

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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August 17, 2018

Ryan Stevenson
Principal Advisor
Regulatory Affairs
Southern California Edison
8631 Rush St, General Office 4 – 235E (2nd Floor)
Rosemead, CA, 91770

RE: West of Devers Upgrade Project: Minor Project Refinement #19

Dear Mr. Stevenson,

On August 13, 2018, Southern California Edison (SCE) submitted a request for Minor Project Refinement (MPR) #19 for additional work areas in Segment 4 to support transmission line activities approved under the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Notice to Proceed (NTP) #4, September 5, 2017, in support of the West of Devers Upgrade Project in the City of Calimesa and in unincorporated Riverside County, California.

The CPUC voted on August 18, 2016 to approve SCE's West of Devers Upgrade Project (Decision D.16-08-017) and a Notice of Determination was submitted to the State Clearinghouse (SCH# 2014051041).

The CPUC also adopted a Mitigation, Monitoring, Compliance and Reporting Plan (MMCRP) to ensure compliance with all mitigation measures imposed on the West of Devers Upgrade Project during implementation. The MMCRP also acknowledges that temporary changes to the project, such as final project design and engineering or need for addition workspace, are anticipated and common practice for construction efforts of this scale and that a MPR request would be required for these activities. This letter documents the CPUC's thorough evaluation of all activities covered in this MPR, and that no new impacts or increase in impact severity would result from the requested MPR activities.

MPRs are reviewed for consistency with CEQA requirements and are located within the geographic boundary of the project study area. MPRs do not create new or substantially more severe significant impacts, or conflict with any mitigation measure or applicable law or policy. Also, they do not trigger other permit requirements unless the appropriate agency has approved the change, and clearly and strictly comply with the intent of the mitigation measure or applicable law or policy.

MPR #19 for additional work areas in Segment 4 to support transmission line activities (approved under NTP #4) is granted by CPUC based on the factors described below.

SCE MPR Request. Excerpts from the SCE MPR request, received August 13, 2018 is presented below (indented) [brackets for clarification]:

Transmission Line Segment 4 – Tower Site 4N58

SCE is requesting approval for the work area for Segment 4 Tower Site 4N58 [to be] expanded south to facilitate wire pulling activities at the site, by providing additional workspace for material and equipment staging in the City of Calimesa, Riverside County.

The temporary impacts associated with the expansion area total 0.01 acre (0.01 acre Chaparral).

Transmission Line Segment 4 – Tower Site 4N59

SCE is requesting approval for the work area for Segment 4 Tower Site 4N59 [to be] expanded north to facilitate the installation of the TSP foundation while minimizing impacts to Coast Live Oak Woodland, where feasible in the City of Calimesa, Riverside County.

The temporary impacts associated with the expansion area total 0.27 acre (0.16 acre Coast Live Oak Woodland, 0.11 acre Disturbed/Developed).

Transmission Line Segment 4 – Tower Site 4N64

A new work area along the El Casco Substation access road is required to facilitate wire pulling activities at Segment 4 Tower Site 4N64. The new work area will provide additional space for material and equipment staging in unincorporated Riverside County.

The temporary impacts associated with the new work area total 0.33 acre (0.27 acre Developed/Disturbed, 0.06 acre Grassland Forbland).

CPUC Evaluation of MPR Request

In accordance with the MMCRP, the subject MPR request was reviewed by CPUC to confirm that no new impacts or increase in impact severity would result from the requested MPR activities and that the subject request was within the geographic boundary of the Project study area. Additionally, the CPUC Environmental Monitors (EMs) conducted a site visit of the requested work areas on August 15, 2018. The following discussion summarizes this analysis for agriculture, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, land use, noise, paleontological resources, traffic and transportation, visual resources, water resources, and wildland fire. A list of bulleted conditions is presented to define additional information and clarifications regarding mitigation requirements. In some cases, these items exceed the requirements of the Mitigation Measures (MMs) and Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) and are based on specific site conditions and/or are proposed conditions by SCE.

Agriculture: No Important Farmland will be impacted with the implementation of this MPR.

Air Quality: During proposed construction, SCE shall implement the Fugitive Dust Control Plan approved by the CPUC on May 22, 2017, as well as the Exhaust Emissions Control Plan approved by CPUC on June 8, 2017. In addition, in compliance with MM AQ-1b, off-road equipment with engines larger than 50 horsepower shall have engines that meet or exceed U.S. EPA/CARB Tier 3 Emissions Standards. No additional impacts to air quality will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Biological Resources: SCE submitted biological resource survey information with the MPR #19 request. SCE conducted a desktop analysis of publicly available data and relevant project data to determine the potential for special-status species to occur at the new work locations. These new work locations were included in the study area for previous biological surveys. In addition, preconstruction clearance surveys were conducted for the sites, including the new work areas.

Suitable substrates for nesting birds protected by the California Fish and Game Code and Migratory Bird Treaty Act, including trees, shrubs, man-made structures, and the ground surface, are located within the

vicinity. Preconstruction surveys for nesting birds, and ongoing surveys and monitoring for nesting birds, will take place during the nesting season (January 1 – August 31).

Western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) habitat is widespread in the Project area; however, burrowing owls only have a moderate potential to occur within 500 feet of the new work areas. No burrowing owls have been observed within 500 feet of the proposed work areas during preconstruction surveys.

Suitable breeding habitat for the listed riparian bird species least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*; LBVI) or Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*; SWFL) is associated with San Timoteo Creek, which is located adjacent to the northern edge of the work area for Tower 4N64 and west of Towers 4N58 and 4N59. Protocol surveys were conducted for LBVI and SWFL in 2018. Multiple LBVI observations have been made within the adjacent suitable riparian bird habitat in 2018. Based on continued nest monitoring during the breeding season and analysis by LBVI/SWFL biologists John Green and/or Steve Myers, it has been concluded that the LBVI breeding season has concluded. No active LBVI nests are currently located within 500 feet of the new work areas. No SWFL have been confirmed in the Project area to date. The additional work area would not require trimming or removal of riparian vegetation. Assuming construction activities at this location are completed outside the breeding season, no impacts to riparian birds are expected.

Mapped suitable habitat for Stephens' kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*; SKR) is located adjacent to both sides of the El Casco access road. Tower 4N59 is also located within mapped suitable habitat for SKR. A habitat assessment, pedestrian surveys, and trapping surveys have been conducted for the Project. The area along the telecom route north of El Casco was trapped in 2015 with negative results. No sign of SKR has been observed during multiple pedestrian surveys from 2015 to the present. The habitat area is isolated from other areas of contiguous habitat by urban development and natural boundaries (e.g., habitat, watercourses). SKR are not expected at this location. Tower 4N59 – trapping surveys have been conducted annually in suitable habitat as recent as 2016 and 2017, and trapping has recently been completed in 2018 (report pending). No SKR have been captured. Based on a lack of historic data, habitat conditions, negative results over several years of surveys, and discussions with the wildlife agencies, SKR are unlikely to occur in the MPR areas.

Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*), big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*), hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), California myotis (*Myotis californicus*) and canyon bat (*Parastrellus hesperus*) have been documented by Dr. Ed West (CDFW collection permit and Memorandum of Understanding with CDFW) as using the riparian area associated with San Timoteo Creek, east of Tower 4N64 and near the associated additional work area, as a daytime roost site. Additionally, the oak woodland surrounding Tower 4N59 has been identified as a potential daytime roost site. The bat buffers associated with these habitats intersect the Tower 4N64 and 4N59 work areas, respectively. MM WIL-2i requires avoidance of the buffered areas to the extent feasible. If not feasible, it describes that construction activities should be delayed until the end of the breeding season. The wire site near Tower 4N64 was sited to avoid sensitive resources to the extent feasible. The work area for Tower 4N59, including the proposed additional work area, has been designed conservatively to avoid impacts to the extent feasible. Unfortunately, due to engineering constraints and safety concerns, the bat buffers cannot be avoided. However, based on the current outage schedule, construction within the established avoidance buffers will occur outside of bat breeding season (conservatively ending August 15 as determined by Dr. West). If construction activities must proceed within the buffers during the breeding season, SCE/Barnard will coordinate with the CDFW, CPUC, and BLM. It should be noted that no direct impacts (tree removals) are expected for the roosts near the additional work areas at this time. If it is later determined that direct impacts are required, additional surveys, and impact assessment will be conducted by a Qualified Biologist. If determined to be the best course of action, evictions will be conducted as described in MM WIL-2i and/or via methods developed in coordination with the CDFW.

Special-status small mammals such as the pallid San Diego pocket mouse (*Perognathus fallax pallidus*), northwestern San Diego pocket mouse (*Perognathus fallax fallax*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), desert kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis*), and/or black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*) can occur in many parts of the project area. Suitable habitat for the Los Angeles pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris brevinasus*) is mapped along the El Casco access road; however, based on negative trapping surveys and considerations for habitat quality in this area, it has been determined that the species are absent. If any of these special-status small mammal species are determined to be present during preconstruction surveys, potential impacts will be addressed according to the Small Mammals Avoidance and Minimization Plan.

One red diamond rattlesnake occurrence was recorded approximately 284 feet southwest of the work area associated with Tower 4N64. No special-status herpetofauna have been observed within 500 feet of the Tower 4N58 or 4N59 expanded work areas to date. Preconstruction sweeps will be conducted prior to commencing work in the new work areas to identify and move any special-status herpetofauna observed prior to the commencement of work.

A tree pruning and removal permit was issued by the City of Calimesa for oak tree trimming/removals near Tower 4N59. The oak tree protection measures identified in the arborist report will be implemented during construction and removals will be avoided, if feasible.

Smooth tarplant (*Centromedia pungens* ssp. *laevis*; CRPR 1B.1, WR-MSHCP Criteria Area Plant Species) occurs throughout the habitat immediately north of the El Casco access road. The tarplants have been flagged for avoidance. Tarplants have not been identified within the new work area; however, the seed bank within the surrounding buffer may contain tarplant seed. If unavoidable impacts occur to smooth tarplant or the seed bank, the site will be revegetated according to the temporary disturbance site requirements.

A constructed watercourse (concrete lined) runs along the south side of the El Casco Substation access road. The new work space will be located north of the feature. The feature will be avoided and stormwater BMPs will be implemented in accordance with the Project SWPPP. No jurisdictional water features directly intersect the new work areas. Therefore, no impacts to jurisdictional waters are anticipated.

No additional impacts to biological resources are anticipated with the implementation of this MPR.

Cultural Resources: SCE submitted cultural resource information with the MPR #19 request. A Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) has been completed for the West of Devers Upgrade Project and was approved by the CPUC in October 2017. The new work areas are located within the Project Area of Potential Affect (APE) and were covered within the record search data that was conducted during previous surveys and studies. The record search and survey results for the area were negative for cultural resources (SCE 2016). In the event of unanticipated discoveries, MM CL-1b, MM CL-1c, MM CL-1d and the CRMP requirements would be implemented. No impacts to cultural resources are anticipated with the implementation of this MPR.

Geology and Soils: SCE conducted geotechnical studies to evaluate faults, landslides and unstable slopes, and soil characteristics as outlined in MMs G-1a, G-2a, and G-5a. The geotechnical survey reports were reviewed and approved by the CPUC on August 17, 2017. No additional impacts to geology and soils will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: As required by MM HH-1a, SCE prepared and submitted a Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Plan to the CPUC on September 27, 2017. Hazardous materials used and stored on site for the duration of construction activities will be managed according to the Plan. A Soil Management Plan has been developed consistent with MMs HH-2a and HH-3a to provide guidance for the proper handling, onsite management, and disposal of impacted soil that might be encountered during construction activities, including soil samples to be collected in construction areas where the land has historically or is currently being used for agriculture and would be subject to ground disturbance by the

project. SCE's Soil Management Plan was combined with the Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Plan described above. Also, SCE's contractor submitted information including written procedures for fueling and maintenance of construction equipment and an Emergency Response Plan. No additional impacts from hazards or hazardous materials will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Land Use: As required by MM LU-1a, a Construction Notification Plan was prepared by SCE and approved by CPUC on May 22, 2017. The Plan identified the procedures to ensure that SCE will inform property and business owners of the location and duration of construction. The Plan includes provisions for public noticing including mailers, newspaper advertisements, public venue notices, and includes the establishment of a public liaison and toll-free information hotline. No additional impacts to land use will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Noise: Best Management Practices for construction noise management will be implemented as outlined in MM N-1a to reduce construction noise exposure at noise-sensitive receptors and to avoid possible violations of local rules, standards, and ordinances during construction. Construction noise shall be confined to daytime, weekday hours (7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) or an alternative schedule developed by SCE based on its coordination with local jurisdiction. Construction traffic and helicopter flights shall be routed away from residences and schools, where feasible. No additional impacts to noise will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Paleontological Resources: A Paleontological Resource Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (PRMMP) has been completed for the West of Devers Upgrade Project and was approved by the CPUC on May 9, 2017. The use of an additional work area and water hydrant described in this MPR are no different than what was described in NTP #4. In the event of unanticipated discoveries, MM PAL-1d and the PRMMP requirements would be implemented. No additional impacts to paleontological resources will occur with implementation of this MPR.

Traffic and Transportation: Consistent with MM T-1a and MM T-1b, Construction Transportation and Traffic Control Plans have been developed and approved. The Construction Transportation Plan describes timing of commutes, methods of reducing crew-related traffic, and other methods for reducing construction-generated additional traffic on regional and local roadways. No additional impacts to traffic and transportation will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Visual Resources: The use of an additional work areas described in this MPR are no different than what was described in NTP #4 and are temporary. No additional impacts to visual resources will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Water Resources: As required by MM WR-2a, SCE developed and submitted an Erosion Control Plan to the CPUC and BLM. The Erosion Control Plan was incorporated into the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which will be kept onsite and readily available on request. SCE submitted the SWPPP to the CPUC on May 25, 2017. Any changes necessitated by this MPR will be incorporated into the SWPPP document. No additional impacts to water resources will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

Wildland Fire: SCE submitted a Fire Management Plan on February 10, 2017 to satisfy the conditions of MM WF-1a and the Plan was approved by the CPUC on July 18, 2017. This Fire Management Plan has been submitted to local fire departments. The majority of the work areas in this MPR are located along developed and disturbed areas in the Cities of Loma Linda and Redlands. No additional impacts to wildland fire will occur with the implementation of this MPR.

The conditions noted below shall be met by SCE and its contractors:

- SCE shall provide the CPUC with Collector data for the new work areas covered in this MPR prior to the start of construction activities.
- Due to the proximity of construction activities to known special-status plant occurrences (smooth tarplant) north of the El Casco access road, SCE shall avoid impacts to the seed bank by minimizing soil compaction

and topsoil disturbance. This may be accomplished by covering the ground with heavy planks, plates, or plywood prior to driving equipment over it, to disperse the weight. If covering the ground is not feasible, SCE shall salvage the top 6 inches of topsoil, pile it off to the side of the construction activities, decompact the subsoil by ripping after construction activities are completed, and replace the topsoil where disturbance occurred.

- SCE shall provide the CPUC with landowner approval of additional work areas prior to the start of construction activities.
- All applicable Project MMs, APMs, compliance plans, and permit conditions shall be implemented. Some measures have on-going/time-sensitive requirements and shall be implemented prior to and during construction where applicable.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, and this MPR shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities. All permits and plans shall be made available to the CPUC EM upon request.
- SCE will conduct pre-construction surveys prior to construction, including surveys for nesting birds from January 1 to August 31. If special-status resources are identified, SCE will implement the applicable mitigation measures and/or permit conditions, as determined in coordination with the CPUC, BLM, CDFW, USFWS, or other applicable regulatory agencies. In addition, a Biological Monitor will conduct spot check sweeps weekly thereafter.
- All crew members shall be WEAP trained prior to working on the Project. A log shall be maintained on-site with the names of all crew personnel trained. The WEAP training brochure can be provided in Spanish or other languages if appropriate. All participants will receive a hard-hat sticker for ease of compliance verification.
- No movement or staging of construction vehicles or equipment shall be allowed outside of the approved areas. If additional temporary workspace areas or access routes, or changes in technique and mitigation implementation to a lesser level are required, a MPR request shall be submitted for CPUC review.

Sincerely,



Billie Blanchard
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen