

I. Public Participation

I.1 Introduction

The scoping process and public participation program appear in this section. To collect agency and public input for the Devers–Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Line Project environmental review process, the CPUC and BLM administered a program of public notice and participation. [This has led to the publication of the Final EIR/EIS in October 2006.](#)

I.2 EIR/EIS Scoping Process

The scoping process of the EIR/EIS consisted of five elements detailed in the subsections following:

1. Publication of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Notice of Intent (NOI) of a joint EIR/EIS and Notice of Public Scoping Meetings soliciting comments from affected public agencies, as required by CEQA and NEPA, and from the public.
2. Public scoping meetings and meetings with agencies.
3. Summarization of scoping comments in a Scoping Report and an Addendum to the Scoping Report.
4. Distribution of the Scoping Report and Addendum to the commenting agencies, scoping meeting attendees, the EIR team members for use in work planning and impact analysis, and to public libraries designated as project repository sites for members of the public interested in reviewing the report and comments.
5. Establishment of an Internet web site, an electronic mail address, a telephone hotline, and local EIR Information Repositories.

I.2.1 Notice of Preparation and Notice of Intent

The CPUC issued the NOP on October 25, 2005, distributing it to the State Clearinghouse, federal, State, regional, and local agencies, elected officials of affected areas, and the general public. The CPUC mailed about 2,100 copies of the NOP to members of the general public; 80 representatives of over 40 different agencies; 120 environmental groups; 50 private organizations; 60 tribal government representatives; and 20 elected officials including 12 Assembly Members and State Senators. Copies of the NOP were available at 26 local repositories. The 30-day public scoping period extended from the issuance of the NOP to November 28, 2005 as required by CEQA.

The BLM published the NOI on December 7, 2005 in the Federal Register. A Notice of Public Scoping Meetings was mailed to federal, State, regional, and local agencies, elected officials of affected areas, and the general public. Over 2,500 copies of the NOI reached members of the general public; 80 representatives of over 40 different agencies; 120 environmental groups; 50 private organizations; 60 tribal government representatives; and 20 elected officials including 12 Assembly Members and State Senators, and 2,100 private citizens including those within 300 feet of the project corridor. Copies of the NOI were also available at 26 local repositories. The comment period began on December 7, 2005, the day of the NOI publication, and extended from December 7, 2005 to January 20, 2006. The Addendum to the Scoping Report, released February 22, 2006, presents comments received after December 2005.

Notice of the eight scoping meetings also appeared on the CPUC's project website. Newspaper advertisements appeared in four regional newspapers on October 23, 2005 for the NOP scoping meetings and in five local newspapers between January 5 and 15, 2006 for the NOI meetings.

I.2.2 Scoping Meetings

In November 2005 and January 2006 the CPUC and BLM held a total of eight public scoping meetings to collect input for the scope and content of the EIR and for alternatives and mitigation measures to consider.

About 38 members of the public and representatives from organizations and government agencies attended the following November 2005 meetings in California:

- November 1, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. in the City of Blythe's Multipurpose Room, Blythe
- November 2, 2005 at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in the City of Beaumont Civic Center, Beaumont
- November 3, 2005 at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, Palm Desert

About 85 members of the public and representatives from organizations and government agencies attended the following January 2006 meetings in Arizona:

- January 18, 2006, at 2:00 p.m. at Estrella Mountain Community College, Avondale
- January 18, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. at the Harquahala Valley Irrigation District Headquarters, Tonopah
- January 18, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at Quartzsite Town Hall, Quartzsite

I.2.3 Scoping Report

A Scoping Report summarized issues of concern in 35 comments on the NOP from public, private, and tribal agencies and from members of the public. In December 2005, 106 copies of the Scoping Report were distributed to agencies, parties on the CPUC's Service List, and individuals who requested copies. The Scoping Report was available for review at 26 repositories, on the Internet at the site specified in Section I.4, and by mail to agencies, parties on the CPUC's Service list, and individuals who requested copies.

The categories below summarize issues of concern in the Scoping Report.

- Human Environment
- Physical Environment
- Alternatives
- Cumulative Impacts
- Environmental Review and Decision-Making Process

Human Environment Issues and Concerns

Some public comments focused on the potential effect of the project on the human environment, including the health and safety impacts of electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) from increased EMF emissions, impacts to property values, safety and fire risk issues, noise, construction impacts, and conflicts with planned uses.

- **EMFs.** Health and safety-related issues resulting from increased EMF emissions were a primary concern of some members of the public. Comments expressed concerns about electric fields and shock hazards.

- **Construction Impacts.** Residents expressed concern that construction of the DPV2 project would cause an increase in traffic, safety hazards, and noise; destruction of habitat; offense to aesthetic values; conflict with other land uses; and a worsening impact in combination with coinciding development projects.
- **Safety Issues and Fire Risk.** In addition to the safety issues associated with EMF emissions, one property owner expressed concern about the risk of accidental electrocution and falling towers and cables due to mechanical failure or vehicle collision.
- **Impacts to Property Values.** Residents and the Harquahala Valley Irrigation District expressed concern that an alternative to the DPV2 project would be detrimental to the value of their land.
- **Conflicts with Existing or Planned Land Uses.** Residents and agencies including Riverside County Transportation and Land Management and the City of Cathedral City expressed concern about land use conflicts with the project including those with a proposed State Park, right-of-way (ROW) setbacks, future development of Paradise Valley, cropland, and new development projects.

Physical Environment Issues and Concerns

Comments expressed concerns with the potential impacts that the DPV2 project may have on the physical environment, particularly to biological and cultural resources and traffic and transportation. Most of the concern centered on the impact of the project on biological resources. For that resource area, conservation concerns varied from long-term landscape and habitat value to the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. Comments also requested that wildlife resources be analyzed in the EIR/EIS.

Alternatives

Several comments expressed preferences for alternative routes.

Cumulative Impacts

A Glorious Land Company representative suggested that the cumulative effects on safety and reliability of the transmission lines Devers–Palo Verde No. 1, Devers–Palo Verde No. 2, Desert Southwest Transmission Project, and a Southern California Edison 230 kV line in the middle of the future development Paradise Valley would be mitigated by distancing the Proposed Project from the existing towers.

Environmental Review and Decision-Making Process: Public Involvement

Members of the public suggested different means of communication for project information. The Harquahala Valley Irrigation District, the Harquahala Valley Power District, and Harquahala Valley Farms criticized a lack of outreach in Arizona.

I.2.4 Addendum to the Scoping Report

An Addendum to the Scoping Report summarized issues of concern in 82 comments received after publication of the NOI. Comments were received from public, private, and tribal agencies and members of the public. In February and March 2006, 141 copies of the Addendum were distributed to agencies, parties on the CPUC's Service List, and individuals who requested copies. The Addendum is available for review at 26 repositories and on the Internet at the site specified in Section I.4. It was mailed to agencies, parties on the CPUC's Service list, and individuals who requested copies.

The categories below summarize issues of concern in the Addendum to the Scoping Report.

- Human Environment
- Physical Environment
- Purpose and Need
- Alternatives
- Environmental Review and Decision-Making Process

Human Environment Issues and Concerns

Some public comments focused on the potential effect of the project on the human environment, including the health and safety impacts of electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) from increased EMF emissions, impacts to property values, safety and fire risk issues, noise, construction impacts, and conflicts with planned uses.

- **EMFs.** Public water works agencies expressed concern that the transmission line would cause materials in the irrigation distribution infrastructure to degrade. Other comments expressed concern that the transmission line would carry strong electric voltages dangerous to people, livestock, and wildlife.
- **Construction Impacts.** Many comments indicated that construction of the DPV2 project would cause negative environmental impacts through work in wilderness areas, work around new tower sites, and edge effects of transportation on and near ROWs.
- **Safety Issues and Fire Risk.** One comment states that the DPV2 project would place a high priority and reliance on nuclear power generation, which includes hazardous materials, dangerous processes, and the increased production of nuclear waste.
- **Impacts to Property Values.** Various comments, including the City of Scottsdale Water Resources Department, expressed concern about negative impacts to existing and future property values, especially those properties in the Harquahala Valley region.
- **Conflicts with Existing or Planned Land Uses.** With regard to the traversal of Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, comments asserted the project's incompatibility with the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System to conserve fish, wildlife, plant resources, and habitat for the benefit of the general public. Many comments expressed concerns that the Harquahala-West Alternative may interfere with farming practices. Maricopa County objected to the same alternative while the City of Calimesa objected to the Proposed Project in anticipation of future development.

Physical Environment Issues and Concerns

- **Biological Resources Issues.** Many comments expressed concern about potential impacts to wildlife, habitats, and the pristine nature of the desert landscape. Some comments requested mitigation for the combined threat of the Proposed Project and the existing DPV1 toward wildlife migration and avian behavior. The Arizona Game and Fish Department stated that the Proposed Project and subalternate routes traverse habitats of special status species and important wildlife, in particular, SCE's Subalternate Route 2 in the Plomosa and Dome Rock Mountains.
- **Cultural Resources Issues.** Three tribal governments commented that the DPV2 project could impact cultural resources and recommended some mitigation measures.
- **Visual Resources Issues.** Many comments criticized visual impacts both of the Proposed Project and of alternatives in combination with existing lines and in wilderness landscapes.
- **Water Resources Issues.** The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) expressed concern regarding the elimination of watercourses or wetlands and requested mitigation measures.

Purpose and Need

A majority of the comments, particularly from private citizens and nonprofit groups such as the Maricopa Audubon Society, Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter, and the Arizona Wilderness Coalition, questioned the purpose and need for the DPV2 project. Reasons included growth in Arizona, the environmental stressor of transmission, clean energy policy abuse, environmental justice, and misrepresentation of energy demand and production.

Alternatives Issues

Comments from one NGO and three individuals expressed preference for a range of alternatives including the No Project Alternative, local generation, demand reduction, and alternative routes.

Environmental Review and Decision-Making Process

State and utilities agencies recommended information databases and methods for EIR/EIS analysis. Many comments also recommended focused study of several issue areas including energy conservation programs.

Public Involvement

Imperial County and some individuals requested improved communication about scoping meetings and the comment period.

Regulatory Compliance

Several State, regional, and tribal agencies identified permits required of SCE. SCE's Subalternate Route 3 would require amendment to the Palo Verde Community Area Plan.

I.3 Draft EIR/EIS

The CPUC issued the Draft EIR/EIS on May 4, 2006, including a detailed analysis of impacts in 13 environmental disciplines, and an evaluation of alternatives to the Proposed Project, including the No Project/Action Alternative. Copies of the full Draft EIR/EIS and Appendices were sent to 170 interested parties and agencies, and to 26 libraries used as document repositories listed in Section I.5. One hundred and sixty-two (162) copies of the Executive Summary and 79 CDs with the text of the Draft EIR/EIS were also sent out. Additional copies of the Executive Summary and of the CDs with the text of the Draft EIR/EIS were distributed at the Informational Workshops in June and July 2006. The public comment period for the Draft EIR/EIS ended on August 11, 2006.

I.4 EIR/EIS Mailing List

The initial EIR/EIS mailing list included SCE's list of property owners within 300 feet of the Proposed Project as well as groups and individuals the EIR/EIS team identified to have stake in the Proposed Project. In addition, all attendees at scoping meetings were added to the mailing list. The mailing list also includes all individuals on the CPUC's proceeding service list for this application.

I.5 Notice of Availability

A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EIR/EIS was mailed to over 4,347 interested parties, agencies, county and city departments, special districts, property owners, and occupants on or adjacent to SCE’s Proposed Project route in May 2006 at the time the Draft EIR/EIS was released. The NOA included information on how to gain access to the Draft EIR/EIS, information on the Proposed Project, the dates, times and locations for the CPUC’s Informational Workshops and Public Participation Hearings and how to comment on the Draft EIR/EIS. A second NOA was mailed to 5,191 people to correct a mailing error, to announce that the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative had become SCE’s preferred route, and to announce an additional Informational Workshop and Public Participation Hearing on July 24, 2006.

All those on the EIR/EIS Mailing List and landowners on or adjacent to SCE’s proposed route and the alternative routes considered in the Draft will receive a Notice of Release of the Draft EIR/EIS in May 2006. The Notice will include information on accessing the Draft EIR/EIS, the Environmentally Superior Alternative(s), and the dates, times, and locations for informational workshops on the Draft EIR/EIS and the CPUC’s Public Participation Hearings. Attendees at the Informational Workshops and all commenters on the Draft EIR/EIS were added to the Project mailing list and will also receive the Notice of Availability for this Final EIR/EIS.

I.6 EIR/EIS Information and Repository Sites

The CPUC and BLM have established a telephone hotline for project information: (800) 886-1888. This line can receive faxes and voice messages.

EIR/EIS information, including Proposed Project information, the Scoping Report and Addendum, the Draft EIR/EIS, and other information on the environmental review process will be available on the project website:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspen/dpv2/dpv2.htm>.

This site hosts all public documents during the environmental review process and announcements of upcoming public meetings.

To maximize accessibility of project information to the public, the CPUC and BLM have placed documents in repository sites. All DPV2-related documents are available for review at 26 repositories and documents are also available at the CPUC in San Francisco. EIR/EIS-related documents, including the Scoping Report and Addendum have been made available upon release to the public at the locations defined in Table I-1.

Table I-1. Repository Sites

Devers to Harquahala – Library Sites		
Desert Hot Springs City Public Library	11691 West Drive, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240	(760) 329-5926
City of Palm Springs Library	300 S. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262	(760) 323-8298
Cathedral City Branch Library	33520 Date Palm Drive, Cathedral City, CA 92234	(760) 328-4262
Rancho Mirage City Library	42520 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270	(760) 341-7323
Palm Desert City Library	73300 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92260	(760) 346-6552
Indio Public Library	200 Civic Center Mall, Indio, CA 92201	(760) 342-0185

Table I-1. Repository Sites

Coachella Branch Library	1538 7th Street, Coachella, CA 92236	(760) 398-5148
Palo Verde Valley Library District	125 W. Chanslorway, Blythe, CA 92225	(760) 922-5371
Quartzsite Public Library	465 N. Plymouth Ave. Quartzsite, AZ 85346	(928) 927-6593
Buckeye Public Library	312 N. 6th St, Buckeye, AZ 85326	(623) 386-2778
Devers to Harquahala – U.S. Bureau of Land Management Offices		
Palm Springs/South Coast Field Office	690 W. Garnet Avenue, N. Palm Springs, CA 92258	(760) 251-4800
Phoenix Field Office	21605 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85027-2099	(623) 580-5500
Yuma Field Office	2555 East Gila Ridge Road, Yuma, AZ 85365-2240	(928) 317-3200
West of Devers – Library Sites		
City of Riverside Library	5505 Dewey Avenue, Riverside, CA 92504	(951) 359-3906
San Bernardino County Library	104 W. Fourth Street, San Bernardino, CA 92415	(909) 387-5723
Colton Public Library	656 N. Ninth Street, Colton, CA 92324	(909) 370-5083
Grand Terrace Library	22795 Barton Road, Grand Terrace, CA 92313	(909) 783-0147
City of Loma Linda Library	25581 Barton Road, Loma Linda, CA 92354	(909) 796-8621
A.K. Smiley Public Library	125 West Vine Street, Redlands, CA 92373	(909) 798-7565
Mentone County Library	1870 Mentone Boulevard, Mentone, CA 92359	(909) 794-2657
Yucaipa Branch Library	12040 5th Street, Yucaipa, CA 92399	(909) 790-3146
Calimesa City Library	974 Calimesa Boulevard, Calimesa, CA 92320	(909) 795-9807
Beaumont Library District	125 East 8th Street, Beaumont, CA 92223	(951) 845-1357
Banning Public Library	21 W Nicolet Street, Banning, CA 92220	(951) 849-3192
Morongo Community Library	11581 Potrero Road, Banning, CA 92220	(951) 849-5937
West of Devers – U.S. Bureau of Land Management Office		
California Desert District Office	22835 Calle San Juan Del Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553	(951) 697-5200

I.7 Draft EIR/EIS Public Review Period

The Draft EIR/EIS was released for public review on May 4, 2006 with a 60-day comment period (originally ending on July 5, 2006). However, due to a mailing error, the comment period for the Draft EIR/EIS was extended to August 11, 2006. The CPUC and BLM allowed written comments on the Draft EIR/EIS to be submitted by U.S. mail, fax, or at the Informational Workshops and oral comments to be received at the Public Participation Hearings described below. The comments received by the CPUC and BLM during the public review period and at the Information Workshops and Public Participation Hearings are reproduced in this Final EIR/EIS along with responses to comments (see Volume 3).

I.7.1 Informational Meetings and Public Hearings on the Draft EIR/EIS

~~There will be a 60 day public review period for the Draft EIR/EIS, as defined in the Notice of Availability accompanying this document.~~ Following the release of the Draft EIR/EIS the CPUC and BLM held six Informational Workshops as shown in Table I-2. The intent of the workshops is to help affected communities understand the Proposed Project and the Draft EIR/EIS, and to suggest ways to participate in the CPUC's decision-making process. The EIR/EIS Team and CPUC and BLM staff were available to respond to questions and to clarify the EIR/EIS analyses and conclusions.

The CPUC also hosted three Public Participation Hearings (PPHs) at the time that some workshops ~~are~~ were held on the Draft EIR/EIS. The public will be invited to speak informally on the record on any other issues of concern related to SCE’s Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) Application. Administrative Law Judge TerKeurst held these PPHs at the times and dates below. Forty-three (43) members of the public, including representatives of organizations and government agencies were documented in attendance at the CPUC Informational Workshops and Public Participation Hearings. For more information on the PPHs please contact the Public Advisor at (866) 849-8390 or public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov.

Table I-2. Informational Workshops and Hearings

Informational Workshops	Public Participation Hearings
Tuesday, June 6 2:00pm and 7:00pm Harquahala Valley Irrigation District, Tonopah AZ	Tuesday, June 6 7:00pm–8:30pm Beaumont CA – Recreation Center
Wednesday, June 7 2:00pm and 5:00pm Beaumont CA – Recreation Center	Wednesday, June 7 7:00pm–8:30pm Palm Desert – UC Riverside
Thursday, June 8 3:00pm Palm Desert – UC Riverside	Monday, July 24 7:00pm–8:30pm Beaumont CA – Recreation Center
Monday, July 24 4:00pm Beaumont CA – Recreation Center	

The CPUC and BLM ~~will~~ collected written comments by fax on the project hotline at (800) 886-1888, email at the project address dpv2@aspeneg.com, or postal mail at:

Billie Blanchard and John Kalish
 c/o Aspen Environmental Group
 235 Montgomery Street, Suite 935
 San Francisco, CA 94104

Written comments were due or ~~must be~~ postmarked on or before the closing day of the comment period, and ~~must~~ were required to include a name and return address. Oral comments are acceptable only at the Public Participation Hearings to ensure accurate records.

I.7.2 Newspaper Notices

Newspaper Notices, including information on the Draft EIR/EIS, the project website address, and the dates and times of the Informational Workshops and Public Participation Hearings were printed at least once and up to three times in May and July 2006 in the following papers: Hemet Valley Chronicle; The Press Enterprise; The San Bernardino Sun; Redlands Daily News; The Desert Sun; The Arizona Republic; West Valley View; Palo Verde Times; The Palo Verde Times/Quartzsite Times; and the Yuma Daily Sun.