

Final
INITIAL STUDY

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON COMPANY
SIX FLAGS POWER LINE AND SUBSTATION PROJECT
(A.97-12-049)

Prepared for:

California Public Utilities Commission
Energy Division

June 1998

Prepared by:

Aspen Environmental Group
Agoura Hills, California

(Contract No. PS-1624)

Environmental Checklist Form

1. Project Title:

Six Flags Power Line and Substation Project
(Application Number 97-12-049)

2. Lead Agency Name and Address:

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
Energy Division
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

3. Contact Person and Phone Number:

Judith Iklé, Regulatory Analyst
Energy Division
(415) 703-1486

4. Project Location:

The proposed project involves the construction of a new substation, the replacement of power poles, and the stringing of new power lines in northwestern Los Angeles County. A portion of the new power lines would be located within the boundaries of the City of Santa Clarita, while the new substation and the majority of the new power poles would be constructed within unincorporated territory of Los Angeles County. The new 66/16 kilovolt (kV) substation would be constructed in the parking lot of the Six Flags Magic Mountain amusement park adjacent to Feedmill Road on the west side of the Santa Clara River. The proposed 66 kV power line would span the Santa Clara River, the Old Road, and Interstate 5. New power lines would be added to existing poles along Avenue Stanford and Avenue Hall in the City of Santa Clarita. Interstate 5 is the boundary between the City of Santa Clarita and unincorporated Los Angeles County.

5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address:

Southern California Edison Company (SCE)
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue
P.O. Box 800
Rosemead, CA 91770
Attn: Beth Gaylord
(626) 302-1915

6. General Plan Designation:

The portions of the proposed power line located within the City of Santa Clarita are designated as Business Park in the Santa Clarita General Plan. The portions of the project located within unincorporated Los Angeles County, including the proposed substation, are designated for commercial use.

7. Zoning:

The zoning for the portion of the project located within the City of Santa Clarita is BP (Business Park). The portions of the project located within unincorporated Los Angeles County are zoned C3DP, an intensive commercial designation, and CR (Commercial Recreation).

8. Description of Project:

Information in this section is taken from Southern California Edison's Application (December 31, 1997) and Amendments to the Application (March 6 and April 22, 1998) for a permit from the California Public Utilities Commission to construct the Six Flags power line and substation, pursuant to CPUC General Order 131-D. References to these documents and the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA), submitted with the original application, are made throughout this Initial Study.

Proposed 66kV Power line

The proposed 66kV tap line will require the construction of 3,210 feet of single circuit line, and the double circuiting of 2,890 feet of existing line, for a total distance of 6,100 feet (1.15 miles). The proposed project requires the installation of nine 75 foot-high wood poles and three 85 foot-high tubular steel poles. The power lines will tap into a Southern California Edison (SCE) transmission line east of Pardee Substation and then be strung along existing power poles on the north side of Avenue Hall (see Figure 2). Then the proposed power line would be strung along existing poles on Avenue Stanford (heading southeast) for 1,590 feet, and new poles would be added along the edge of existing parking lots located at rear of commercial and industrial businesses on the west side of Avenue Stanford. From the new poles, the proposed power line turns southwest again and crosses Interstate 5 and the Old Road, and continues across the Santa Clara River along more new poles. Here, the conductor on an existing 16kV system will be transferred onto the new poles (see "Relocation and Removal of 16 kV Conductor and Poles" below). After crossing the river, the proposed power line and the transferred conductor enter the Six Flags Magic Mountain property. The proposed power line continues across a gravel parking lot to Feedmill Road. The south side of Feedmill Road is a paved parking lot and the proposed power lines would terminate at the proposed Colossus substation, approximately 1,100 feet from the west bank of the Santa Clara River. At Feedmill Road, the transferred conductor will be split off to the existing 16kV pole system, and the 66kV line will enter the station as described below.

Substation

The proposed 66/16 kV substation would be located approximately 1,100 feet from the west bank of the Santa Clara River. The proposed substation would occupy a 45-foot by 83-foot area with one 29-foot switchrack and one 15-foot switchrack with two circuit breakers. An 8 foot-high chain-link fence is proposed around the substation.

Relocation and Removal of 16 kV Conductor and Poles

The existing 16 kV conductor that currently crosses the Santa Clara River, south of the proposed project, will be relocated and placed on the poles installed for the proposed 66kV project. The 16 kV conductor will then be strung across the Six Flags parking lot to an existing 16kV pole that is located adjacent to Feedmill Road. The poles and 16 kV conductor that were previously used will be removed.

Applicant's Mitigation Measures

Within SCE's application materials, including the PEA, a number of measures have been adopted to reduce or avoid potential environmental impacts associated with project construction and maintenance. These measures are considered a part of the proposed project and are summarized below:

- Personnel and equipment will stay out of the river channel at all times during project construction except for tree trimming personnel who, utilizing hand tools, must provide line clearance for construction.
- Construction activities (wire stringing) in the vicinity of the river channel will be avoided during the nesting season for sensitive bird species (March 15 to August 15).
- The duration of construction activities in the vicinity of the river channel will be minimized.
- During construction of the substation, necessary precautions will be made to prevent transportation of exposed soils into drainage channels. These precautions may include sediment traps, barriers, or covers. In addition, SCE has erosion control plans prepared for emergencies which include the storage and use of materials such as sand bags and pumps at various locations.
- Excavated materials will not be deposited or stored where the material can be washed away by high water or storm runoff.
- All construction spoils will be hauled off site.
- Power line stringing will be accomplished in accordance with procedures contained in SCE's Accident Prevention Manual, Section 200 T&D Overhead Rules; Rule 214, Wire Stringing. All existing facilities (utility lines on existing poles) will be protected in place utilizing covers and guard structures.
- In accordance with California state law, identification and protection of underground facilities will be accomplished by contacting Underground Service Alert 48 hours prior to commencement of construction.
- SCE will survey all proposed pole sites and any other area subject to disturbance by this project for the presence of Peirson's morning glory (*Calystegia piersonii*) during the appropriate time of year (May-June), and immediately prior to construction to ensure that all individuals of this species are avoided.
- Emissions generated from construction equipment will be minimized by keeping the number of pieces of equipment to a minimum and reducing vehicle idling to an absolute minimum, as a general rule, less than 10 minutes.
- As a maintenance activity, trees in the river channel may need to be trimmed periodically to maintain adequate separation between the trees and the 66 kV lines crossing the river channel. No trees will be cut down and removed. Trimmed material will be left on the ground to provide cover habitat for wildlife.

Lead Agency's Required Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures are required by the CPUC in order to reduce or avoid potential impacts identified in the "Evaluation of Environmental Impacts" section of this Initial Study (beginning on page 9).

- B-1** *If Peirson's morning glory are located within the construction area, plants will be marked with a 1-2 foot tall metal pole at the time of surveying, and flagging shall be attached to each pole to ensure specimens are avoided during construction. Workers will be instructed in writing to avoid walking, driving, or parking near these flagged poles.*

- B-2** *Trimming of trees may only take place from September 30 to March 31.*

- H-1** *SCE shall ensure that affected state and local emergency service agencies are notified of the freeway closure at least two weeks in advance. SCE shall coordinate with each affected agency as needed to ensure that alternative emergency response and evacuation routes are available during the period of freeway closure. Emergency service agencies shall be provided with name and telephone number of a SCE contact person who will be responsible for coordinating construction activities related to the freeway closure.*

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

The power line route begins in a modern business park complex on the west side of the City of Santa Clarita (along Avenue Hall and Avenue Stanford). This area is developed with one- and two-story commercial and light industrial buildings. The power line route then proceeds across a transportation corridor which includes Interstate 5, the Old Road, and an abandoned railroad line. The river channel is approximately 500 feet wide and contains substantial stands of riparian vegetation along each bank, although the amount of vegetation in the channel has been reduced by recent flood flows. On the opposite side of the river (in unincorporated Los Angeles County territory), the power line route traverses a gravel auxiliary parking lot for the Six Flags Magic Mountain amusement park. Substantial erosion has occurred at the edge of this parking lot along the bank of the Santa Clara River channel. Feedmill Road, a local two-lane street, separates the gravel auxiliary parking lot from main parking lot for the amusement park. The main parking lot is a large, uninterrupted expanse of asphalt pavement. The proposed substation would be located near the periphery of this parking lot in close proximity to Feedmill Road and immediately adjacent to a drainage channel that traverses the parking lot and empties into the river channel. The amusement park facilities are located on the opposite side of the parking lot, several hundred feet in distance from the substation site. There are no buildings or other structures in the vicinity of the substation site except for the existing transformer. The adjacent land is used for parking and roads (Feedmill Road). Feedmill Road continues north providing access to ranch property among the hillsides north of Magic Mountain.

10. Other Public Agencies whose approval is Required:

The project would require the temporary closure of Interstate 5 to remove the existing 16kV conductor lines which span the freeway. Permitting and coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California Highway Patrol will be required for the freeway closure.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a “Potentially Significant Impact” as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use and Planning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population and Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy & Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities & Service Systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geological Problems | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards | <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Circulation | | |

DETERMINATION:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described herein have been added to the project. A NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect(s) on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets, if the effect is a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated.” An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there WILL NOT be a significant effect in this case because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR pursuant to applicable standards and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project.

Douglas M. Long, Manager
Decision-Making Support Branch
Energy Division
California Public Utilities Commission

Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. LAND USE AND PLANNING. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Conflict with general plan designation or zoning?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with applicable environmental plans or policies adopted by agencies with jurisdiction over the project?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Be incompatible with existing land use in the vicinity?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
d) Affect agricultural resources or operations (e.g., impacts to soils or farmlands, or impacts from incompatible land uses)?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of established community (including a low-income or minority community)?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Explanation:

- a) **No Impact.** The portion of the project located within the City of Santa Clarita is designated for business park use and the proposed project facilities located in unincorporated Los Angeles County are in an area designated for commercial use. Utility structures such as those included in the proposed project are typically considered appropriate for such areas and, in fact, are necessary to serve businesses located within these areas. Therefore, the project is not considered in conflict with local general plan designations or zoning. It should be noted that the CPUC has exclusive jurisdiction over the proposed project and any local zoning permit requirements are not applicable to the project.
- b) **No Impact.** The project is not known to conflict with state environmental plans or policies.
- c) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Due to the substation's location within a large parking lot, it should present no incompatibilities with nearby land uses. The only land use in the vicinity of the substation is the Six Flags Magic Mountain amusement park which the substation is intended to serve. The substation will be located in a remote corner of the amusement park parking lot, several hundred feet from the park facilities. The new and replacement power lines will be located in an area of existing power lines which serve the local businesses and should present no land use incompatibilities.
- d) **No Impact.** None of the proposed facilities are located within an agricultural area. With the exception of the river channel, the immediate vicinity of the project is completely developed with urban land uses and improvements.
- e) **No Impact.** There is no aspect of the project that will serve as a physical or psychological barrier with the potential to disrupt an established community.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
II. POPULATION AND HOUSING. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Cumulatively exceed official regional or local population projections?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly (e.g., through projects in an undeveloped area or extension of major infrastructure)?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace existing housing, especially affordable housing?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Explanation:

- a) **No Impact.** The project is intended to upgrade power delivery to an existing commercial customer (Six Flags). There is no direct population growth associated with the project and little likelihood for significant secondary growth-inducing effects. Therefore, the project will have no effect on official regional or local population projections.
- b) **No Impact.** The project represents an upgrade to the power delivery system for an existing commercial customer. There is no direct population or employment growth associated with the project and little likelihood for significant secondary grow-inducing effects.
- c) **No Impact.** No housing will be displaced or otherwise affected by the proposed project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. GEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS. <i>Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving:</i>				
a) Fault rupture?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
b) Seismic ground shaking?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
c) Seismic ground failure, including liquefaction?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
d) Seiche, tsunami, or volcanic hazard?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Landslides or mudflows?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Erosion, changes in topography or unstable soil conditions from excavation, grading, or fill?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

g) Subsidence of the land?	G	G	G	☑
h) Expansive soils?	G	G	G	☑
i) Unique geologic or physical features?	G	G	G	☑

Explanation:

- a-b) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The project site is located in an area of seismic activity and structures associated with the proposed project could be rendered inoperable by a major earthquake. Five major faults lie within 31 miles of the site, with the closest fault being the San Gabriel at 2.7 miles distance (SCE, 1997). The potential for injuries to people at the substation site is minimal because no workers are typically present, and the site is fenced and locked. The line structures themselves incorporate code-mandated (Uniform Building Code) wind-loading criteria which creates structures able to withstand most seismic events (Gaylord, 1998). To the extent that the power poles holding the 66 kV and 16kV conductor were rendered inoperable in an earthquake, resulting in a loss of power in the service area, the project could affect the population of the area (see Section XII - Utilities and Service Systems).

- c) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Liquefaction can have several impacts on a linear project including liquefaction-induced lateral spreading which displaces objects on the surface. Although major earthquakes (e.g., Northridge Earthquake of January 17, 1994) have not caused liquefaction damage within the Six Flags property (SCE, 1997), the entire area of the proposed project falls within a potential lateral spreading zone (Fugro, 1997). Power pole and line failure could occur as a consequence of lateral spreading, resulting in a loss of power to the service area. However, the construction standards used in the design should minimize damage from all but the most severe earthquakes.

- d) **No Impact.** The proposed project is located within the interior of California where there is no threat of a tsunami. The project is not adjacent to any large bodies of water and, therefore, could not be impacted by seiches. No active volcanos exist in the area.

- e) **No Impact.** The proposed project is located in a valley along a stream terrace. The installation of the project will have no impact on the hillside structure or stability.

- f-g) **No Impact.** The proposed route for the project includes areas underlain with artificial fill and includes paved and graded parking lots, and street setbacks. Excavation for the substation is expected to involve less than 1,500 cubic yards of material, and will be refilled with engineered compacted fill (SCE, 1997). The proposed project includes measures to limit fill entering the river during the rainy season (SCE, 1997). These factors should minimize the potential for erosion and subsidence impacts.

- h) **No Impact.** Soil surveys of the area indicate it is underlain with artificial fill and/or alluvial terrace consisting of silts, sands, and gravels deposited by the ancestral Santa Clara River (SCE, 1997). These artificial and native soil types have zero to low expansion potential (SCE, 1997).

- i) **No Impact.** The proposed project occurs in a heavily graded and filled commercial and industrial area that has disguised any unique geologic or physical features that may have existed. Given the nature of area (i.e., consisting of fill and/or alluvial terrace material), it is unlikely that any unique geologic or physical features exist.

IV. WATER. <i>Would the proposal result in:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface runoff?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Discharge into surface water or other alteration of surface water quality (e.g., temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity)?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
d) Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Changes in currents, or the course or direction of water movements?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Change in the quantity of ground waters, either through direct additions or withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations or through substantial loss of ground water recharge capability?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Altered direction or rate of flow of ground water?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Impacts to ground water quality?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
i) Substantial reduction in the amount of ground water otherwise available for public water supplies?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Explanation:

- a) **No Impact.** Since the substation will be located within an area which is completely paved and contains existing drainage improvements, there will be no change in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface runoff with the construction of the proposed project. The power line improvements do not involve any changes to topography nor covering of the land with impervious surfaces and, therefore, will have no effect on existing absorption rates or drainage.
- b) **No Impact.** The only water-related hazard in the vicinity is potential flooding and scouring associated with the Santa Clara River. The proposed project will be located in close proximity to the river channel, but will not have any affect on flood hazards associated with the river. Based on the flood plain boundaries indicated on the Santa Clarita General Plan map (1991), some of the new power poles could be located along the edge of the flood plain. This will not result in exposure of people or property to flood hazards, but will require routine monitoring by SCE to make sure the poles are not undermined or otherwise compromised by large flood events.
- c) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The proposed substation and power lines do not involve any type of discharge into surface waters. However, if project construction occurs during the rainy season, it is possible that soil

exposed by construction activities could be transported to the nearby river channel by surface runoff. To avoid the transportation of exposed soils, SCE has proposed the use of sediment traps, barriers, and/or soil covers at the construction site. Properly implemented, these types of measures should prevent the transport of exposed soils during the construction period, thereby avoiding adverse effects on surface water quality.

- d) **No Impact.** Since the proposed project does not involve the withdrawal of water from any source and will not affect absorption rates, drainage patterns, or surface runoff, it will have no effect on the amount of surface water in any water body.
- e) **No Impact.** The project site is located within a developed area with existing drainage improvements. Existing drainage patterns will be unaffected by the proposed project. Therefore, there will be no changes in the course or direction of water movements.
- f-h) **No Impact.** The proposed project involves only surface or near-surface improvements which should have no effect on groundwater flows, quantities, or quality. The project also does not involve any groundwater withdrawals or additions. Recharge capability is already limited by the extensive impervious surfaces associated with existing development in the area.
- i) **No Impact.** The project will have no effect on groundwater supplies. No water source is required to support the proposed substation and power lines.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. AIR QUALITY. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
b) Expose sensitive receptors to pollutants?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
c) Alter air movement, moisture, or temperature, or cause any change in climate?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create objectionable odors?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G

Explanation:

- a) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** There are no emissions associated with the *operation* of the proposed substation and transmission lines (SCE, 1997, p. 35). During *construction*, emissions will be generated from heavy duty diesel- and gasoline-powered construction equipment. Below-ground construction will consist of installation of cast-in-place concrete pier and slab foundations for the substation, and installation of conduit and an electrical ground grid. Construction vehicles required for this phase will include a drilling rig, concrete and material delivery trucks, a water truck, and pick-up trucks (SCE, 1997, p. 7). When below-ground construction is complete (after approximately four weeks), chain-link fencing and crushed rock will be installed. Substation electrical construction will take approximately eight weeks and will include erection of structural steel and installation of electrical and telecommunications equipment. Construction vehicles required for this phase of construction include a 100-ton lattice crane for transformer installation, low-bed trucks for equipment hauling, 40-foot material delivery trucks, forklifts, manlifts, a 40-ton crane for steel and equipment installation, and pick-up

trucks (SCE, 1997, p. 9). Construction of the proposed 66kV transmission line is expected to take approximately four weeks. The overhead line construction will consist of installing three tubular steel poles and steel pole footings, installing nine new wood poles, and stringing new conductor. Existing pole heads will be reconfigured from single circuit to double circuit. Construction vehicles required for this phase will include a transmission line truck, a transmission light truck, a drill rig, cement trucks, a dump truck, a crane, wire pulling machine, a wire payoff machine, a carryall, and a pick-up truck (SCE, 1997, p.10). An emissions screening analysis performed by Aspen Environmental Group indicated that the temporary emissions from construction would not exceed the South Coast Air Quality Management District's daily and quarterly emission thresholds. In addition to the construction vehicles described above, a helicopter will be utilized to carry new power lines across the river and Interstate 5. As a result, the temporary construction activities would not cause a significant air quality impact.

- b) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The majority of construction activity which will generate emissions will occur at the substation site and at the transmission line crossings of the river and freeway. There are no sensitive receptors (e.g., schools, health care facilities, residences) in the vicinity of these locations. The only land uses in close proximity to project activity are commercial and light industrial uses located in the business park along Avenue Stanford and Avenue Hall. The temporary and minor emissions associated with construction activities is not expected to significantly affect these land uses.
- c) **No Impact.** There is no aspect of project construction or operation which would conceivably have an effect on air movement, moisture, or temperature, or cause any change in climate.
- d) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Odors could be generated by diesel equipment emissions during project construction. Such odors would be very localized and temporary. Since there are no sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the construction sites, no significant adverse effects associated with odors are anticipated.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION. <i>Would the proposal result in:</i>				
a) Increased vehicle trips or traffic congestion?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
b) Hazards to safety from design features (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
d) Insufficient parking capacity onsite or offsite?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
e) Hazards or barriers for pedestrians or bicyclists?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
f) Conflicts with adopted policies supporting transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Rail, waterborne or air traffic impacts?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Explanation:

- a) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The *operation* of the proposed substation and transmission line will not generate vehicle trips. SCE maintenance crews will need to visit the facilities on a periodic basis, but this will not result in significant traffic generation. During project *construction*, traffic will be generated by construction crews and equipment/material deliveries, but the number of vehicle trips should be very small and should have no significant effect on local traffic operations. The removal of the existing transmission lines crossing Interstate 5 and the stringing of new lines across the freeway will necessitate the brief closure of the freeway (SCE, 1998, p. 4). These closures will occur in the early morning hours when traffic is at its lowest levels; however, the closures will still temporarily back up freeway traffic. The freeway closures will require a permit from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). No mitigation will be necessary for the freeway closures beyond the permit requirements and conditions imposed by Caltrans.
- b) **No Impact.** There are no features of the project that would conceivably pose a safety hazard to traffic or transportation systems. Except for the temporary closure of Interstate 5 (see VIa above), construction activities would generally occur off of major thoroughfares and therefore should not impede traffic or constitute a traffic hazard.
- c) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Construction activities will be limited to specific, localized areas immediately adjacent to the substation and pole locations. Although the work involved in double circuiting existing poles along Avenue Stanford and Avenue Hall will occur at the roadway edge adjacent to existing businesses, it should be possible to avoid blocking access to adjacent properties. In no case will it be necessary to block sole access to any properties. Potential effects on emergency response capabilities due to the temporary closure of Interstate 5 are discussed in Section IX - Hazards.
- d) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The proposed substation and transmission lines will not generate a need for parking except for occasional visits by SCE maintenance crews. Ample areas are available adjacent to the substation and new pole sites to accommodate construction vehicles. Because the new substation will occupy a larger area than the existing transformer in the Six Flags parking lot, some parking spaces will be lost. There is ample parking available at the amusement park, therefore the lost of these spaces is not expected to result in a parking shortage.
- e) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Portions of roadway edges (along Avenue Hall, Avenue Stanford, the Old Road, and Feedmill Road) will be occupied by construction activities and therefore will not be available to pedestrians and bicyclists. Since these routes do not have sidewalks or bicycle lanes, they are not frequently used by pedestrians or bicyclists. After construction, the substation and power lines should present no hazards or barriers to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- f) **No Impact.** Construction will not need to occur at any transit stops, bicycle racks, or other alternative transportation facilities.
- g) **No Impact.** There are no active rail, waterborne, or air traffic facilities in proximity to the substation or power line sites.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. <i>Would the proposal result in impacts to:</i>				
a) Endangered, threatened or rare species or their habitats (including but not limited to plants, fish insects, animals, and birds)?	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G	G
b) Locally designated species (e.g., heritage trees)?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Locally designated natural communities (e.g., oak forest, coastal habitat, etc.)?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Wetland habitat (e.g., marsh, riparian and vernal pool)?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Wildlife dispersal or migration corridors?	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G	G

Explanation:

- a) **Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated.** Although the Santa Clara River did contain habitat at one time for the endangered unarmored three-spined stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni*), the river's high turbidity and increased channelization has created conditions unsuitable for this species (Gaylord, 1998; site visit, April 2, 1998). Therefore, suitable habitat for this species does not currently exist at the location where the proposed power line will be strung across the river (Gaylord, 1998).

The sensitive Peirson's morning glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*) is potentially present on the disturbed land where power poles are proposed for installation. SCE has committed to surveying for this species at all proposed pole sites and other areas in spring (May-June) and immediately prior to construction. To increase protection for this species, the following mitigation measure is recommended:

B-1 If Peirson's morning glory are located within the construction area, plants will be marked with a 1-2 foot tall metal pole at the time of surveying, and flagging shall be attached to each pole to ensure specimens are avoided during construction. Workers will be instructed in writing to avoid walking, driving, or parking near these flagged poles.

The proposed power line route, although within the range of several other sensitive species (e.g., least Bell's vireo [*Vireo bellii pusillus*], arroyo southwestern toad [*Bufo microscaphus californicus*] and San Diego horned lizard [*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii*]), lacks one or more of the essential habitat components for these species to exist. Therefore, there are no potential impacts to these sensitive species.

- b) **No Impact.** The substation site currently occupies a portion of a parking and therefore has already been graded, paved, and the original vegetation removed, precluding any existence of a sensitive species. Past development along the proposed power line route has displaced natural habitat except where the power line crosses the Santa Clara River. Recent construction along the east bank of the channel and scouring from recent high flows have reduced the amount of natural vegetation within the river channel at the crossing location (site visit, April 2, 1998). No locally designated species will be affected by the proposed project.

- c) **No Impact.** The Valley Foothill Riparian habitat type at the river channel has no locally designated natural community status.
- d) **No Impact.** The river channel has recently experienced high flows and extreme levels of turbidity (Gaylord, 1998) which precludes vernal pools and marshes. Valley Foothill Riparian habitat is present in the river bed, but should not be significantly affected by the proposed project. The power lines will be strung using a helicopter, and no equipment will enter the riparian areas and the conductor will be kept out of the channel at all times (SCE, 1998).
- e) **Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated.** The locations of new power poles will be at or near the same locations as existing power poles, thus, the addition of lines would result in little additional risks to migratory birds. Riparian areas have been noted for their use as migration corridors; however, no trucks, crew, or equipment will enter the riparian areas (SCE, 1997; SCE, 1998). During construction, little or no tree trimming will be necessary due to the loss of many large trees during recent storms (site visit, April 2, 1998). During the life of the project, tree trimming may need to take place in the river channel to retain clearance between the conductor and the vegetation. The trimming will take place with hand-crews and vegetation will be left on the ground to contribute to cover habitat for wildlife. To minimize disturbance to wildlife during tree topping, the following mitigation measure is recommended:

B-2 *Trimming of trees may only take place from September 30 to March 31.*

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Conflict with adopted energy conservation plans?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Use non-renewable resources in a wasteful and inefficient manner?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and to the residents of the State?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Explanation:

- a) **No Impact.** The proposed project should have no conflicts with adopted energy conservation plans.
- b) **No Impact.** The project does involve the use of non-renewable materials, such as steel and copper, as well as non-renewable fuel for construction vehicles. However, the proposed project is the shortest route possible between the preferred tap point and proposed substation, therefore material and fuel use will be minimized. The long-term operation of the site would require only minor amounts of fuel for site inspection and maintenance vehicles.
- c) **No Impact.** The site has no known mineral, oil, gas, geothermal, or aggregate resources. The minimal size of the substation and pole locations would not prevent access if resources were identified in the future.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. HAZARDS. <i>Would the proposal involve:</i>				
a) A risk of accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to: oil, pesticides, chemicals or radiation)?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Possible interference with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G	G
c) The creation of any health hazard or potential health hazard?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Exposure of people to existing sources of potential health hazards?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Increased fire hazard in areas with flammable brush, grass, or trees?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G

Explanation:

- a) **No Impact.** The proposed action does not involve any hazardous substances (SCE, 1997).
- b) **Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated.** The proposed project will require the temporary closure of Interstate 5 in the early morning hours to pull conductor across the freeway (SCE, 1997). This construction activity is subject to the issuance of a permit from Caltrans. If necessary, emergency agencies will need to choose alternative routes for emergency response and evacuation actions during the freeway closure (see Section VI - Traffic). To decrease the chances of a conflict with emergency response and action plans, the following mitigation is recommended:

H-1 SCE shall ensure that affected state and local emergency service agencies are notified of the freeway closure at least two weeks in advance. SCE shall coordinate with each affected agency as needed to ensure that alternative emergency response and evacuation routes are available during the period of freeway closure. Emergency service agencies shall be provided with name and telephone number of a SCE contact person who will be responsible for coordinating construction activities related to the freeway closure.

c-d) **No Impact.** See (a) above.

- e) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The majority of the proposed project traverses areas devoid of vegetation (e.g., streets, parking lots). The heaviest vegetated area along the power line route is the Santa Clara River channel. Although energized lines that fall to the ground would be automatically de-energized by protective relays, the possibility of a brush fire still exists. Because the project basically involves the replacement of existing lines with new lines, the potential for brush fires ignited by power lines would remain unchanged.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. NOISE. <i>Would the proposal result in:</i>				
a) Increases in existing noise levels?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
b) Exposure of people to severe noise levels?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Explanation:

- a) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Noise will be generated by activities related to construction of the substation and installation of new power lines. Due to its temporary nature, noise generated by construction activities is typically not considered significant unless there are sensitive noise receptors in the immediate vicinity. However, local noise levels will be substantially elevated by the use of a helicopter to carry new conductor across Interstate 5. Since this activity will be very brief in duration and will not occur in close proximity to any residences, schools, libraries, or health care facilities, this impact is not considered significant.
- b) **No Impact.** Construction will temporarily increase noise levels in the vicinity, although not necessarily to severe levels. As indicated above, there are no sensitive noise receptors in the immediate vicinity of the construction sites.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. PUBLIC SERVICES. <i>Would the proposal have an effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered government services in any of the following areas:</i>				
a) Fire protection?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Police protection?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
c) Schools?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Maintenance of public facilities, including roads?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Other governmental services?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Explanation:

- a) **No Impact.** The structures proposed by this project would not create any new fire hazard and therefore would not require additional fire suppression personnel or equipment. The proposed project does not include uses that generate building floor area or increased population. Thus, additional fire protection services will not be needed.
- b) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The proposed project does not involve an increase in population size or the establishment of any new businesses and, therefore, should not result in an increased demand for police protection. The crossing of Interstate 5, and its associated temporary closing, will need to be coordinated with the highway patrol and, possibly, local police (see Section IX - Hazards).

- c) **No Impact.** There is no increase in population associated with the project that would result in additional children attending local schools.
- d) **No Impact.** The proposed project does not include the disturbance of any paved roads, sidewalks or curbs. Thus, maintenance of these facilities should not be affected.
- e) **No Impact.** The project is not anticipated to impact any other government services provided by the City of Santa Clarita or Los Angeles County.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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XII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. *Would the proposal result in a need for new systems or supplies, or substantial alterations to the following utilities:*

a) Power or natural gas?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Communications systems?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Local or regional water treatment or distribution facilities?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Sewer or septic tanks?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Storm water drainage?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Solid waste disposal?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
g) Local or regional water supplies?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G

Explanation:

- a) **No Impact.** The proposed project itself is responding to a local need for an electrical power distribution upgrade. The result of the upgrade will not create a need for new or altered power or natural gas systems.
- b) **No Impact.** The stringing of the proposed power lines will cross Pacific Bell telephone lines (SCE, 1998). However, normal accident prevention procedures will be implemented to protect these utilities, including utility covers and guard structures (SCE, 1998).
- c-d) **No Impact.** Such facilities are located in close enough proximity to the project to be affected. The locations of all buried utility lines, including sewer lines, will be verified prior to augering holes for new poles or undertaking any excavation. No sewer lines are known to be located beneath proposed pole locations.
- e) **No Impact.** The size of the proposed substation is less than one-quarter of an acre, and will be paved similar to the existing parking lot. The parking lot already discharges runoff into the Santa Clara River via a flood control channel adjacent to the proposed substation site. There will be no net increase in impervious surface area that would generate additional runoff and necessitate upgrading of the existing storm drainage system.

- f) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The 16 kV poles (and associated conductor) being replaced will require disposal. During construction, small amounts of soil will be removed for the substation installation (less than 1,500 cubic feet; SCE, 1997) which will also require disposal. Operation of the project will not generate solid wastes.
- g) **No Impact.** Some water will be required for dust abatement during construction. Because the project exposure and potential disturbance of only small areas of soil, dust abatement needs should be minimal. No additional water supplies will be needed as the substation does not require on-site personnel.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. AESTHETICS. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Affect a scenic vista or scenic highway?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a demonstrable negative aesthetic effect?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
c) Create light or glare?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Explanation:

- a) **No Impact.** The proposed project area does not include any designated scenic highways or vistas.
- b) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Negative aesthetic impacts are expected to be insignificant. The proposed substation will not alter existing natural viewsheds since it is located in a valley and covers only a very small area of land. The area currently contains various overhead utility structure and lines similar to the type proposed to be installed as part of the project. Since the project primarily involves the replacement of existing poles and lines, there should be no significant change in the visual character of the area. However, the metal poles proposed at each side of the river crossing are taller than the current wood ones and, therefore, may be more visually prominent. For most of the power line route, the new line will be replacing a nearby existing line, and thus the net visual change is minimal. Along Avenue Stanford and Avenue Hall, the amount of conductor strung on the existing poles will be doubled from three lines to six, increasing the visibility of these lines. There will also be minor temporary visual impacts associated with the presence of construction equipment at the construction sites.
- c) **No Impact.** The proposed project would involve the construction between hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., thus there is no potential for the significant light and glare impacts often associated with night-time construction efforts. The substation and poles do not have any large surface areas that could generate glare.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. CULTURAL RESOURCES. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Disturb paleontological resources?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Disturb archaeological resources?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Affect historical resources?	G	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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|--|----------|----------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| d) Have the potential to cause a physical change which would affect unique ethnic cultural values? | G | G | G | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Restrict existing religious or sacred uses within the potential impact area? | G | G | G | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Explanation:

- a) **No Impact.** The breaching of the Saint Francis Dam in 1928 is responsible for the deposition of up to eight feet of sediment along the banks of the Santa Clara River (SCE, 1997). This sediment contains no paleontological resources. In addition, the deposits on higher ground are composed of fanglomerate and alluvial debris, which are not conducive to the formation or preservation of fossils (SCE, 1997).
- b) **No Impact.** The PEA's (1997) search of records conducted by the South Central Coastal Information Center of the California Heritage Resources Inventory, housed at the University of California, Los Angeles, identified one prehistoric archaeological site (CA-LAn-823), one isolated metate (L-IF-65), two possibly buried prehistoric archaeological sites, three historic archaeological sites (CA-LAn-961-H, CA-LAn-962-H, and CA-LAn-2190-H) within one mile of the project (SCE, 1997). However, a 1997 Archaeological Survey Report (SCE, 1997) notes no cultural resources directly within the project area. The project only involves subsurface disturbance at pole locations and at the substation, greatly reducing chance encounters with unidentified cultural resources.
- c) **No Impact.** Based on a records and literature search documented in the PEA, one California Historical Landmark (No. 556, the adobe headquarters of Rancho San Francisco) occurs within one mile of the project area (SCE, 1997). This structure will not be impacted by the installation of the poles or substation. No other local, state, or federal historic properties are known to exist in the immediate area of the project.
- d) **No Impact.** The proposed project is located in a business and industrial area. The installation of the proposed structures are not considered out of character in comparison to existing uses.
- e) **No Impact.** The proposed project is located in a business and industrial area that has no known religious or sacred uses.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. RECREATION. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				

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|---|----------|----------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Increase the demand for neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities? | G | G | G | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Affect existing recreational opportunities? | G | G | G | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Explanation:

- a) **No Impact.** No increased demand for parks or facilities is expected to occur as a result of the proposed project, because the project is not expected to increase population size or utilization of the area.
- b) **No Impact.** There are no parks or other public recreational facilities in the vicinity of the project. The project is intended to upgrade service to an existing commercial recreation use (Six Flags Magic Mountain) The proposed

project is not expected to result in the long-term degradation, loss, or preemption of recreational uses within the study area.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
Explanation: As described in VII above, the proposed project would cause less-than-significant impacts to biological resources.				
b) Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
Explanation: The project is being proposed in response to an existing need for an upgraded power delivery system the project area and should have no adverse effect on long-term environmental goals.				
c) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
Explanation: Two construction projects have been approved in the immediate area of Six Flags, Stevenson Ranch and Chiquito Canyon Landfill expansion (SCE, 1998). The proposed power line and substation would be a relatively minor project in comparison and would not contribute significantly to cumulative impacts.				
d) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	G	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G
Explanation: Several sections above (including the sections on Air Quality, Transportation/Circulation, Hazards, Noise; and Aesthetics) address the less-than-significant impacts that this proposed project could have on human beings. These impacts are relatively minor and can be effectively mitigated.				

XVII. EARLIER ANALYSES

Some of the explanations contained in the preceding Evaluation of Environmental Impacts are derived from the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA), submitted with the original application (December 31, 1997), an amendment to the application dated March 6, 1998, and a letter dated April 22, 1998, which provided supplemental project information. These documents were prepared by SCE staff. Additional information was obtained from a visit to the project site on April 2, 1998, by personnel from SCE, the California Public Utilities Commission, and Aspen Environmental Group. In addition, the City of Santa Clarita General Plan and EIR (1991) was utilized as a resource in preparing this Initial Study.

XVIII. REFERENCES

Fugro West, Inc. 1997. *Landslide, Fault, and Liquefaction Hazard Study; Emido to Los Angeles Pipeline*. Prepared for Rooney Engineering, Inc. February.

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SCE. 1998. *Amendment to the Application of Southern California Edison Company (U 338-E) for a Permit to Construct Electrical Facilities with Voltages Between 50 kV and 200 kV: Six Flags Power Line and Substation Project*. March 6.