

# ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM

**1. Project title:**

Southern California Edison (SCE) Valley-Auld Power Line Project  
Application Number A.98-10-015

**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:**

Moisés Chavez, Project Manager  
Energy Division  
(415) 703-1851

**4. Project location:**

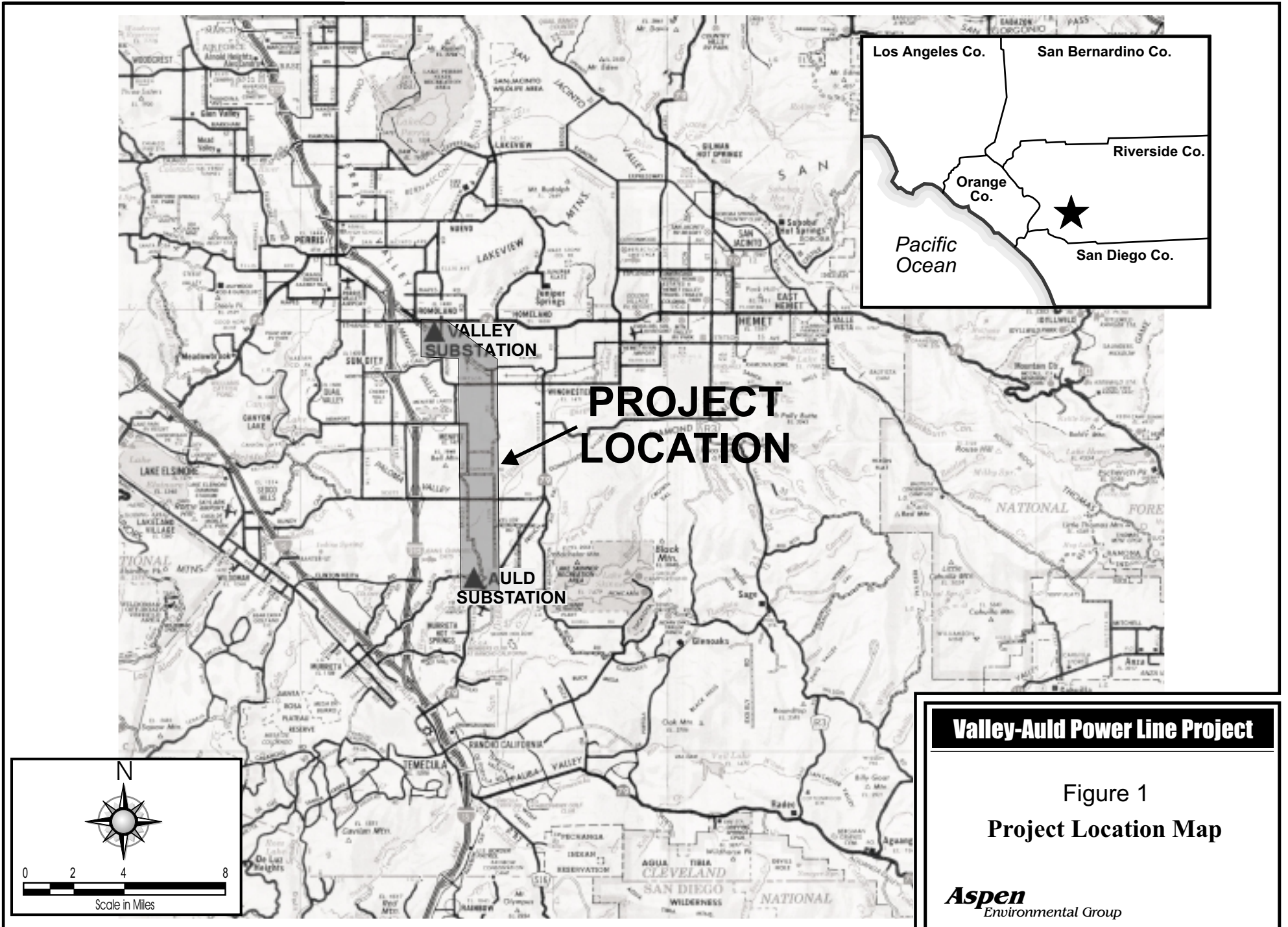
The proposed project is located within an unincorporated area in southwestern Riverside County, near the cities of Perris, Hemet, and Murrieta (see Figures 1 and 2). The project site occupies a north-south corridor that parallels Interstate 215. The project site extends from SCE's Valley Substation, located south of Highway 74 on Menifee Road, to a point about one mile south of the Auld Substation near Winchester Road (Highway 79).

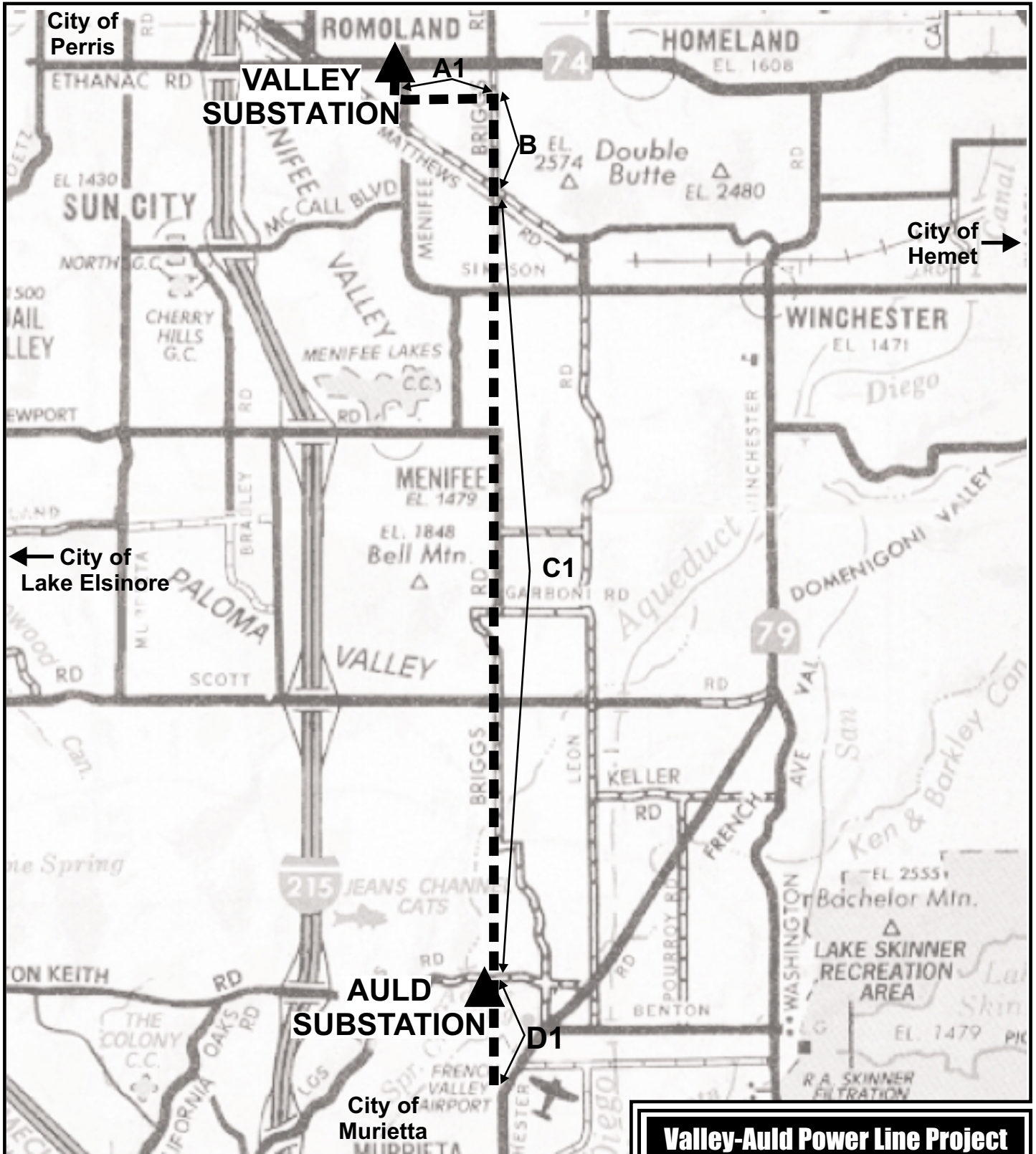
**5. Project sponsor's name and address:**

Southern California Edison Company (SCE)  
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue, Room 312  
Rosemead, CA 91770  
Attn: Thomas Burhenn  
(626) 302-9652

**6. General plan designation:**

The project site is located in unincorporated Riverside County and therefore is controlled by the land use policies of the Riverside County Comprehensive General Plan. The Riverside County Comprehensive General Plan primarily states goals and general policies for implementing development and conservation proposals within the county. Plan designations are more specifically delineated in a suite of Community Plans encompassing the proposed project site. The proposed power line traverses area encompassed by three Community Plans: the Sun City/Menifee Valley Community Plan, the Highway 74/79 Community Plan, and the Southwest Area Community Plan. Segment A1 (refer to Figure 2 for the segment designations) is designated as low density residential by the Sun City/Menifee Valley Community Plan.





Proposed Action = Segments A1, B, C1, D1



**Valley-Auld Power Line Project**

Figure 2  
Proposed Project Alignment

**Aspen**  
Environmental Group



Segment B is designated as a mix of low-density residential, medium-density residential, and school zones by the Highway 74/79 Community Plan. Segment C1 of the proposed project is designated as a mix of rural residential, open space, and hillsides or mountain areas by the Sun City/Menifee Valley Community Plan. Finally, Segment D1 is designated as rural residential, office/light industrial, and open space in the Southwest Area Community Plan.

## **7. Zoning:**

Zoning designations for the project site are established through the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance and three approved Specific Plans. Segment A1 of the proposed project is zoned for rural residential and light agriculture uses. Segment B is zoned primarily for light agriculture use with some medium density residential zoning specified in the Menifee North Specific Plan. Segment C1 is zoned mostly for rural residential development uses with some areas zoned for light agriculture, poultry agriculture, heavy agriculture, and residential agriculture uses. Portions of Section C1 are also zoned for commercial and low-density residential uses as specified in the Winchester Hills Specific Plan and for rural residential uses in the Menifee Village Specific Plan. Segment D1 is zoned entirely for rural residential use.

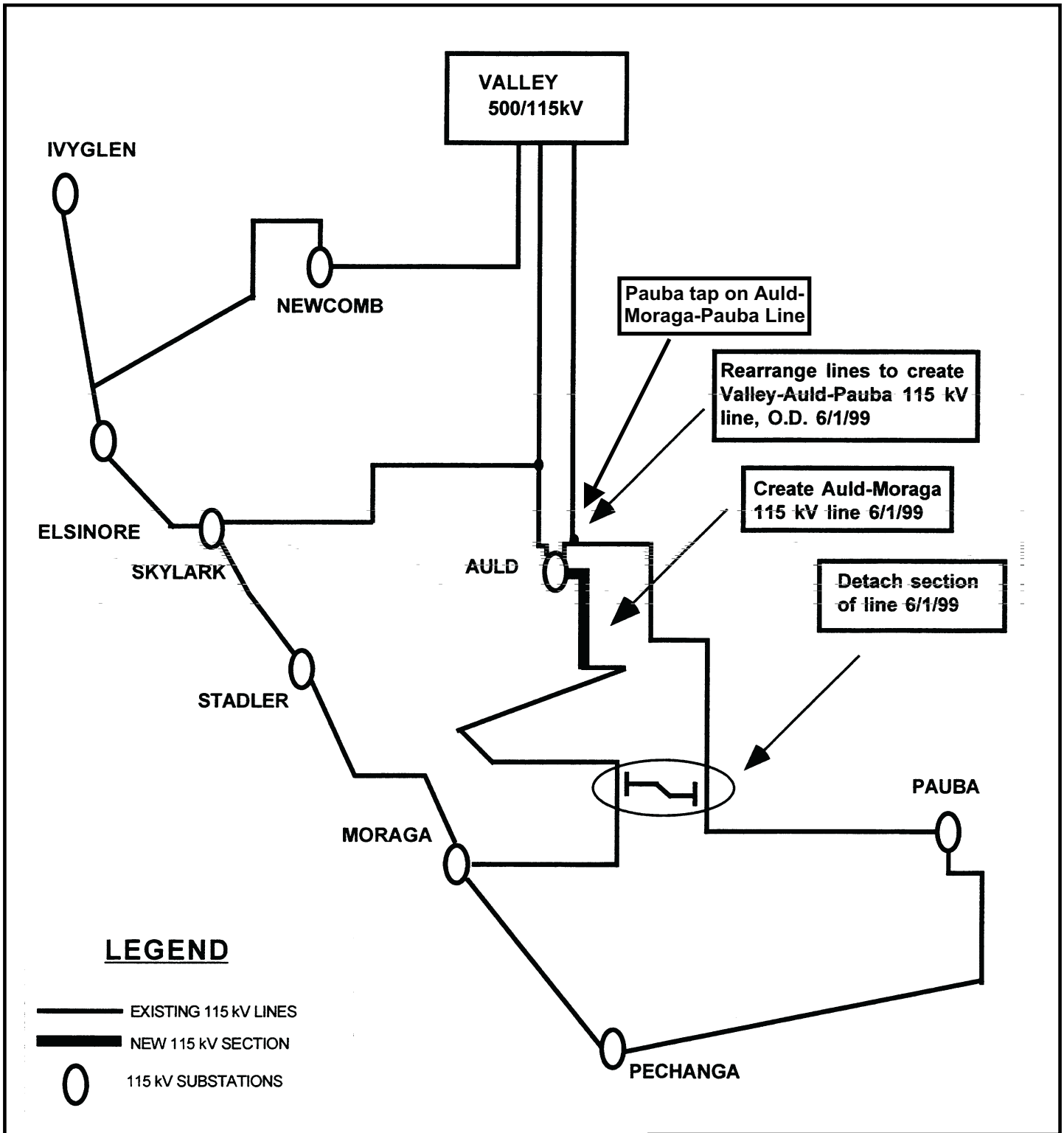
## **8. Description of project:**

The existing Valley-Auld 115 kV system provides electrical service to approximately one half million residents in southwestern Riverside County. SCE has indicated that due to high growth in the service area, demand on the existing Valley 115 kV system has increased to a point where service to customers may be compromised during peak use because of system overload. To address this increasing problem, SCE proposes to improve system voltages and to expand transmission capacity. Phase 1 of the proposed project (Figure 3) will serve to improve voltage problems by constructing a new 115 kV line connection between the Auld Substation and the Moraga Substation (Figure 4) (located approximately 6.5 miles south of the Auld Substation). The Pauba tap on the Auld-Moraga-Pauba line will be removed and switched to tap the existing Valley-Auld 115 kV line. Phase 2 of the proposed project is designed to address anticipated voltage drop and line overloading problems on the existing 115 kV line by adding an additional 115 kV line creating a double circuit system that would be tapped by and increase capacity to the Pauba line. Without the increase in line capacity, SCE anticipates the problems on the existing system of electrical facility outages and disruptions to customer service during peak load times will continue and anticipates these difficulties will compound as energy demand increases with growth.

### ***Phase 1 Auld-Moraga 115 kV Line***

Phase 1 (also referred to in the Proponent's Environmental Assessment [PEA] as Segment D1) of the Valley-Auld Power Line Project consists of constructing a 0.9-mile 115 kV line on 30 wood and three tubular steel poles. This new line will extend from the Auld Substation south along the west side of Liberty Road until it connects with the existing Auld-Moraga-Pauba 115 kV line at Winchester Road (Figure 3).

The new 115 kV line will be constructed by overbuilding the existing Garboni 12 kV line (located on Briggs Road from Garboni Road south to Benton) and the Archie 33 kV line (located near the Auld substation at Los Alamos south to Winchester). The 12, 33, and new 115 kV lines will be placed on new wood poles with polymer post type insulators in a triangle configuration. A steel tubular pole will be placed at the end of the 115 kV line with a third steel pole placed for line rearrangement. The old poles will then be removed and disposed of off-site. As a condition of granting the easement from the property owner of the area just south of Liberty Road, existing SCE sub-transmission and distribution facilities currently crossing the northeastern portion of the property will be removed.



**LEGEND**

- EXISTING 115 kV LINES
- NEW 115 kV SECTION
- 115 kV SUBSTATIONS

Source:  
Proponent's Environmental Assessment  
Application No. 98-10-05



**Valley-Auld Power Line Project**

Figure 3  
1999 Valley 115 kV  
System Line Arrangement  
Phase 1

**Aspen**  
Environmental Group

## ***Phase 2 Valley-Pauba 115 kV Line***

Phase 2 consists of constructing Segments A1, B, and C1 (Figure 2), approximately 10.6 miles of new 115 kV line using 243 wood poles and 13 steel tubular poles from the Valley Substation (at the corner of Menifee Road and McLaughlin Road in the northwest portion of the project site) south to a tap point in the southern portion of the project site at the corner of Liberty Road and Los Alamos Road to connect to the existing Pauba 115 kV line (Figure 4).

Segment A1 is a 1.1-mile segment beginning at the Valley Substation. The line would cross Menifee Road at McLaughlin Road and then continue east along the south side of McLaughlin Road until it reaches the east side of Briggs Road. The western 1/3 of this route contains no existing facilities. The remaining 2/3 of the route contains existing poles carrying an idle 33 kV line and an active 12 kV line. The poles carrying these two lines will be removed and the two existing lines will be placed on new poles with the new 115 kV line. A total of 20 wood poles and 2 steel tubular poles would be placed to complete this segment.

Segment B would involve construction of a single-circuit 115 kV line from the eastern endpoint of Segment A1 on the east side of Briggs Road south to the corner of Matthews Road and McLaughlin Road, for a total distance of 0.9 mile. Fifteen wood poles and one steel tubular pole would be placed to complete this segment.

Segment C1 covers the 8.6-mile long portion of the project route, from the end of Segment B south to the tap point for the existing Pauba 115 kV line at the corner of Los Alamos Road and Liberty Road. At the intersection of Briggs Road and Matthews Road, the line proceeds down the east side of Briggs Road until it reaches Newport Road. At this point, the line crosses over and is aligned on the west side of Briggs Road. The existing single circuit 115 kV line along Segment C1 would be switched to a double-circuit kV line. All existing power lines would be placed on new poles with the new 115 kV line and all existing poles would be removed. A total of 208 wood poles and 10 steel tubular poles are required to complete this segment.

The proposed construction schedule calls for construction of both phases to begin in the latter half of 1999, with an 8-member crew working on each phase until Segment D1 is completed. At that point, both crews would begin Phase 2 (Segments A1, B and C1) which is expected to be completed approximately six months later.

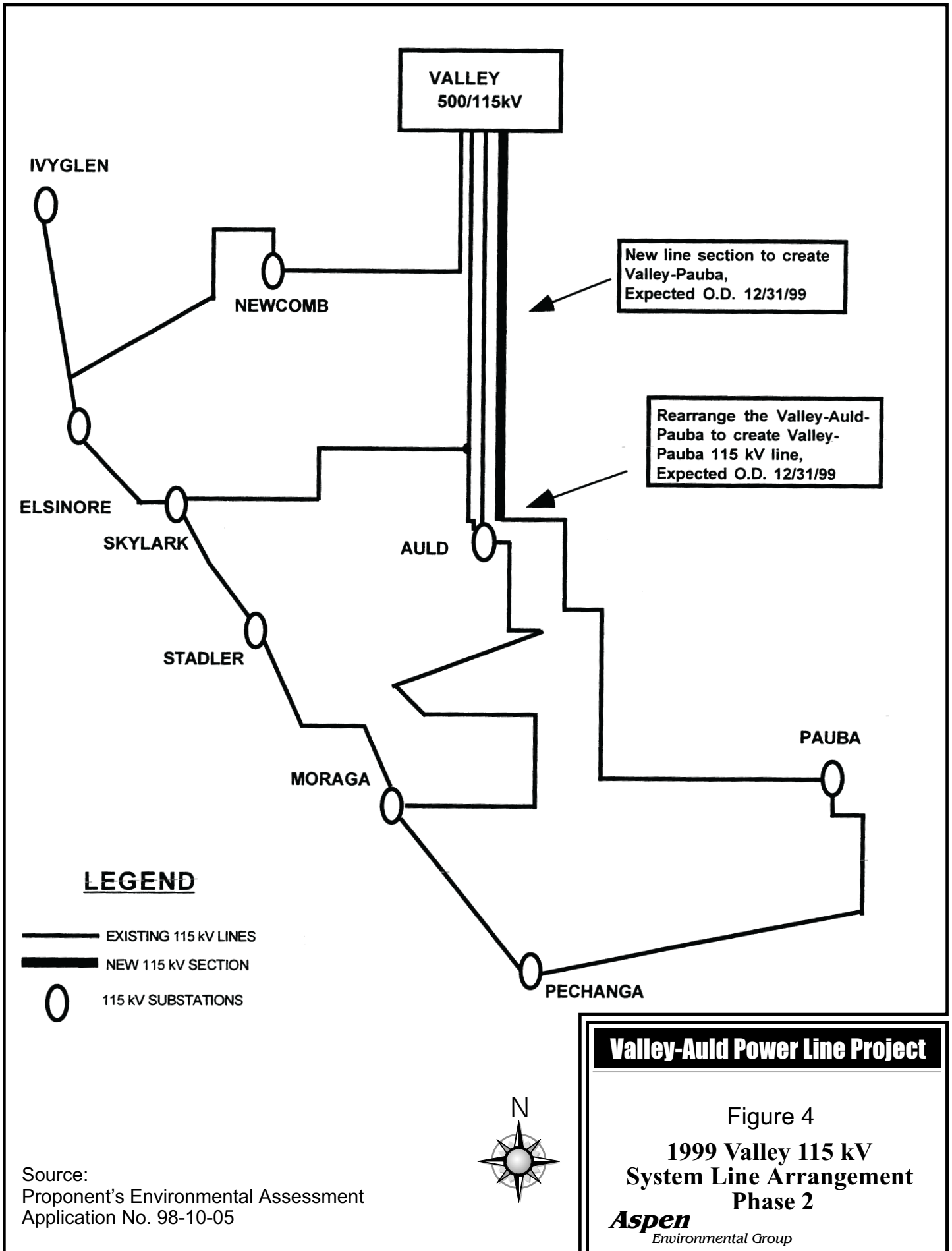
## ***Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF)***

The CPUC is aware of the public's concerns regarding the potential health effects from exposure to Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs) from electric facilities. This issue continues to be controversial in the scientific community and other public organizations researching this issue, given that no resolution or agreement has been reached on whether EMF exposure poses a human health threat or not.

The CPUC, in January of 1991, began an investigation into this issue to develop policies and procedures for addressing the potential health effects, if any, of EMFs. As a result of this investigation and extensive input from a number of stakeholders representing various diverse interests and perspectives, in November of 1993, the CPUC setup a research program under the direction of the California Department of Health Services. In addition, at the recommendation of California EMF Consensus Group (CG)<sup>1</sup>, the CPUC established an interim EMF reduction policy for all new and upgraded electrical facilities.

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<sup>1</sup> The CPUC formed the California Consensus Group (CCG) which consisted of 17 stakeholders representing citizen groups, consumer groups, environmental groups, state agencies, unions, and municipal and investor-owned utilities.



Source:  
Proponent's Environmental Assessment  
Application No. 98-10-05



This interim policy adopted in the CPUC's Decision (D.) 93-11-013 requires California's Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) to implement no- and low-cost (a 4% benchmark of total project cost) EMF reduction measures applicable to all new and upgraded electrical facilities, if a noticeable reduction could be achieved.

SCE prepared EMF Field Management Plans for the Auld-Moraga 115 kV transmission line (Phase 1) and the Valley-Pauba 115 kV transmission line (Phase 2). EMF is the expression commonly used when talking about power-frequency Electric and Magnetic Fields. The purpose of these plans is to determine the change in the magnitude of EMF fields in the vicinity of the proposed 115 kV transmission lines, and to determine if there are feasible no-cost and/or low-cost measures that can be implemented to reduce EMF fields, if warranted.

SCE's Valley-Auld Power Line Project incorporates various low-cost and no-cost measures to comply with the CPUC's D.93-11-013. SCE prepared EMF Field Management Plans for the Auld-Moraga 115 kV transmission line (Phase 1) and the Valley-Pauba 115 kV transmission line (Phase 2).

For the Auld-Moraga 115 kV transmission line, the analysis presented in the EMF Field Management Plan indicates that there will be a net increase in the magnitude of the magnetic field with the implementation of the proposed project. The EMF Field Management Plan recommends the implementation of a low-cost measure to minimize the increase in the magnetic field associated with the proposed Auld-Moraga line. This low-cost measure is to roll phases on the existing energized 115kV circuit from an ABC configuration (representing conductor A at the top, B in the middle, and C at the bottom) to a BAC configuration. With the implementation of the recommended low-cost measure, the magnetic field at the west edge of the franchise area would increase from 3.4 milliGauss (mG) to 4.6 mG, and the magnetic field at the east edge of the franchise area would increase from 1.6 mG to 2.9 mG. Without this low-cost measure, the magnetic field at the west edge of the franchise area would be 12.3 milliGauss (mG) and the magnetic field at the east edge of the franchise area would be 4.8 mG.

For the Valley-Pauba 115 kV transmission line (Valley Substation to Auld Substation), SCE's analysis indicates that there will be a net reduction in the magnitude of the magnetic field with the implementation of the proposed project. The analysis indicates a 29% reduction in the magnetic field 3 feet above the ground directly under the transmission line. This reduction in EMF is a result of the increased conductor height and more compact and symmetrical conductor configuration. The more symmetrical conductor configuration is a result of double-circuiting the line, which provides a more symmetrical configuration than the existing single-circuited line. In addition, the double-circuited 115 kV line will be installed using a pole top configuration that reduces conductor spacing.

### ***Applicant's Mitigation Measures***

SCE's proposed project includes a number of mitigation measures to reduce or avoid potential environmental impacts associated with project construction and maintenance. A detailed Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan has been prepared describing the specific actions required to implement these mitigation measures. SCE's mitigation measures are considered a part of the proposed project and are summarized below:

#### *Aesthetics:*

- As development occurs in the area, SCE will provide information to and work with developers and roadway designers to integrate subtransmission lines into landscape.

#### *Air Quality:*

- Exhaust emissions from construction vehicles and increased fugitive dust shall be minimized.



*Biological Resources:*

- SCE will reduce impacts to habitat by avoid grading within the coastal sage scrub or near riparian habitat to the greatest extent possible.
- SCE will contribute to the Skinner Lake Preserve by buying one acre of credit to cover impacts to coastal sage scrub habitat, as requested and approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. SCE will prepare a Riparian Habitat Restoration Plan in conjunction with the Section 1601 Streambed Alteration Agreement for approval by the California Department of Fish and Game.
- The project can be constructed without incidental take of listed species, pursuant to recommendations by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS). To mitigate and/or avoid any potential impacts, SCE will: 1) contribute to the Stephens' kangaroo rat Habitat Conservation Fund, 2) mark buffer areas around any known California gnatcatcher nests, and 3) not undertake construction activities in California gnatcatcher nesting areas between March 1 and August 15.
- SCE shall avoid the population of San Jacinto crowscale within the wash on Segment C-1.
- SCE shall avoid populations of smooth tarweed along Segment C-1.
- SCE shall establish measures to avoid impacts to the San Diego horned lizard, the orange-throated whiptail, and the western spadefoot toad in SCE's Environmental Protection Plan (EPP).
- Project design shall incorporate measures to avoid impacts to raptors.

*Cultural Resources:*

- SCE will reduce potential impacts to Archaeologically Sensitive Areas by carefully siting transmission poles and by using rubber tired vehicles at all times during construction.
- Paleontological sites shall be protected through the implementation of a construction monitoring plan.

*Geology and Soils:*

- To minimize the potential impact to native soils, SCE shall implement soil management measures during construction.

*Hazards and Hazardous Materials:*

- Disposal of debris and old poles will be limited to the construction phase and these items will be recycled by SCE.
- SCE shall maintain a cleared buffer zone around energized components of the power line.

*Hydrology and Water Quality:*

- SCE shall obtain a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game pursuant to Section 1601 of the California Fish and Game Code prior to any construction within the unnamed Warm Springs Creek tributary along the west side of Briggs Road. If required, SCE shall obtain a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prior to any construction within the unnamed Warm Springs

Creek tributary along the west side of Briggs Road. SCE shall comply with all conditions stipulated in the required permits.

*Noise:*

- SCE shall minimize noise through careful work scheduling and by having properly functioning mufflers on construction vehicles.

*Transportation and Traffic:*

- SCE shall minimize obstruction of traffic caused by construction activities. Cones and signs shall be used to warn motorists of the construction activities. Flagmen will be utilized as necessary to control traffic in the construction zone.

**9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:**

The proposed project is located in southwest Riverside County within the Peninsular Ranges Geologic Province. The northern portion of the project area consists of broad flat alluvial plains punctuated by small rocky hills and bordered by treeless buttes and distant mountains. The southern portion of the project site transitions to low, rolling hills. The general habitat type of the area is rural and is characterized by flat agricultural fields with some scattered hills containing disturbed coastal sage scrub. A small riparian area also occurs within a ditch along side a portion of Briggs Road. Land uses in the immediate project area consist mostly of agricultural fields, scattered rural residential land uses, poultry, dairy, ostrich, and horse farms, and open space. In addition, shopping centers constructed at freeway interchanges, Metropolitan Water District's Eastside Reservoir development east of Winchester Road, the Wilderness Lakes Time Share Camping Resort, and new residential development south on Winchester Road further characterize the land use within the project area.

**10. Other public agencies whose approval is required:**

California Department of Fish and Game, Streambed Alteration Agreement (CDFG Code Section 1601)

US Army Corps of Engineers, Section 404 Permit (if required)

**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.

- |                                 |                                      |                            |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 9 Aesthetics                    | 9 Agricultural Resources             | 9 Air Quality              |
| 9 Biological Resources          | 9 Cultural Resources                 | 9 Geology / Soils          |
| 9 Hazards & Hazardous Materials | 9 Hydrology / Water Quality          | 9 Land Use / Planning      |
| 9 Mineral Resources             | 9 Noise                              | 9 Population / Housing     |
| 9 Public Services               | 9 Recreation                         | 9 Transportation / Traffic |
| 9 Utilities / Service Systems   | 9 Mandatory Findings of Significance |                            |

**DETERMINATION:**

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- 9 I find that the Proposed Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- :
- 9 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 revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the applicant. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- 9 I find that the Proposed Project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- 9 I find that the Proposed Project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant impact unless mitigated" 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.
- 9 I find that although the Proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, 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, nothing further is required.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

For: \_\_\_\_\_

**EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:**

<b>I. AESTHETICS.</b> <i>Would the project:</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	9	9	:	9
b) Damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	9	9	:	9
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	9	9	:	9
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views of the area?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The project consists mostly of placing new poles where old poles presently exist. Any additional poles would be placed along roadsides. The additional poles placed to complete the segments of the project would not significantly change the landscape's existing visual character because power and transmission lines are already common in the area and because the area contains a low number of existing residential viewers.
- b) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The majority of the power lines and poles will occur in and along agricultural fields, roadsides, or disturbed habitat where power lines are already present and so no significant impact to scenic resources is expected.
- c) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Refer to a) above.
- d) **No Impact.** The proposed project contains a work schedule with construction activities limited to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. so no potential for significant impact from light or glare associated with night-time construction is anticipated. The wood and steel poles do not have enough surfaces area to cause problematic glare.

<b>II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES.</b> <i>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of statewide Importance (Farmland) to non-agricultural use?	9	9	9	:
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?)	9	9	9	:
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could individually or cumulatively result in loss of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **No Impact.** According to the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) and subsequent Supplement to the PEA (dated December 9, 1998), poles would only be placed in the easement of existing roads where farmland is present, so no cultivated land would be lost.
- b) **No Impact.** Refer to a) above.
- c) **No Impact.** Refer to a) above.

<b>III. AIR QUALITY.</b> <i>Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Attainment Plan or Congestion Management Plan?	9	9	:	9
b) Violate any stationary source air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation?	9	9	:	9
c) Result in a net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	9	9	:	9
d) Create or contribute to a non-stationary source “hot spot” (primarily carbon monoxide)?	9	9	:	9
e) Expose sensitive receptor to substantial pollutant concentrations?	9	9	9	:
f) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Southern California Edison (SCE) has proposed to utilize SCE’s existing maintenance equipment (e.g., transmission line boom trucks, drill rigs, pole trucks) and crews to construct the 115 kV transmission line. However, SCE anticipates using contractors for some construction activities. Both SCE and contract personnel will be using Valley Substation as the construction base. Since construction would primarily be accomplished with existing crews, the majority of emissions associated with construction would be included within the baseline condition within the Air Quality Attainment Plan (AQMP). This would also apply to the minimal operational emissions associated with this project. In addition, this project would not conflict with the Congestion Management Plan because this project would not cause an increase in vehicle traffic within the study area.
- b) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The temporary emissions associated with construction would not violate any air quality standards. It should be noted that the maximum daily construction emissions were calculated for the proposed project. It was determined that the temporary emission levels from construction would not exceed any of the SCAQMD’s significance emission thresholds. Similar to construction, emissions associated with operation of the proposed project would not violate any air quality standards.
- c) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** As described above under section III (b), maximum daily construction emissions were calculated for this proposed project assuming a worst-case scenario; emissions generated from non- SCE equipment, which are not included within the baseline emissions inventory. Even under the worst-case scenario (which would not occur because SCE has stated that they would use their own equipment), it was determined that the temporary emission levels from construction would not exceed any of the SCAQMD’s significance emission thresholds. As a result, emissions associated with construction would be less than significant.

With regard to operations, emissions associated with inspection and maintenance activities would be minimal, well below the SCAQMD’s significance criteria. As a result, emissions associated with the operation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

- d) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Construction or operation of the proposed project would not create or contribute to a non-stationary source “hot spot”. A “hot spot” is usually associated with a project that would contribute to an increase in vehicle traffic or congestion near the project area.
- e) **No Impact.** No sensitive receptors (e.g., schools, hospitals) are located within ½ mile of the proposed project alignment. As a result, construction and operation of the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. The project alignment passes near a number of residences (especially along the southern portion of the alignment), but construction near any single residence should last no more than a few days.
- f) **No Impact.** The construction and operation of the proposed project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.



<b>IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.</b> <i>Would the project:</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Adversely impact, either directly or indirectly or through habitat modification any endangered, threatened or rare species as listed in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (sections 670.2 or 670.5) or in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (section 17.11 or 17.12)?	9	9	:	9
b) Have substantial adverse impacts, either directly or indirectly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	9	9	:	9
c) Have a substantial adverse impact on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	9	9	:	9
d) Adversely impact federally protected wetlands, (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc) either individually or in combination with known probable impacts of the activities through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	9	9	:	9
e) Interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of wildlife nursery sites?	9	9	9	:
f) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policy or ordinance?	9	9	9	:
g) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	9	9	:	9

**Explanation:**

- a) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica californica*), a Federally-listed threatened species, and Stephen's kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*), a Federally-listed endangered and State-listed threatened species, occur in the disturbed coastal sage scrub habitat located within Segments D1 and C1 of the proposed project. The San Jacinto crownscale (*Atriplex coronata* var. *notatior*), a recently listed Federally endangered plant, occurs in a wash along Segment C1. Construction work within the coastal sage scrub could potentially impact individuals or populations of gnatcatchers or kangaroo rat known to occur within the coastal sage scrub community and to the population of crownscale in the wash. Additionally, SCE estimates that construction activities related to pole setting and the construction of some new stub roads will result in a loss of approximately 130 square feet of scrub in Segment D1 and 6,600 square feet in Segment C1.

The potential impact to the two sensitive wildlife species will be mitigated to a less-than-significant level by several commitments outlined in SCE's PEA and detailed in the Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan (MIMP).

- SCE will reduce impacts to habitat by avoid grading within the coastal sage scrub or near riparian habitat to the greatest extent possible.
- SCE will contribute to the Skinner Lake Preserve by buying one acre of credit to cover impacts to coastal sage scrub habitat, as requested and approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. SCE will prepare a Riparian Habitat Restoration Plan in conjunction with the Section 1601 Streambed Alteration Agreement for approval by the California Department of Fish and Game.
- The project can be constructed without incidental take of listed species, pursuant to recommendations by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS). To mitigate and/or avoid any potential impacts, SCE will: 1) contribute to the Stephens' kangaroo rat Habitat Conservation Fund, 2) mark buffer areas around any known California gnatcatcher nests, and 3) not undertake construction activities in California gnatcatcher nesting areas between March 1 and August 15.
- SCE shall avoid the population of San Jacinto crownscale within the wash on Segment C-1.

- SCE shall avoid populations of smooth tarweed along Segment C-1.
- SCE shall establish measures to avoid impacts to the San Diego horned lizard, the orange-throated whiptail, and the western spadefoot toad in SCE's Environmental Protection Plan (EPP).

Please refer to Mitigation Measures 3.1 through 3.6 in the project's Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan for a more detailed description of each mitigation measure and the process for implementation.

- b) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The San Diego horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei*), the orange-throated whiptail (*Cnemidophorus hyperythrus beldingi*), and the western spadefoot toad (*Scaphiopus hammondi*) are all wildlife Species of Special Concern (SCS) to the California Department of Fish and Game and are either known to occur within the coastal sage scrub habitat on Segments D1 and C1 of the proposed project or have suitable habitat within these segments of the project. As stated above, SCE estimates approximately 6,600 square feet of scrub will be disturbed or lost due to construction activities. With the loss of the scrub, there is a potential for the loss of some individuals of the above mentioned species. Potential impacts to these species will be mitigated to a less-than-significant level by the implementation of the measures proposed by SCE as discussed in IVa above.

SCE has also committed to avoiding those areas identified as suitable habitat (temporary pools within the scrub) for the western spadefoot toad (Supplement to the PEA). Smooth tarweed (*Hemizonia pungens ssp laevis*) is a former Federal candidate that is now considered a Federal Species of Concern and a sensitive plant by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS 1B). This species occurs in patches along a dirt road on the alignment on Segment C1. Pole setting along this road could result in the loss of individuals or small populations of this species. Because the populations of this species are small and scattered, SCE commits to avoiding this plant when encountered during construction, and thereby reduce any potential significant impacts to non-significance (PEA, Supplement to the PEA, and personal communication with Dan Pearson, SCE, October 23, 1998).

Some potential exists for the loss of raptors through electrocution from perching or nesting on the power lines. This impact is mitigated by designing the subtransmission line to comply with *Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1996* by APLIC (PEA). Please refer to Mitigation Measure 3.7 in the project's Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan for a more detailed description of the measures proposed by SCE to avoid impacts to raptors.

- c) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Coastal sage scrub and riparian habitats are both considered sensitive by the CDFG. Both plant communities serve as habitat for sensitive and general wildlife species and both habitats are on the decline statewide. By the implementation of the proposed project, an estimated 6,600 square feet of coastal sage scrub and approximately 30 square feet of riparian habitat will be disturbed or lost. As part of the mitigation for sensitive species, SCE has committed to purchasing one acre of credit at the Skinner Lake Preserve, as requested and approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (see discussion IVa above). For impacts to the riparian area within the ephemeral stream within Segment C1, SCE will undertake appropriate mitigations as specified in the Streambed Alteration Agreement to reduce impacts to riparian species as a condition of obtaining a Streambed Alteration Agreement (CDFG Code Section 1601). If required, a Section 404 Permit will be obtained from the US Army Corps of Engineers (see discussion VIIIc). SCE has also committed to scheduling construction in the riparian area so that the breeding season of birds (mid-February through June) is avoided so potential impacts to birds using the riparian area are reduced to non-significance (Supplement to the PEA).

Please refer to Mitigation Measures 3.1, 3.2, and 7.1 in the project's Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan for a more detailed description of the measures proposed by SCE to reduce impacts to coastal sage scrub and riparian habitat.

- d) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Refer to c) above discussion of riparian communities.
- e) **No Impact.** No significant wildlife movement or migratory corridors occur on the proposed project alignment. Warm Springs Creek serves as migration and movement corridors for a variety of wildlife and the implementation of this alternative could produce temporary but mitigable impacts during construction by disrupting wildlife movement and breeding in the area (PEA).
- f) **No Impact.** The proposed project does not conflict with local policies and ordinances protecting biological resources (PEA).

- g) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Although the proposed project occupies a small area within Riverside County, the project site is within the boundaries of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRCMSHCPP) (CERES). This plan is still under development and has not yet been approved.

<b>V. CULTURAL RESOURCES.</b> <i>Would the project:</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource which is either listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historic Resources, or a local register of historic resources?	9	9	:	9
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of unique archaeological resources (i.e., an artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions, has a special or particular quality such as being the oldest or best available example of its type, or is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person)?	9	9	:	9
c) Disturb or destroy a unique paleontological resource or site?	9	9	:	9
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** As part of the easement agreement with the property owner, existing subtransmission line and poles will be removed from the area west of Segment D1. This falls within the boundaries of a large recorded prehistoric archaeological site in the vicinity of Warm Springs Creek. Potential impacts to this site during pole removal are offset by SCE’s commitment not to improve on any existing access roads and to use rubber-tired vehicles at all times. An Archaeological Sensitive Area occurs on the eastern side of Segment D1 between Winchester Road and Briggs Road. Segment B crosses an area of Archaeological Sensitivity located near the corner of Briggs Road and Matthews Road. Segment C1 crosses through an extensive district of archaeological and historical resources located on and around the hills located between Simpson Road and Newport Road. In addition, Segment C1 passes near historic Leon Mine located just north of Scott Road. SCE has committed to reduce potential impacts to these sites by implementation of the following measures:

- SCE will reduce potential impacts to Archaeologically Sensitive Areas by carefully siting transmission poles and by using rubber tired vehicles at all times during construction.

To increase the protection of these resources the following additional mitigation is *recommended*:

- To increase the protection of Archaeologically Sensitive Areas, a qualified archaeological monitor shall conduct a preconstruction survey and be present during all construction or subtransmission line removal activities in the vicinity of Warm Springs Creek, the Leon Mine area, and the Archaeological Sensitive Areas at the corner of Winchester Road and Briggs Road and the area between Winchester Road and Briggs Road. Should an archaeological resource be inadvertently unearthed or in some other way disturbed, construction activities will be halted until the specific area can be cordoned off or in some other way avoided. If possible, pole locations or stub roads shall be relocated to avoid the archaeological resource. If complete avoidance is not possible, a qualified cultural resource specialist shall investigate the site and recommend an appropriate course of action.

Please refer to Mitigation Measure 4.1 in the project’s Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan for a more detailed description of the measures proposed to avoid impacts to cultural resources.

- b) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Refer to a) above.
- c) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Fossil-bearing Pleistocene alluvium deposits may be encountered during pole drilling activities on Segment C1 north of Holland Road. Potentially significant impacts to paleontological sites will be reduced

by SCE's commitment for a monitoring plan to be drafted and implemented by a qualified paleontologist when construction work is occurring in sensitive areas. The plan shall detail the method and criteria for salvaging unearthed fossils if encountered during pole drilling or removal (PEA).

Please refer to Mitigation Measure 4.2 in the project's Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan for a more detailed description of the measures proposed to avoid impacts to paleontological resources.

- d) **No Impact.** A record search of the Eastern Information Center of the California Historical Resources Inventory System (Department of Anthropology, University of California, Riverside, 1998) shows that roughly eighty five percent of the proposed project site has been subject to previous archaeological survey and that no Native American reservation lands or places of particular Native American tradition or religious importance have been identified on any of the proposed project segments. No burial sites are expected within the project site.

<b>VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS.</b> <i>Would the project:</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?	9	9	:	9
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	9	9	:	9
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	9	9	:	9
iv) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	9	9	9	:
v) Landslides?	9	9	9	:
vi) Flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	9	9	9	:
vii) Wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas and where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	9	9	:	9
b) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil?	9	9	:	9
c) Would the project result in the loss of a unique geologic feature?	9	9	9	:
d) Is the project located on strata or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	9	9	9	:
e) Is the project located on expansive soil creating substantial risks to life or property?	9	9	:	9
f) Where the sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater, is the soil capable of supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) i) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** No portions of the proposed project fall within an active fault zone. Two active fault zones occur in the vicinity (but not within) the project site. The Elsinore Fault Zone occurs approximately 1½ miles from the Auld Substation and 9 miles from the Valley Substation. The San Jacinto Fault Zone occurs approximately 9 miles from the Valley Substation and 16 miles from the Auld Substation. The most significant geologic hazard along the proposed project is strong ground motion from these active faults. However, the design of the 115 kV subtransmission line structures have incorporated code-mandated wind-loading criteria that have resulted in structures of strength that well exceeds that required to withstand seismic events. Also, due to the compact configurations and high design margins for safety of the poles and lines used in subtransmission systems, 115 kV lines are inherently resistant to seismic shaking (PEA and Supplement to the PEA).

- ii **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Refer to i) above.
  - iii **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The majority of the proposed project occurs on substrate underlain with either granitic materials (Segment D1) or alluvium (most of Segments A1, B, and C1) on both of which liquefaction is unlikely to occur. Therefore, liquefaction represents a minor hazard affecting only a few potential pole locations. Liquefaction could be a concern where the transmission line crosses the tributary of the Warm Springs Creek along the west side of Briggs Road. Although no other specific liquefaction hazard has been identified along the proposed route, SCE has committed to minimizing the possibility of pole failure due to liquefaction through engineering design and by avoiding placement of poles in liquefaction hazard area at the tributary crossing of the Warm Springs Creek and along the west side of Briggs Road.
  - iv **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. Mudflows are not known to occur in the project site (PEA).
  - v **No Impact.** The proposed project is located in a valley floor or on existing roads on very low hills. The installation of the project will have no impact on these hills' structure or stability (PEA and Aspen site visit September 23, 1998).
  - vi **No Impact.** The proposed project is strictly an upgrade of an existing above-ground electrical system and will not alter any water features or flood control structures (PEA).
  - vii **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Refer to h) in Section VII Hazards and Hazardous Materials.
- b) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The majority of the proposed project will occur in easements of existing roads and so only topsoil in these areas will be disturbed. Upon completion of all pole placements, remaining soil will be redistributed in the area of the poles. Where the proposed project crosses streams or creeks, intermittent flow may result in scour and erosion. This potential impact will be mitigated by SCE's commitment to incorporate erosion and scour control elements in the project design (PEA). Also refer to c) in Section VIII Hydrology and Water Quality.
- Please refer to Mitigation Measure 5.1 in the project's Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan for a more detailed description of the measures proposed to avoid potential erosion impacts.
- c) **No Impact.** No unique geologic features are known to occur on the project site (PEA).
  - d) **No Impact.** Although soils along the subtransmission line vary significantly from one area to another (ranging from alluvial deposits underlain with stiff dense layers of either silty sand, clayey silt, or clayey silty sand or granular soils composed of silts sands, or gravels), none of the route occurs on substrate that would be considered unstable (PEA). Also refer to a-iii) above.
  - e) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** According to the PEA, most of the native soils along the proposed project route have low expansion potential. However, within the region, cracking has been noted along the ground surface in association with groundwater withdrawal. In order to ensure that the proposed project does not occur on expansive soils that may threaten the stability of poles, SCE has committed to conduct field explorations and/or review documents to identify the presence of any expansive soils within the construction area. Mitigations such as design modification or construction techniques (such as deepening foundations, removing and re-compacting or replacing unsuitable soils, foundation grouting, or avoiding expansive soils) shall be implemented to offset any adverse impact presented by expansive soils (PEA). Please refer to Mitigation Measure 5.1 in the project's Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan for a more detailed description of the measures proposed to avoid potential impacts associated with expansive soils.
  - f) **No Impact.** The proposed project will not result in an increase in wastewater in the area. Refer to a-f) in Section XVI Utilities and Services below.

<b>VII. HAZARDS &amp; HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. Would the project:</b>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials?	9	9	9	:



b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the likely release of hazardous materials into the environment?	9	9	9	:
c) Reasonably be anticipated to emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	9	9	9	:
d) Is the project located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	9	9	9	:
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	9	9	9	:
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	9	9	9	:
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	9	9	9	:
h) Expose people or structures to the risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildland are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	9	9	:	9

**Explanation:**

- a) **No Impact.** The project will not involve the use of, routine transport, or disposal of hazardous materials. Disposal of debris and old poles will be limited to the construction phase and these items will be disposed of off site at an approved recycling facility (PEA, Project Description).
- b) **No Impact.** The SCE 115 kV subtransmission lines are constructed to exceed standards set forth in the CPUC General Order No. 95 and are designed to de-energize should the line fail and fall to the ground (PEA).
- c) **No Impact.** Refer to a) above.
- d) **No Impact.** During the project reconnaissance survey by SCE personnel, no evidence of hazardous materials disposal was discovered. The Riverside County's Highway 74/79 Infrastructure Study identified one hazardous site (groundwater contamination from the Double Butte Landfill) but determined that it was more than 1 mile east of one segment of one alternative (Supplement to the PEA, 1998).
- e) **No Impact.** The southern portion of the proposed project is adjacent to, and less than a mile from the Borel Airpark Center Specific Plan area which includes the existing French Valley Airport. The heights of the new poles would not result in any aircraft safety hazard (PEA).
- f) **No Impact.** The project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip.
- g) **No Impact.** The proposed project will not interfere (by way of blocking access or cause any other delays) with any emergency response plan or evacuation plan (PEA).
- h) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** In order to minimize the risk to property and lives from wildland fires, SCE shall be in compliance with State and Federal law by maintaining a brush clearance of not less than 10 feet around energized components of the power line during construction and operation (PEA).

<b>VIII. HYDROLOGY &amp; WATER QUALITY. <i>Would the project:</i></b>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Violate Regional Water Quality Control Board water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	9	9	9	:

b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater discharge such that there would be a net deficit in the aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (i.e., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	9	9	9	:
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	9	:	9	9
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site?	9	9	:	9
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems to control?	9	9	9	:
f) Place housing within a 100-year flood plain, as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other hazard delineation map?	9	9	9	:
g) Place within 100-year flood plain structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **No Impact.** The proposed project consists solely of an upgrade of an existing above-ground electrical system and will not affect water supply, usage or water discharge (PEA).
- b) **No Impact.** Refer to a) above.
- c) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Three waterways are within the proposed project site. Construction work near Warm Springs Creek and the flood channel along Salt Creek just south of Simpson Road involves only spanning these creeks, and no new poles shall be placed or old poles replaced. Approximately three poles, currently located within an unnamed tributary of Warm Springs Creek along the west side of Briggs Road, will be replaced. Although this action will not significantly alter the course of this tributary, a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game pursuant to Section 1601 of the California Fish and Game Code and (if required) a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be obtained by the SCE prior to any construction in this watercourse. SCE will also reduce any potential impacts from soil or water runoff from construction by implementing the following soil stabilization measures: 1) minimizing the amounts of material imported to each site, 2) hauling away any excess materials resulting from the drilling of holes for new poles, and 3) implementing appropriate measures to prevent the washing of excavated materials into the any adjacent watercourse should work be performed during the winter months (PEA).

Please refer to Mitigation Measure 7.1 in the project’s Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan for a more detailed description of the measures proposed to avoid potential impacts to water quality during construction. In addition, the following specific actions are *recommended* to prevent excavated materials from washing into nearby watercourses:

- Sandbags, sterile hay bales or silt fencing must be used to prevent water and soil runoff during winter months. Fencing, sandbags or hay bale barriers should be checked frequently during storm weather to ensure that the barriers are in proper condition and properly placed to achieve erosion protection and prevent runoff.

SCE also commits to the use of poles designed with scour protection in place within this tributary (Supplement to the PEA).

- d) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Refer to c) above.
- e) **No Impact.** Refer to c) above.
- f) **No Impact.** The proposed project consists solely of an upgrade of an existing above-ground electrical system and will not result in the construction of new housing or need to construct any new housing in the project area (PEA and Initial Study Section XII Population and Housing).

- g) **No Impact.** Flood control facilities (both existing and proposed) for the project site are under the control of the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (RCFCWCD) which is required to prepare master drainage plans that evaluate drainage problems and identify flood control facilities for the project site. According to Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Valley Substation and Segments A1, B, and C1 of the proposed project are within a 100-year flood plain. However, it is not expected that the minimal construction (i.e., pole placement) in these segments would impede or redirect flood flows. RCFCWCD does not require SCE to obtain any permits related to flood protection for the proposed project (Supplement to the PEA).

<b>IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING.</b> <i>Would the project:</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Physically divide an established community?	9	9	9	:
b) Conflict with applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance)?	9	9	9	:
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural communities conservation plan?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **No Impact.** The proposed project is to upgrade an existing electrical system. The project does not call for the construction of any walls, new roads, or other structures that would otherwise divide an established community (PEA).
- b) **No Impact.** The future land uses for the area of Segment D1 are identified as rural residential and light agriculture in the Southwest Area Community Plan. The proposed project is compatible with this community plan. Any disturbance to residents from increased traffic and noise during construction will be minor and temporary.

The land uses in Segments A1, B, and C1 include the Valley Substation, agricultural, rural residential, horse, dairy and poultry ranching, a camping resort, aquaculture, and a recreational vehicle park. The future land uses identified in community plans are primarily rural residential and agriculture. Because the project will essentially replace the existing line with taller poles, no significant impact to existing or future lands is expected. However, the Menifee North Specific Plan and the Winchester Hills Specific Plan both identify more intensive land uses for the northern portion of the power line route on the east side of Briggs Road. These land uses include commercial, manufacturing, urban residential, park, and school uses. It is anticipated that the park would provide a buffer between the proposed power line and the proposed school thus eliminating any conflict. Any disturbance to residents from increased traffic and noise during construction on these segments will be minor and temporary (PEA).

- c) **No Impact.** The proposed project is within the boundaries of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. This plan is still being formulated and, therefore, it is not possible to make a determination of the consistency of the proposed project with this plan.

<b>X. MINERAL RESOURCES.</b> <i>Would the project:</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource classified MRZ-2 by the State Geologist that would be valuable to the region and the residents of the state?	9	9	9	:
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **No Impact.** No mineral resources have been identified within the affected area of the project site, and there are no active mineral recovery operations within the project site.

b) **No Impact.** Refer to a) above.

<b>XI. NOISE.</b> <i>Would the project result in:</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	9	9	9	:
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive ground borne vibration noise levels?	9	9	9	:
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	9	9	9	:
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	9	9	:	9
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the area to excessive noise levels?	9	9	9	:
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the area to excessive noise levels?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **No Impact.** Noise standards are developed by the U.S. EPA and local governments to protect human health. The Electric Power Research Institute determined through noise tests conducted on 230 kV transmission lines that levels produced by higher voltage lines than that proposed do not exceed 40 dBA at a distance of 40 feet from the outside conductor. The study determined that a lower voltage line, such as the 115 kV in the proposed project, would result in a lower noise level. Through a study conducted in May of 1998 by SCE, it was determined that 115 kV lines produce little or no audible or measurable noise levels, and that everyday ambient noise levels far exceed any produced by a 115 kV line (see item “c” below for study details). There are relatively few sensitive receptors within the project site (these include some residences and livestock ranches). Therefore, it is determined that the proposed project would not exceed any noise level standards put forth by local governments or any general plans for the project area (PEA & Supplement to the PEA). In addition to operational noise associated with the proposed power lines, noise levels will be temporarily elevated as a result of project construction activities [refer to d) below].
- b) **No Impact.** The proposed project is to upgrade of an existing above ground electrical system’s reliability. No ground borne vibration noise would result from the completion of the proposed project (PEA). However, local vibration may be possibility during project construction due to the operation of construction equipment and vehicles. None of the types of equipment or vehicles to be utilized during construction are considered to be of a type that would be expected to produce excessive vibration levels. Any appreciable vibration at any given location would be temporary in nature and limited to the designated construction hours of 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- c) **No Impact.** During a SCE subtransmission line noise survey, noise level data was collected at 3 different 115 kV transmission lines both under the poles and then at mid span, and at both 20 feet and 100 feet from the outside conductor to determine ambient noise levels. The survey revealed that there was either minimal or no audible or measurable magnetostriction or corona noise attributable to 115 kV transmission lines. The ambient noise produced by the new 115 kV line would not exceed the everyday ambient noise levels produced by traffic, aircraft, livestock, dogs, birds, insects, and community activities (PEA & Supplement to the PEA).
- d) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Existing noise levels may temporarily increase during construction from the operation of construction equipment and from construction crew. This increase should not result in significant exposure to people or other potential sensitive receptors in the project area. However, any adverse noise impacts associated with project construction will be minimized by SCE’s commitment to implement the following measure:
- SCE shall minimize noise through careful work scheduling and by having properly functioning mufflers on construction vehicles.

Implementation of this measure will involve limiting construction activities to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday, and Saturday and Sunday if required (PEA). In addition, the following measures are *recommended* to minimize potential noise impacts associated with construction:

- SCE shall provide at least 72-hour advance notice of the start of construction to all business and residences adjacent to the ROW. Notification shall be by mail with follow up by telephone or in person. The announcement shall state specifically where and when construction will occur in the area. Notices shall provide tips on reducing noise intrusion, for example, by closing windows facing the planned construction. The noticing shall also advise the recipient on how to inform SCE if specific outdoor events are scheduled so that construction can be rescheduled, if necessary, to avoid a conflict.
- SCE shall maintain proper mufflers on all internal combustion and vehicles engines used in construction to reduce noise to the maximum feasible extent.

Please refer to Mitigation Measure 8.1 in the project’s Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan for a more detailed description of the measures proposed to avoid potential noise impacts.

- e) **No Impact.** The southern end of the proposed project is located near the French Valley Airport; however, neither project construction nor operation would result in the exposure of people in the area to excessive noise levels associated with aircraft operations.
- f) **No Impact.** Refer to e) above.

<b>XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING.</b> <i>Would the project:</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Induce a substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	9	9	9	:
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	9	9	9	:
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **No Impact.** According to SCE, the proposed project is intended to increase the reliability of the electrical service to existing customers south of the Valley Substation. Without the increase in line capacity, SCE anticipates that problems of electrical facility outages and disruptions to customer service during peak load times will be compounded as demand increases due to growth in the region. The project is not intended to induce growth, but instead is intended to accommodate anticipated growth in electric demand.
- b) **No Impact.** The proposed project limits any new construction to pole placements within rights-of-way and easements of existing roads. No residential property would be displaced by this construction (PEA).
- c) **No Impact.** Refer to b) above.

<b>XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES.</b> <i>Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provisions of new or physically altered government facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Fire protection?	9	9	9	:
b) Police protection?	9	9	9	:
c) Schools?	9	9	9	:



d) Parks?	9	9	9	:
e) Other public facilities?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **No Impact.** The proposed project would not overburden existing fire protection services or necessitate additional services in the area. Fire and emergency service to the project site is adequately provided by the Bautista and Southwest field operation divisions of the Riverside County Fire Department, under contract with the California Department of Forestry. Should additional assistance be required, other fire stations within the immediate area may be called upon, including the nearby Sun City station. During construction, construction vehicles may temporarily slow traffic but will not prevent passage of vehicles, including emergency vehicles (Supplement to the PEA).
- b) **No Impact.** Adequate police protection for the project site is provided by Hemet and Temecula stations of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. During construction, construction vehicles may temporarily slow traffic but will not prevent passage of vehicles, including emergency vehicles (Supplement to the PEA).
- c) **No Impact.** According to SCE, the proposed project will result in an increase of population therefore would not tax existing schools nor necessitate the need for additional schools in the area (Supplement to the PEA).
- d) **No Impact.** The proposed project will result in an increase of population therefore will not tax existing parks nor necessitate the need for additional parks in the area (Supplement to the PEA).
- e) **No Impact.** The proposed project will not tax existing traffic control nor necessitate the need for additional traffic control in the area. Adequate traffic control is provided to the area by the California Highway Patrol and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department (Supplement to the PEA).

<b>XIV. RECREATION.</b>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	9	9	9	:
b) Does the project include recreation facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **No Impact.** There are no existing recreational facilities along Segment D1. The Southwest Area Community Plan does identify a future Regional Recreational Trail to be located along Warm Springs Creek at the southern boundary of the project site, but because subtransmission and distribution lines already occur in this area no impact to future recreation is expected from the implementation of the project. There are no existing recreational facilities along Segments A1 and B. Segment C1 contains the Wilderness Lakes Camping Resort located along Briggs Road. Users of this resort will experience adverse impacts in the form of roadside activity and construction noise. This disturbance will be short term; for only the duration of the construction activities in the area. The existing 115 kV line that presently exists along Briggs Road adjacent to the resort will be replaced with a double circuit 115 kV system situated on higher replacement poles which will be visible when entering or leaving the park. No adverse impacts are expected because the existing line is already visible to resort users. There will be no significant change in what visitors see when entering or leaving the resort. The Southwest Area Community Plan identifies a future bike path and local recreational trails along Keller Road where it intersects Briggs Road. Because a 115 kV transmission line currently exists along this area, no impact to trail or bike path enjoyment would be anticipated.
- b) **No Impact.** The proposed project consists solely of the construction of new subtransmission lines and does not include the construction or need for construction of any new recreational facilities in the area.

<b>XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC. <i>Would the project:</i></b>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ration on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	9	9	:	9
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by either by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	9	9	9	:
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	9	9	9	:
d) Substantially increase hazards to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	9	9	9	:
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	9	9	:	9
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	9	9	9	:
g) Conflicts with adopted policies supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** The proposed project is a transmission line upgrade and will not generate any land, air, or rail traffic and will not interfere with ground traffic movement upon completion. The construction of the proposed project will not require the closures of any roads but there is a possibility that a single lane of traffic may be temporarily blocked on some roads by construction vehicles during construction. This shall be minimized by SCE's commitment to use cones and/or flagmen as necessary and to minimize the duration of any activity that may block traffic (PEA).
- b) **No Impact.** The proposed project is a transmission line upgrade and will not generate any land, air, or rail traffic and will not interfere with ground traffic movement upon completion.
- c) **No Impact.** Refer to b) above.
- d) **No Impact.** The proposed project is a transmission line upgrade within easements and franchises. No alteration of road configuration will result.
- e) **Less-than-Significant Impact.** Refer to a) above.
- f) **No Impact.** The completion of the proposed project will result in a transmission line upgrade and will not result in a demand for increased parking areas. No new facilities, which include parking areas, will be constructed.
- g) **No Impact.** The proposed project will only result in an upgrade of an existing electrical system servicing existing customers south of the Valley Substation. The completed project will have no effect on transportation, including alternative transportation (PEA).

<b>XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. <i>Would the project:</i></b>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	9	9	9	:
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects?	9	9	9	:

c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, construction of which would cause significant environmental effects?	9	9	9	:
d) Are sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	9	9	9	:
e) Has the wastewater treatment provider who serves or may serve the project determined that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	9	9	9	:
f) Is the project served by the landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	9	9	9	:

**Explanation:**

- a) **No Impact.** The proposed project involves the alteration of an existing electrical system and does not involve the establishment of any land uses that generate wastewater (PEA).
- b) **No Impact.** Refer to a) above.
- c) **No Impact.** Refer to a) above.
- d) **No Impact.** SCE does not anticipate the need for water during construction or for dust suppression (refer to Air Quality). Should water be required for dust suppression, SCE will contact the local water agency to obtain authorization to use a local water hydrant as a source to fill a SCE water tank truck (Supplement to the PEA).
- e) **No Impact.** Refer to a) above.
- f) **No Impact.** No construction waste would be generated that would need to go into a local landfill. All old poles that are to be removed shall be shipped to a recycling center. Excess dirt from construction shall be redistributed around pole bases subsequent to pole placement (Supplement to the PEA).

<b>XVI. MANDATORY FINDING OF SIGNIFICANCE.</b>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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 pre-history?	9	9	:	9
b) Does the project have the potential to achieve short term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?	9	9	9	:
c) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ( <i>Cumulatively considerable</i> 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.)	9	9	:	9
d) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	9	9	:	9

**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 (October 8, 1998) and the Supplement to the PEA dated December 9, 1998. SCE staff prepared these documents. Additional information was obtained during a visit to the

project site on October 23, 1998, by personnel from SCE, the California Public Utilities Commission, and Aspen Environmental Group.

**XVIII. REFERENCES.**

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