



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT OR INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED  
NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE  
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY RELIABILITY PROJECT PROPOSED BY  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON**

**APPLICATION NO. A.12-10-018**

**To: All Interested Parties**  
**From: Lon Payne, CEQA Project Manager, CPUC Energy Division**  
**Date: April 23, 2013**

*Si usted necesita más información o una copia de este documento en español, por favor, llame al (855) 894-8054.*

**A. INTRODUCTION**

Southern California Edison (SCE) filed an application for a Permit to Construct (PTC) with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the Santa Barbara County Reliability Project (SBCRP) to rebuild and upgrade a portion of its transmission infrastructure in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties between the City of San Buena Ventura (Ventura) and the City of Carpinteria. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the CPUC is the Lead Agency and is preparing an environmental review document to evaluate the proposed project.

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) indicates the CPUC's intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Initial Study (IS)/Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) in accordance with CEQA. The EIR would describe the nature and extent of the environmental impacts of the SBCRP and project alternatives, and would discuss mitigation measures for adverse impacts. Depending on the initial assessment of potential impacts related to the construction or operation of the project, the CPUC may instead issue an IS and draft MND, if appropriate.

With this NOP, the CPUC provides information about the SBCRP project description, location, and potential environmental impacts, and requests comments from interested persons, organizations, and agencies regarding the scope and content of the environmental information.

This NOP will be circulated for a public review and comment period beginning April 23, 2013 and ending at 5:00 pm on May 23, 2013. A scoping meeting will be held to receive comments, as described in Section D.

## **B. SUMMARY OF THE SBCRP**

### ***Background***

In 1998, SCE initiated the SBCRP to increase reliability by reinforcing its existing 66 kilovolt (kV) subtransmission system in northwestern Ventura County and southeastern Santa Barbara County to meet the electrical demands of the Santa Barbara South Coast area during emergency conditions while also enhancing operational flexibility. The Santa Barbara South Coast area includes the cities of Goleta, Carpinteria, and Santa Barbara, and adjacent areas of unincorporated southern Santa Barbara County (Electrical Needs Area or ENA). Customers in northwest Ventura County would also benefit from the modernized facilities.

SCE commenced construction of the SBCRP in 1999 under the assumption that the Project was exempt from permitting pursuant to CPUC General Order (G.O.) 131-D and the California Coastal Act (California Public Resources Code section 30000 et seq). Between 1999 and 2004, the following portions of the Project were constructed:

- Some substation modifications were completed at the Carpinteria, Goleta, Isla Vista, Ortega, and Santa Clara Substations;
- New subtransmission structures and 66 kV conductor were installed in Segment 1 from Santa Clara Substation to Casitas Substation, and the existing 66 kV conductor was removed;
- New subtransmission structures and 66 kV conductor were installed in Segment 2 from Casitas Substation to the ‘Y’ (the point along the corridor where Segments 2, 3B, and 4 converge) located near Casitas Pass just west of Lake Casitas in Ventura County, and the existing 66 kV conductor was removed;
- New subtransmission structures and 66 kV conductor were installed in Segment 3A from Carpinteria Substation to the Santa Barbara/Ventura County line, and existing wood subtransmission structures were removed or topped;
- Subtransmission structures in Segments 1 and 2 were partially removed; and
- Two footings for tubular steel poles (TSPs), two lightweight steel (LWS) H-frames, one LWS pole, and two switches at the Getty Tap location were installed, and two wood H-frames and one wood pole were removed.

In 2004, Coastal Commission staff determined that the Project did not qualify for an Exemption from a Local Coastal Development Permit (CDP) and construction ceased. In 2012, SCE submitted an application to the CPUC for a permit to construct the components of the project not yet constructed, and those portions of the project that would require a CDP.

### ***Project Description***

Major components of the SBCRP include the following:

- Reconstruction of existing 66 kilovolt (kV) subtransmission facilities primarily within existing utility rights-of-way (ROW) between the existing Santa Clara Substation in Ventura County and the existing Carpinteria Substation in Santa Barbara County (Segments 4 and 3B);
- Installation of marker balls on overhead wire;
- Modification of subtransmission and substation equipment within the existing Carpinteria Substation, Casitas Substation, and Santa Clara Substation;

- Replacement of line protection relays within existing substation equipment rooms or cabinets at Getty Substation, Goleta Substation, Ortega Substation, and Santa Barbara Substation;
- Installation of telecommunications facilities along Segments 1, 2, and 4 and at Carpinteria Substation, Casitas Substation, Santa Clara Substation, and Ventura Substation;
- Installation of fault return conductor on subtransmission structures along Segment 3A;
- Removal of subtransmission infrastructure foundations in Segments 1 and 2;

Construction of the SBCRP is anticipated to begin in July 2014 and would take approximately 2 years.

### ***Project Location***

The components of the SBCRP would be primarily located in existing SCE ROW between the City of Ventura and the City of Carpinteria in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. The proposed project components have been divided into discrete geographic segments to facilitate discussions (Figure 1).

- Segment 1:* Spans from Santa Clara Substation in the east to Casitas Substation in the west.  
*Segment 2:* Spans from Casitas Substation in the east to the 'Y' in the west.  
*Segment 3A:* Spans from Carpinteria Substation in the west to the Santa Barbara County/Ventura County border in the east.  
*Segment 3B:* Spans from the Santa Barbara County/Ventura County border in the west to the 'Y' in the east.  
*Segment 4:* Spans from the 'Y' in the east to Carpinteria Substation in the west.  
*Getty Tap:* The 'Getty Tap' is located approximately in the middle of Segment 1.

### ***Operations and Maintenance***

The subtransmission lines would be maintained in a manner consistent with CPUC G.O. 95 and G.O. 128, as applicable, and may include activities such as repairs, pole brushing in accordance with fire break clearance requirements, herbicide applications, and tree trimming to maintain a clear working space area around all poles. Typical activities would also include routine aerial and ground inspections, patrols, and preventive maintenance to ensure service reliability, as well as emergency work to maintain and restore service continuity. Activities associated with maintenance of the telecommunications line could include replacing defective circuit boards, damaged radio antennas, or feedlines and testing of the equipment. Telecommunication equipment would also be subject to routine inspection and preventative maintenance such as filter change-outs or software and hardware upgrades. Most regular operations and maintenance activities of telecommunication equipment would be performed at substations and would be accessed from existing access roads. All substations associated with the proposed project are, and would continue to function as, remotely controlled substations. Workers would routinely visit each substation, as needed, for standard operations and equipment maintenance.

### ***Project Alternatives***

If an EIR is confirmed to be the appropriate CEQA document for environmental review of the project, reasonable project alternatives will be identified and analyzed in the Draft EIR. Agencies and the public will be given the opportunity to comment on the project alternatives considered following publication of the Draft EIR during the 30-day comment period. A Notice of Availability (NOA) will be issued at the time of the publication of the Draft EIR to inform the public and agencies that the 30-day comment period for the Draft EIR has been initiated.

If an MND is confirmed to be the appropriate CEQA document for environmental review of the project, the public will be given the opportunity to comment following publication of the Draft MND during the 30-day comment period. A Notice of Availability (NOA) will be issued at the time of the publication of

the Draft MND to inform the public and agencies that the 30-day comment period for the Draft MND has been initiated.

**C. SCOPE OF THE EIR AND DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

CEQA requires agencies to consider environmental impacts that may result from a proposed project, to inform the public of potential impacts and alternatives, and to facilitate public involvement in the assessment process. The CEQA document prepared for the project will describe in detail the nature and extent of the environmental impacts of the project, and will discuss appropriate mitigation measures for any adverse impacts. The EIR will include, among other matters, discussions of the project objectives, a description of the affected environment, an evaluation of the environmental impacts of the proposed project, and proposed mitigation to reduce environmental impacts to a less-than-significant level. If it is found that all environmental impacts can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, an MND will be prepared.

An initial review of the Proponent’s Environmental Assessment (PEA), prepared by SCE for the project, has identified the following potential environmental impacts.

Table 1: Potential Project Issues or Impacts

Environmental Issue Area	Potential Issues or Impact
<i>Aesthetics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of the project components could result in impacts on aesthetics.</li> </ul>
<i>Air Quality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction could result in an exceedance of criteria air pollutants above established thresholds.</li> </ul>
<i>Biological Resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of the project could result in impacts on steelhead designated critical habitat, arroyo chub, and avian species.</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of some project elements could result in impacts on cultural resources.</li> </ul>
<i>Traffic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporary lane closures along Highway 33 and other streets in the project area could result in impacts related to traffic and transportation.</li> </ul>

**D. PROJECT SCOPING PROCESS AND MEETINGS**

Circulation of this NOP opens a public review and comment period on the scope of the CEQA document that begins on April 23, 2013 and ends on May 23, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. All interested parties, including the public, responsible agencies, and trustee agencies, are invited to learn more about the project, ask questions, and present comments about the SBCRP at the public scoping meeting:

Tuesday, May 7, 2013

**Carpinteria City Hall Council Chambers**  
 5775 Carpinteria Avenue  
 Carpinteria, CA 93013

Open House: 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.  
 Public Comment Session: 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Written scoping comments may also be mailed, faxed, or emailed to the CPUC during the NOP comment period specified above. Please include a name, address, and telephone number of a person who can receive future correspondence regarding the EIR. Please send your comments to:

Lon Payne  
California Public Utilities Commission  
RE: Santa Barbara County Reliability Project  
c/o Ecology and Environment, Inc.  
505 Sansome Street, Suite #300  
San Francisco, CA 94111

Emailed comments may be sent to: [SBCRP.CEQA@ene.com](mailto:SBCRP.CEQA@ene.com). Faxed comments may be sent to (415) 398-5326. Voice messages may be left at: (855) 894-8054. For mailed, faxed, and emailed comments, please include your name and mailing address in your comment, and include the words “Santa Barbara County Reliability Project.”

Comments received during the scoping period will be considered during preparation of the SBCRP environmental document.

### ***Agency Comments***

This NOP was sent to responsible and trustee agencies, cooperating federal agencies, and the State Clearinghouse. Each responsible agency receiving this NOP is invited to respond by providing the CPUC with specific details about the scope, environmental issues, alternatives, and mitigation measures related to each responsible agency’s area of statutory responsibility that must be explored in the environmental analysis. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b)(1)(B), responsible and trustee agencies should also indicate their respective level of responsibility for the SBCRP in their response. Please send responses to the address noted above.

## **G. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

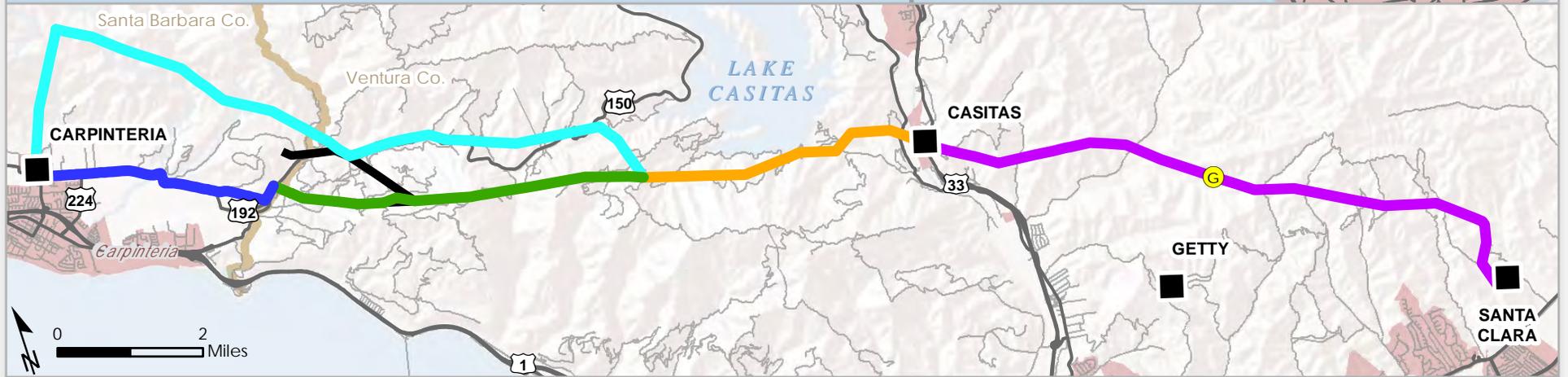
Information about the SBCRP and the CEQA process is available on the CPUC’s project website: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/ene/sbcpr/sbcpr.html>.

The website will be used to post all public documents related to the CEQA document. No public comments will be accepted on this website; however, the website will provide a sign-up option for interested parties to be placed on the project mailing list and a printable comment form.

The CEQA Guidelines are available at the following website:  
[http://www.ceres.ca.gov/topic/env\\_law/ceqa/guidelines](http://www.ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/guidelines)

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, which serves as an environmental checklist for all CPUC CEQA documents, is available at the following website: [http://www.ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/guidelines/pdf/appendix\\_g-3.pdf](http://www.ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/guidelines/pdf/appendix_g-3.pdf)

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|--|--|-----------------|
| Existing Electrical Transmission Lines                   | Existing Substation Locations                  | Major Roads     |
| Segment 1 (Purple line)                                  | Getty Tap (Yellow circle with G)               | Local road      |
| Segment 2 (Orange line)                                  | Los Padres National Forest (USFS) (Green area) | County Boundary |
| Segment 3A (Blue line)                                   |  | City Limits     |
| Segment 3B (Green line)                                  |  |                 |
| Segment 4 (Cyan line)                                    |  |                 |
| Existing SubTrans 66-kV To Be Removed (Thick black line) |  |                 |

Figure 1  
Project Location

Santa Barbara County  
Reliability Project  
Santa Barbara and  
Ventura Counties  
California