

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

El Centro Field Office
1661 South 4th Street
El Centro, CA 92243
www.blm.gov/ca/elcentro/

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Memorandum

To: Field Manager, El Centro Field Office

From: Archaeologist, El Centro Field Office

Subject: Agency Findings and Determinations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

Project: ECO Substation Minor Project Refinement #4, BLM Variance Request #1, San Diego County, California

San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) has proposed a minor project refinement (MPR) and submitted a Variance Request to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the approved ECO Substation (Project) as analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIR/EIS).

MPR #4/Variance Request #1: As part of this MPR/Variance Request, SDG&E proposes to shift the entrance to the southern access road on private property approximately 70 feet to the northeast of its originally proposed location on Old Highway 80. In addition, minor adjustments have been made to the road alignment. The requested shift of the entrance to the southern access road, as well as minor adjustments to the alignment, include a total of approximately 0.39 acres outside of the approved southern access road alignment, which was established along the centerline of an existing unpaved access road.

In addition, SDG&E proposes to reroute a portion of the approved 138 kV transmission line between the ECO Substation and Old Highway 80. The proposed rerouted section will begin at the entrance to the southern access road at Old Highway 80 and travel underground within the footprint of the southern access road toward the ECO Substation. The 138 kV underground transmission line will then be converted to overhead through relocated steel pole (SP-) 105A, which is a riser pole located approximately 1,000 feet southeast of Old Highway 80 within the permanent footprint of the southern access road. From SP-105A, an approximately 1,200-foot-long northeast overhead span will connect to SP-108A, which will be relocated to within the ECO Substation. This reroute also includes the relocation of SP-105B from its originally proposed location immediately adjacent to Old Highway 80 to the southern access road.

The relocation of SP-108A, SP-105A, and SP-108 to approved graded areas in the permanent footprint of the ECO Substation site and the southern access road, respectively, will eliminate the permanent work areas originally associated with these three poles. The reroute will also eliminate SP-106, SP-107, and SP-108, thus eliminating a total of three steel poles and their associated permanent work pads, pull sites, and access roads from the approved Project design. A gate originally proposed at the entrance of a proposed access road at Old Highway 80 will also be eliminated as the access road will no longer be required. Lastly, the reroute will eliminate approximately 1,000 feet of underground transmission line along Old Highway 80 north of the southern access road entrance. The refinements will relocate structures SP-105A and SP-105B, as well as the originally proposed gate at Old Highway 80, off of Bureau of Land Management- (BLM-) administered land, as well as remove a permanent work pad, vaults, and approximately 1,000 feet of underground transmission line that were previously placed on BLM-administered land. This totals approximately 1.5 acres of Project components that will be relocated off of BLM-administered land through implementation of the requested refinements.

Because these changes will result in changes to the location of facilities on BLM managed lands, these changes are being processed as a Variance Request. They have been reviewed pursuant to the BLM's obligations under the Project's Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement¹ fully executed on August 14, 2012.

Identification and evaluation efforts for the Project are described in the BLM Class III inventory report prepared in support of this Project, *Prehistoric Artifact Scatters, Bedrock Milling Stations and Tin Can Dumps: Results of a Cultural Resources Study for the SDG&E East County Substation Project, San Diego County, California* (Berryman and Whittaker 2010), and a supplemental preconstruction survey of the Domingo Lake Construction Yard, *Cultural Resources Survey of the Border to Boulevard Corridor (Partial Underground corridor) Fly Yard for the East County Substation Project, San Diego County, California* (Williams 2011). In accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement, the area covered by MPR #4 has been surveyed during both Class III inventory survey and by ASM Affiliates, Inc. (ASM) personnel in accordance with the final *Management Plan for Archaeological Monitoring, Post-Review Discovery, and Unanticipated Effects for the San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) East County (ECO) Substation Project, Jacumba, San Diego County, California*, January 2013 (Management Plan). Four cultural resources were identified within the proposed alignment during these inventories in the area covered by MPR #4. National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources (NRHP/CRHR) evaluations were conducted by ASM at three of the sites on February 28 and March 1, 2013 while the fourth site was previously evaluated for the *Energia Sierra Juarez* (ESJ) project (Jordan 2010). The four sites were determined not eligible for inclusion in the CRHR or the NRHP. This is documented in ASM's confidential letter report to Mr. Jeffrey Sahagun dated June 19, 2013. In regards to MPR #4, Mr. Brian Williams, Senior Archaeologist of ASM Affiliates, makes the following recommendations:

¹ Memorandum of Agreement among the Bureau of Land Management-California, The United States Army Corps of Engineers, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding the East County Substation Project, San Diego County, California (August 14, 2012).

“Based on this analysis, it is my assessment that MPR #4 would not result in any impacts to significant cultural resources and that the potential for impact to unevaluated resources would be lessened by the proposed changes.”

Pursuant to the Project’s Memorandum of Agreement, BLM professional cultural resources staff has reviewed MPR #4/ Variance Request #1. The BLM concurs with the contractor’s recommendations and based on their letter report, the Memorandum of Agreement, and the BLM’s Record of Decision (ROD) for this Project, compliance with the following actions are required as part of SDG&E’s implementation of these changes:

- **CUL-1A – Develop and Implement a Historic Properties Treatment Plan-Cultural Resources Management Plan.**
- **CUL-1D – Construction Monitoring.**
- **CUL-1E – Discovery of Unknown Resources.**
- **CUL-2 – Human Remains.**
- **SDG&E will also continue to comply with all other relevant cultural resources protection and treatment measures as outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement and the ROD as appropriate.**

All archaeological sites and all potentially culturally sensitive areas that are within 100 feet of construction activities shall be demarked as ESAs and protected as exclusionary zones. Additionally, archaeological and Native American monitors are to be on-site during the temporary fencing prior to initiation of ground disturbing activities in the vicinity of the site and will be maintained and monitored for the duration of the work effort in the ESA vicinity.

Prior Section 106 review and consultation for the Project’s Memorandum of Agreement provide that the required conditions and mitigation measures listed above are adequate to identify and protect historic properties on public lands that might be affected by the aforementioned MPR/Variance Request. Therefore, the BLM staff archaeologist has recommended that there would be no adverse effect on historic properties if the above measures are implemented.

The BLM makes the following findings for this undertaking.

- 1. The activities covered by the MPR/Variance Request will take place within the originally defined APE for the Project.**
- 2. The BLM finds that there will be *no adverse effects to historic properties* provided the above mitigation measures are implemented as required by the Memorandum of Agreement and the ROD.**
- 3. Accordingly, the MPR/Variance Request is covered by the prior consultations for the Project. No additional consultation is required pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act.**

This memorandum documents the recommendations of the cultural resources staff, the acceptance of these recommendations by the Agency Official (as defined in 36 CFR §800.2(a), Protection of Historic Properties), and constitutes the formal statement of Agency findings and

determinations for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act with respect to the
aforementioned MPR/Variance Request.

Recommended by:

JEFF SAHAGUN 7/2/13
Archaeologist, El Centro Field Office Date

Reviewed by:

Carroll 7/2/13
Reviewing Agency Official, El Centro Field Office Date

Accepted by the Agency Official:

[Signature] 7/2/2013
Field Manager, El Centro Field Office Date