comment A1-3

A3-3 The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) commented that they recommend the Nesting Bird Management Plan, required by Mitigation Measure (MM) BR-11, address potential operational impacts to nesting birds, including those protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act. USFWS commented that nesting birds could be disturbed by operational activities such as vegetation management and facility maintenance near natural vegetation.

The comment also indicates that restoration of coastal sage scrub habitat for gnatcatcher also requires about five or more years to reach a minimum of 80 percent cover. MM BR-3 sets a minimum monitoring period of four years; this is not an upper limit for a Habitat Restoration Plan.

SCE already has procedures in place to minimize disturbance to nesting birds during operations and maintenance. With the implementation of these, impacts during operations would be less than significant. Discussion of this impact has been clarified in the EIR.

Page 4.3-43:

With the implementation of MM BR-6, impacts on any candidate, sensitive, or special-status species from operation and maintenance activities would be less than significant.

In addition, direct or indirect impacts on nesting birds protected by the MBTA, Fish and Game Code, FESA, or CESA could occur during operation and maintenance of the proposed project. SCE has procedures in place to prevent or minimize impacts on nesting birds. SCE has committed to the following avoidance and minimization measures as needed: pre-activity nesting bird surveys, delaying work when nests are present, limiting O&M activities during nesting season, monitoring nests, and performing vegetation management activities outside nesting season (SCE 2016). Because these measures would be in place during O&M, impacts on nesting bird species would be less than significant.

Construction of the proposed Mesa 500-kV Substation Project would involve installation of new transmission and subtransmission structures to replace existing structures.

Comment Set A4 – Jillian Wong, Program Supervisor, South Coast Air Quality Management District



**South Coast
Air Quality Management District**
21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765-4178
(909) 396-2000 • www.aqmd.gov

SENT VIA E-MAIL & USPS:

June 10, 2016

Lisa Orsaba, CEQA Project Manager Mesa.CPU@ene.com
California Utilities Commission
Re: Mesa 500k V Substation Project
c/o Ecology and Environment, Inc.
505 Sansome Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94111

**Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the
Proposed SCE Mesa 500-kV Substation Project (Application No. A.15-03-003)**

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-mentioned document. The following comments are meant as guidance for the Lead Agency and should be incorporated into the Final CEQA document.

In the project description, the Lead Agency includes construction related soil disturbance activities during the development of the telecommunications routes that could encounter contaminants including petroleum hydrocarbons in areas that were occupied by uses that included a former leaking underground storage tank site.¹ Based on the potential soil disturbance of these contaminated sites, the Lead Agency should also include how compliance with SCAQMD Rule 1166 – Volatile Organic Compound Emissions From Decontamination of Soil will be incorporated in the proposed project in the Final EIR.² In addition, if any demolition results includes contact with asbestos, compliance with SCAQMD Rule 1403 – Asbestos Removal should also be included in the Final EIR.

A4-1

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21092.5, SCAQMD staff requests that the Lead Agency provide the SCAQMD with written responses to all comments contained herein prior to the adoption of the FSR. Further, staff is available to work with the Lead Agency to address these issues and any other questions that may arise. Please contact Gordon Mize, Air Quality Specialist, at (909) 396-3302, if you have any questions regarding the enclosed comments.

Sincerely,

Jillian Wong

Jillian Wong, Ph.D.
Program Supervisor
Planning, Rule Development & Area Sources

JW:GM

LAC160506-03
Control Number

¹ DEIR, Section 4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Table 4.7-1 starting on page 4.7-7.

² E.g., The SCAQMD regulatory portion of Section 4.2 – Air Quality and the applicable plans described in Section 4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials starting on page 4.7-39.

Response to Comment Set A4: Jillian Wong, Program Supervisor, South Coast Air Quality Management District

A4-1 The following edits have been made to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIR) to include Rules 1166 and 1403 in Section 4.2.2.3, "Regional and Local" in the regulatory setting section for air quality:

Page 4.2-9:

Rule 1166: Volatile Organic Compound Emissions from Decontamination of Soil

Rule 1166 requires that an approved mitigation plan be obtained from SCAQMD prior to excavation of an underground storage tank or piping which has stored VOCs, excavating or grading soil containing VOC material, handling or storing VOC-contaminated soil, or the treatment of VOC-contaminated soil at a facility.

Rule 1403: Asbestos Emissions from Demolition /Renovation Activities

The purpose of Rule 1403 is to limit asbestos emissions from demolition and renovation activities. Rule 1403 contains specific requirements regarding surveying, notification, scheduling, and removal procedures if asbestos is found.

Section 4.2.3.3 of the Draft EIR has been revised as follows:

Page 4.2-13:

Construction

The South Coast AQMP outlines the SCAQMD's long-term strategies for reaching attainment status for the federal 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard and the federal 8-hour ozone standard. Most control measures relate either to control of stationary sources or to actions the SCAQMD or other agencies will take to incentivize emissions reductions. Three VOC-reducing policies in the AQMP would relate to construction of the Mesa Substation Project, since the project would involve architectural coatings, adhesives, solvents, and vacuum trucks (for fuel transport). Any of the three relevant AQMD control measures (CTS-01, CTS-02, FUG-01) would be developed into SCAQMD rules or regulations. SCE would be required to comply with all relevant SCAQMD rules and regulations as they become enforceable. Construction of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the AQMP. There would be no impact.

If soil contamination, including petroleum hydrocarbons, is discovered during ground disturbance activities, SCE would comply with SCAQMD Rule 1166 "Volatile Organic Compound Emissions From Decontamination of Soil." Construction of the proposed project in compliance with Rule 1166 would not conflict or obstruct the implementation of Rule 1166. There would be no impact.

Similarly, if demolition activities result in the discovery of asbestos, SCE would comply with SCAQMD Rule 1403 "Asbestos Removal." Construction of the proposed project in compliance with Rule 1403 would not conflict or obstruct the implementation of Rule 1166. There would be no impact.

Comment Set A5: Vivian Romero, Mayor Pro Team, City of Montebello

California Public Utilities Commission Draft EIR Public Meeting for the Mesa 500-kilovolt (kV) Substation Project May 18, 2016	
Thank you for participating in tonight's public scoping meeting. We would like to hear your comments. Note: Before including your address, telephone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.	
Name (please print):	<u>VIVIAN ROMERO</u>
Affiliation (if applicable):	<u>MAYOR PRO TEM MONTEBELLO</u>
Phone:	<u>2133794466</u>
Email:	<u>VRomero music @ gmail . com</u>
Address:	<u>1600 W Beverly BLVD</u>
City, State, Zip:	<u>Montebello CA 90640</u>
COMMENTS	
① Would like the public comment period to be extended	A5-1
② would like presentations to be held in Montebello City Council Chambers by BOTH P.U.C. AND So CAL EDISON	A5-2
③ Would like better notices to Montebello residents QSA	A5-3
④ Would like community outreach done in City of Montebello.	A5-4
Comments must be received by June 13, 2016 Mail: California Public Utilities Commission Re: Mesa 500kV Substation Project c/o Ecology and Environment, Inc. 505 Sansome Street, Suite 300 San Francisco, CA 94111 Fax: (415) 398-5326 Emails: Mesa.CPUC@ene.com	

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Response to Comment Set A5: Vivian Romero, Mayor Pro Team, City of Montebello

A5-1 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15105(a) requires that, in general, the minimum time for public review of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) submitted to the State Clearinghouse for review by state agencies is 45 days. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) initiated a 45-day comment period from April 29, 2016, through June 13, 2016. The CPUC subsequently extended the comment period to 60 days and accepted written comments on the Draft EIR through June 27, 2016. All written comments must have been postmarked or received by fax or email no later than 5:00 p.m. on June 27, 2016.

A5-2 The commenter requests that presentations on the proposed project be given in Montebello City Council Chambers by the CPUC and Southern California Edison. The commenter's request is noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. On May 18, 2016, as noted in the Notice of Availability, the CPUC held a public meeting in the city of Monterey Park, about 2 miles from Montebello, "to explain the proposed project, discuss the proposed project's significant impacts, and receive written comments on the Draft EIR from the public." The meeting also included a presentation and an informal discussion session that was open to the public, including residents of Montebello.

A5-3 CEQA Guidelines section 15082 outlines requirements for distribution of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for an EIR. CEQA Guidelines section 15083 state that the "Lead Agency *may* consult directly with any person or organization it believes will be concerned with the environmental effects of the project" (emphasis added). There is no requirement to send an NOP to members of the public unless they have requested that notice in writing, per CEQA Guidelines section 15082(c)(3). Nonetheless, the CPUC sent out the NOP to approximately 1,900 Montebello addresses, including residents, with a total of about 4,770 notices sent to members of the public.

CEQA Guidelines section 15087 outlines notification requirements to the public for publication of a Draft EIR. As described in section 15087(a), the Lead Agency must provide public notice of availability of a draft EIR at the same time a notice of completion is sent to the Office of Planning and Research. Notice must be mailed to persons requesting such notice in writing and shall also be provided in at least one of the following ways:

- Publication at least one time in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected by the proposed project. If more than one area is affected, the notice shall be published in the newspaper of largest circulation from among the newspapers of general circulation in those areas.
- Posting of notice by the public agency on and off the site in an area where the project is to be located.
- Direct mailing to the owners and occupants of property contiguous to the parcel or parcels on which the project is located.

The CPUC submitted the Notice of Completion to the Office of Planning and Research (OPR), which OPR received on April 28, 2016. The CPUC also posted a notice in the Los

Angeles Times on April 29, 2016, as the newspaper of largest circulation from among newspapers of general circulation in the affected areas. The Notice of Availability (NOA) was distributed to 63 state, regional, and local agencies and to more than 4,770 members of the public, including property owners within 500 feet of the existing and proposed right-of-way and substations and within 1,500 feet of the proposed disturbance areas associated with work at Mesa Substation. Eight tribal representatives were also sent a copy of the NOA. Recipients on the project email list received an emailed NOA. Specific to residents in Montebello, the NOA was sent to approximately 1,900 Montebello addresses. The noticing conducted for the Draft EIR complied with and went beyond the noticing requirements outlined in CEQA.

As noted in the NOA, on May 18, 2016, the CPUC held a public meeting in the city of Monterey Park, about 2 miles from Montebello, “to explain the proposed project, discuss the proposed project’s significant impacts, and receive written comments on the Draft EIR from the public.” The meeting also included a presentation and an informal discussion session.

- A5-4 The commenter’s request for community outreach in Montebello is noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. See responses to comments A5-2 and A5-3 for details on outreach to the City of Montebello and City of Montebello residents. Note that Ecology and Environment, Inc. (E & E), CPUC’s contractor, also spoke with Alex Hamilton, then Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Montebello, on October 1, 2015, regarding concerns about aesthetic impacts from the project. E & E also answered Mr. Hamilton’s questions about the project schedule and how to comment on the project. CEQA Guidelines section 15088 requires that a Lead Agency respond to comments on environmental issues. The comment does not raise an issue with the environmental analysis in the EIR; therefore, no further response is required.

Comment Set A6: Ben Kim, Director of Planning and Community Development, City of Montebello



City of Montebello

June 22, 2016

California Public Utilities Commission
RE: Mesa 500kV Substation Project
c/o Ecology and Environment, Inc.
c/o Lisa Orsaba, CPUC Project Manager
505 Sansome Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94111

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) Comments

Dear Ms. Orsaba,

Please find attached the City of Montebello (“Montebello”) comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (“DEIR”) for the proposed Southern California Edison Mesa 500kV Substation Project (Application No. A.15-03-003). The City of Montebello finds that the subject DEIR is significantly inadequate and fails completely in meeting the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. As such, Montebello respectfully requests that CPUC cease in proceeding with the Final EIR’s certification until the inadequacy and deficiencies of the current DEIR are corrected. This of course, would require substantive changes to the existing DEIR and its recirculation.

A6-1

Montebello further officially states its objection to the public hearing and participation process held for the said project. At the May 18, 2016 “public meeting” held in the City of Monterey Park, the CPUC refused to conduct substantive dialog with the public by stating that the meeting is “not a public hearing” but a “meeting” where CPUC was there to explain the project but would not accept any public comments. The CPUC’s approach violates the spirit of the CEQA process and public participation to ensure transparent disclosure of the environmental review process. It is also noted that at the May 18, 2016 meeting, the CPUC indicated a willingness to hold a public meeting in Montebello. However, on June 13, 2016, Montebello received a communication from CPUC that states, “[T]he CPUC has already held a public meeting on the DEIR, as you know. We cannot hold another.” It is Montebello’s understanding that nothing in CEQA limits CPUC from holding more

A6-2

1600 West Beverly Boulevard • Montebello, California 90640-3932 • (323) 887-1200

than one public meeting on any project. It is Montebello's position that CPUC has violated the intent of the CEQA process in providing the public with transparency or the ability to provide appropriate comments. Given the nature and extent of the project's potential impacts on our City, it is very disingenuous in limiting a dialogue between the lead agency, the project proponent, and our City.

A6-2
cont.

The City of Montebello requests that CPUC respond to the comments point-by-point and correct the deficiencies with the DEIR. Please contact Ben Kim, Director of Planning and Community Development should you have any questions.

A6-3

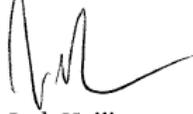
Sincerely yours,



Art Barajas
Mayor



Vivian Romero
Mayor Pro Tem



Jack Haijian
Councilmember



William Molinari
Councilmember



Vanessa Delgado
Councilmember

City of Montebello

Comments to DEIR for the Mesa 500kV Substation Project
(SCH #2015061014)

Comment #1 - General Comment

A6-4

The DEIR is deficient in providing the public, local governments, and other interested parties with a clear and meaningful description of what is being proposed and the attendant environmental impacts. The DEIR fails to provide a meaningful and understandable analysis that may be understood by the general public and local government representatives. The project description, for example, uses technical language that is extremely difficult to understand. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15140 of Article 10 states the following:

“EIRs shall be written in plain language and may use appropriate graphics so that decision makers and the public can rapidly understand the documents.”

The preparers of the DEIR relied on technical experts as principle authors of the individual sections of the document. We recognize the complex and technical nature of the proposed project though very little effort was made to ensure that the readers clearly understood the physical and operational characteristics. Section 15142 of Article 10 of the CEQA Guidelines, indicate the following:

“An EIR shall be prepared [using] an interdisciplinary approach which will ensure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the consideration of qualitative as well as quantitative factors. The interdisciplinary analysis shall be conducted by competent individuals, but no single discipline shall be designated or required to undertake this evaluation.”

As stated above, the technical information included in the DEIR is very difficult for a lay-person, who will most likely be affected by the project, to fully understand or comprehend the project's impact. Section 15147 of Article 10 of the CEQA guidelines states the following:

“The information contained in an EIR shall include summarized technical data, maps, plot plans, diagrams, and similar relevant information sufficient to permit full assessment of significant environmental impacts by reviewing agencies and members of the public. *Placement of highly technical and specialized analysis and data in the body of an EIR should be avoided through inclusion of supporting information and analyses as appendices to the main body of the EIR.* Appendices to the EIR may be prepared in volumes separate from the basic EIR document, but shall be readily available for public examination and shall be submitted to all clearinghouses which assist in public review.”

Comment #2 – Section 1.2 Project Objectives (page 1-2)

A6-5

The project objectives outline the SCE's rationale for advancing the proposed project. These objectives include, but are not limited to, the following:

“Address reliability concerns resulting from the recent retirement of the San Onofre Nuclear Generation Station (SONGS) and from Once-Through Cooling (OTC) shutdowns expected by December 31, 2020.

Allow greater flexibility in the siting of future generation projects to meet local reliability needs in the Western Los Angeles Basin while reducing the total amount of new generation required by providing additional transmission import capability.”

These aforementioned objectives indicate that new replacement generation facilities will be required. Where will these new power generation plants be located and what is the nature of their power generation (nuclear, oil and gas, solar, etc.)? It appears that the Mesa Substation is one element of a much larger project.

Comment #3 – Section 1.2 Project Objectives (page 1-3)

A6-6

Section 1.2.2 outlines the objectives of the CPUC. This discussion includes two objectives that provide an example of the overly technical and complex narrative.

1. Address anticipated violations of the NERC Standard TPL-001-04 (NERC 2015), WECC 16 Regional Business Practice TPL-001-WECC-RBP-2 (WECC 2011), and CAISO Planning Standards that would occur upon retirement by December 31, 2020, of generators that use OTC.
2. Avoid introduction of new violations of NERC, WECC, and CAISO standards.
3. Maintain electrical service by minimizing service interruptions during project implementation.”

Comment #4 – Section 2 Project Description

A6-7

The DEIR states the following when discussing the retirement of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) and once through cooling (OTC) units and the attendant need for the proposed project:

“The Mesa Substation Project is ultimately meant to address reliability concerns that would likely occur only after OTC unit retirement (December 31, 2020), although SCE's objectives from the [Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA)] state that the proposed project is meant to address reliability concerns from SONGS and OTC retirement. Although SONGS' retirement resulted in reliability concerns, SCE has since stated that the Mesa Substation Project would likely not be necessary to maintain reliability unless OTC units 25 are also retired by the end of 2020 (SCE 2015).”

The above statement clearly indicates the project need is dependent on the retirement of the existing San Onofre nuclear power plant (presently undergoing closure) and other power generating OTC facilities. The DEIR is correct in that The Clean Water Act (CWA) requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that the location, design, construction, and capacity of cooling water intake structures reflect the best technology available for minimizing adverse environmental impacts. The regulation affected 19 California power plants. Of those, 16 power plants totaling are in the California ISO balancing authority area, and three are in the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (LADWP) balancing area. The Mesa Substation will serve as a transmission facility and will not be involved in the generation of power. Where will the replacement generation facilities be located? The proposed project description is incomplete without this information.

A6-7
cont.

Comment #5 – Section 2 Project Description (Figures 2-3C and 2-3D).

Several exhibits indicate the new telecommunication and transmission lines that will be installed. Figures 2-3C and 2-3D indicate that a new aboveground telecommunication line will be installed in key areas of the City. The exhibits lack street names or other information to assist the reader in determining the location and extent of this improvement. Figure 2-3C appears to indicate a new transmission line will be installed along Lincoln Avenue between Wilcox Avenue (on the west) and Montebello Boulevard (on the east). Exhibit 2-3D indicates a new aboveground telecommunications line (Route 3) will be located along Avenida De La Merced. In any event, the City is opposed to the installation of any additional above-ground lines along this roadway and the existing above-ground lines should be placed underground.

A6-8

A6-9

Comment #6 – Section 2 Project Description (Section 2.2.1.1)

This section is extremely important in that the proposed project's physical characteristics are described. Unfortunately this section, as written, is completely unintelligible to the public and local decision-makers (also please refer to Comment #1). For this reason alone, the DEIR should be revised and re-circulated.

A6-10

Comment #7 – Section 2 Project Description (Page 2-31)

This section of the DEIR described the new foundation for a proposed microwave tower. The description does not provide any information concerning the new tower itself including the tower height, the purpose, etc. The City is very concerned with the potential health effects associated with the introduction of a new source of microwave and electromagnetic radiation into its urban area.

A6-11

Comment #8 – Section 2 Project Description (Figures 2-5 and 2-6, Pages 2-34 and 2-36)

The above-referenced figures illustrate the proposed and existing transmission structures. While dimensions are provided, these illustrations should be provided at the same scale so a meaning comparison may be made.

A6-12

Comment #9 – Section 2 Project Description (Section 2.2.2)

A6-13

Comment #5 indicated the City's concern regarding the installation of new above-ground telecommunications lines along local streets. The discussion indicates that some existing wooden poles would be replaced. The City requests that these lines be placed underground.

Comment #10 – Section 2 Project Description (Section 2.3.1, Pages 2-48 and 2-49)

A6-14

This section indicates the location and extent of the major construction staging areas. The great majority of the construction areas are located within the existing Mesa Substation. The City is concerned with the lengthy period (55 months or more) and the attendant visual, safety, and traffic impacts.

Comment #11 – Section 2 Project Description (Section 2.3.2.2, Pages 2-55 and 2-56)

A6-15

Table 2-7 indicates the grading quantities and the number of truck trips for each of the three phases of grading. The total truck trips per day will result in a substantial impact on traffic levels of service, especially at the freeway ramps. More telling is the total number of truck trips during each phase. For example, during Phase III, 50,000 cubic yards (CY) of export (earth) will be trucked out. Assuming 20 CY per truck, a total of 2,500 trucks would be required with more than 5,000 truck trips (to and from the grading site). These trucks and others carrying building materials and construction equipment will obstruct roads and damage roadway surfaces. Section 3.3.1 is very general in its description of the potential haul routes:

A6-16

“Construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed project would require the use of existing public roads and existing transmission access roads to the maximum extent possible.”

The City is requesting the DEIR identify haul routes as well as provisions for repairing damaged struts, curbs, and medians.

Comment #12 – Section 2 Project Description (Section 2.3.2.4, Pages 2-73 and 2-74)

A6-17

The City is concerned with the long-term use of helicopters during the construction phases and the attendant noise and safety impacts. The DEIR's discussion is limited to the following sentences:

“Flight paths would be determined by the applicant's helicopter contractor immediately prior to construction. The applicant would coordinate with and obtain approvals from the FAA Flights Standards District Office to implement an operating plan for helicopter use for the proposed project, in compliance with Title 14 CFR Part 77.”

The DEIR fails to identify flight paths and duration associated with the project's operations. The DEIR is clearing deferring analysis and any required mitigation with the following statement:

“Flight paths would be determined by the applicant's helicopter contractor immediately prior to construction.”

Comment #13 – Section 2 Project Description (Section 2.4, Page 2-76)

A6-18

It appears that the DEIR preparers relied on the California Air Sources Board's CalEEMod computer model to estimate construction employment. The variables that are used in CalEEMod (land area, square footage of building construction and demolition, etc.) are for generalized land uses (residential, commercial, etc). A list of employee and types of construction equipment based on the project's construction costs should be first developed. Using the CalEEMod to generate these lists will be inaccurate.

Comment #14 – Section 2 Project Description (Section 2.6, Page 2-81)

A6-19

Section 2.6, Table 2-10 identified measures that are referred to as "Applicant's Control Measures." These should be more correctly identified as "Required Measures" since they are specific requirements of the various regulatory and trustee agencies. For example, the first proposed measure (APM-AIR-01) actually reflects South Coast Air Quality (SCAQMD) Rule 402 that is required to control fugitive dust during site preparation.

Comment #15 – Section 3 Description of Alternatives (Sections 3 and 3.2, Page 3-2)

A6-20

This section indicates the process that was followed in the selection of project alternatives. Section 3.2 outlines the basic objectives of the project that were considered in the selection of alternatives. The following two of the three objectives identified are only indirectly to the Mesa Substation project:

"1. [To] Address anticipated violations of North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) 25 Standard TPL-001-04, Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) Regional Business 26 Practice TPL-001-WECC-RBP-2, and California Independent System Operator (CAISO) Planning Standards that would occur upon retirement by December 31, 2020, of generators that use Once-Through Cooling (OTC).

"2. [To] Avoid introduction of new violations of NERC, WECC, and CAISO standards."

These objectives are more related to the new power generation plants that will actually replace the OTC and San Onofre facilities. The Mesa Substation is just a component of the facilities these new plants may need to effectively serve as replacement power generating facilities for the existing OTC and San Onofre facilities. This is an example of the lack of information related to the larger project that includes the replacement power generation plants. In the absence of the complete and comprehensive project description, the users of the DEIR are unable to make any judgment as to the effectiveness of the project alternatives in meeting those objectives. The comment is directly related to a previous comment (Comment #4).

Comment #16 – Section 3 Description of Alternatives (Section 3.2, Page 3-2)

A6-21

The methodology used in determining the feasibility of the particular alternative scenarios is focused on minor modifications to the Mesa Substation project.

“A transmission system model created in the PowerWorld Simulator was used to identify potential alternatives. The model was also used to test potential alternatives to determine if they would meet Objectives 1 and 2 (i.e., address all potential violations of reliability standards and whether they would avoid introduction of new violations of reliability standards). The transmission system model was created in the PowerWorld Simulator modeling program using the WECC transmission 41 system database and data provided by Southern California Edison (SCE).”

It is clear that the alternatives analysis is predisposed to the project given the above-defined approach that was used in the alternatives screening analysis. The alternative should focus on alternatives that could eliminate the need for the Mesa Substation altogether. For example, would locally generated renewable energy facilities (wind, solar, etc.) eliminate or otherwise reduce the need for the Mesa Substation expansion. Without a comprehensive project description and realistic set of project alternatives related to the larger initiative to replace OTC and San Onofre, other agencies and the public have no way of knowing.

Comment #17 – Section 3 Description of Alternatives (Section 3.2.2, Page 3-3)

A6-22

This section outlines how “feasibility” was determined in the selection of alternatives. Four criterion are identified though the following criteria are problematic:

“Economic: Whether the alternative is exceedingly costly such that implementation could not occur or that it would be impractical to proceed with the proposed project.”

The DEIR makes no indication as to the thresholds used in determining whether an alternative is financially infeasible. Without these thresholds, we have no way of knowing whether a particular alternative is too expensive.

Comment #18 – Section 4.1 Aesthetics (Section 4.1.3.3, beginning on Page 4.31 – 4-34)

A6-23

The impact analysis illustrates before and after views of the project elements. The new towers are substantially larger than the existing (for example, refer to Figure 4.1-5b, 4-1-5c, 4.1-5d, 4.5e, and continuing). The greatest visual impact along the 60-Freeway adjacent to the City of Montebello is illustrated in 4.1-5g. These illustrations underscore the impossibility of mitigating the aesthetic impacts. It also raises the failure of the DEIR to include towers and other infrastructure that will be less obtrusive, thus lessening the visual impacts.

Comment #19 – Section 4.1 Aesthetics (Section 4.1.4, Pages 4.1-51 and 4.1-52)

The greatest visual and aesthetic impacts are related to the height and mass of the new transmission towers. The following mitigation included in the DEIR does little to mitigate these impacts:

- MM AES-1: Staging Area Screening;
- MM AES-2: Minimize Clearing and Ground Disturbance and Restore Disturbed Areas to Pre-Project Conditions;
- MM AES-3: Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment along Potrero Grande Drive;
- MM AES-4: Graffiti Deterrence;
- MM AES-5: Glare Reduction; and,
- MM AES-6: Night Lighting.

At the minimum, the alternatives analysis should have considered a concept where the mass and height of the transmission towers are reduced.

Comment #20 – Section 4.2 Air Quality (Section 4.2.1.1, Page 4.2-1)

The climate profile refers to the SCAQMD CEQA Handbook that was first published in 1993 and the handbook is obsolete. More recent information is available. This information is important in determining the impacts related to fugitive dust and toxic air contaminants.

Comment #21 – Section 4.2 Air Quality (Section 4.2.3.1, Page 4.2-10)

The DEIR indicates that the analysis of construction emissions relied on the CARB's and SCAQMD CalEEMod. Again, we would like to emphasize that this model is not well suited to estimating the emissions from such a large and unique project.

Comment #22 – Section 4.2 Air Quality (Section 4.2.3.1, Page 4.2-11)

The preparers of the DEIR used the SCAQMD's Localized Significance Threshold (LST) screening methodology. The use of this model is only used if the total land area that will be disturbed daily is five acres. The affected area that will be disturbed on any given day will be much greater than that. Therefore, any impacts and conclusions concerning construction air quality impacts are inaccurate.

Comment #23 – Section 4.2 Air Quality (Section 4.2.3.3, Page 4.2-14-4.2-16)

The analysis of construction emissions is not accurate when considering all of the equipment emissions from trucks hauling earth, heavy equipment operations, use of helicopters, and fugitive dust from

A6-24

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A6-29

disturbed soils. We request the DEIR be revised to clearly and accurately reflect construction impacts. The City of Montebello oversaw the preparation of an EIR for the 1,200-unit Montebello Hills development that was much smaller in terms of land area and soil disturbance and the impacts could not be fully mitigated.

A6-29
cont.

Comment #24 – Section 4.3 Biological Resources (Page 4.3-39 and 4.3-40)

A6-30

This section of the DEIR indicates the proposed Mesa Substation improvement will impact local California gnatcatcher habitat. The DEIR states the following:

“Direct impacts to this species or its nest could occur as a result of vehicular collision and nest failure or abandonment due to noise and human presence during construction; this would be a significant impact. APM-BIO-03 commits SCE to monitoring construction activities to the extent feasible. APM-BIO-04 commits SCE to conducting pre-construction surveys for the coastal California gnatcatcher if construction activities occur during the avian nesting season; establishing an exclusionary buffer, in coordination with USFWS, if a nest is observed; and full-time monitoring of construction activities in occupied habitat. Direct impacts would still be significant because APM-BIO-3 does not ensure proper monitoring protocols are followed and APM-BIO-04 would not require the established protocol to be used for gnatcatcher surveys. Indirect impacts to this species could result from habitat modifications through vegetation trimming, clearing of vegetation, and other ground-disturbing activities. The proposed project would include removal of approximately 14.23 acres of coastal California gnatcatcher habitat.”

As indicated in the above paragraph, the project would result in a permanent loss of just over 14 acres of gnatcatcher habitat. The DEIR indicates that this habitat loss will not result in any significant adverse impacts because the mitigation measures will mitigate the impacts:

“With the implementation of MM BR-2, MM BR-3, MM BR-5, MM BR-9, MM BR-11, and MM BR-12, in combination with the APMs identified above, [the] impacts to coastal California gnatcatcher and its habitat would be less than significant.”

MM BR-3 calls for the preparation of a “restoration plan in the future.”

“SCE shall prepare the plan to ensure restoration of all temporary impact areas and to ensure mitigation for permanent impacts on sensitive natural communities and coastal California gnatcatcher habitat. The plan must be submitted 60 days prior to the planned start of construction.”

The City of Montebello is concerned that MM BR-3 actually defers mitigation in that the restoration efforts are unknown at this time. The trustee agencies, without the plan, will be unable to identify the effectiveness if this mitigation. The DEIR must be revised to include this Plan so that the trustee agencies, the CDFW and the USFWS, have an opportunity to review and comment on the restoration plan.

Comment #25 – Section 4.3 Biological Resources (Page 4.3-58)

A6-31

Similar to the previous comment, the MM BR-7 is another example of deferred mitigation. The DEIR also indicates that a “restoration plan” will be prepared for the impacts to the Southern California Black Walnut community.

“SCE shall take measures to avoid and minimize impacts on Southern California black walnut resulting from project construction activities, and shall plant replacement trees for any impacted or removed specimens. Prior to construction (after completion of final engineering design of project features), black walnut tree evaluation surveys shall be completed by a qualified arborist (an arborist with extensive local or regional expertise in the planting, care, and maintenance of black walnut trees). The arborist must be approved by the CPUC. The arborist shall record a brief description (e.g., location, height, diameter at breast height, condition) of each black walnut tree with a dripline within 25 feet of construction activities.”

The information regarding the location and extent of affected trees should be identified in the DEIR and not deferred to some future time with the preparation of the restoration plan. This information must be disclosed in the DEIR given that the specific parameters of the proposed improvements are known (and identified in the project description). The DEIR must be revised to include this Plan so that the trustee agencies, the CDFW and the USFWS, have an opportunity to review and comment on the restoration plan.

Comment #26 – Section 4.3 Biological Resources (Page 4.3-62)

A6-32

The greatest potential impact on biological resources is related to the potential for avian species colliding with the tower structures and lines. The risk is increased by the Mesa Substation’s proximity to the Whittier Narrows area that includes extensive foraging areas and sources of water. A single mitigation is supposed to address this impact:

“MM BR-15: Avian Protection Plan. SCE shall adhere to recommendations published by APLIC (Reducing Avian Collisions with Power Lines: The State of the Art in 2012 (APLIC 2012)). In addition, SCE shall develop and implement an Avian Protection Plan according to Avian Protection Plan Guidelines (APLIC and USFWS 2005). The plan shall include provisions to reduce impacts on avian species during operation of the proposed project, and shall provide for the adaptive management of project-related issues. The plan shall be submitted for review to CDFW, USFWS, and the CPUC at least 60 days prior to construction. CPUC approval is required before the plan is implemented.”

There are numerous shortcomings with this mitigation as stated. First, this mitigation is an additional example of deferred mitigation. There are no specifics as to the content of this “plan” which at this point makes it impossible to identify the effectiveness of this measure. The last two sentences indicate that the Plan will be submitted to the CDFW, USFWS, and the CPUC at least 60 days prior to the commencement of construction though only CPUC approval is required. The DEIR must be revised to include this Plan so that the trustee agencies CDFW and USFWS have an opportunity to review and comment on the Plan.

Comment #27 – Section 4.4 Cultural and Paleontological Resources (Page 4.4-27)

A6-33

The local tribal representatives from the Gabrieleño Tongva and the Gabrieleño Kizh indicated the Montebello area has a “high sensitivity” for cultural resources (refer to page 4.4-15). The mitigation measures do not require any on-site monitoring by tribal monitors during soil disturbance. Instead, the DEIR mitigation relies solely on construction workers to make the identification of significant resources. Tribal representatives are the most appropriate individuals to undertake the monitoring. The DEIR mitigations that indicate construction workers will undertake monitoring should indicate that appropriate tribal representatives will be responsible for monitoring.

Comment #28 – Section 4.5 Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources (Page 4.5-10)

A6-34

The identification of local faults is inadequate and incomplete. The inventory of faults, summarized in Table 4.5-3, only includes major known active faults that have been identified as Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zones (APSSZ). The APSSZ refers to those faults where a fault trace is visible due to past surface displacement. In fact, the Mesa Substation overlies the Puente Hills Blind Thrust Fault, that has been identified as an active fault that could result in an earthquake with a Richter magnitude as great as 7.1 (John H. Shaw, Andreas Plesch, James F. Dolan, Thomas L. Pratt, and Patricia Fiore, *Puente Hills Blind-Thrust System, Los Angeles, California*. Bulletin of the Seismological Society of America, Vol. 92, No. 8, pp. 2946–2960, December 2002). The impacts of this fault must be identified in the DEIR.

Comment #29 – Section 4.5 Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources, Section 4.5.4 Mitigation Measures (Page 4.5-34)

A6-35

The following measure (in part) is included in the DEIR as a means to address geotechnical impacts:

“MM GEO-1: Geotechnical Investigation. The applicant will conduct a geotechnical investigation for the proposed project and prepare a geotechnical report documenting the results of the investigation. The geotechnical investigation shall assess the potential for liquefaction, landslides, lateral spreading, seismic ground shaking, and expansive soil. The geotechnical report shall make recommendations of engineering and design measures to incorporate into the proposed project, determined appropriate by a California-licensed Geotechnical Engineer or Certified Engineering Geologist, to mitigate impacts associated with liquefaction, landslides, lateral spreading, seismic ground shaking, and expansive soils.”

The above mitigation is a classic example of deferred mitigation. The measure implies that the potential impacts are not known though at some future date prior to construction; a study will be completed that will identify both the impact and specific mitigation. In the absence of a robust environmental analysis, the public and decision-makers will be unable to ascertain the effectiveness of the mitigation as stated. Section 15126.4 from the CEQA Guidelines, Subsection A.1.b.1 states the following (the italics emphasize that point):

"Where several measures are available to mitigate an impact, each should be discussed and the basis for selecting a particular measure should be identified. *Formulation of mitigation measures should not be deferred until some future time.* However, measures may specify performance standards which would mitigate the significant effect of the project and which may be accomplished in more than one specified way."

A6-35
cont.

Comment #30 – Section 4.6 Greenhouse Gases, Section 4.6.3. Impact Analysis (Page 4.6-11)

The discussion of indirect greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts from construction activities discuss the leakage of sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆) used for insulation. Nationally, more than 10,000 tons of SF₆ are produced annually, most of which (over 8,000 tons) is used as a gaseous insulating medium in the electrical industry. According to the DEIR (Table 4.6-4 on Page 4.6-13) the proposed electrical equipment will potentially result in the leakage of 1,167 tons of SF₆ per year. This is very significant in that 10,000 tons of SF₆ is produced annually. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, SF₆ is the most potent greenhouse gas that it has evaluated, with a global warming potential of 23,900 times that of CO₂ when compared over a 100-year period. Given the projected SF₆ leakage, we *do not concur* with the DEIR's conclusions that the impacts are less than significant.

A6-36

Comment #31 – Section 4.6 Greenhouse Gases, Section 4.6.3. Impact Analysis (Page 4.6-13)

This section analyzes the project's conformity with plans, policies, or regulations designed to reduce GHG emissions. The project description is incomplete in that new and/or expanded OTC or other power generating facilities are not identified. The fuel sources (gas, coal, hydroelectric, nuclear, solar, wind, etc.) were also not identified and there is no way to determine if the project will result or otherwise contribute to significant GHG emissions.

A6-37

Comment #32 – Section 4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Section 4.7.3. Impact Analysis (Page 4.7-33)

The DEIR acknowledges that contaminated soils and hazardous materials will be removed as part of the proposed project's construction. The DEIR is silent as to the location of haul routes that will be used and where these materials will be disposed of. A major concern is the estimated 379,000 gallons of electrical insulating oil (petroleum-based mineral oil) that will be transported to the site and transferred into transformers at the proposed Mesa Substation. Other hazardous materials include the various waste materials such as existing infrastructure that would be disposed of, including old transformers from the existing substation and contaminated soil containing petroleum hydrocarbons. The location of the haul routes and the disposal sites must be identified.

A6-38

Comment #33 – Section 4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Section 4.7.1.5. Fire Hazards (Page 4.7-15)

A6-39

The DEIR fails to identify those high risk fire areas located in close proximity to the Mesa Substation. Last year there was a wildfire in the Whittier Narrows area near the SR-60 Freeway. In addition, there are areas of native vegetation within the boundaries of the Mesa Substation. This area should be identified in the DEIR.

Comment #34 – Section 4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Section 4.7.3 Impact Analysis

A6-40

The DEIR is completely silent regarding the long-term health effects related to EMF exposure. The City is concerned that long term exposure to EMF from the new facilities may impact its residents. This risk must be disclosed in the DEIR.

Comment #35 – Section 4.9 Land use and Planning. General Comment

A6-41

The Mesa Substation is an important location within the City in that it is a visual gateway for the City of Montebello and the adjacent areas. We are concerned that the DEIR fails to identify alternatives that would place the proposed improvements to another area. The proposed project is not compatible with the nearby uses that include a regional park, residential neighborhoods, and many schools.

A6-42

Comment #36 – Section 4.10 Noise, Section 4.10.3 Impact Analysis (Page 4.10-19)

A6-43

The DEIR outlines the project's construction-related noise impacts to the City of Montebello in the following paragraph:

“Components constructed in the City of Montebello include 220-kV transmission lines; 500-kV 40 transmission lines; and Telecommunications Routes 1, 2, and 3 (Table 4.10-15). Staging Yards 2 and 3 would also be located in Montebello. Helicopters may also be used in Montebello for line stringing and may also use Staging Yards 2 and 3 as a landing area. Montebello restricts non-emergency construction activities to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on weekdays (Monday through Friday), and 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. Construction activities would generally occur during these hours. However, some construction may be required outside of the allowed time, e.g., a planned line outage that must occur at night for safety reasons. Construction noise associated with the proposed project would conflict with the City of Montebello's noise ordinance if construction occurs outside of the allowed construction hours, and [the] impacts would be significant and unavoidable.”

The above statements completely fail to disclose the nature and location of construction impacts. The City is especially concerned with the use of helicopters during the project's construction.

Comment #37 – Section 4.10 Noise, Section 4.10.3 Impact Analysis (General Comment)

A6-44

The noise analysis completely fails to identify the specific mobile noise impacts from large trucks during the construction phases. There are few direct routes that may be utilized for the transport of construction equipment, building materials, and graded materials. The failure of the DEIR to identify the potential haul routes makes it impossible to identify the location and extent of these impacts.

Comment #38 – Section 4.12 Public Services and Utilities, Section 4.12.3 Impact Analysis (Page 4.12-11)

A6-45

The DEIR clearly indicates that there will be a potential for roadway closures during the construction phases by stating the following:

“Temporary lane closures or lane reductions would be required during construction. These closures would be coordinated with emergency services and appropriate traffic controls measures would be implemented, as discussed in Section 4.14, “Traffic and Transportation.” Therefore, there would be no impact on response times.”

We request that the DEIR be revised to indicate the construction haul routes so the Montebello Police Department and the Los Angeles County Fire Department can review this information to determine if “no impacts on response times” would occur.

Comment #39 – Section 4.13 Recreation, Section 4.13.3 Impact Analysis (Page 4.13-5 and 4.13-6)

A6-46

The proposed project identifies construction-related impacts to regional recreational facilities located in or near the City of Montebello. The DEIR states the following:

“Telecommunications Route 3 would be installed on existing distribution poles along the border of the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area and Bosque Del Rio Hondo (a recreational area), as well as on existing distribution poles and within new underground conduit within the Whittier Narrows Natural Area. Telecommunications Route 3 would also cross the Rio Hondo Bike Path, a county maintained bike path, on existing distribution poles where the bike path crosses existing SCE ROW at the intersection of San Gabriel Boulevard and Highway 19. In addition, Telecommunications Route 3 would cross the entrance to the Whittier Narrows Bikeway, a bikeway that circles Legg Lake, along Durfee Avenue (Los Angeles County Department of Public Works 2015). For stringing work immediately adjacent to and crossing the Rio Hondo Bike Path, temporary trail closures would be required as a safety precaution. For stringing work near the Whittier Narrows Bikeway along Durfee Avenue, a temporary trail closure would be required as a safety precaution. However, other access routes to this bike path are available and closures would be for less than a day. Near the Whittier Narrows Nature Center, Telecommunications Route 3 would cross a paved nature center trail. During construction activities for this component, portions of this trail would be closed for short

periods to ensure public safety. The applicant has committed to providing advance notice of trail closures to the affected facilities.”

A6-46
cont.

The DEIR should be revised to clearly indicate the location of potential alternative routes that may be used during construction phases. The closure of the entry to the Whittier Narrows Nature Center and local bicycle trails will represent a significant impact to local residents that regularly use or visit these facilities.

Comment #40 – Section 4.14 Traffic and Transportation, (Page 4.14-18)

A6-47

Previous comments have indicated that the failure of identifying construction haul routes will compromise the quality of the traffic analysis. For example, Table 4.14-12 indicates that during Phase 1 of the construction, a total of 804 heavy-duty one-way truck trips will be generated on a daily basis. This traffic would significantly impact three local intersections during the morning peak hour and five local intersections during the evening peak hour. The traffic study indicates that the following mitigation will reduce the impact to a level that is less than significant:

“Mitigation Measure (MM) TT-1 would require implementation of a Peak Period Traffic Management Plan to reduce the impacts to the intersections. Implementation of the Peak Period Traffic Management Plan would reduce V/C increase resulting from the proposed project to at or below the applicable threshold; therefore, impacts to the intersections would be less than significant.”

The mitigation relies on the implementation of a Peak Period Traffic Management Plan, which is not identified or described in enough detail for the City of Montebello to ascertain the effectiveness of this mitigation. While the proposed project is regional in scope and involves multiple jurisdictions, all of the significantly impacted intersections are located within the corporate boundaries of Montebello. For this reason, a draft Peak Period Traffic Management Plan must be provided to the City prior to the completion of the Final EIR (FEIR).

Comment #41 – Section 4.14 Traffic and Transportation, (Page 4.14-25)

A6-48

Construction Phase 2 would also significantly impact four intersections during the evening peak hour traffic period. Once again, all four of the impacted intersections are located within the corporate boundaries of the City of Montebello. The DEIR also indicates that the impacts will be mitigated through the preparation of a Peak Period Traffic Management Plan. Again, the City emphasizes the need for the preparation of a draft Peak Period Traffic Management Plan prior to the completion of the FEIR.

Comment #42 – Section 4.14 Traffic and Transportation, (Page 4.14-26)

A6-49

Construction Phase 3 would also significantly impact four local intersections during the evening peak hour traffic period. Likewise, references are made to the preparation of a Peak Period Traffic Management Plan to mitigate these impacts. Again, the City emphasizes the need for the preparation of a draft Peak Period Traffic Management Plan prior to the completion of the FEIR.

Comment #43 – Section 4.14 Traffic and Transportation, (page 4.14-37)

A6-50

The DEIR indicates that during construction a number of public transit routes and bicycle routes may be impacted. The mitigation that is supposed to address these impacts includes the following:

“Implementation of MM TT-9 would require preparation of a Public Transit, Pedestrian and Bicyclist Plan that takes into account the location and duration of public transit stop closures, sidewalk closures, and bike lane closures once known. The Plan would reduce the impacts to less than significant through implementation of measures such as temporary transit stop relocation.”

Again, the mitigation calls for the preparation of a Public Transit, Pedestrian, and Bicyclist Plan at some future point in time. As with the previous mitigation referred to herein, this plan should be drafted at this time rather than at some future date so that it may be reviewed by local jurisdictions and transit providers to ensure the plan’s feasibility. The draft Plan must be prepared prior to the certification of the FEIR.

Comment #44 – Section 4.14 Traffic and Transportation, General Comment

A6-51

Without the delineation of a haul route, the City of Montebello is unable to identify the project impacts during the construction phases. While the DEIR identified the local intersections that would be significantly impacted, this cannot be confirmed in the absence of a haul route delineation. In addition, a detailed time and location listing of potential street closures is being requested by the City of Montebello Police Department. The City would also recommend that the traffic analysis be forwarded to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to ensure that freeway and freeway ramp impacts are carefully evaluated.

A6-52

A6-53

Comment #45 – Section 4.14 Traffic and Transportation, Section 4.14.3.4 Mitigation Measures (page 4.14-39)

A6-54

At the end of the traffic section, there are a number of extremely important mitigation measures that are identified as a means to address traffic impacts. All of these mitigation measures call for the preparation of a “plan” to address a particular impact (Peak Period Traffic Management Plan, Road and Lane Closure Plan, Highway Closure Plan, Helicopter Lift Plan, and Public Transit, Pedestrian, and Bicyclist Plan). All of these plans are critical in understanding how the intended impacts will be mitigated. As indicated previously, the City of Montebello requests a copy of the draft plans so that their feasibility and any unforeseen impacts may be identified prior to the certification of the FEIR.

Comment #46 – General Comment on the Impact Analysis

A6-55

The DEIR’s analysis fails to analyze the impacts related to Environmental Justice and Urban Decay. These are extremely important issues to the City of Montebello in that the surrounding communities are bearing the brunt of a regional initiative related to power generation and stability. The closure of the OTC and the SONGS’s power generation facilities and the attendant new transmission lines will have a greater impact to the City of Montebello and other communities in the San Gabriel Valley.

Comment #47 – Section 5.0 Comparison and Analysis of Alternatives, General Comment (page 5-1)

A6-56

The alternatives analysis that has been indicated previously was skewed to alternatives that are related to the Mesa Substation. The City of Montebello is requesting an expanded list of alternatives that would truly represent a No Project scenario that would consider other options whereby the proposed improvements would not be required. For example, there is no identification of those replacement generating facilities that would come online with the closure of SONGS and the other OTC facilities. Without the identification of these other facilities, a meaningful identification of No Project candidates can be identified. The following concluding statement may be inaccurate if a broader range of alternatives were considered:

“The No Project Alternative includes transmission system options as well as Remedial Action Schemes (RAS) that are likely to be pursued in the absence of the proposed project. The No Project Alternative would likely have more severe environmental impacts than the proposed project and alternatives considered, as described in Section 5.5, “No Project Alternative Comparison.””

The City of Montebello questions why the alternative analysis focused only on transmissions system options when new power generating facilities or scenarios could affect the need for the Mesa Substation facility. For example, increased initiatives and support for residential solar equipment installation might eliminate the need for these expanded facilities. This type of initiative is certainly feasible given the State and regional governments' emphasis on sustainable development.

A6-57

Comment #48 – Section 5.0 Comparison and Analysis of Alternatives, Section 5.2 Comparison Methodology (page 5-2)

A6-58

This section underscores the very narrow selection of project alternatives that fail to consider a broader range of alternatives that would potentially reduce or eliminate the need for the Mesa Substation and the attendant facilities. Without an understanding of the other replacement power generating facilities, those reviewing the DEIR have no way of evaluating the adequacy of the alternatives analysis.

Comment #49 – Section 5.0 Comparison and Analysis of Alternatives, Section 5.4 Environmentally Superior Alternative (page 5-22)

A6-59

This section states that all three alternatives are environmentally superior to the proposed project. The DEIR states the following:

“The One-Transformer-Bank Substation is environmentally superior to all alternatives and to the proposed project in most resource areas. In areas where it is not environmentally superior, the Gas-Insulated Substation is superior. The Gas-Insulated Substation Alternative's long-term greenhouse gas impacts make it environmentally inferior to the One-Transformer-Bank Substation despite its benefits related to noise and aesthetics. The One-Transformer Bank Substation Alternative is

therefore considered environmentally superior to the Gas-Insulated Substation Alternative. The One-Transformer Bank Substation Alternative is therefore the Environmentally Superior Alternative.”

A6-59
cont.

The above paragraph is confusing and does not identify why these environmentally superior alternatives were not selected over the proposed project. The City of Montebello requests that the DEIR include specific justification as to why the environmentally superior alternatives were discounted.

Comment #50 – Section 5.0 Comparison and Analysis of Alternatives, Section 5.5 No Project Alternatives Comparison (page 5-23)

A6-60

The analysis of No Project alternatives is flawed. For example, the following paragraph states the following:

“For most resource sections, it would be speculative to determine the No Project Alternative’s impacts. An explanation is provided as to why determining the impacts would be speculative. For air quality, greenhouse gases, and public services and utilities, an analysis of probable impacts of the proposed project are provided.”

The paragraph implies that the impact from the No Project alternative would be “speculative” for a number of issue areas. The purpose of the DEIR is to identify those alternatives, including the No Project, that are feasible. The identification of a feasible No Project alternative would permit an analysis of impacts that would not be speculative. This underscores the need for the Lead Agency to develop a comprehensive and realistic range of alternatives.

Comment #51 – Cumulative Impacts

The project area is located near the gateway to the City of Montebello. As a result, the City does not agree with the conclusions that the only impacts that are unmitigable relate to aesthetics. While we agree that the visual impacts will be significant and cannot be mitigated, there are other potentially significant impacts. These include, but are not limited to, land use compatibility, short-term traffic impacts, human health impacts, potential biological impacts, and other impacts related to environmental justice and urban decay.

A6-61

The DEIR lacks sufficient detail or candor with respect to the identification of the need for the project. We understand that power demand will likely increase in the coming years and in the absence of not doing anything, may lead to power shortages in the Southern California area. However, we would question the CPUC’s efforts to increase capacity, while at the same time, promoting sustainable development and power conservation. For example, the new infrastructure that will be installed in the Southern California area will also require new power generation facilities located elsewhere. The project’s need and the discussion of cumulative effects must indicate the source of this additional power demand.

A6-62

Conclusion

As we have indicated in the comments outlined in this letter, there are significant deficiencies in the DEIR that warrant its revision and recirculation. In other words, the flaws to the DEIR are so significant that the only remedy would be its revision to address our concerns that include the lack of a comprehensive project description, the deferral of mitigation, a realistic set of project alternatives, and a robust analysis of the more significant environmental impacts. As part of the preparation and recirculation of the DEIR, the City would also request that the CPUC make a concerted effort to include the City of Montebello in any outreach. This is especially important to our City in that the environmental impacts of the project will affect our City more significantly than other communities in the area. The current DEIR acknowledges, for example, that all of the significantly impacted intersections are located in the City of Montebello.

A6-63

A6-64

We are grateful that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has provided our City with an opportunity to review and to comment on this project. We respectfully request that all future notices regarding additional meetings, outreach, and public hearings be provided to the City of Montebello in the upcoming months. We also anticipate receiving point-by-point responses to the comments included in this letter. These responses are required under CEQA as part of the preparation of the Final EIR.

A6-65

Response to Comment Set A6: Ben Kim, Director of Planning and Community Development, City of Montebello

A6-1 The City of Montebello's concerns regarding the inadequacy of the Draft EIR and its failure to meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are noted and will be included in the record for the decision makers. See specific responses below regarding the City's concerns related to adequacy of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Please note that recirculation is required only when "significant new information" is added to the EIR, as defined in CEQA Guidelines section 15088.5.

A6-2 The City's concerns regarding the public hearing and participation process held for the proposed project are noted and will be included in the record for the decision makers. Contrary to the City's assertions, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) complied fully with all CEQA requirements regarding agency consultation, review, and comment on a Draft EIR.

On April 29, 2016 the CPUC transmitted the Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EIR to Montebello's Mayor, City Administrator, Director of Community Development & Planning, Chair of the Planning Commission, and City Clerk pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15086. The NOA announced that the Draft EIR was available for public review, set forth the 45-day comment period (later extended to 60 days) during which comments would be accepted, described the project and its significant environmental effects, included information regarding the location of the Draft EIR on the internet and in hard copy, and stated that a public meeting would be held on May 18, 2016, in the city of Monterey Park to explain the proposed project, discuss its significant impacts, and receive written comments from the public. The NOA also provided contact information for those who wished to transmit written comments to the CPUC. The NOA fulfilled the requirement that the Lead Agency request comments on the draft EIR from other public agencies set forth in CEQA Guidelines section 15086. Although the CPUC declined to have an additional public meeting on the Draft EIR in the city of Montebello, it did offer to have a conference call with the City to discuss the proposed project in an email transmitted on June 13, 2016; the CPUC did not receive a response to this offer.

CEQA does not require public agencies to hold public hearings to receive comments on draft EIRs. Public comments may be restricted to written communication (CEQA Guidelines section 15202(a)). The public meeting on May 18, 2016, included a PowerPoint presentation with an overview of the proposed project, the significant impacts of the proposed project, the environmental review process, the purpose of the public meeting, and information regarding all methods for the public and agencies to comment on the Draft EIR, including mail, email, and fax. Written comments were also accepted at the public meeting, and comment cards were provided. The public also had the opportunity to ask questions during the public meeting.

A6-3 Refer to other responses to comment letter A6 for specific responses to the City of Montebello's comments.

A6-4 This comment does not raise any specific environmental issues regarding the Draft EIR or its analyses and conclusions. The commenter’s opinion that the Draft EIR “fails to provide a meaningful and understandable analysis that may be understood by the general public and local government representatives” has been noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. The commenter does not specify what portions of the EIR’s project description or analysis was found to be too technical or difficult to understand. Consistent with the CEQA Guidelines, the body of the EIR included summarized technical data, maps, plans, diagrams, and similar information sufficient to permit the public and reviewing agencies to make a full assessment of the proposed project’s significant environmental effects, but placed highly technical analysis and data in EIR appendices (CEQA Guidelines section 15147).

A6-5 The objectives of the proposed project, “CEQA Project Objectives,” are set forth in Draft EIR Section 1.2.2.1:

1. *Address anticipated violations of the NERC Standard TPL-001-04 (NERC 2015), WECC Regional Business Practice TPL-001-WECC-RBP-2 (WECC 2011), and CAISO Planning Standards that would occur upon retirement by December 31, 2020, of generators that use OTC.*
2. *Avoid introduction of new violations of NERC, WECC, and CAISO standards.*
3. *Maintain electrical service by minimizing service interruptions during project implementation.*

The objectives quoted by the commenter are from Southern California Edison’s (SCE’s) Proponent’s Environmental Assessment (PEA) and are SCE’s objectives. The CPUC considered the objectives provided by SCE when formulating the CPUC CEQA project objectives for the Draft EIR as described in Section 1.2.2.2, “Consideration of SCE’s Objectives.” Constructing replacement generation facilities is not a CPUC CEQA objective. The proposed project does not involve construction of new power generation plants, nor is the proposed project one element of a larger power generation project.

A6-6 This comment does not raise any environmental issues regarding the Draft EIR or its analyses and conclusions. The commenter’s opinion that the objectives of the proposed project give an overly technical and complex narrative is noted and will be provided in the record for the decision makers. The project objectives are discussed in detail in Draft EIR Section 1.2.4, “Detailed Description of CPUC Project Objectives,” which provides context for and detail about the development of each of the three objectives.

A6-7 The commenter appears to misunderstand the quoted language from Draft EIR page 1-6. As stated in the quoted paragraph, although the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station’s (SONGS’) retirement resulted in reliability concerns, SCE has since stated that the proposed project would not be necessary to maintain reliability unless Once-Through Cooling (OTC) units are also retired by the end of 2020 (Draft EIR page 1-6). For that reason, CPUC’s project objectives do not include addressing retirement of SONGS, which has already been retired.

As discussed in response to comment A6-5, the proposed project does not involve

construction of new power generation plants. The Draft EIR explains in Section 1.2.4.1, “Project Objective 1,” that retirement of TOC Units would result in violations of transmission reliability planning criteria. As described in that section, after OTC retirement under peak load conditions,

Thermal overloads indicate that there is insufficient capacity on transmission lines to import energy to meet demand after OTC retirement because the Serrano Corridor would be used to import energy from the east through the Serrano Substation. Prior to OTC retirement, generators to the west of the ENA have provided a substantial amount of energy. After OTC retirement, more energy would need to be imported through the Serrano Corridor, but it would have insufficient capacity.

The proposed project would address violations resulting from OTC retirement by facilitating additional import of power into the Western Los Angeles Basin from existing generation facilities. No new generation is included in the proposed project.

- A6-8 Per the City’s request, street names have been added to Figures 2-3a through 2-3d. Refer to EIR Section 2.1, “Location of the Proposed Project” for the revised figures.
- A6-9 This comment does not raise environmental issues regarding the Draft EIR or its analyses and conclusions. The City’s opposition to the installation of aboveground transmission and telecommunications lines shown on Figures 2-3c and 2-3d and its recommendation that existing aboveground lines be placed underground is noted and will be provided in the record for consideration by the decision makers.
- A6-10 This comment does not raise any significant environmental issues regarding the Draft EIR or its analyses and conclusions. The City’s opinion that Draft EIR Section 2.2.1.1, “Proposed Mesa Substation” “is completely unintelligible to the public and local decision-makers” is noted and will be provided in the record for the decision makers. The City does not specify what language or portion of Section 2.2.1.1 it considered to be unintelligible or suggest any revisions to the EIR that would constitute significant new information requiring recirculation under CEQA Guidelines section 15088.5.
- A6-11 The proposed Mesa Substation would include the construction of a microwave tower foundation for the potential future installation of a microwave tower. SCE refers to the microwave tower as a “potential future microwave tower” in its PEA, indicating that the tower may or may not be built. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the potential impacts of construction and operation of such a tower would be minimal. The tower would be located within the expanded substation’s fenceline and would not require additional ground disturbance. The microwave tower would be visually similar to other tall components at the substation and would not result in a significant aesthetic impact. Additionally, due to the degree of the existing aesthetic impacts of the substation, the addition of the microwave tower would not significantly contribute to adverse cumulative aesthetic impacts at the substation site.

Given that installation of a microwave tower would require no new ground disturbance, there would be no impacts to biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, or hydrology and water quality. Minimal workers would be needed to install a microwave tower, indicating no impacts to population and housing or

recreation.

Installation of the microwave tower would require the use of heavy trucks to transport construction equipment; this would result in less than significant impacts to air quality, traffic, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, given the likely small number of vehicles needed. These incremental impacts would not change the conclusions in the EIR regarding air quality, traffic, and GHG emissions.

Installation of a microwave tower would create minimal noise within the substation site, which would likely be similar to other existing repair and operations noise. There would be no additional noise impact.

The commenter's concern about electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) is noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. Section 2.5.2 of the EIR discusses EMFs and how the CPUC considers EMFs in its CEQA documents.

- A6-12 This comment does not raise any environmental issues regarding the Draft EIR or its analyses and conclusions. The figures identified by the commenter (Figures 2-5 and 2-6) are diagrams intended to illustrate the appearance of typical 500-kilovolt (kV) and 220-kV structures, including configurations and dimensions, in the Draft EIR's project description, not to simulate the way that these structures will look when constructed in the real world as part of the proposed project. Section 4.1, "Aesthetics" includes visual simulations of the proposed Project from several Key Observation Points (KOPs), including simulations of the 500-kV and 220-kV structures that would be constructed as part of the proposed project, and analysis of the impacts of these structures to sensitive viewers from KOPs.
- A6-13 This comment does not raise any environmental issues regarding the Draft EIR or its analyses and conclusions. The City's desire that existing telecommunications lines be placed underground is noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision makers.
- A6-14 This comment does not raise any environmental issues regarding the Draft EIR or its analyses and conclusions. The City's concern regarding the length of the construction period and the attendant visual, safety, and traffic impacts is noted and will be included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. Details regarding construction of the proposed project are included in Draft EIR Section 2.3, "Construction of the Proposed Project"; details regarding the visual impacts of project construction are included in Section 4.1.3, "Impact Analysis"; details regarding safety impacts during construction are included in Section 4.7.3, "Impact Analysis"; and construction traffic impacts are identified and analyzed in Section 4.14.3, "Impact Analysis" in the EIR.
- A6-15 This comment does not raise any environmental issues regarding the Draft EIR or its analyses and conclusions. The City states that daily truck trips during the three phases of project construction will have impacts on level of service (LOS), particularly at freeway ramps, and further claims that trucks will obstruct roads and damage roadway surfaces.

Impacts to traffic flow (LOS) during construction of the proposed project are discussed under Impact TT-1 of the EIR, starting on page 4.14-16. As discussed in detail in that section, the Draft EIR identifies significant impacts at various area intersections, freeway ramps, and roadway segments during each phase of construction, some located within the city of Montebello. With implementation of Mitigation Measure (MM) TT-1, all intersection, freeway ramp, and roadway segment impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Impacts related to roadway damage are discussed under Impact TT-4 of the Draft EIR, starting on page 4.14-35. This section acknowledges that construction of the proposed project would involve the use of overweight and oversized vehicles, which can obstruct roadways and also lead to roadway damage. The project applicant would be required to obtain permits from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for the movement of vehicles and loads exceeding statutory limitations on size, weight, and loading of vehicles on state roads. MM TT-1, as revised to incorporate the requirements of former MM TT-7, requires the applicant to repair any road damage caused as a result of ground-disturbing activities associated with project construction, as well as damage cause by project-related vehicle traffic.

A6-16 The language quoted by the City does not describe project haul routes. Rather, this language, taken from Section 2.3.3.1 of the Draft EIR “Access and Spur Roads” on page 2-61, discusses the construction of new access roads as part of the proposed project. Specifically, the quoted language indicates that the proposed project would utilize existing public roads and access roads to the extent possible and would only improve existing roads or construct new roads when necessary to support project activities, in accordance with technical specifications and safety construction practices.

The truck trip distribution used in the traffic impact analysis is shown in Figure 11 of the Revised Draft Traffic Impact Analysis, which is included in Appendix K of the EIR.

As discussed above in response to comment A6-15, MM TT-1, as revised to incorporate the requirements of MM TT-7, requires SCE to repair any roads damaged as a result of project construction. The text of the requirement was revised to specify that repair provisions apply to curbs and medians in response to this comment. Refer to response to comment A2-2 for the text of the revised measure.

A6-17 The City’s concern about noise and safety impacts from helicopter use during construction of the proposed project is noted and included in the record for consideration by decision makers. The Draft EIR discusses the safety risk associated with helicopter use during project construction under Impact TT-3, starting on page 4.14-33. The Draft EIR concluded that flights in close proximity to residents or congested areas would result in significant safety impacts. MM TT-2 (formerly MM TT-4 in the Draft EIR) requires that SCE obtain necessary Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approvals for helicopter operation, which would include a Helicopter Lift Plan for operations within 1,500 feet of a congested area or residences. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Noise impacts from helicopter operation are discussed under Impact NV-4, starting on

page 4.10-27, including analysis of helicopter flyover noise and takeoff and landing noise. The Draft EIR concludes that helicopter noise would be significant and unavoidable, even after implementation of MM NV-3, which requires adherence to helicopter clearance distances, and MM NV-4, which requires positioning landing zones as far away from sensitive receptors as possible.

The Draft EIR's analysis of impacts associated with the use of helicopters during construction of the proposed project was based on sufficient information and specificity about the proposed project to allow for meaningful analysis of impacts. Specifically, the Draft EIR analyzed the noise and safety impacts of helicopter use in all locations where SCE indicated that helicopters may be used, and this analysis is sufficient to provide decision makers with information enabling them to take into account environmental consequences and make an informed decision (CEQA Guidelines Section 15151). Consistent with this mandate, the Draft EIR analyzed the proposed project at the level of detail required by CEQA (refer to CEQA Guidelines Section 15124, requiring a general description of a project's technical, economic and environmental characteristics). As indicated in the Draft EIR (page 2-74) and in MM TT-4 (Helicopter Lift Plan) flight paths would be determined immediately prior to construction in coordination with the FAA, in compliance with Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 77.

- A6-18 Estimates of the duration of construction activities and workforce were provided by the applicant. Table 2-9 shows the proposed construction schedule and includes a citation referring the reader to information provided by SCE in 2015. The California Emission Estimator Model (CalEEMod) is not utilized to estimate construction employment; CalEEMod is used to determine air quality emissions.
- A6-19 As described in Section 2.6, "Applicant Proposed Measures," Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) are considered part of the proposed project, and the applicant has committed to implementing them. APMs required to reduce significant impacts to less than significant are also included in the proposed project's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan. If the CPUC approves the proposed project or an alternative, the CPUC would also ensure that SCE implements the APMs during mitigation monitoring for the proposed project.
- A6-20 Contrary to the assertions of the commenter, replacement power generation facilities are not part of the proposed project. Refer to responses to comments A6-5 and A6-7 for additional detail.
- A6-21 The CEQA requirements for alternatives considered in an EIR are described in Section 3.2, "Alternatives Screening Methodology." In sum, CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(a) requires an EIR to describe a reasonable range of alternatives to a project that meet most of the basic project objectives, are potentially feasible, and avoid or substantially reduce any of the project's significant environmental impacts. The purpose of presenting a range of alternatives in a Draft EIR is not to eliminate the need for the proposed project, but rather to foster informed decision making and public participation. The alternatives brought forward for analysis in the Draft EIR meet the requirements of CEQA for alternatives, as described in detail in Section 3.4, "Alternatives Evaluated in this EIR."

The alternatives analysis also included examination of alternatives that did not involve modifications to Mesa Substation. Alternatives unrelated to Mesa Substation included, as summarized in Table 3-1 of the EIR, load shedding, installation of additional reactive support at other SCE substations, load shedding and reconductoring, and a connection to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power system at the Alamitos Substation. However, none of these alternatives met CEQA's requirements for full analysis in the EIR. Refer to Section 3.5, "Alternatives Eliminated from Full EIR Evaluation," for a discussion of why these alternatives were not carried forward for full analysis in the EIR.

The commenter's suggestion that locally generated renewable energy facilities could eliminate or otherwise reduce the need for Mesa Substation is noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. The CPUC is unaware of any particular local renewable energy facility, either constructed, planned or proposed, that would reduce or avoid the project's significant effects while meeting its basic objectives, and the comment does not provide any factual information in support of its suggestion that such a facility, even if it existed, would be a potentially feasible alternative to the project.

Replacement generation facilities are not part of the proposed project. See responses to comments A6-5 and A6-7 regarding the comprehensiveness of the project description.

A6-22 CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(a) requires that the range of alternatives included in an EIR be potentially feasible. "Feasible" is defined in CEQA as "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors" (CEQA Guidelines section 15364). A lead agency may exclude from an EIR alternatives that it concludes are not potentially feasible. (See, e.g., *Save San Francisco Bay Ass'n v. San Francisco Bay Conserv. & Dev. Comm'n* (1992) 10 Cal.App. 4th 908, 922.) As stated in Section 3.2.2, "Potential Feasibility" of the Draft EIR, potential feasibility was one factor in the alternatives screening analysis and included consideration of legal, technological, economic, and environmental feasibility.

The comment quotes the Draft EIR's definition of economic infeasibility and claims that it lacks the threshold used to determine whether an alternative would be financially infeasible. However, none of the alternatives considered in the screening analysis and eliminated from further consideration in the EIR were eliminated due to reasons of economic infeasibility.

At the project approval stage, the decision makers will weigh the relative advantages and disadvantages of the project and the alternatives examined in the EIR and may decide to approve the project or adopt one of the alternatives. If the project is approved, the decision to reject any environmentally superior alternatives in favor of the project would be based on a determination that the alternatives are infeasible. If this determination of infeasibility is based on economic factors, the findings are required to include evidence and analysis supporting and explaining the basis for this determination.

Please note that because the focus of an EIR is environmental impacts, the evidence of economic infeasibility does not need to be presented in the EIR itself but can be in the supporting administrative record (*Flanders Found. v. City of Carmel-by-the-Sea* (2012) 202 Cal.App.4th 603, 618).

A6-23 The City's concerns with the visual impacts of the proposed project are noted and will be included in the record for the decision makers. The project's aesthetic impacts were evaluated consistent with the requirements of CEQA in Draft EIR Section 4.1, "Aesthetics." The Draft EIR concludes that the project will substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings from certain KOPs (see Impact AE-1 (operation and maintenance), starting on page 4.1-23).

The commenter raises a concern that the Draft EIR does not identify less obtrusive towers and other infrastructure as mitigation to reduce aesthetic impacts for views from the Pomona Freeway and City of Montebello, while at the same time commenting that the visual impacts are impossible to mitigate.

The Draft EIR concludes that aesthetic impacts associated with new structures at the substation are less than significant for views with moderate visual sensitivity from the Pomona Freeway (represented by KOPs 5 and 6) and therefore do not require mitigation. The Draft EIR concludes that aesthetic impacts associated with new structures at the substation are significant and unavoidable for views with moderately high to high visual sensitivity from the neighborhood south of the substation (represented by KOP 7) and for Landscape Option 2 for views from Potrero Grande Drive (represented by KOPs 1 and 3). Visual impacts would remain significant and unavoidable at KOPs 1 and 3 (note that under Landscape Option 1, impacts at KOPs 1 and 3 would be significant and unavoidable only before landscaping matures; under Landscape Option 2, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable for the life of the project) and at KOP 7 with the implementation of all feasible mitigation, including MM AES-2, MM AES-3, MM AES-4, and MM AES-5.

Structures at the substation are designed in compliance with General Order (G.O.) 95. As described on Draft EIR page 4.7-24, G.O. 95 "regulates the design, construction, operation and maintenance of overhead electric lines in California. The order includes safety standards for overhead electric lines, including minimum conductor ground clearance, electric line inspection requirements, and vegetation clearance requirements."

Although some reduction in height or mass or other design changes for some structures may be feasible in light of G.O. 95, substantial reductions in height or mass would not be feasible given the number of transmission lines and other existing infrastructure at the proposed substation. Furthermore, structures could not be reduced to sizes small enough to substantially reduce visual impacts and still comply with G.O. 95. The Draft EIR identifies that implementation of MM AES-5 would help reduce glare and color contrast for components of the proposed project, thus helping blend them into the landscape setting. Although MM AES-5 would help make the new structures less noticeable, it would not reduce impacts to less than significant at KOPs 7 and 3. As shown in updated visual simulations for KOP 7 (Figure 4.1-5i) and

Landscape Option 2 for KOP 3 (Figure 4.1-5e, 4.1-5f), revised and submitted by SCE in its Draft EIR comment letter, aesthetic impacts would remain significant due largely to skylining and dominance of structures for residential area views with moderately high to high visual sensitivity. A slight reduction in tower size likely would not appreciably reduce this visual impact.

A6-24 The commenter raises a concern that the greatest aesthetic impacts are due to the height and mass of new transmission structures and mitigation measures proposed in the Draft EIR do “little” to mitigate impacts resulting from height and mass of proposed transmission towers. See the response to comment A6-23 above regarding changes to tower size as mitigation for aesthetic impacts.

A6-25 The commenter raises a concern that reducing the height and mass of new transmission structures should have been considered in the alternatives analysis. See the response to comment A6-23 regarding the potential to reduce the height and mass of structures and reduce aesthetic impacts. For similar reasons, reducing the height and mass of new transmission structures was not considered in the alternatives analysis. Furthermore, the commenter has not provided evidence, and the CPUC is not aware of any evidence, that would support a conclusion that an alternative with reduced mass and height of towers is potentially feasible, would avoid or substantially reduce an environmental impact of the proposed project, and meet most of the basic project objectives.

A6-26 The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) recommended that the Draft EIR use its CEQA Air Quality Handbook (1993) as guidance for the air quality analysis. (See SCAQMD Scoping Comment, Draft EIR Appendix A.) While SCAQMD acknowledges that sections of the 1993 Handbook are obsolete and recommends that Lead Agencies avoid their use,¹ the portions of the handbook relied upon in the EIR (information about the climate of the South Coast Air Basin and the numeric significance thresholds, including for fugitive dust, in Table 4.2-5), are not.

A6-27 The City’s position that the CalEEMod software is not well suited to estimating proposed project emissions is noted and will be included in the record for consideration by the decision makers.

SCAQMD recommended that the Draft EIR use the CalEEMod software for the air quality analysis and noted that this software has recently been updated to incorporate up-to-date state and locally approved emission factors and methodologies for estimating pollutant emissions from land use projects. (See SCAQMD Scoping Comment, Draft EIR Appendix A.) CalEEMod, developed by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) is a widely used and accepted statewide land use emissions computer model designed to provide a uniform platform for government agencies, land use planners, and environmental professionals to quantify criteria pollutant and GHG emissions associated with both construction and operation of land use projects. The model quantifies direct emissions from construction and operations (including vehicle use), as well as indirect emissions, such as GHG emissions from energy use, solid waste disposal, vegetation planting and/or removal, and water use. The mobile source emission factors currently used in the model

¹ [http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/ceqa-air-quality-handbook-\(1993\)](http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/ceqa-air-quality-handbook-(1993))

(EMFAC2011) includes the Pavley standards and Low Carbon Fuel standards into the mobile source emission factors. Further, the model identifies mitigation measures to reduce criteria pollutant and GHG emissions along with calculating the benefits achieved from measures chosen by the user. The GHG mitigation measures were recently developed and adopted by CAPCOA.

CalEEMod utilizes widely accepted models for emission estimates combined with appropriate default data that can be used if site-specific information is not available. These models and default estimates use sources such as the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) AP-42 emission factors, California Air Resources Board vehicle emission models, and studies commissioned by California agencies such as the California Energy Commission and CalRecycle. In addition, local air districts were given the opportunity to provide default values and existing regulation methodologies to use in their specific regions. If no information was provided by local air districts, appropriate statewide values were utilized if regional differences could not otherwise be defined.

- A6-28 The localized significance threshold (LST) screening methodology determines significance levels for localized impacts by modeling hypothetical 1-, 2-, and 5-acre sites. The mass rate LSTs are derived using an air quality dispersion model to back-calculate the emissions per day that would cause or contribute to a violation of any short-term ambient air quality standard. LSTs are developed based on the size or total area of the emissions source, the ambient air quality in each source receptor area in which the source is located, and the distance to the sensitive receptor. The LSTs are a screening methodology, and screening procedures are, by design conservative. Therefore, the predicted impacts tend to overestimate the actual impacts.

While the Mesa Substation site encompasses an area greater than 5 acres, SCE assumed in its air quality calculations that daily construction activities would be limited to 5 acres or less, indicating that daily ground disturbance would be 5 acres or less. The LST methodology was also used to determine significance levels for the transmission ROWs. The ROWs consist of long, narrow construction corridors and would not disturb more than 5 acres per day, given that SCE's air quality calculations indicate disturbance would be less than 5 acres per day. Therefore, the LST methodology, as applied in the EIR, is appropriate for determining significance levels for localized impacts.

- A6-29 The Draft EIR's analysis of construction emissions considered all sources of emissions associated with construction of the proposed project and accurately analyzed the impacts of these emissions on regional and local air quality using widely accepted models and methodology.

Section 4.2.3.1, "Methodology and Significance Criteria" of the Draft EIR details the methodology used in the air quality analysis. For Impact AQ-2, construction emissions were estimated with CalEEMod using project-specific information. Refer to Appendix C for CalEEMod-specific inputs, such as for construction equipment. Impact AQ-2 describes emissions from the proposed project and determines that oxides of sulfur emissions would not exceed the SCAQMD daily significance threshold. However, emissions of reactive organic gasses, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter less

than or equal to 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀) and 2.5 microns in diameter (PM_{2.5}) during the first two years of construction (2016 and 2017) would exceed the applicable thresholds and would be significant. In addition, peak daily oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) emissions would exceed the applicable thresholds in construction years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 and would be significant. The peak daily emissions anticipated for each year of construction are compared to the SCAQMD daily significance thresholds as summarized in Table 4.2-7. Detailed emission calculations are presented in Appendix C, "Air Calculations."

For Impact AQ-4, the SCAQMD localized significant threshold methodology was used. As shown in Table 4.2-11, CO, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} emissions would not exceed the SCAQMD localized significance thresholds and would be less than significant. However, emissions of NO_x during construction phases would exceed the localized significant threshold and would have a short-term, significant impact on air quality during construction. The implementation of MM AQ-1 and MM AQ-3 would reduce NO_x emissions, as shown in Table 4.2-8. However, NO_x emissions would still exceed the localized significance thresholds. The implementation of MM AQ-4 would only address NO_x emissions on a regional level, given that it requires purchasing credits rather than implementing measures to reduce project related emissions, and no additional feasible mitigation is available. Impacts from NO_x emissions during construction would be significant and unavoidable.

The City's comment that the air quality impacts from construction of the 1,200 unit Montebello Hills development could not be fully mitigated to will be included in the record for consideration by the decision makers.

A6-30 The City asserts that MM BR-3 constitutes deferred mitigation because it calls for the development of a restoration plan in the future. While it is ordinarily inappropriate to defer formulation of a mitigation measure to the future, the CEQA Guidelines acknowledge exceptions to this rule, stating that "[f]ormulation of mitigation measures should not be deferred until some future time. However, measures may specify performance standards which would mitigate the significant effect of the project and which may be accomplished in more than one specified way" (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.4(a)(1)(B); see also *Sacramento Old City Ass'n v. City Council* (1991) 229 Cal.App.3d 1011 [agency may defer committing to specific mitigation measures when it approves a project if the measures that will be considered subsequently are described and performance criteria are identified]; *Defend the Bay v. City of Irvine* (2004) 119 Cal.App.4th 1261 [agency may defer defining the specifics of mitigation measures if it commits itself to mitigation and lists the alternatives to be considered, analyzed and possibly incorporated in the mitigation plan]).

When it is known that mitigation is feasible, but it is impractical to devise specific measures during the planning process because, for example, the specific design of a project component may not be known, the agency can commit itself to eventually devising measures that will satisfy specific performance criteria articulated at the time of project approval as long as further action to carry the project forward is contingent on meeting them (*Sacramento Old City, supra*, at 1029).

The Draft EIR was prepared using preliminary engineering plans and data prepared by

SCE that was sufficiently analyzed to provide decision makers with information enabling them to take into account environmental consequences and make an informed decision (CEQA Guidelines section 15151). However, because final engineering plans would be prepared after the CPUC reviews and approves either the proposed project or one of the alternatives, it would be impractical to design a specific measure or require the development of a restoration plan based on preliminary data that are subject to change. For this reason, rather than require development of a restoration plan now, MM BR-3 requires such a plan to be submitted 60 days before the start of construction, subject to consultation and review by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) during preparation of the plan and subject to approval by the CPUC.

MM BR-3 includes a performance standard requiring restoration of all temporarily disturbed areas and mitigation of permanent impacts at a ratio of 1.5:1 on site or within 1 mile of the project area or, if neither option is feasible, purchase of credits and/or mitigation lands at a ratio of 2:1. The mitigation measure also lists specific methods for satisfying the performance standard, including restoring temporary disturbance areas either to their pre-disturbance sensitive natural community or to coastal sage scrub if the area was not a sensitive natural community prior to disturbance. For on-site and offsite mitigation, the restoration plan must specify restoration details, including topsoil segregation and conservation; vegetation treatment and removal; revegetation methods, including seed mixes, rates, and transplants; and criteria to monitor and evaluate success, including a minimum of four years of post-construction monitoring.

A6-31 See Response to Comment A6-30. Similar to the restoration plan requirement discussed in that response, it would also be impractical to design a restoration plan for black walnut trees prior to development of final construction specifications. Without knowing the specific location of construction activities, for example, it would not be possible to determine which trees might be impacted, and what type of mitigation would be most effective, depending on the particular impact. For this reason, like MM BR-3, MM BR-7 sets forth a performance standard to mitigate impacts on black walnut trees, and a menu of options that may achieve the identified performance standard. The restoration plan must be developed in consultation with USFWS and CDFW, and approved by CPUC prior to any removal of black walnut trees.

Please note that the EIR identifies the locations of black walnut trees in Table 4.3-2 and in Figure 5 of Appendix D. Impacts to black walnut are discussed on page 4.3-32. The EIR concludes that impacts would be less than significant after implementation of APM-BIO-01, APM-BIO-02, MM BR-1, MM BR-2, MM BR-5, and MM BR-7.

A6-32 The EIR discusses impacts to avian species from operation of the proposed project under Impact BR-1 and determines that collision of avian species with towers and structures would be a significant impact. With implementation of APM-BIO-07 (to prevent electrocutions and evaluate the potential for avian species collision according to standard industry guidance) and MM BR-15 (requiring the development and implementation of an Avian Protection Plan), impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

See response to comments A6-30 and A6-31 regarding CEQA’s requirements for deferred formulation of mitigation measures. Like the measures discussed in those responses, it would be impractical to prepare the required Avian Protection Plan now, based on preliminary engineering data that are subject to change. For this reason, MM BR-15 requires submittal of an Avian Protection Plan, subject to consultation and review by the USFWS and CDFW, for CPUC review and approval at least 60 days prior to construction. The Avian Protection Plan must be prepared in accordance with the Avian Protection Plan Guidelines prepared by the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee and USFWS (“Avian Guidelines”).² The Avian Protection Plan would be required to reduce impacts associated with avian collision and electrocution to less than significant levels, by complying with standards and recommendations set forth in the Avian Guidelines. Specifically, the plan would address issues such as line marking, line placement strategies to reduce collision potential, placing bird deterrents near lines, planting trees, and conducting collision monitoring to determine the type and effectiveness of modifications.

A6-33 Refer to response to comment A9-2.

A6-34 The Puente Hills Blind Thrust Fault identified by the commenter has been added to the list of Active and Potentially Active Faults in the Immediate Vicinity of the Proposed Project shown in Table 4.5-3, and a citation added for Shaw et al. 2002.

p. 4.5-9:

Raymond Fault	1.3 miles south southeast of the Goodrich Substation in the North Area.	6.5
<u>Puente Hills Blind Thrust Fault</u>	<u>Projection of fault plane 6-8 miles below Mesa Substation and Telecom Segments 1-3; 9 miles below Goodrich Substation; 2.5 miles below the lattice steel tower replacement on Goodrich-Laguna Bell 220 kV line; and 2 miles below the streetlight source line conversion to underground along Loveland Street.</u>	<u>7.1</u>
San Andreas Fault (Mojave Section)	4 miles northeast of Vincent Substation.	7.4

Section 4.5 of the Draft EIR discusses impacts associated with construction and operation of the proposed project with respect to geology and soils, including impacts from rupture of a known fault. (See Impact GEO-1, page 4.5-29.) The analysis in the Draft EIR determined that, although Staging Yard 6 lies within an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone, the activities proposed at that location would involve minor ground disturbance only. There would be no trenching, grading at depth, or addition of permanent structures because Staging Yard 6 would only be used for equipment storage and staging during construction. Furthermore, activities proposed for Staging Yard 6 would not exacerbate existing fault rupture conditions. Impacts would be less than significant. Impact GEO-2 (page 4.5-29) was also determined to be less than significant despite the proposed project’s location in a seismically active area because structures would be designed according to California Building Code, CPUC General Order (G.O.)

² http://www.aplic.org/uploads/files/2634/APPguidelines_final-draft_Aprl2005.pdf

95, and G.O. 128 standards, and recommendations from a site-specific geotechnical study required by MM GEO-1. The identification of the Puente Hills Blind Thrust Fault does not change the analysis or conclusions set forth in the Draft EIR with respect to rupture of a known earthquake fault, or effects associated with strong seismic ground shaking. No additional analysis is required.

A6-35 The City quotes the first paragraph of MM GEO-1 but omits the specific measures listed in MM GEO-1 to reduce the seismological and geological impacts identified in the Draft EIR, as well as the requirement that SCE provide documentation to the CPUC prior to construction demonstrating that the engineering and design measures identified in the geotechnical report were incorporated into project design. Refer to page 4.5-34 of the EIR for the full mitigation measure.

See response to comment A6-30 regarding CEQA's requirements for deferred formulation of mitigation measures. Like the measure discussed in that response, it would be impractical for SCE to prepare a geotechnical report now based on preliminary engineering when that data are subject to change. Instead, the mitigation measure requires the preparation of a geotechnical report by a California-licensed Geotechnical Engineer or Certified Engineering Geologist with specific recommendations to mitigate impacts associated with unstable soils, seismic ground shaking, landslides and lateral spreading, and expansive soils to less than significant.

Specific options include design features and engineering devices such as retaining walls, slope coverings, excavation of unstable materials, bracing, foundation bolting, and methods to drain water away from expansive soils. The measure requires SCE to incorporate all identified measures into project design and document its compliance for the CPUC.

A6-36 As discussed under Impact GHG-1, the proposed project's annualized GHG emissions, which include sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆) leakage, would be below the SCAQMD GHG threshold of 10,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalency (MTCO_{2e}) per year. Impacts from GHG emissions would therefore be less than significant.

In its comment, the City misinterprets the SF₆ leakage listed in Table 4.6-4 of the EIR. Table 4.6-4 states that 1,167 MTCO_{2e} of SF₆ per year would be emitted from the proposed project, which equates to approximately 0.05 tons of SF₆ per year. 1,167 MTCO_{2e} is a measure of carbon dioxide equivalency and takes into account SF₆'s global warming potential, which measures the warming potential a pound of SF₆ would have relative to a pound of carbon dioxide (CO₂). As shown in Table 4.6-1 of the EIR, the global warming potential of SF₆ is 22,800. Therefore, 0.05 tons of SF₆ would be equivalent to 1,167 metric tons of CO₂.

A6-37 Refer to responses to comments A6-5 and A6-7. Because new generation is not part of the proposed project, the Draft EIR did not analyze operation of other power generation facilities in its analysis of the proposed project's GHG impacts.

A6-38 Impacts related to the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials are discussed in the Draft EIR Section 4.7, “Hazards and Hazardous Materials” under Impact HZ-1 starting on page 4.7-32. While the Draft EIR does not identify specific haul routes for the transport of hazardous materials, the truck trip distribution used in the traffic impact analysis is shown in Figure 11 of the Revised Draft Traffic Impact Analysis (which shows the routes project trucks would be likely to take during construction), included in Appendix K of the Draft EIR. Hazardous waste would be disposed of in a manner compliant with applicable federal, state, and local regulations, as well as MM HAZ-1. If hazardous wastes are encountered, a firm qualified to manage disposal and treatment of hazardous waste would be contracted to dispose of them. The closest Class I landfills to the project site that is currently accepting hazardous waste are Kettleman Hills Facility (Kings County) and Clean Harbors Buttonwillow Landfill (Kern County). The disposal site for hazardous wastes encountered during the proposed project will depend on the type and amount of waste and each facility’s capacity to accept waste at the given time. The following edits have been made to page 4.12-5 through 4.12-6, within Table 4.12-3 of the Draft EIR:

Table 4.12-3 Landfills Serving the Proposed Project

Landfill	Distance to Mesa Substation (miles)	Estimated Closure Date	Total Amount of Waste Permitted (cubic yards)	Remaining Estimated Waste Capacity (cubic yards)
Savage Canyon Landfill	10	2055	19,337,450	9,510,833
Azuza Azusa Land Reclamation	17	2025	66,670,000	34,100,000
Scholl Canyon Landfill	36	2030	58,900,000	9,900,000
<u>El Sobrante Landfill</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>2040</u>	<u>184,9300,000</u>	<u>145,530,000</u>
<u>Clean Harbors Buttonwillow Landfill</u>	<u>~135</u>	<u>2040</u>	<u>13,250,000</u>	<u>9,362,500</u>
<u>Kettleman Hills Facility</u>	<u>~200</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>15,600,000</u>	<u>Unknown</u>

Source: CalRecycle 2015a,b,c

The City’s concern about transportation of transformer oil (mineral oil) is noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision-makers. While impacts from transport of mineral oil would be significant, as discussed on page 4.7-33 of the Draft EIR, with implementation of MM HZ-1 (Hazardous Materials Business Plan), MM HZ-2 (Hazardous Materials Training), and MM HZ-4 (Contaminated Soil Contingency Plan) impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

The commenter also references other waste materials discussed in the Draft EIR, including old transformers from the existing substation and possibly including soil contaminated with petroleum hydrocarbons. Compliance with applicable regulations, including Code of Federal Regulations Title 49 would not address impacts from all hazardous materials thus impacts would remain significant. As discussed in the Draft EIR (see page 4.7-33), implementation of MM HZ-1 (Hazardous Materials Business Plan), MM HZ-2 (Hazardous Materials Training), MM HZ-3 (Spill Prevention, Control,

and Countermeasure Plan), and MM HY-1 (Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan) would reduce impacts associated with disposal of these materials to less than significant.

A6-39 Contrary to the commenter's assertions, the EIR identified Moderate, High, or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone using the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CAL FIRE's) Fire Hazard Severity Zone GIS data. The EIR utilizes CAL FIRE's Fire Hazard Severity Zone GIS data to determine the risk of fire in and around the project area, as shown on Figure 4.7-3. As described in Section 4.7.1.5, "Fire Hazards," CAL FIRE uses the data to estimate the likelihood and physical behavior of a fire, and the data are based on a fire hazard model that considers the amount and types of natural vegetation that will burn during a wildfire, the topography, and typical weather conditions. Based on the data, the Main Project Area, which includes Mesa Substation, is located in an urbanized area and not in an area designated as a Moderate, High, or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The occurrence of a fire inside an urbanized area is not necessarily an indication that there is a higher potential for fire to occur in the area. The EIR's conclusion that fire impacts in the Main Project Area would be less than significant during construction is supported by the proposed project's location outside of a CAL FIRE Very High Wildland Fire Hazard Severity Zone, by the fact that the proposed project would be consistent with Public Resource Code (PRC) Sections 4291 through 4299 regarding vegetation management, and by the proposed project's construction in accordance with clearance specifications in GO 95 and GO 165. The EIR's conclusion that fire impacts in the Main Project Area would be less than significant during operation is supported by the fact that the applicant would continue to comply with PRC Sections 4291 through 4299 vegetation management requirements and GO 95 and GO 165 clearance requirements.

Native vegetation is not located within the proposed Mesa Substation boundary. Native vegetation is identified in the proposed project area south of the Mesa Substation and along transmission, subtransmission, and telecommunications routes. Vegetation types are shown in Figure 4.3-1, "Vegetation Types."

A6-40 The City's concern about long-term exposure to EMFs and how they may impact health of City residents is noted and included in the administrative record for the decision makers. The CPUC's policy regarding EMFs is explained in Section 2.5.2, "Electric and Magnetic Fields." As described in that section, "there is still a lack of agreement in the scientific community regarding the potential health impacts of human exposure to EMFs from electric power facilities. Additionally, there are no federal or state standards limiting public exposure to EMFs emitted by electrical power lines or substation facilities in the state. For these reasons, EMFs are not evaluated in this EIR as an issue to be addressed under CEQA, and no related impact significance is presented in this section." Therefore, long-term health impacts are outside the scope of the impact analysis in the EIR.

A6-41 See response to comment A6-21 for a discussion of CEQA's requirements for an alternatives analysis. Consistent with CEQA's requirements, the Draft EIR evaluated "a reasonable range of alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or

substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project” (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(a)). The commenter’s suggestion that the proposed project be constructed in another location is noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. The CPUC considered and eliminated a number of alternatives to the proposed project because they would not meet CEQA’s requirements for alternatives, including alternatives that would not involve construction of the project at the proposed location. See Draft EIR Section 3.5, “Alternatives Eliminated from Full EIR Evaluation” for discussion of alternatives eliminated from full evaluation in the Draft EIR. The CPUC is unaware of any particular off-site location for the proposed project that would be potentially feasible and would reduce or avoid the proposed project’s significant effects while meeting its basic objectives, and the comment does not identify any sites or provide any facts demonstrating that such a site may exist. No further response is required.

A6-42 This comment does not raise any significant environmental issues regarding the Draft EIR or its analyses and conclusions. The City’s concern that the proposed project is not compatible with nearby uses, including a regional park, residential neighborhoods, and many schools, has been noted and will be included in the record for the decision makers.

The Draft EIR analyzed recreation impacts in Section 4.13, “Impact Analysis” of the Draft EIR, including more than 40 recreation facilities, including parks, walking paths, hiking trails, 25 playgrounds, athletic fields, and golf courses, within 1 mile of the proposed project’s main components as shown in Figure 4.13-1. Impacts to schools and residential uses in the vicinity of the proposed project are analyzed throughout the EIR, including in Section 4.2, “Air Quality, Section 4.7, “Hazards and Hazardous Materials,” and Section 4.10, “Noise and Vibration.”

As discussed in the analysis of Land Use and Planning (Draft EIR Section 4.9), the proposed project area is characterized by dense urban development, including mostly residential communities and commercial and institutional development, with a few areas of open space and parkland. Existing land uses in the city of Montebello in the project area are primarily residential, and Staging Yard 2 would be located within the SCE right-of-way northwest of Schurr High School and immediately southeast of a commercial center. Table 4.9-2 of the Draft EIR analyzes the proposed project’s consistency with local plans, policies and regulations related to land use and planning, including the City of Montebello General Plan and Municipal Code. The Draft EIR did not identify any inconsistencies. (See Draft EIR, Impact LU-2, starting on page 4.9-22.)

A6-43 The City’s concern over noise during proposed project construction, particularly helicopter noise, is noted and included in the record for decision makers. Section 4.10, “Noise and Vibration” of the Draft EIR identifies and analyzes noise and vibration impacts during construction and operation of the proposed project, including the nature and location of impacts related to construction noise. Impact NV-1, the source of the language quoted by the City in its comment, focuses on whether noise from project construction and operation would exceed levels established in local noise ordinances, including the City of Montebello’s noise ordinance. Table 4.10-14 sets forth the locations of the project components by jurisdiction. Components to be constructed in the city of Montebello include 220-kV transmission lines; 500-kV

transmission lines; and Telecommunications Routes 1, 2, and 3. Staging Yards 2 and 3 would also be located in Montebello. Helicopters may also be used in Montebello for line stringing and may also use Staging Yards 2 and 3 as a landing area. The Draft EIR concludes that, while construction activities at these locations will generally occur during the hours set forth in the City’s ordinance, if construction occurs outside of these hours (which may be required), noise impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact NV-4 also analyzes impacts from construction noise, including impacts from helicopter use during construction. The Draft EIR states on page 4.10-28 that “During construction, helicopter use may occur up to 7 hours per day for approximately 15 days spread throughout the approximately 55-month construction window for the stringing of electrical conductor”. This section has also been revised to state: “Helicopters would potentially take off and land at Staging Yards 1 through 4³”³ (Draft EIR page 4.10-28). The Draft EIR further states that during that time, sensitive receptors within 660 feet of this helicopter use would be subject to temporary ambient noise levels in excess of 80 A-weighted decibels, a significant impact. While MM NV-3 would reduce noise impacts by requiring SCE to adhere to helicopter clearance distances, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable during certain periods. Draft EIR Table 4.10-19 sets forth impacts on sensitive receptors in the project vicinity by staging yard.

A6-44 Section 4.10 of the Draft EIR discusses impacts of the proposed project with respect to noise. The primary source of existing noise in the proposed project area is vehicular traffic on highways and local streets (Draft EIR Section 4.10.1, “Environmental Setting”). Major vehicular noise sources in the area, which are shown in Figure 4.10-1, include State Route (SR) 60; SR 19; Interstate 210; and Potrero Grande Drive.

Noise emission levels from vehicles traveling on highways depend on a range of characteristics related to the individual vehicles and the specific highways on which they travel. Caltrans has developed a methodology for traffic noise impacts—California vehicle noise (Calveno). This methodology is based on vehicle noise reference energy mean emission levels (REMELs), which are defined as the “speed-dependent energy-averaged A-weighted maximum pass-by noise level generated by a defined vehicle type, as measured by a microphone at 50 feet from the centerline of travel (traffic lane) at the height of 5 feet” (Caltrans 2009). Assuming existing noise levels in the proposed project area result from traffic at a constant speed between 25 and 65 miles per hour (mph) on level roadways identified in the project area, the REMELs as perceived by a receptor at 50 feet from the centerline of a traffic lane would be as follows:

Vehicle Type	REMEL at 50 feet from traffic lane (dBA)	
	25 mph	65 mph
Heavy trucks	78.7	85.2
Medium trucks	71.1	81.7
Automobiles	59.4	75.5

Source: Caltrans 2009.

³ Note that the text was revised in the EIR to eliminate Staging Yard 4 for helicopter use based on SCE’s comment that Staging Yard 4 would not be used for helicopter landing and takeoff. Staging Yards 1 through 3 would be used for helicopter takeoff and landing.

REMELs are maximum levels; traffic noise is usually adjusted by case-specific traffic flow data, distance, roadway conditions, and existing shielding (barriers). All sensitive receptors identified within the proposed project area (Table 4.10-4 of the Draft EIR) are located at least 50 feet away from the centerline of travel of SR 60, SR 19, Interstate 210, and Potrero Grande Drive. In general, local roads that would be used by the proposed project have been designed following noise standards from applicable General Plans to reduce noise from transportation sources. Similarly, state and interstate highways that would be used as transportation routes for the proposed project have been designed following Caltrans and Federal Highway Administration design criteria to reduce noise effects on nearest sensitive land uses, including the use of minimum safety distances and standard traffic noise barriers. Therefore, existing traffic noise levels from these major transportation routes are expected to be below the REMELs presented in the table above.

The proposed project would use heavy trucks, medium trucks, and passenger vehicles or automobiles during construction, as described in Chapter 2, "Project Description" and Section 4.14, "Traffic and Transportation" of the Draft EIR. The truck trip distribution used in the traffic impact analysis (which shows the routes that heavy trucks would be assumed to use during construction of the proposed project) is set forth in Figure 11 of the Revised Draft Traffic Impact Analysis, included in Appendix K of the EIR.

Noise from vehicles used for the proposed project would occur as a pass-by (meaning that the noise level would increase while the vehicle was approaching the receptor, be loudest when the vehicle is nearest the receptor, then fade away while the vehicle retreats from the receptor) and would contribute to the existing major vehicle noise sources in the area previously described. The severity of the proposed project's contributions to traffic noise, however, would depend on traffic flow, roadway conditions, distances, and existing physical noise barriers (e.g., walls, vegetation, and topography). Given that a mixture of heavy trucks, medium trucks, and automobiles likely contribute to the main transportation corridors of SR 60, SR 19, Interstate 210, and Potrero Grande Drive noise levels, it is expected that noise from each additional vehicle for the proposed project construction would be within the same range of the existing traffic noise levels. There is substantial traffic on State Routes and Interstates that the noise from project traffic would not be distinguishable from other State Route and Interstate traffic noise. On Potrero Grande Drive and other local roadways, a number of vehicles would have to "pass by" in the same location on the roadway, i.e., pass by at the exact same time, for noise to increase by more than 10 dBA, which is the significance threshold applied in the Draft EIR for determining whether the proposed project would result in a substantial increase in ambient noise. For heavy truck noise to increase by 10 dBA above the traffic REMEL assumed by Caltrans for Heavy Trucks at 65 mph (i.e., from 85.2 to 95 dBA) or by 10 dbA at 25 mph (i.e., from 78.7 to 89 dBA) there would need to be about 10 heavy trucks passing by at the same place, which is impossible. Trucks would be spaced out, and there could not feasibly be 10 trucks in the same location on roadways. Likewise, there would need to be 10 cars or 10 medium trucks in the same place to cause an increase of 10 dBA. Therefore, traffic noise would be less than significant

A6-45 The Draft EIR does not identify specific construction haul routes. Truck trip distribution used in the traffic impact analysis is shown in Figure 11 of the Revised Draft Traffic Impact Analysis, which is included in Appendix K of the EIR. In all cases, with implementation of MM TT-1, impacts to area intersections and roadway segments due to proposed project construction would be less than significant.

The Draft EIR discusses impacts to emergency access under Impact TT-5 starting on page 4.14-36 and concludes that with implementation of MM TT-8 (the provisions of which have been consolidated into revised MM TT-1, as shown in response to comment), construction of the proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access. See response to comment A6-52, discussing the requirement to notify local emergency service providers, including the Los Angeles County Fire Department and the City of Montebello Police Department, of road closures.

A6-46 This comment does not raise any significant environmental issues regarding the Draft EIR or its analyses and conclusions. The commenter's opinion that there would be a significant impact to local residents who use or visit recreational facilities referenced in the Draft EIR is noted and included in the record for consideration by decision makers. An EIR is required to evaluate the environmental impacts of a project; a project's social effects, e.g., inconvenience, are not treated as effects on the environment. Further, the effects analyzed in an EIR must be related to a physical change (CEQA Guidelines section 15358(b)). Temporary inconvenience to recreational users is not a physical change in the environment and therefore was not considered in the EIR.

Impact RE-1 discusses impacts to local recreational facilities—specifically, whether construction of the proposed project would increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated. While, as the City states in its comment, temporary closures of local trails may be required during construction, these closures would be for very short periods and would not induce the use of other facilities to the extent that they would deteriorate.

Please note that closure of a trail near the Whittier Narrows Bikeway as a safety precaution during stringing work would be for less than one day, and other access routes to the bike path are available. Portions of the paved nature center trail near the Whittier Narrow Nature Center may be closed for less than one day during construction, but recreationists can use several other trails nearby.

A6-47 Please refer to response to comment A6-31 for a discussion of CEQA's requirements for deferred formulation of mitigation measures. Note that MM TT-1 has been revised to include other traffic and transportation mitigation measure requirements, but retains the same requirements as the version of MM TT-1 that was included in the Draft EIR. As explained in MM TT-1, specific measures would be dependent on the final construction schedule and residing location of construction workers.

The Draft EIR was prepared using preliminary engineering plans and data prepared by SCE that was sufficiently analyzed to provide decision makers with information enabling them to take into account environmental consequences and make an

informed decision regarding the proposed project (CEQA Guidelines section 15151). However, because final engineering plans will be prepared after the CPUC reviews and approves either the proposed project or one of the alternatives, which will affect project construction, it would be impractical to design a specific measure or require the development of a construction traffic management plan based on preliminary data that are subject to change. For this reason, MM TT-1 requires a plan to be submitted to the CPUPC for review and approval 60 days before the start of construction, subject to review and comment by other affected agencies, including the City of Montebello.

As required by CEQA, MM TT-1 includes a performance standard: it requires that significant impacts to affected intersections be reduced to less than significant levels, specifically, that the increase in volume to capacity from the proposed project at each intersection be reduced to at or below the applicable threshold. MM TT-1 also lists potential methods for achieving the performance standard, including limiting heavy-truck trips during peak periods.

MM TT-1 has been revised, as shown in response to comment A2-2, to require SCE to consult with the City of Montebello regarding preparation of a traffic control plan.

A6-48 See response to comment A6-47.

A6-49 See response to comment A6-47.

A6-50 See response to comment A6-47. Note that MM TT-1 has been revised to include other traffic and transportation mitigation measure requirements and therefore now retains the same requirements as the version of MM TT-9 that was included in the Draft EIR. As explained in revised MM TT-1, specific measures would be dependent on the final construction schedule.

As required by CEQA, MM TT-1 includes a performance standard requiring the maintenance of safe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. Specifically, SCE must allow for safe vehicle, bicyclist, and pedestrian passage through construction zones using basic safety principles to route roadway users through these construction zones using roadway geometrics and features and traffic control devices as comparable to normal roadway situations as possible. The mitigation measure lists potential methods for maintaining the required safe conditions, including notifying public transit providers of construction and ensuring that sidewalk and bicyclist access is maintained on at least one side of affected streets.

MM TT-1 has been revised, as shown in response to comment A2-2, to require SCE to consult with local jurisdictions regarding preparation of a traffic control plan.

A6-51 See response to comment A6-15 for a discussion of the proposed project's impacts to local intersections during construction. Truck trip distribution used in the traffic impact analysis to determine which intersections would be impacted by proposed project construction traffic is shown in Figure 11 of the Revised Draft Traffic Impact Analysis, included in Appendix K of the EIR.

A6-52 MM TT-1, which has been revised to include the requirements of MM TT-8, “Emergency Service Provider Notification” and MM TT-2, “Road and Lane Closure Plan,” requires SCE to notify local emergency service providers, including the City of Montebello Police Department, of road closures at least one week prior to the closure.

A6-53 Caltrans was notified by the CPUC of the availability of the Draft EIR and submitted a comment letter (Comment Letter A2). The EIR included SCE’s Revised Draft Traffic Impact Analysis and Addendum in Appendix K. Refer to responses to comment letter A2 for responses to Caltrans’ comments on the Draft EIR.

A6-54 Note that MM TT-1, as shown in response to comment A2-2, has been revised in the Final EIR to require a Traffic Control Plan that incorporates the requirements outlined in the Peak Period Traffic Management Plan (Draft EIR MM TT-1), Road and Lane Closure Plan (Draft EIR MM TT-2), Highway Closure Plan (Draft EIR MM TT-3), and Public Transit, Pedestrian, and Bicyclist Plan (Draft EIR MM TT-9). Draft EIR MM TT-4 required a Helicopter Lift Plan; in the Final EIR, it has been renumbered to MM TT-2.

The traffic control plan and other plans required pursuant to the above-referenced mitigation measures will not be prepared prior to certification of the Final EIR. See response to comment A6-31 for a discussion of CEQA’s requirements for deferred formulation of mitigation measures and responses to comments A6-48 through A6-50 for a specific discussion of the plans required pursuant to the mitigation measures set forth in the Draft EIR to reduce or avoid the proposed project’s significant traffic impacts. As discussed in those responses, because final engineering plans (and therefore related construction plans) will not be prepared until after certification of the EIR and approval of the proposed project, it would not be practical to design specific mitigation measures to mitigate the project’s construction traffic impacts in the Final EIR. Instead, as permitted by CEQA, the EIR proposes feasible mitigation measures to minimize the proposed project’s significant traffic impacts but defers formulation of those measures pending development of final construction plans.

A6-55 The commenter’s concerns regarding environmental justice and urban decay will be included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. While economic and social effects ordinarily need not be discussed in an EIR, physical changes to the environment caused by a project’s economic or social effects are secondary impacts that must be included in an EIR’s impact analysis if they are significant (CEQA Guidelines section 15064(e)). According to the EPA, “Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”⁴ The CPUC is not aware of any evidence suggesting that construction or operation of the proposed project would create issues related to environmental justice, and is also unaware of any evidence suggesting that such issues, if they existed, would cause physical changes to the environment requiring analysis under CEQA.

Similarly, urban decay is an economic and social impact that must be analyzed under CEQA only insofar as a proposed project would cause economic or social conditions

⁴ <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

that precipitate a physical impact on the environment, including deterioration of structures, graffiti, or other physical signs of urban decay (see *Bakersfield Citizens for Local Control v. City of Bakersfield* (2004) 124 CA4th 1184). The CPUC is not aware of any evidence suggesting that the proposed project would cause economic or social conditions leading to urban decay and any attendant physical impacts.

A6-56 Consistent with the requirements of CEQA, the Draft EIR identifies a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project that meet most of the project objectives, are potentially feasible, and avoid or substantially reduce a significant impact of the proposed project. The alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIR are described in Section 3.4, "Alternatives Evaluated in this EIR."

The Draft EIR also identifies and evaluates a No Project Alternative as required by CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e), which is described in Section 3.4.4, "No Project Alternative." As required by CEQA, the No Project Alternative includes what would reasonably be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services, and was developed with input from SCE on what actions SCE would take if the proposed project is not approved. The CPUC also conducted supplemental analysis to determine what actions may be taken to address reliability issues if the proposed project is not approved.

Replacement generation facilities are not part of the proposed project. Refer to responses to comments A6-5 and A6-7 regarding replacement generating facilities.

A6-57 See response to comment A6-21.

A6-58 See response to comment A6-21.

A6-59 CEQA requires an EIR to identify a reasonable range of alternatives to a proposed project that are potentially feasible, meet most of the project's basic objectives, and avoid or substantially lessen any of the project's significant effects (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(a)). If the no project alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR must also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives described in the EIR (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e)(2)).

While an EIR is required to include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project, it is not the role of the EIR to select an alternative or a proposed project for approval. Consistent with this requirement, the Draft EIR evaluates the environmental impacts of the proposed project and contains a comparative analysis of the alternatives. The Draft EIR also determines that the One-Transformer-Bank Substation Alternative is the Environmentally Superior Alternative to the proposed project, as described in Section 5.4, "Environmentally Superior Alternative."

It is the role of the decision makers to determine, at the project approval stage, whether to approve the project or adopt one of the alternatives. There is no requirement to approve the environmentally superior alternative. A decision to reject alternatives in favor of the project is referred to as a determination that the

alternatives are found to be infeasible. The CPUC has not yet made a decision on whether to approve the proposed project or an alternative, or to deny the Permit to Construct altogether. Rather, the CPUC will consider information gathered in the environmental review process during the decision-making process.

A6-60 In compliance with CEQA, the Draft EIR evaluated a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project that are potentially feasible, meet most of the project's basic objectives, and avoid or substantially lessen any of the project's significant effects (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(a)). The Draft EIR also evaluated a No Project Alternative in compliance with CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e). There is no requirement in CEQA that the No Project Alternative be feasible, as its purpose is to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving it. To accomplish this comparison, CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e)(3)(C) requires that the Lead Agency "analyze impacts of the no project alternative by projecting what would reasonably be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services."

Regarding analysis of the No Project Alternative, CEQA section 15145 states that "[i]f, after thorough investigation, a Lead Agency finds that a particular impact is too speculative for evaluation, the agency should note its conclusion and terminate discussion of the impact." As stated in the Draft EIR, it would be too speculative to determine the impacts of the No Project Alternative in certain resource areas. Please see Draft EIR Section 5.5.1, "Aesthetics; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use and Planning; Noise; Population and Housing; Recreation; Traffic and Transportation" for further discussion of the rationale for this approach.

A6-61 The City's statements regarding the potentially significant impacts of the project with respect to land use compatibility, short-term traffic impacts, human health impacts, biological impacts, and other impacts related to environmental justice and urban decay are noted and will be included in the record for the decision makers. As required by CEQA, the Draft EIR evaluated the physical impacts that would result from the proposed project in all relevant resource areas, including those identified in this comment, and identified feasible mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts. Please see response to comment A6-55 for a discussion of CEQA's requirements with regard to evaluation of environmental justice and urban decay. With respect to the other impacts referenced in the comment, the CPUC is unaware of any evidence demonstrating that these impacts were not adequately evaluated or that there are additional feasible mitigation measures that were not proposed in the Draft EIR that would reduce or avoid the proposed project's significant effects.

A6-62 CEQA requires identification of the objectives of a proposed project, per CEQA Guidelines section 15124(b), but does not require identification of a need for a project. The objectives of the proposed project, as defined by the CPUC, are:

1. Address anticipated violations of the NERC Standard TPL-001-04 (NERC 2015), WECC Regional Business Practice TPL-001-WECC-RBP-2 (WECC 2011), and CAISO Planning Standards that would occur upon retirement by December 31,

2020, of generators that use OTC.

2. Avoid introduction of new violations of NERC, WECC, and CAISO standards.
3. Maintain electrical service by minimizing service interruptions during project implementation.

Increasing capacity to meet increasing power demand is not an objective of the proposed project. Furthermore, Section 6.5.2, "Operation," states that "[t]he project is not intended to facilitate increased consumption of energy or require additional local or regional capacity, but is instead meant to address reliability concerns relating from retirement of certain generating units as explained in Section 1.2, "Project Objectives." Replacement power generation is not part of the proposed project. Refer to responses to comments A6-5 and A6-7 regarding replacement power generation.

- A6-63 Refer to previous responses to comments within comment letter A6 regarding the project description, deferral of mitigation, alternatives, and the environmental impact analysis. A Lead Agency is required to recirculate an EIR when "significant new information" is added to the EIR after notice is given of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review but prior to certification. Recirculation is not required where the new information added to the EIR merely clarifies, amplifies, or makes insignificant modifications to an adequate EIR. None of the responses to this comment letter constitute significant new information under CEQA, and therefore recirculation is not required.
- A6-64 See response to comment A6-2. The City of Montebello staff are also included on the proposed projects' mailing list.
- A6-65 City of Montebello representatives are on the project mailing list and will receive all project-related notices and information. As requested by the City, and as required by CEQA, this response to comments document addresses the City's comments on the Draft EIR and will be included as part of the Final EIR to be considered by the decision makers.

Comment Set A7: Jose Jimenez, City Planner, City of Commerce



CITY OF COMMERCE

Public Works & Development Services Department

May 31, 2016

California Public Utilities Commission
RE: Mesa 500kV Substation Project
c/o Ecology and Environment, Inc.
505 Sansome Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA. 94111

Sent Via US MAIL

Re: Notice of Availability – Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Mesa 500 – kV Substation Project Proposed by Southern California Edison

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is submitted on behalf of the City of Commerce. We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the abovementioned project in the City of Montebello.

Upon further review of the proposed project, the City of Commerce has only one comment as it relates to this project. We ask that hardcopies of the EIR be placed at our library for the public to review. **A7-1** Otherwise, there are no additional comments as they relate to this project.

We thank you for including us in this notification, and encourage the SCE to consider us on any future planning activities conducted by Southern California Edison.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (323) 722-4805, extension 2389 or via email at jjimenez@ci.commerce.ca.us.

Sincerely,

Jose Daniel Jimenez
City Planner

Cc: Matt Marquez, Deputy Director of Development Services, 2016 Reading File

2535 Commerce Way • Commerce, California 90040 • (323) 722-4805 • FAX (323) 838-4240

Response to Comment Set A7: Jose Jimenez, City Planner, City of Commerce

- A7-1 One hard copy and two electronic copies of the proposed project's Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) were delivered to the City of Commerce's public library on June 10, 2016. Instructions to make the Draft EIR available to the public were sent separately to the City of Commerce public library via mail on June 7, 2016.

Comment Set A8 – Michael Huntley, Director of Community and Economic Development, City of Monterey Park

CITY OF MONTEREY PARK

320 West Newmark Avenue • Monterey Park • California 91754-2896
www.MontereyPark.ca.gov



City Council
Mitchell Ing
Teresa Real Sebastian
Stephen Lam
Hans Liang
Peter Chan

City Clerk
Vincent D. Chang

City Treasurer
Joseph Leon

June 23, 2016

California Public Utilities Commission
Re: Mesa 500kV Substation Project
c/o Ecology and Environment, Inc.
San Francisco, CA 94111

Re: Notice of Availability Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Mesa 500kV Substation Project Proposed by Southern California Edison

Dear California Public Utilities Commission:

Thank you for providing the City of Monterey Park ("City") the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Mesa 500 kV Substation. The 45-day public commenting period began on April 29, 2016 through June 13, 2016 and was extended to 60-days through June 27, 2016. The City of Monterey Park has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report and requests that the CPUC consider and respond to the following comments.

ES.1.2 Proposed Project Overview

Table ES-1 Major Components of the Proposed Project.

Comment: The Mesa Substation is the first category identified in Table ES-1. Although the second bullet point identifies the demolition of the existing 21.6 acre site, none of the bullet points (Major Components) identify the grading as a major component of the project. Per the NOA, the Mesa Substation would be enlarged from 21.6 to 69 acres. To accommodate the increase in size, significant grading would be necessary to accommodate the enlarged substation. It is the City's opinion that the grading should be considered a "Major Component" of the project and evaluate as such. Accordingly, the DEIR should be revised to reflect the substantial grading activities necessary to triple the area for the substation and the measures needed to control fugitive dust.

A8-1

Comment: The first bullet point in this Table ES-1 identifies the site area as 86.2 acres, but the NOA identifies the increase in site area to 69 acres. Which is correct?

A8-2

ES.2 Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Alternatives

Pride in the Past • Faith in the Future

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Table ES-2 Impacts and Mitigation Measures Discussed in this EIR.

Aesthetics, Impact AE-1: MM AES-3: Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment along Potrero Grande Drive

A8-3

Comment: This mitigation measure should require the use California native and/or drought tolerant landscape materials to minimize water consumption.

Comment: The City requests to be included in the review of the proposed retaining walls and block walls. The photo simulations shown in Figures 4.1-5c, d, e, f, show the proposed perimeter wall to be constructed with split-face blocks in a dark brown color with beige columns. The City concurs with the proposed material and colors and request that the block wall be finished with a decorative cap.

Comment: On page 4.1-29, Key Observation Point (KOP) 1: View East from Potrero Grande Drive at Atlas Avenue of the DEIR, it states that two landscape options will be considered. The City requests that the CPUC consider increasing the width of the planting strip in front of the block wall along Potrero Grande Drive and Greenwood Avenue to 10 feet to provide adequate space for plant growth. Additionally, the City request that a combination of trees, shrubs and groundcover be planted in the planting strip, in essence, a hybrid of Landscaping Options 1 and 2. Although SCE would prefer not to install trees in the landscape areas between the property line and the 12-foot high masonry wall because of security concerns, there are medium sized conical shaped trees that would be appropriate for reducing the mass of the perimeter wall and metal transmission towers.

A8-4

Comment: There are a variety of drought tolerant plants that can effectively detour graffiti vandalism. Such plants should be incorporated into the overall design of the perimeter landscaping.

A8-5

Aesthetics, Impact AE-1: MM AES-4: Graffiti Deterrence

A8-6

Comment: It is the City's position that the mitigation proposed to deter graffiti vandalism is not adequate for the following reasons. The proposed project includes encircling the project site with a 12-foot high masonry wall thereby improving security to the site. For those areas of the proposed 12-foot high masonry wall that are facing Potrero Grande Drive and Greenwood Avenue, those areas should have adequate accessibility to remove graffiti. However, the City of Monterey Park questions the ability to remove graffiti along those areas of the 12-foot high masonry wall that are situated along a property line. Specifically, the areas in questions are along the south and southwest property lines abutting Caltrans right-of-way and facing the 60 Freeway. If the proposed wall in these locations is constructed abutting a property lines, SCE will not be able to remove the graffiti from the south facing portion of the wall that face the freeway because Caltrans does not permit access to their property for graffiti removal. Because the likelihood of graffiti vandalism is so great, allowing the installation of a 12-foot high masonry wall along the property line in these areas would substantially degrade the visual environment along the 60 Freeway through the City of Monterey Park. As such, the current mitigation measure to address graffiti vandalism is not acceptable.

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There are two alternatives available to SCE to address this issue. The first would be to change the proposed block wall to a decorative 12-foot high non-view obscuring metal fence (non-solid surface) thereby eliminating the surface where graffiti could be placed. The second alternative would be to set the proposed 12-foot high masonry wall at least 10 feet from the south and southwest property lines with security fencing along the SCE and Caltrans property line thereby allowing the installation of a secured access road for maintenance vehicles to remove/abate graffiti vandalism.

A8-6
cont.

Comment: There is a variety of drought tolerant plants that can also function as graffiti deterrents. Incorporate this type of plant material in the Graffiti Deterrence mitigation measure.

A8-7

2.0 Project Description

2.3 Construction of the Proposed Project, 2.3.1 Staging Yards and Work Areas (Pages 2-48 through 2-50)

Comment: The City of Monterey Park is concerned with the proximity of Staging Yard 1 and its proximity to residential uses in the city. Specifically, due to the location Staging Yard 1 and its proximity to residential uses, a project design feature/condition should be included that does not allow for stockpiling of soil or construction debris, salvaging of debris or materials and should not allow for the storage of fuel for the construction vehicles. It is also stated that helicopters would use Staging Yard 1. Again, due to the proximity of Staging Yard 1 to residential uses, helicopters should not be used at this staging yard. Accordingly, only less intensive uses and/or activities should be allowed. Please specify the type of uses and/or activities being considered for Staging Yard 1.

A8-8

2.3.2 Substation Construction, 2.3.2.1 Site Preparation

Comment: On page 2-51, line 2, it states that a permanent driveway will be constructed off of East Markland Drive for secondary and emergency access. The Monterey Park Fire Department requires that the proposed fire access roadway meet several standards, including a minimum width of 20 feet, a fire apparatus road grade not to exceed 10 percent, the roadway must be all-weather and capable of supporting loads of 75,000 pounds, the roadway must provide a clear height of 13 feet 6 inches, and dead-end roadways in excess of 150 feet must be provided with approved provisions for the turning around of a fire apparatus.

A8-9

2.3.2.4 Helicopter Use

Comment: Same as comment above on helicopter use at Staging Yard 1.

A8-10

4.1 Aesthetics

See the comments in the Project Overview Section above under the mitigation measures.

A8-11

4.10 Noise and Vibration

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4.10.3.3 Environmental Impacts, Table 4.10-15 Transformer Noise Levels at Sensitive Receptors (Page 4.10-22 and 4.10-23)

Comment: There is a much closer sensitive receptor than Holly Oak Dr. that was identified in Table 4.10-15. Specifically, there is a new housing project (Encanto Walk) to the northeast that is only 150 feet away from Staging Yard 1. This section of the DEIR should be rewritten to evaluate the potential noise impacts from Staging Yard 1 (short-term) and the transformer (long-term) to the residential neighborhood at Encanto Walk.

A8-12

Comment: The DEIR indicates that there may be construction during the evening times and temporary lighting will be placed on the property. According to the Monterey Park Municipal Code (MPMC) §§ 9.53.070(5) and (6), the operation of any mechanically powered saw, sander, drill, grinder, lawn or garden tool or similar tool is allowed between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Construction or demolition work is allowed to be conducted between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Address these standards as part of the noise restriction for the project.

A8-13

4.14 Traffic and Transportation

Comment: On page 4.14-1 of the DEIR, the City reaffirms its comments on requiring a Traffic Management Plan for during construction work as well as encouraging construction and project related vehicles to travel and circulate mostly during off-peak traffic rush hours.

A8-14

Comment: It is stated on page 4.14-25 of the DEIR that Phase II would involve the stringing of the 220 kV transmission line across Potrero Grande Drive and SR 60 near Markland Drive. Line stringing would require the temporary closure of Potrero Grande Drive. Additionally, on page 4.14-28, Phase III would involve stringing of the 500 kV transmission lines across Greenwood Avenue. Line stringing would require temporary closure of Greenwood Avenue. The City concurs with MM TT-2 that prior to the initiation of Phases II and III that preparation and implementation of a Road and Lane Closure Plan be review and approved by the City.

A8-15

Comment: The City also concurs that any road damage caused directly as a result of ground disturbing activities be repaired by South California Edison (SCE), as stated on page 4.14-36 of the DEIR.

A8-16

Comment: On pages 4.14-36 of the DEIR, under Impact TT-5, the Road and Lane Closure Plan must also address the closure of roadways and lanes when the MWD water pipeline within Potrero Grande Drive is relocated. Additionally, adequate notification time must be provided to the Monterey Park Fire and Police Departments to prepare for the roadway closures.

A8-17

Comment: On page 4.14-37 of the DEIR, the City requests to be included in the review of the Public Transit, Pedestrian and Bicyclist Plan that takes into account the location and timing of public transit stop closures, sidewalk closures, and bike lane closures once known.

A8-18

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Comment: As stated on page 4.14-40 of the DEIR, the City requests adequate notification time in preparation for any anticipate Highway Closures and to be included in the review of the Highway Closure Plan.

A8-19

The City of Monterey Park encourages Southern California Edison and the California Public Utilities Commission to maintain an open line of communication and include the City in the planning and review process of the supplemental plans required as mitigation measures in the DEIR. The City strongly believes that this will help to minimize impacts for the duration of the project. If you have any questions, please contact this office at (626) 307-1315.

A8-20

Respectfully,



Michael Huntley
Director of Community and Economic Development
City of Monterey Park

Response to Comment Set A8: Michael Huntley, Director of Community and Economic Development, City of Monterey Park

A8-1 Grading activities have been included in the list of major project components in the Executive Summary. The following change to Table ES-1 has been made.

Page ES-2:

Table ES-1 Major Components of the Proposed Project

Component and Location	Detail
Mesa Substation (Monterey Park)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of the proposed 500/220/66/16-kilovolt (kV) Mesa Substation within an 86.2-acre site in the City of Monterey Park, California. • Demolition of the existing 220/66/16-kV Mesa Substation (currently occupying 21.6 acres of the site⁽¹⁾). • <u>Grading of approximately 85.1 acres on the Mesa Substation site.</u> • Relocation of a portion of an existing 72-inch-diameter Metropolitan Water District of Southern California waterline that traverses the same substation site with an 84-inch-diameter pipeline.

Details regarding grading activity can be found in Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Section 2.3.2.1, and grading quantity estimates are provided in Table 2-7. Impact AQ-2 discusses the effect of fugitive dust, referred to as particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀) and particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter (PM_{2.5}), generated during construction, including grading of the substation site. Project activities would exceed the significance threshold for fugitive dust; however, the South Coast Air Quality Management District requires compliance with Rule 403, which includes best management practices to reduce fugitive dust emissions. Additionally, Applicant Proposed Measure (APM) AIR-01 in Section 4.2.3.2 would be implemented by SCE to reduce air pollutant emissions from fugitive dust during construction. The impact analysis indicates that this APM would reduce fugitive dust emissions by 55 percent, which would be below significance thresholds. With the implementation of the APM and compliance with Rule 403, therefore, impacts would be less than significant and no additional mitigation is required.

A8-2 Table ES-1 states that the total acreage of the property owned by the applicant is 86.2 acres. The proposed substation would occupy 69 acres within the 86.2-acre property.

A8-3 Mitigation Measure (MM) AES-3 has been revised as follows:

Pages 4.1-52, ES-5, and 8-3

MM AES-3: Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment along Potrero Grande Drive.

Prior to construction, the applicant shall prepare a Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment Plan that will, at a minimum, provide vegetative screening, with the use of California native and/or drought tolerant vegetation, and other aesthetic treatments (e.g., decorative caps on block walls) along Potrero Grande Drive and in

the vicinity of the new entry drive at the substation, and provide aesthetic treatment of the operations and test and maintenance buildings and their immediate surroundings. The Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment Plan shall not conflict with NERC CIP requirements in CIP-014-2 (Physical Security) or related NERC findings. Aesthetic treatments along Potrero Grande Drive shall include design enhancements for the masonry screening wall, adjacent walkway, pavement surfaces, and planting areas and may include raised and median planters or other design enhancements. Aesthetic treatment of the operations and test and maintenance buildings and their immediate surroundings shall include improved color selection and design for the buildings and landscaping of their surroundings that will help screen views of the buildings and blend them with their surroundings. All color finishes for built elements shall be flat and non-reflective. The final Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment Plan along Potrero Grande Drive shall be prepared by a professional landscape architect licensed to work in California. The applicant shall consult with the City of Monterey Park in development of the Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment Plan and both this plan and the final designs for the buildings shall be subject to design review and approval by the City. The Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment Plan shall be provided to the CPUC for final review and receive final approval from the CPUC prior to construction of these buildings and aesthetic treatments along Potrero Grande Drive. The final approved Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment Plan shall be fully implemented within four months of beginning operation of the new substation.

A8-4 The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) concludes that both Landscape Options 1 and 2 would result in a significant aesthetic impact. While implementation of MM AES-3 (Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment along Potrero Grande Drive) would reduce this impact to less than significant for Landscape Option 1, it would not reduce the impact to less than significant for Landscape Option 2.

MM AES-3 states in part that, “The applicant shall consult with the City of Monterey Park in development of the Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment Plan and both this plan and the final designs for the buildings shall be subject to design review and approval by the City.” This mitigation measure also requires that the Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment Plan be prepared by a licensed landscape architect and that it provide vegetative screening and other aesthetic treatments that include design enhancements for the adjacent walkway, pavement surfaces, and planting areas. Therefore, the City’s requests regarding particular aesthetic treatments would be addressed through the collaboration with the City required by MM AES-3 and the review and approval process for the Landscape and Aesthetic Treatment Plan set forth in MM AES-3.

Note that whether Landscape Option 1 or Landscape Option 2 is implemented is dependent on the design outcome decision per the North American Electric Reliability Corporation [NERC] Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) requirements in CIP-014-2 (Physical Security). As described on page 4.1-30, Landscape Option 1 involves planting small trees along the perimeter of the substation and would be implemented depending on the design outcome decision. If Landscape Option 1 is determined to be infeasible due to physical security requirements (e.g., if the NERC does not allow SCE to implement the vegetation and design under Landscape Option 1), the applicant would

implement Landscape Option 2.

- A8-5 Response to comment A8-3 contains revisions made to MM AES-3 to include the use of California native and/or drought tolerant vegetation in substation landscaping. Mitigation Measure AES-4 “Graffiti Deterrence,” has also been revised as follows:

Pages 4.1-52, ES-5, and 8-3

MM AES-4: Graffiti Deterrence. Prior to construction, the applicant shall prepare a Graffiti Prevention and Abatement Plan that will, at a minimum, provide measures for the installation of vegetative screening, with the use of California native and/or drought tolerant vegetation, and the removal of graffiti within 48 hours of report or implement other measures to screen or substantially reduce aesthetic impacts associated with graffiti on the new 12-foot-high perimeter wall facing State Route (SR) 60 along the southeast edge of the proposed Mesa Substation site, such as vegetative screening or other measures intended to fully or mostly screen views from SR 60 of the southeast-facing portion of the wall that is likely to provide a surface that attracts graffiti generally considered unattractive or offensive. The applicant shall consult with the City of Monterey Park in development of the Graffiti Prevention and Abatement Plan, and this plan shall be subject to review and comment by the City. The Graffiti Prevention and Abatement Plan shall be provided to the CPUC for final review and approval prior to beginning construction. The final approved Graffiti Prevention and Abatement Plan shall be fully implemented, including installation of all plants for vegetative screening, within four months of beginning operation of the new substation.

- A8-6 The 12-foot-high masonry perimeter wall identified by the commenter is approximately 1,800 feet long, and proposed along a portion of SR 60 that would be set back from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) right-of-way (ROW) by a distance ranging from 24 feet to 26.2 feet. This separation between the proposed perimeter wall and the Caltrans ROW would allow sufficient room for graffiti removal, as needed. MM AES-4, as drafted, is adequate to reduce the identified impacts.

- A8-7 See response to comment A8-5.

- A8-8 This comment does not raise any significant environmental issues regarding the Draft EIR or its analyses and conclusions. The City’s concern regarding the proximity of Staging Yard 1 to residential uses in the City is noted and will be included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. As described in Draft EIR Section 2.3.1, “Staging Yards and Work Areas,” activities at Staging Yard 1 would include use as a reporting location for project construction workers, vehicle and equipment parking, and material storage. Materials stored at this staging yard may include portable sanitation facilities, steel bundles, steel/wood poles, conductor reels, telecommunications cable reels, hardware, insulators, cross arms, signage, filler compound, waste materials, and best management practice materials (e.g., straw wattle, gravel). The staging yard may also contain construction trailers. Maintenance and refueling would be conducted at staging yards and may take place at Staging Yard 1. Helicopters may take off and land from Staging Yard 1.

Refueling of equipment as well as general hazardous materials impacts are discussed under Impact HZ-1. The Draft EIR concludes that MM HZ-1 is needed to address hazardous materials stored on site over threshold quantities. MM HZ-2 would require Worker Environmental Awareness Program training, which requires training on the proper use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials. MM HZ-3 requires preparation of a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure plan. Further, MM HY-1 requires preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). As outlined in MM HY-1, the SWPPP would require immediate cleanup of any spills as well as measures that would prevent spills from entering waterways and distributing across a larger area. Impacts related to refueling would be less than significant with mitigation.

The Draft EIR explains under Impact NV-4 that construction noise impacts at Staging Yard 1 would be significant due to helicopter landing and takeoff activities. MM NV-4 would require locating landing and takeoff areas as far away as feasible from sensitive receptors; however, as explained in the Draft EIR, this measure would not reduce impacts to less than significant because there would be occasional periods when the helicopters would be within 660 feet of residences, resulting in noise increase beyond the 10 dBA threshold. The CPUC considered restricting helicopter use to certain staging yards to minimize noise impacts; however, such a restriction would not be feasible due to the substation's location in a heavily urbanized area and to the lack of any staging area location located far enough away from residential receptors to reduce impacts. Restricting helicopter use to reduce the significant noise impact, therefore, would require prohibiting helicopter use at all staging yards slated for helicopter use, as all staging yards would experience significant helicopter takeoff and landing noise, as shown in Table 4.10-9. Precluding helicopter use at all staging areas would therefore essentially prohibit helicopter use for the project. Helicopter use is therefore considered for Staging Yard 1, subject to the restrictions in MM NV-4. Please note that helicopter use would occur only on approximately 15 days during the approximately 55-month construction window.

The City also expresses the opinion that there should be a design measure/condition of approval that precludes stockpiling of soil or construction debris and salvaging of debris and materials. The City does not clarify what environmental impact would necessitate the design measure and therefore does not raise an issue with the environmental analysis in the EIR. The CPUC is not aware of any evidence that stockpiling of soil or construction debris and salvaging of debris and materials at Staging Yard 1 would cause a significant impact that is not evaluated in the EIR. Therefore, no additional response is necessary.

- A8-9 The Draft EIR lists local permitting requirements that may apply to construction activities in Monterey Park in Table 2-11 on page 2-85. The driveway would be required comply with all Monterey Park Fire Department requirements.
- A8-10 See response to comment A8-8.
- A8-11 See responses to comments A8-3, A8-4, A8-5, A8-6, and A8-7.
- A8-12 The Draft EIR identifies the Encanto Walk housing development in Table 6-1 as a

“Project within Five Miles of the Proposed Project that Could Contribute to a Cumulative Impact.” As the Encanto Walk Project is now constructed, and in response to the comment, the Final EIR has been modified to incorporate the Encanto Walk Project as a sensitive receptor into Section 4.10, “Noise and Vibration” of the EIR.

The Encanto Walk development is located on Potrero Grande Drive across the street and approximately 1,000 feet east of the Mesa Substation site. This analysis estimates the existing ambient noise for the area near the Encanto Walk development based on the 2011 Monterey Park Market Place Supplemental EIR (SEIR) (available at <http://www.montereypark.ca.gov/535/Whats-Developing-in-Monterey-Park>). The SEIR considered noise over a 24-hour time period when analyzing impacts. The Encanto Walk property line is approximately 50 feet from the centerline of Potrero Grande Avenue. The SEIR included a noise study along roadways in Monterey Park, including along portions of Potrero Grande Drive, and determined that within 50 feet of the center line of Potrero Grande Drive east of Greenwood Avenue, the average 24-hour noise level was 73.1 dBA. The noise analysis from the completed Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Encanto Walk development project was also reviewed. Noise measurements for Encanto Walk were conducted in 2013 at the west and east ends of the development—refer to Figure 13 of the IS/MND (Monterey Park 2014). The minimum noise level measured at NR-2 (east end) and NR-3 (west end) were 44.9 dBA and 40.9 dBA, respectively. Maximum noise levels were recorded as 77.2 dBA and 76.1 dBA, respectively. The IS/MND noise analysis estimated that once the Encanto Walk development was built, the noise level 50 feet from the center line Potrero Grande Drive would be 70 dBA. This is similar to the noise estimates from the SEIR, and 73.1 dBA is well within the range measured for the IS/MND. Therefore, 73.1 dBA is used for the analysis for the Mesa Substation as baseline noise at Encanto Walk.

Under Impact NV-1, noise resulting from construction activities would not violate Monterey Park’s noise regulations because Chapter 9.53 of the City’s Municipal Code exempts activities where regulation has been preempted by state law. Here, the siting of the proposed project is within the jurisdiction of the CPUC; therefore, there would be no impact from inconsistencies with the City’s noise ordinance during construction. As shown in Figure 4-5 of the noise study completed for the proposed project, noise contours indicate that operational noise would be loudest from transformers at the substation and is estimated to be approximately 50 dBA at the southwest corner of the Encanto Walk development (Acentech 2015). This would match, and may exceed, the nighttime standard of 50 dBA; however, as is the case for receptors on Holly Oak Drive, implementation of APM-NOI-01 (which requires SCE to produce engineering solutions to reduce noise) and MM NV-2 (which requires monitoring to confirm that the 50 dBA nighttime threshold or the existing nighttime noise level is not exceeded) would be required. The implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce the impacts to less than significant during operation and maintenance.

A less than significant impact to the Encanto Walk development would occur under Impact NV-2. While jack-and-bore and horizontal directional drilling activities would be used to relocate the Metropolitan Water District Pipeline under Potrero Grande Drive and would cause significant groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels, these activities would occur more than a half mile west of Encanto Walk and would

not be noticeable at residences. As described on page 4.10-24, general construction such as that associated with telecommunications work would produce vibration (from equipment such as vibratory rollers and jackhammers) below the significance threshold at a distance of 25 feet from the source. Additionally, during operation, the proposed project would produce groundborne vibration that is perceptible only in the immediate vicinity of the transformer pad, if at all. The Encanto Walk development is approximately 1,000 feet from the Mesa Substation and would not be affected by these vibrations. The remaining project components would not produce significant groundborne noise or vibration.

Impact NV-3 analyzes whether the proposed project would result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity by comparing estimated noise during operation with ambient noise levels at sensitive receptors. Estimated transformer noise levels at Encanto Walk would be 53 dBA during operation. This is less than the existing ambient noise level of 73.1 dBA and would not be perceptible to residents. Impacts under this criterion would remain less than significant.

Under Impact NV-4, the impact of construction of the Mesa Substation, transmission, subtransmission, and distribution lines on ambient noise levels would result in noise of 70 dBA at Encanto Walk. This is lower than the 73.1 dBA noise level described along Potrero Grande Drive and at the Southwest corner of the Encanto Walk development and would therefore not increase ambient noise levels. Therefore, at these residences, construction noise from the Mesa Substation would not result in a substantial temporary increase in the ambient noise level. However, as shown in Table 4.10-18, helicopter takeoff and landing at Staging Yards 1 through 3 would result in significant, unavoidable impacts to the closest sensitive receptors. This remains true with the incorporation of the Encanto Walk development into the analysis.

The Draft EIR recognized that helicopter use would produce 97 dBA at 100 feet. Although the commenter states that Encanto Walk is 150 feet from Staging Yard 1, Staging Yard 1 is within approximately 50 feet of Encanto Walk. Based on this measurement, helicopter takeoff and landing could generate noise levels of 103 dBA at Encanto Walk. This would be about a 30 dBA increase over ambient noise levels and would be a significant impact. MM NV-4 requires positioning helicopter landing and takeoff areas as far away as feasible from sensitive receptors; however, impacts would remain significant. Impacts would remain significant and unavoidable from helicopters use at Staging Yards 1, 2, and 3. The Encanto Walk development is as little as 20 feet from planned trenching activities associated with Telecommunications Route 1. As described in the Draft EIR, the loudest noise level from trenching could be 92 dBA, a nearly 20 dBA increase over ambient noise at Encanto Walk. This same level of noise increase would also occur at residences in Bell Gardens due to trenching activities, as described in the EIR. In Bell Gardens, trenching could be up to 42 dBA above ambient noise levels. Existing analysis in the Draft EIR describes the impact to residences within 20 feet of trenching along Telecommunications Route 1 as being significant and unavoidable because the mitigation described in MM NV-1 would not be enough to mitigate an increase of 42 dBA. Impacts to Encanto Walk would be the same as stated in the Draft EIR under criterion Impact NV-4.

The following changes were made to the EIR:

Table 4.10-4, Page 4.10-7:

Telecommunications Route 1 (new underground portion)	Residences	Los Angeles County	70
	<u>Residences (Encanto Walk Development)</u>	<u>Monterey Park</u>	<u>20</u>

Page 4.10-23:

Table 4.10-15 Transformer Noise Levels at Sensitive Receptors

Monitor Location	Transformer Noise L _{eq} (dBA)	Nighttime Standard (dBA)	Daytime Standard (dBA)	Exceeds Standard?
1990 Holly Oak Drive (at backyard property line facing substation)	53	50	55	Yes (nighttime only)
Northwest Corner of Potrero Grande Drive and East Markland Drive	48	50	55	No
Best Western Plus Markland Hotel	52	55	65	No
<u>Southwest Corner of Encanto Walk Development</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>No</u>

Source: Acentech 2015

Key:

dBA A-weighted decibels

L_{eq} equivalent sound pressure level

As shown in Table 4.10-15, noise levels would exceed the City of Monterey Park's 50 dBA nighttime noise standard for residential land uses by 3 dBA at the property line of residences along Holly Oak Drive, ~~which would be a significant impact. The lowest nighttime ambient noise levels were measured at 47 dBA at this location, and it appears that the nighttime median noise level is approximately 50 dBA. Operation of the Mesa Substation would increase the ambient noise by 3 dBA. This would violate the Monterey Park municipal code and would be a significant impact. Existing ambient noise over a 24-hour period was determined to be 73.1 dBA at the Encanto Walk development (Monterey Park 2011). Nighttime noise would likely be less than the 24-hour average but may still exceed the 50 dBA nighttime noise standard. This impact would be significant before mitigation.~~

~~The receptors~~Residences on Holly Oak Drive are the closest to the 500/220-kV transformers, with the closest ~~receptors~~ residence being approximately 1,000 feet from the transformers (about 100 feet closer than 1990 Holly Oak Drive, ~~where noise measurements were taken~~). To reduce transformer noise to meet the applicable standard of 50 dBA or lower in the residential areas and 55 dBA or lower in commercial areas of the City of Monterey Park and to prevent further increases in an existing exceedance of the threshold at either Holly Oak Drive or Encanto Walk, SCE would implement APM-NOI-01. Impacts would still be significant after implementation of APM-NOI-1 because there is no mechanism in the APM to require verification that the engineering solution abated noise to below

the 50-dBA threshold or current ambient noise level. MM NV-2 would require verification of adequate noise reduction and implementation of additional measures until the threshold is met. Impacts would be less than significant after mitigation.

Page 4.10-25:

Table 4.10-17 Impact of Transformers on Ambient Noise Levels at Closest Sensitive Receptors

Receptor Location	Average L_{eq} (8-hour dBA)	Transformers (dBA)	Increase (dBA)	Threshold (increase in dBA)	Exceeds Threshold?
Schurr High School at Appian Way	62	44	N/A	10	No
Neil Armstrong Street, East of Building W	55	39	N/A	10	No
1990 Holly Oak Drive (at backyard property line facing substation)	52	53	1	10	No
Northwest Corner of Potrero Grande Drive and East Markland Drive	68	48	N/A	10	No
Best Western Plus Markland Hotel	68 ⁽¹⁾	52	N/A	10	No
<u>Southwest corner of Encanto Walk Development</u>	<u>73.1⁽²⁾</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>No</u>

Source: Acentech 2015

Notes:

(1) Estimate based on proximity to monitoring data from Northwest Corner of Potrero Grande Drive and East Markland Drive

(2) Estimate is for a 24-hour L_{eq} based on noise calculations along Potrero Grande Drive in the Monterey Park Market Place Supplemental EIR (Monterey Park 2011).

Key:

dBA A-weighted decibels

L_{eq} equivalent sound pressure level

N/A not applicable

The transformers would not result in a noticeable increase in ambient noise level at ~~four~~ three locations because the transformer noise would be substantially lower than existing ambient noise levels. These ~~four~~ three locations are Schurr High School at Appian Way; the Northwest Corner of Potrero Grande Drive and East Markland Drive; the Southwest corner of the Encanto Walk Development; and Neil Armstrong Street, East of Building W. At Holly Oak Drive, the increase would be 1 dBA, which is less than the 10 dBA significance threshold.

Page 4.10-27:

Table 4.10-18 Impact of Construction on Ambient Noise Levels at Closest Sensitive Receptors

Calculation Location	Average Leq (8-hour dBA)	Calculated Leq (dBA)	Increase in Leq (dBA)	Threshold (increase in dBA)	Exceeds threshold?
Schurr High School at Appian Way	62	66	4	10	No
Neil Armstrong Street, East of Building W	55	50	0	10	No
1990 Holly Oak Drive (at backyard property line facing substation)	52	71	19	10	Yes
Northwest corner of Potrero Grande Drive and East Markland Drive	68	69	1	10	No
Best Western Plus Markland Hotel (rear, top floor)	68 ⁽¹⁾	78	10	10	No
527 Potrero Grande Drive Backyard	68 ⁽²⁾	68	0	10	No
<u>Southwest Corner of Encanto Walk Development</u>	<u>73.1⁽³⁾</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>No</u>

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ Estimate based on proximity to monitoring location at Northwest Corner of Potrero Grande Drive and East Markland Drive

⁽²⁾ During HDD activities

⁽³⁾ Estimate based on noise calculations along Potrero Grande Drive in the Monterey Park Market Place Supplemental EIR (Monterey Park 2011)

Key:

dBA A-weighted decibels

HDD horizontal directional drilling

Leq equivalent sound pressure level

Refer also to response to comment D2-179 for revisions to Table 4.10-19 made in response to this comment.

A8-13 Page 4.10-10 of the Draft EIR identifies the relevant noise standards in Section 9.53.070 of the City of Monterey Park Municipal Code. This discussion also notes that under that Code section, activities preempted by state or federal law are exempted from the City’s noise ordinance.

Impact NV-1 of the draft EIR (starting on Draft EIR p. 4.10-18) evaluates the impacts of project construction noise against standards established in local noise ordinances, including those of Monterey Park. Page 4.10-19 of the Draft EIR states “The City of Monterey Park Municipal Code exempts activities in locations where regulation has been preempted by state law from the City of Monterey Park Municipal Code noise regulations in Chapter 9.53. Thus, noise from constructing the components in Monterey Park and using the staging yards in Monterey Park, as listed in Table 4.10-15, would not exceed applicable noise limits. There would be no impact.” The Draft EIR does address the City’s noise ordinance. The text has been revised as follows to clarify that state law preempts regulation from City noise regulations.

Page 4.10-19:

City of Monterey Park

The City of Monterey Park Municipal Code exempts activities in locations where regulation has been preempted by state law from the City of Monterey Park Municipal Code noise regulations in Chapter 9.53. The siting of the proposed project is within the jurisdiction of the CPUC. Thus, noise from constructing the components in Monterey Park and using the staging yards in Monterey Park, as listed in Table 4.10-15, would not exceed applicable noise limits. There would be no impact.

- A8-14 The City's comment that a Traffic Management Plan should be required and that project-related vehicles travel and circulate off peak hours is noted and included in the record for consideration by decision makers.

As shown in response to comment A2-2, MM TT-1 has been revised to include the requirements of Draft EIR MM TT-2, MM TT-3, MM TT-6, MM TT-7, MM TT-8, MM TT-9, and MM TT-10 (see response to comment D2-205). MM TT-1 requires the applicant to prepare and implement a Traffic Control Plan identifying specific measures to reduce significant impacts to significantly affected intersections during the AM or PM peak hours (and during the specified phase) to less than significant levels. Primary measures to be included in the Traffic Control Plan are limiting project-related heavy truck trips and, as suggested by the City, limiting project construction worker vehicle trips during peak hours so that more project-related traffic would travel and circulate during off-peak hours.

- A8-15 The City's concurrence is noted. As stated in response A8-14, MM TT-1 has been revised in the Final EIR to include the coordination requirements of Draft EIR MM T-2 referenced in the comment. Refer to response to comment A2-2 for revised text of MM TT-1.

- A8-16 The City's concurrence is noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. MM TT-1 has been revised to incorporate the road repair requirements of MM TT-7 in the Final EIR, as described in response to comment D2-206. Refer to response to comment A2-2 for revised text of MM TT-1.

- A8-17 The temporary closure of Potrero Grande Drive due to relocation of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) water pipeline is addressed under Impact TT-1. The Draft EIR concluded that the temporary closure (if necessary) could cause substantial delays, which would be a significant traffic impact. The Draft EIR concluded that, with implementation of MM TT-2 (Road and Lane Closure Plan) impacts of temporary closures, including Potrero Grande Drive, would be reduced to less than significant. Note that the requirement to prepare a Road and Lane Closure Plan, originally found in MM TT-2, has been added to MM TT-1. Refer to response to comment A2-2 for revised text of MM TT-1.

As described under Impact TT-5, lane closure during relocation of the MWD pipeline would significantly impact emergency access. The Draft EIR concluded that implementation of MM TT-8 (which included coordination with local emergency

service providers, including the Monterey Park Fire and Police Departments) would reduce impacts to emergency access to less than significant. Note that the requirement to coordinate with emergency services providers in the Draft EIR, originally found in MM TT-8, has been added to MM TT-1 in the Final EIR. Refer to response to comment A2-2 for revised text of MM TT-1.

A8-18 Note that MM TT-1 has been revised in the Final EIR to include the requirements of Draft EIR MM T-9 (Public Transit, Pedestrian, and Bicyclist Plan) referenced in the comment, which requires review and comment by the City of Monterey Park. Refer to response to comment A2-2 for revised text of MM TT-1.

A8-19 Note that MM TT-1 has been revised in the Final EIR to include the requirements of Draft EIR MM T-3 (Highway Closure Plan) referenced in the comment, which requires review and comment by the City of Monterey Park. Refer to response to comment A2-2 for revised text of MM TT-1.

A8-20 The City's request is noted and will be included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. The City is encouraged to reach out to the CPUC with questions and concerns throughout the project. The CPUC also posts all project-related information, documents, and updates on a project-specific website.

Comment Set A9 – Andrew Salas, Chairman, Gabrieleno Band of Indians



GABRIELEÑO BAND OF MISSION INDIANS – KIZH NATION

Historically known as The San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
recognized by the State of California as the aboriginal tribe of the Los Angeles basin

California Public Utilities Commission
Re: Mesa 500-kV Substation Project
C/ Ecology & Environment
505 Sansome Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94111

RE: AB52 consultation response for Mesa Substation Project

Dear Agency

May 10, 2016

Please find this letter in response to your request for consultation dated March 13, 2016. I have reviewed the project site and do have concerns for cultural resources. Your project lies in an area where the Ancestral territories of the Kizh (Kitch) Gabrieleño's villages adjoined and overlapped with each other, at least during the Late Prehistoric and Protohistoric Periods. The homeland of the Kizh Gabrieleño was probably the most influential Native American group in aboriginal southern California (Bean and Smith 1978a:538), was centered in the Los Angeles Basin, and reached as far east as the San Bernardino-Riverside area. The homeland of our neighbors the Serranos was primarily the San Bernardino Mountains, including the slopes and lowlands on the north and south flanks. Whatever the linguistic affiliation, Native Americans in and around the project area exhibited similar organization and resource procurement strategies. Villages were based on clan or lineage groups. Their home/ base sites are marked by midden deposits often with bedrock mortars. During their seasonal rounds to exploit plant resources, small groups would migrate within their traditional territory in search of specific plants and animals. Their gathering strategies of ten left behind signs of special use sites, usually grinding slicks on bedrock boulders, at the locations of the resources. A9-1

Due to the project location and the high sensitivity of the area location, we would like to request one of our certified Native American Monitor to be on site during any and all ground disturbances (including but not limited to pavement removal, post holing, auguring, boring, grading, excavation and trenching) to protect any cultural resources which may be effected during construction or development. In all cases, when the Native American Heritage Commission states there are "no records of sacred sites in the project area" the NAHC will always refer lead agencies to the respective Native American Tribe because the NAHC is only aware of general information and are not the experts on each California Tribe. Our Elder Committee & Tribal Historians are the experts for our Tribe and are able to provide a more complete history (both written and oral) regarding the location of historic villages, trade routes, cemeteries and sacred/religious sites in the project area. While the property may be located in an area that has been previously developed, numerous examples can be shared to show that there still is a possibility that unknown, yet significant, cultural resources will be encountered during ground disturbance activities. Please note, if they haven't been listed with the NAHC, it doesn't mean that they aren't there. Not everyone reports what they know. A9-2

The recent implementation of AB52 dictates that lead agencies consult with Native American Tribes who can prove and document traditional and cultural affiliation with the area of said project in order to protect cultural resources. However our tribe is connected Ancestrally to this project location area, what does Ancestrally or Ancestral mean? The people who were in your family in past times, Of, belonging to, inherited from, or denoting an ancestor or ancestors <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/ancestral>. Our priorities are to avoid and protect without delay or conflicts – to consult with you to avoid unnecessary destruction of cultural and biological resources, but also to protect what resources still exist at the project site for the benefit and education of future generations. A9-3

CC: NAHC

With respect,

Andrew Salas, Chairman
cell (626)926-4131

Andrew Salas, Chairman
Albert Perez, treasurer I

Nadine Salas, Vice-Chairman
Martha Gonzalez Lemos, treasurer II

Christina Swindall Martinez, secretary
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Response to Comment Set A9: Andrew Salas, Chairman, Gabrieleno Band of Indians

A9-1 The commenter states that the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) sent a “request for consultation” under Assembly Bill (AB) 52 dated March 13, 2016. To clarify, this project is not subject to AB 52, as explained in footnote 1 on page 4.4-1 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), since the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR for the project was completed on June 5, 2015, and only projects with an NOP completed after July 1, 2015, must comply with AB 52. The Energy Division of the CPUC did not send a letter dated March 13, 2016, to the commenter that requested consultation under AB 52; it is unclear what letter the commenter is referring to. However, the letter was not an AB 52 consultation for the proposed project.

The commenter states that the proposed project causes “concerns for cultural resources.” Please see the Draft EIR, Section 4.4, “Cultural and Paleontological Resources,” which provides a complete environmental analysis of the impacts to cultural resources anticipated to result from the proposed project.

The commenter’s information about the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians/Kit’c Nation is noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. Pages 4.4-15 through 4.4-16 of the EIR contain a discussion similar to previous input from the commenter regarding cultural resources associated with the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians/Kit’c Nation.

A9-2 The Draft EIR discusses the potential cultural resources impacts associated with ground disturbance during construction under Impact CR-2. The Draft EIR concludes that ground disturbing activities could result in a significant impact because excavation and ground disturbance in previously undisturbed soils may result in discovery and damage to a previously undiscovered cultural resource. Mitigation Measure (MM) CR-2 would require training workers regarding the potential for discovery of cultural resources as well as procedures to follow if a discovery occurs during construction. MM CR-3 outlines the procedure to follow in the case of an unanticipated discovery.

MM CR-2 and MM CR-3 are sufficient to mitigate Impact CR-2 to less than significant. The information provided by the commenter during preparation of the Draft EIR is described on pages 4.4-15 and 4.4-16 of the EIR and has been revised as follows to reflect the confidential nature of the location of the proposed sacred lands area:

On January 26, 2015, Andrew Salas, Chairman of the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians/Kizh (Kit’c) Nation, replied to SCE’s outreach letter in an e-mail listing four sacred sites—Siba, Houtnga, Isankanga, and Ouiichi—and stated that they believe the project would impact the sites.

Mr. Salas also responded to the CPUC’s Notice of Preparation for the proposed project. He stated that the area is sensitive in that it is a traditional Gabrieleño territory. Mr. Salas requested that a Native American monitor be on site during ground disturbing activities. In a subsequent email, Mr. Salas provided a map of Rancho Potrero Grande, which was owned by Manuel Perez, a Gabrieleño native. Mr. Salas stated the area was a village site.

During the CPUC's conference call with Mr. Salas, the Tribal Archaeologist, and a member of the tribe, the Tribal Archeologist discussed areas of known and potential resources within the general location of the proposed project. In addition, the archeologist noted that the tribe had submitted a request to the NAHC to document an area within the vicinity of the proposed project as Sacred Land and indicated that the request also included areas of known and potential resources. The CPUC requested that the tribe provide this information to its qualified archeologist, Dr. G. T. Gross, for review as part of the EIR preparation.

The information provided by the Tribe identified a proposed Sacred Land area in the vicinity of the proposed Mesa Substation site and proposed Telecommunications Routes 1 and 3. However, the exact location of the Sacred Land area is confidential and not subject to inclusion in this EIR under CEQA Guidelines section 15120(d) and Government Code section 6254(r). In addition, one archaeological resource that was not identified in record searches and surveys was identified within the proposed Sacred Land area in the materials provided by the Tribe. The resource is located over one mile away from the nearest project component and therefore was outside of the proposed project's records search area. The remainder of the identified archaeological resources were identified during project records searches.

In sum, no additional resources in the project area were identified by the Tribe based on the conference call referenced in comment referenced above or based on the information submitted by the Tribe. As described on page 4.4-10 of the EIR, there are no known surface prehistoric resources within the project area that would indicate subsurface resources are likely to be found. Furthermore, only one prehistoric resource and three multi-component (i.e., historic and pre-historic) resources were located within 0.5 miles of the proposed project area, which also indicates a low probability of discovering a subsurface resource. Finally, most telecommunications work along Telecommunications Routes 1 and 3 would involve stringing cable on existing poles. Ground disturbing work within the proposed Sacred Lands area would be limited to a total of about 400 feet of trenching for telecommunications, distributed between two locations. The CPUC therefore concluded that, given the substantial evidence in support of a low likelihood of uncovering a prehistoric resource during ground disturbing activities and the implementation of MM CR-2 and MM CR-3, monitoring of ground disturbance by a Native American construction monitor is not required to reduce impacts to less than significant.

- A9-3 The CPUC's coordination with the commenter beyond contacting the Native American Heritage Commission is described on pages 4.4-9 and 4.4-15 through 4.4-16 of the Draft EIR. The communication the CPUC had with Andrew Salas, Chairman of the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians, regarding sacred lands and cultural resources near the proposed project is also discussed on these pages.
- A9-4 The commenter's information about AB 52 consultation is noted and included in the record for consideration by the decision makers. As mentioned above, footnote 1 on page 4.4-1 of the Draft EIR explains that AB 52 requires a lead agency to offer Native American tribes with an interest in tribal cultural resources located within its jurisdiction the opportunity to consult with the Lead Agency on California

Environmental Quality Act documents. The footnote also explains that AB 52 requirements apply to projects with NOPs issued after July 1, 2015. The NOP for the proposed project was issued on June 5, 2015; therefore, AB 52 does not apply to this project.