MITIGATION NEGATIVE DECLARATION

SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY
PALA SUBSTATION PROJECT
Application No. 01-01-050

Lead Agency:

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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SECTION 1.0
INTRODUCTION

1.1 SUMMARY OF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) is a public utility corporation engaged principally in the business of providing electric service to a portion of Orange County, California, and electric and gas service to San Diego County, California. On January 29, 2001, SDG&E filed Application No. 01-01-050 pursuant to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Order No. 131-D requesting authority for a Permit To Construct and Operate the Pala Substation project. The proposed Pala Substation would expand and replace the existing 43-year old substation with newer and more reliable equipment and would eliminate a 19 percent overload on the existing single bank substation. The existing Pala Substation and expansion site are located in northern San Diego County in the unincorporated Pala/Pauma subregional planning area. The proposed substation at full buildout is planned to be 56 MVA with two 28 MVA transformers and eight 12 kV (kilovolt) circuits. A 10-foot high wall will enclose the substation area (approximately 36,000 square feet) and landscaping will be established from the beginning of the project (see *Section 2, Project Description,* for further details).

1.2 AUTHORITY TO PREPARE A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The CPUC is the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is responsible for authorizing the construction of the Pala Substation project. The CPUC's process for granting a Permit to Construct is focused on consideration of the environmental issues and concerns surrounding the project as proposed. In compliance with requirements of CEQA, an Initial Study was prepared for the project. This environmental study is specific to the construction of the Pala Substation at the proposed site.

Based on the findings of the Initial Study/Environmental Evaluation (see *Section 4, Initial Study/ Environmental Checklist* and *Section 5, Discussion of Environmental Impacts*) and support of the proposed project by the Pala/Pauma Sponsor Group (letter dated March 19, 2001), the CPUC has made the determination that a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is the appropriate environmental document to be prepared in compliance with CEQA. As provided for by CEQA §21064.5, an MND may be prepared for a project subject to CEQA when an Initial Study has identified potentially significant effects on the environment but revisions

in the project have been made where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur.

This draft MND has been prepared in conformance with §15070, subsection (a), of the State CEQA Guidelines. The purpose of the MND and the Initial Study/Environmental Evaluation is to determine the potential significant impacts associated with the proposed Pala Substation project and incorporate mitigation measures into the project design as necessary to reduce or eliminate the significant or potentially significant effects of the project.

1.3 CONTENT AND FORMAT OF MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

This MND includes the following:

Section 1.0, Introduction: Provides an Introduction to the MND.

Section 2.0, Project Description: Provides a detailed description of the proposed project evaluated in this MND. This section also includes project purpose and need, location, site selection, project characteristics, construction, operation and maintenance and measures incorporated into the project to reduce environmental impacts.

Section 3.0, Proposed Finding of No Significant Effect: Provides finding that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment and rationale supporting this finding.

Sections 4.0 – 5.0, Initial Study/Environmental Discussion: Provides an analysis of environmental issues and concerns surrounding the project.

Section 6.0, Electric Magnetic Fields (EMF): Describes the CPUC's current policy regarding EMF exposure.

Sections 7.0 and 8.0, Report Preparation/References: Provides report preparation personnel and references.

Appendices to the MND:

- Appendix A Public Distribution List
- Appendix B SDG& Subregional NCCP – Mitigation Measures
- Appendix C Cultural Resources

Technical Reports: Separate technical reports providing further project details and analysis include the following:

- Proponents Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the Pala Substation, SDG&E January 2001, amended March 29, 2001. This document is incorporated by reference and provides the basis for preparation of this MND and includes the following technical reports:

  – – *Biological Survey Reports* (Ecological Ventures California, Inc., July 2000 O'Farrel Biological Consulting, August 2000 and HDR Engineering, March 2001)
  – – *Geotechnical Investigation* (Geocon, September 2000)
  – – *Sound Level Analysis* (SDG&E, January 2001)
  – – *Cultural Resources Survey Report* (Affinis, August 2000)
  – – *Drainage Study* (Cherry Engineering, March 2001)

These technical studies are incorporated into this MND by reference and are available for review at the CPUC, Energy Division, Analysis Branch, 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, California.

1.4 OTHER AGENCIES THAT MAY USE THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

This MND is intended to be used by responsible and trustee agencies that may have review authority over the project. SDG&E will obtain all permits as required by law. Based on the analysis in *Sections 4* and *5* of this document, other permits/approval by responsible agencies with jurisdiction over the proposed project include consultation with the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for impacts to endangered species pursuant to the U.S. Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act.

1.5 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

In accordance with CEQA, a good faith effort has been made during the preparation of this MND to contact affected agencies, organizations and persons who may have an interest in this project. The distribution list for the MND is provided in APPENDIX A.

The CPUC will also be providing a notice of availability to property owners within 300 feet of the project and will also be publishing this notice in the local newspaper, in accordance with the CPUC Rule 17.1 of the Rules of Practice and Procedures. This document is also being made available on CPUC's website at the following address: http://www/cpuc.ca.gov.

In reviewing the MND and Initial Study/Environmental Evaluation, affected public agencies and the interested public should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project are proposed to be avoided or mitigated.

Comments may be made on the MND either in writing before the end of the comment period or at the public hearing to be held by the CPUC on the MND. A 30-day review and comment period from May 29, 2001 to June 29, 2001 has been established, in accordance with §15105(b) of the CEQA guidelines. Following the close of the public comment period, the CPUC will consider this MND and comments thereto in determining whether to approve the proposed project. Written comments on the MND should be sent to the following address June 29, 2001, at 5:00 PM.

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SECTION 2.0
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PURPOSE AND NEED

The existing 9.4 megavolt ampere (MVA) Pala Substation is a 69/12-kV substation with two 12-kV circuits. The 1999 peak load for Pala Substation was 9.9 MVA. The forecast peak load for 2001 is 13.2 MVA, which includes 2 MVA for the Pala Casino and other area load growth. Because the existing 69/12-kV transformer is 43 years old and is rated at 9.4 MVA for normal operation and 11.1 MVA for planned load limit operation, the substation must be upgraded in order to avoid equipment damage and loss of service to customers. Additionally, the expansion cannot be accomplished within the footprint of the existing station and much of the equipment is too outdated to be mixed with upgraded equipment.

Since substation equipment is standardized, the substation is initially being upgraded/ expanded to one 69/12-kV, 28 MVA transformer, and two 12-kV distribution circuits with the potential to expand to two new circuits. The existing substation and its outdated equipment will be removed after the expansion is online. The single transformer configuration is expected to have adequate capacity for the next 5 to 15 years (SDG&E Supplement to Application, March 2001).

The forecast in load growth takes into account "normal annual growth" estimated for the substation as well as specific projects like the Pala Casino and the existing Rancho Viejo development (approved buildout of approximately 800 homes) located four miles west of the Pala Substation. Normal annual growth for Pala substation is 0.2 MVA and is due to the accumulation of small load additions estimated after review of the substation and circuit peak load data and customer service requests.

2.2 PROJECT LOCATION/SITE SELECTION

The project site is located on the north side of State Highway 76 (Pala Road), near the intersection of Pala del Norte Road, approximately four miles east of Interstate 15 in the unincorporated Pala/Pauma Subregional Planning area of northern San Diego County. The 12.7-acre project site is part of a larger 203.2-acre property owned by SDG&E that includes steep, undisturbed hillsides and agricultural lands. Lands adjoining the site are vacant. Across Pala Road to the east is the Hanson Sand and Gravel mining operation in the San Luis Rey River. There are no sensitive receptors (*e.g.,* residences, schools) within 1,900 feet of the

project site. *Figure 1* shows the regional location of the project, *Figure 2* shows the site location on the USGS Pala Quadrangle topographic map, and *Figure 3* provides an aerial view of the project site.

2.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed project is planned to be a 56 MVA substation with the loop-in of the existing 69 kV transmission line (see *Figure 4*). The proposed substation at full buildout is planned to have two 28 MVA transformers, three 69 kV tie lines, and eight 12 kilovolt (kV) circuits. Area of temporary and permanent impacts are shown on *Table 1*. Major project components include development of the substation, loop-in of the existing transmission line and upgrades to the existing distribution.

TABLE 1
PROJECT COMPONENTS AND IMPACTS

	Permanent Impact	Temporary Impact	Habitat Type
Substation Pad Area	0.84 acre (36,590 square feet)	0	4,160 square feet of CSS. Remainder non-native grasses
Manufactured Slope	0	1.16 acres (50,530 square feet)	Approximately 35,496 square feet is non-native grasses. 16,034 square feet is comprised of CSS to be revegetated.
Asphalt Driveways	0.24 acre (10,454 square feet)	0	Non-native grassland
Laydown Area	0	0.26 acre (11,326 square feet)	Non-native grassland
Stockpile Area	0	0.24 acre (10,454 square feet)	Non-native grassland
New Poles (2)	8 square feet	72 square feet	Non-native grassland
Construction Area*	1,925 square feet**	0	1,315 square feet of CSS*** Remainder non-native grasses
Total	**1.12 acres (48,969 square feet)**	**1.66 acres (72,309 square feet)**	**0.13 acre (5,475 square feet) of permanent CSS disturbance**

* Used for maneuvering around slopes and finished pad areas.
** Assumes a 5-foot perimeter would be cleared and maintained around the pad.
*** Assumes an area of CSS totaling 263 linear feet at a width of 5 feet (1,315 square feet) would be permanently cleared along the south and west sides of the pad.

Figure 1 Regional Map

Figure 2 Vicinity Map

Figure 3 Aerial View of Project Site

Figure 4 Preliminary Project Site/Grading Plan

Substation

As shown in *Figure 4,* the proposed substation at full buildout is planned to have 56 MVA capacity with two 28 MVA transformers, three tie lines and eight 12 kV circuits. The existing 69 kV tie line will be routed in and out of the proposed site underground. Substation equipment will be low profile with a maximum height of approximately 13 feet. Access to the substation will be from Pala Road. A substation perimeter wall approximately 10 to 13 feet high will enclose the substation. *Figure 4* shows the preliminary site/grading plan. Landscaping will be installed with the initial development; and plants will be similar to the native and non-native plants, trees and bushes already in the area. The landscaping is shown on *Figure 5.*

Transmission and Distribution

An existing electric centerline right-of-way runs along the eastern property line. It is proposed to intersect two 69 kV wood cable poles on the transmission line right-of-way to loop the existing 69 kV transmission line into the expanded substation. The existing 69 kV transmission line will be routed underground into the substation using two wood cable poles. The cable poles will be in addition to the existing wood poles on the east side of the substation. Underground routes to and from the new poles will be in the existing transmission corridor and substation.

The existing two 12 kV distribution circuits will be brought out underground to Pala Road and will transition to overhead and tie into the existing circuitry. The existing 12 kV circuitry will be reconductored and rearranged as necessary. Circuit ties will be constructed as needed.

2.4 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Site development will conform to the "Recommended Grading Specifications" (Geocon, 2000). The final grade of the site will be about one percent, for drainage towards the access road and Pala Road. The access drive to the station would also be rough graded at this time. Wall construction and underground 12 kV and 69 kV duct installation would then be performed on the substation property and in the transmission corridor. After this phase is completed, the landscape and irrigation would be installed.

Figure 5 Conceptual Landscape Plan

Following site development, actual construction of the substation equipment foundations will commence. This is the only activity within the substation enclosure until it becomes operational. Once the enclosure is completed, the major equipment is placed on their foundation and structures are anchored in their final position. The grounding grid installation follows and wiring the equipment controls and protection devices are performed concurrently. Removal of the existing substation would begin after facilities are installed so that uninterrupted electricity would be provided.

All construction equipment, vehicles, personnel and materials staging areas would be accommodated within the property lines of the proposed substation property. Construction equipment would include tractors, scrapers, loaders and a substantial number of trucks for excavating, compacting and grading the site. Portable cranes and heavy hauling trucks would be employed for the transformer. Concrete trucks, backhoes, crew trucks and pick-up trucks would be coming and going to the site during the installation of the foundations, ground grid and underground ducts. Crew trucks, boom trucks and pick-up trucks would be going to and from the site daily for the balance of the construction activities, testing and check out, final transmission tie-ins and 12 kV circuit cabling until the station is energized. *Table 2* provides an estimate of the number of vehicle types required during construction and the duration of use.

TABLE 2. ESTIMATED VEHICLE TYPES AND DURATION OF USE

Vehicle Type	Estimated Number Required	Duration (Days)
Tractor	1	22
Scraper/Grader	2	22
Loader	1	22
Compactor	1	22
Truck (25-ton dump)	250 truck trips for cut soil (average 25 trips per day)	10
Crane		3
	2 (to set pole and transformer)	2
Concrete trucks	70 truck trips (10 loads/day average)	15
Backhoe	1	45
Crew trucks	3	100
Boom truck	1	5
Pick-up truck	3	100
Personal vehicles	15	9 (months)

It is anticipated that six to eight workers would be employed for the site development phase of the project and eight to fifteen workers during the balance of construction of the transmission, substation and distribution infrastructure until just prior to control wiring check-out and testing. At this stage of construction, approximately four to six electricians would be onsite. Final activities including final tie-ins and energizing the station would utilize about six to eight electricians and two to four engineers. Total construction time is expected to take nine months. The project's in-service date is anticipated to be March 2002.

2.5 FACILITY OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The substation will be unmanned, and electric equipment within the substation also will be controlled from SDG&E's central operations facility. The substation wall will be of sufficient height and texture to prevent unassisted and unauthorized entrance. Barbed wire will be attached to the inside of the block wall and will not be visible from outside the wall. The entrance gate will be locked and warning signage will be posted on the perimeter wall. Entry to an operational substation will be restricted to authorized SDG&E personnel. Maintenance will include equipment testing, equipment monitoring and repair, as well as emergency and routine procedures for service continuity and preventive maintenance. It is anticipated that maintenance would require about four trips per year with a two to four-person crew. One pick-up truck with one troubleman could visit the station once per day.

The substation will ordinarily not be lighted at night. If occasional servicing or maintenance is required at night, the area lighted will be within the screening wall.

2.6 MITIGATION MEASURES INCLUDED INTO THE PROJECT

The following identifies mitigation measures identified in this MND which SDG&E has incorporated into the project as well as those measures identified as part of the project in SDG&E's application for a Permit to Construct.

General

- Prior to substation site development, SDG&E will submit project construction and grading plans to the County of San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use, Building Inspection Division and Department of Public Works, Grading Division, for review and comment. The plan submittal will follow a typical building permit

and grading permit submittal process, with the exception that SDG&E will not receive building, grading, electrical or plumbing permits from the County. SDG&E will incorporate the plan check comments into the project, where those comments do not conflict with, or compromise, the CPUC's General Orders regulating the location, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the substation.

Geotechnical

- Grading and construction standards based on the site-specific conditions identified in the Applicant's Geotechnical Report (*Geocon, September 2000*) will be incorporated into design and construction of the proposed facilities.

- Recommendations of the geotechnical investigation report regarding soils, grading, foundations, slope stability, lateral loads, pavements, and drainage facilities listed in the report shall be implemented by SDG&E and project grading and foundation plans will be submitted for geotechnical review prior to finalizing the plans and beginning construction of the project.

- The project design shall meet or exceed existing earthquake design standards, including the Uniform Building Code guidelines currently adopted by the County of San Diego. All proposed facilities shall be designed to meet CPUC's General Order for seismic standards.

- Grading for the substation shall follow best management practices for the control of erosion, such as sediment traps, straw bale or gravel bag carriers, silt fences, slope roughening, and outlet protection. Finished grades shall be promptly planted at the end of construction according to the project landscape plan. If necessary, temporary slope cover such as bonded fiber matrix or mulch shall be applied to newly graded slopes. Project plans shall show control of drainage from the completed site.

Water

- The project will implement short-term construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) and will employ the protective erosion control measures described in the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) General Permit for Discharges

associated with construction activities (Permit No. CA 0108758). These measures designed to control short-term construction sedimentation and erosion include, but are not limited to, sandbags, matting, mulch, berms, hay bales, or similar devices along all graded areas to minimize sediment transport.

- Project plans submitted to the County will include a plan for drainage identifying the manner in which storm flows will be accommodated. SDG&E will ensure that construction of improvements are in place to accommodate runoff generated onsite under developed conditions, and to control runoff downstream.

- At the driveway to the site off the private access road from Pala Road, a double 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe culvert shall be installed to conduct upstream flows under the driveway and discharge through an energy dissipater, preserving the basic drainage pattern of the upstream area. Runoff from the developed site shall be directed to a catch basin with underground pipes discharging into the existing drainage channel west of Pala Road, where runoff from the site now discharges by sheet flow.

- During operation, landscaping and drainage facilities shall be maintained on a regular and as-needed basis.

Air Quality

- SDG&E will comply with the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (APCD) rules and regulations to reduce fugitive dust emissions, including implementing the following:

  - All unpaved construction areas will be sprinkled with water or other acceptable San Diego APCD dust-control agents during dust-generating activities to reduce dust emissions. Additional watering or acceptable APCD dust-control agents will be applied during dry weather or windy days until dust emissions are not visible.

  - Trucks hauling dirt and debris will be covered to reduce windblown dust and spills.

- – On dry days, dirt or debris spilled onto paved surfaces will be swept up immediately to reduce resuspension of particulate matter caused by vehicle movement. Approach routes to construction sites will be cleaned daily of construction-related dirt in dry weather.
- – Onsite stockpiles of excavated material will be covered or watered.

Biological Resources

General:

- The following Operational Protocols are required by the SDG&E Subregional Natural Community Conservation Plan (SDG&E 1995) and would apply to all construction of the proposed project. These measures are environmentally sensitive construction techniques that reduce impacts to biological resources and prevent environmental degradation during construction. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following types of measures:

  - – An environmental training of the sensitive resources onsite shall be given to all construction personnel
  - – No harming of wildlife including rattlesnakes
  - – No pets on the right-of-way
  - – No collection of plants or wildlife
  - – Construction activities, including staging areas will be limited to within flagged boundaries
  - – Minimize erosion with Best Management Practices
  - – Avoid impacts to wetlands
  - – Control fugitive dust
  - – Prior to clearing of vegetation, a biological survey will be conducted to determine that there are no active nests, burrows or dens, etc.

  Refer to Section 7.1, Operational Protocols in the SDG&E Subregional NCCP (SDG&E 1995), provided in *Appendix B* to the MND.

Sensitive Habitats

- Permanent impacts to 0.13 acre of sensitive coastal sage scrub and 0.99 acre of non-native grassland habitat from the substation site, access road, and landscaping shall be mitigated by deducting mitigation credits from the SDG&E mitigation bank. A 1:1 mitigation ratio is applied to impacts occurring outside the "Preserve" associated with the applicable planning area (*i.e.,* MSCP for the County of San Diego unincorporated areas). A ratio of 2:1 is applied to all permanent impacts occurring inside the "Preserve." Although the County has not yet designated a preserve area or ranked habitat quality on a regional scale, the project site is not anticipated to be part of a regional preserve due to its disturbed nature. Therefore, a 1:1 mitigation ratio shall be applied for permanent impacts resulting from project implementation. A total of 1.12 acres will be deducted from the SDG&E Mitigation Credits (see *Appendix B* to the MND).

- Temporary impacts to 1.66 acres of coastal sage scrub and non-native grassland will be mitigated by habitat enhancement measures as described in the SDG&E Subregional NCCP. Habitat restoration activities shall occur under the direction of a qualified Habitat Restoration Specialist. As stated in the NCCP, all disturbed areas, whether inside or outside of preserves and which do not need to be periodically cleared for maintenance activities, shall be restored. A native coastal sage scrub seed mix will be used to reseed the areas disturbed from construction. Seed mix specifications and hand-application techniques shall be provided by the Habitat Restoration Specialist. Restoration, maintenance and monitoring measures shall follow as provided in the SDG&E NCCP and shall be documented in a native habitat restoration plan and associated plans and specifications. This plan shall be reviewed and approved by the USFWS and CDFG for approval (see *Appendix B* to the MND).

Sensitive Plants

- A native habitat restoration plan shall be prepared according to guidelines set forth in the SDG&E NCCP. This plan shall include planting specifications for native coastal sage scrub/chaparral species (see *Appendix B* to the MND).

Sensitive Wildlife Species

- Impacts to potentially-occurring coastal California gnatcatchers will be mitigated through the implementation of the Operational Protocols in Section 7.1 of the Subregional NCCP and the Habitat Enhancement Measures in Section 7.2 of the NCCP for scrub and chaparral species (see *Appendix B* to the MND). The NCCP mitigates impacts to sensitive species on a habitat basis. Therefore, temporary impacts will be mitigated through site remediation. Permanent impacts will be mitigated at a 1:1 ratio. An environmental survey according to SDG&E's NCCP will be conducted prior to construction due to the potential for the species to occur onsite and to determine which protocols will be implemented.

- Laydown areas used during construction shall avoid sensitive coastal sage scrub habitat.

- An exclusion fence shall be installed no more than 24 hours prior to construction to preclude arroyo toads from entering the work area. The exclusion fence shall be maintained throughout the duration of the project construction. Arroyo toad surveys shall be conducted before construction begins each day by a project biologist with a Section 10(a) (1) (B) permit for handling arroyo toad. If arroyo toads are found in the exclusion fence, the toad(s) shall be removed and relocated by the permitted biologist in coordination with the USFWS.

- Should construction occur during the breeding season for the least Bell's vireo (15 March through 15 September), a protocol-level survey for least Bell's vireo nesting in adjacent riparian habitat (unnamed tributary to the west of the project site) shall be conducted prior to construction. If a nest is located, a temporary noise barrier shall be used during construction in coordination with CDFG and USFWS. The noise barrier shall attenuate noise levels at 60 dB(A). If protocol-level surveys indicate that adjacent riparian habitat is not occupied by least Bell's vireo, this measure will not be required.

- Because of the potential presence of two or more listed endangered species on or adjacent to the site, a biologist monitor shall be onsite during construction activities to ensure that all biological mitigation measures are being implemented.

Hazards

- The project will comply with State Title 22 and federal Title 40 requirements, including the oil spill control and countermeasure plan (SCCP) required by Title 40 CFR Section 112.7.

- SDG&E shall conduct regular maintenance for suppression of fire hazards at the proposed substation in accordance with Public Utilities Commission mandates. SDG&E shall maintain a 30-foot wide firebreak around substation with clearing for fire control to be completed on a yearly basis. All construction methods will be conducted in accordance with OSHA standards.

- All transport, handling, use, and disposal of substances such as petroleum products, solvents, and paints related to construction, operation, and maintenance of the substation shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws regulating the management and use of hazardous materials.

Aesthetics

- All equipment in the substation shall be low-profile, a maximum of 12 to 13 feet high.

- The substation perimeter wall will be 10 to 13 feet high designed to screen transformers, distribution circuits, and other facility improvements from view. The wall will be of textured concrete block. Two gates of redwood will be in the northern wall facing travelers south on Pala Road (SR-76).

- The periphery of the project shall be landscaped and screened in a naturalistic manner. The landscape plan shall be submitted to the Pala/Pauma sponsor group for review and comment and shall utilize native plants and shrubs.

- Substation lighting will be used during emergencies only.

Traffic

- A traffic control plan will be prepared in accordance with the County of San Diego and Caltrans traffic control guidelines to address short-term construction traffic and in particular to address heavy equipment/truck access to the site.

Noise

- All construction activities will comply with the County of San Diego's allowable construction limits of 7AM to 7PM Monday through Saturday and prohibits construction on Sundays and holidays.

SECTION 3.0
PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

The CPUC finds that the project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment based on the results of the Initial Study/Environmental Checklist (see *Section 4*) and the Environmental Evaluation Discussion (see *Section 5*). Some potentially significant effects have been identified and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project to ensure that these effects remain at less than significant levels (see *Section 2.6*). An MND is therefore proposed to satisfy the requirements of CEQA (PRC 210000 et.seq. 14 Cal. Code Regs 15000 et.seq.). This conclusion is supported by the following:

1. **Aesthetics:** The substation has been designed to include a 10 to 13-foot high wall and landscaping to screen views to travelers along Pala Road (SR-76). There are no other sensitive or pubic views of the project site. Design and landscaping measures incorporated into the project in consultation with the Pala/Pauma sponsor group will effectively reduce project long-term visual quality impacts to less than significant. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* and *Section 5.1, Aesthetics,* for further discussion.

2. **Agricultural Resources:** The project site is not located on prime or unique/important farmland and no agricultural products are produced on the site. Therefore, the project would not affect agricultural resources. See *Section 5.2, Agricultural Resources,* for further discussion.

3. **Air Quality:** Project operation will not generate air emissions. Construction emissions would not exceed identified significance thresholds and are therefore considered to be less than significant. Furthermore, measures are incorporated into the project which reduce short-term construction effects associated with generation of particulate matter less than 10 microns (PM10) as required by the San Diego APCD. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.5, Air Quality,* for further discussion.

4. **Biological Resources:** The proposed project would permanently impact approximately 1.12 acres including approximately 0.13 acre of coastal sage scrub and the remainder non-native annual grassland. No host plant species for the quino checkerspot butterfly were detected onsite. Focused surveys for the Stephens' kangaroo rat were negative on or adjacent to the site.

The vegetation on and adjoining the site is of moderate habitat value, with a potential for California gnatcatcher and arroyo toad, two federally-listed species. Additionally, least Bell's vireo is known to breed on the San Luis Rey River, east of the project site, and southern willow scrub was found in a small drainage west of the site. The project could therefore (directly or indirectly) affect habitat for the federally and state-listed endangered least Bell's vireo, federally-threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, and the federally-listed endangered arroyo toad.

Mitigation to reduce impacts to coastal sage scrub and sensitive species which generally breed and forage in coastal sage scrub will be in accordance with SDG&E's approved Section 10(a) permit and NCCP and USFWS and CDFG requirements. In addition to complying with the requirements of SDG&E's NCCP, measures such as avoidance of the breeding season and/or incorporation of noise mitigation are included to mitigate potential indirect impacts to the least Bell's vireo. Additionally, an exclusion fence to keep arroyo toads from entering the construction area will be installed and a biological monitor will be present during construction. Implementation of these measures in consultation with the USFWS will reduce impacts to biological resources to less than significant. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.4, Biological Resources,* for further discussion.

5. **Cultural Resources:** There is no potential for encountering important archaeological resources as a result of project construction. A literature review from the south Coastal Information Center, the San Diego Museum of Man, and a field survey of the proposed impact area determined that no archaeological resources were found on the proposed substation site and therefore no impacts to archaeological resources would occur. See *Section 5.14, Cultural Resources*, for further discussion.

6. **Geology and Soils:** No geologic hazards would occur with project implementation. Measures have been incorporated into the project design to reduce risks associated with geologic hazards to below a level of significance. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.6, Geology and Soils,* for further discussion.

7. **Hazards:** The proposed project is not anticipated to generate hazardous materials; therefore, no significant impacts due to public hazards would occur. Measures have been incorporated into the project construction phase to ensure that potential exposure to hazardous materials associated with removal of the existing substation will be reduced to less than significant. Additionally, regular maintenance for suppression of fire hazards will be implemented. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* and *Section 5.7, Hazards,* for further discussion.

8. **Hydrology and Water Quality:** Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce project effects associated with potential discharge of sediments and runoff to less than significant. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.8, Water*, for further discussion.

9. **Land Use:** The project would be developed on a 203-acre site owned by SDG&E that currently has a substation on it. The project would impact approximately 2.8 acres and would expand the existing substation by approximately one acre. Lands adjoining the site are vacant and there are no sensitive receptors (*e.g.,* residences or schools) within 1,900 feet of the project site. Because the existing substation is a utility use already established, the proposed expansion of the existing substation is not considered a new land use being newly introduced and therefore is not considered to conflict with the County's land use planning goals and objectives, and/or existing and planned land uses in the project area. Furthermore, environmental parameters defining land use compatibility are physical factors such as traffic, noise, air quality, aesthetics and public safety. Each of these issues are addressed in *Section 5* of this document. The environmental analysis in *Section 5* of this document indicates that the potential traffic, noise, air quality, aesthetics and public safety impacts of the proposed project will be less than significant. Such physical factors serve as indicators of land use compatibility. The analyses in *Section 5*, along with the fact that the site currently contains a substation and therefore would not introduce a new land use, support the conclusion that no significant impacts to land use would occur as a result of project implementation. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included into the Project to Reduce Environmental Impacts,* as well as *Section 5.9, Land Use and Planning,* for further discussion.

10. **Mineral Resources:** The proposed project would not require long-term natural resource use. See *Section 5.10, Mineral Resources,* for further discussion of environmental impacts.

11. **Noise:** Impacts resulting from both construction and operation noise were determined to be less than significant as they would comply with the County of San Diego's Noise Ordinance. See *Section 5.11, Noise,* for further discussion.

12. **Population and Housing:** The proposed project would not generate additional population, therefore, the approval of the project would have a less than significant effect on human population and housing. See discussion under *Section 5.12, Population and Housing,* for further discussion.

13. **Public Services:** The proposed project would not generate a demand for public services; therefore, no impact to public services would occur. See *Section 5.13, Public Services,* for further discussion.

14. **Recreation:** There are no parks or other public recreational facilities on the project site. Therefore, the project would not affect recreational opportunities. See *Section 5.14, Recreation,* for further discussion.

15. **Transportation and Circulation:** During operation, the proposed project is expected to generate approximately one to two vehicle trips per day. This limited number of vehicle trips would result in less than significant impacts to traffic or traffic congestion.

    During construction, testing and energizing the station (approximately nine months), traffic will be generated by construction crews and equipment/material deliveries. A traffic control plan will be prepared to accommodate short-term construction traffic during the construction of the site. The configuration of Pala road (SR-76) provides adequate sight distance in the vicinity of the proposed substation and, in combination with standard construction traffic control, would not cause any undue or extraordinary safety impacts. Travelers on Pala Road may experience some delays during the period of construction. It is expected that this short-term construction-related traffic would not create a substantial impact on

traffic volumes nor change traffic patterns in such a way that congestion and delay would be substantially increased on street segments or at intersections. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.15, Transportation and Circulation,* for further discussion.

16. **Utilities and Service Systems:** No impacts to utilities and service systems would occur. See *Section 2.6, Mitigated Measures Included Into the Project*, as well as *Section 5.16, Utilities and Service Systems,* for further discussion.

17. **Cumulative Impacts:** As revealed by the previous discussions for each environmental category, impacts from the proposed project are considered to be less than significant or no impact. Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce impacts associated with geological resources, hydrology and water quality, air quality, traffic, biological resources, hazards, noise, and visual resources impacts to less than significant (see *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project)*. No long-term significant impacts are associated with the project. In the absence of significant impacts, incremental accumulation of significant effects would not occur.

SECTION 4.0
INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PROJECT INFORMATION		
1.	Project Title:	Pala Substation Project
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:	Beth Shipley, Regulatory Analyst, Energy Division Tel: (415) 703-1729
4.	Project location:	North side of State Highway 76 (Pala Road), near intersection of Pala del Norte, approximately four miles east of Interstate 15 in the unincorporated Pala/Pauma Subregional Planning area of northern San Diego County.
5.	Project sponsor's name and address:	San Diego Gas & Electric Company 101 Ash Street, San Diego, CA 92101
6.	General plan designation:	General Agricultural
7.	Zoning:	A-72

8. Description of project: (Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or offsite features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

The proposed project is the construction of a 56-megavolt ampere (MVA) substation with the loop-in of the existing 69 kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The proposed substation at full buildout is planned to be 56 MVA, with two 28-MVA transformers, three 69 kV tie lines, and eight 12 kV circuits. The existing 69 kV tie line would be routed in and out of the proposed substation underground. Additionally, the existing two 12 kV distribution circuits will be brought out underground to Pala Road and will transition to overhead and tie into the existing circuitry. Access to the substation will be via a 30-foot wide driveway from Pala del Norte west to the substation, which splits into forked driveway consisting of east and west entrance gates. A 10 to 13-foot high wall will enclose the substation area and landscaping will be established from the beginning of the project (Please refer to *Section 2, Project Description* for further details).

4.0 Initial Study/Environmental Checklist

PROJECT INFORMATION

9. Surrounding land uses and setting: Briefly describe the project's surroundings:

The project site is located on the north side of State Highway 76 (Pala Road), near the intersection of Pala del Norte Road, approximately four miles east of Interstate 15 in the unincorporated Pala/Pauma Subregional Planning area of northern San Diego County. The 12.7-acre project site is part of a larger 203.2-acre property owned by SDG&E that includes steep, undisturbed hillsides and agricultural lands. Lands adjoining the site are vacant. Across Pala Road to the east is the Hanson Sand and Gravel mining operation in the San Luis Rey River. There are no sensitive receptors (*e.g.,* residences, schools) within 1,900 feet of the project site. *Figure 1* shows the regional location of the project, *Figure 2* shows the site location on the USGS Pala Quadrangle topographic map, and *Figure 3* provides an aerial view of the project site.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.)

- Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game pursuant to the U.S. Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act.

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.

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

4.0 Initial Study/Environmental Checklist

PROJECT INFORMATION

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact 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. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature	Date
Beth Shipley, Regulatory Analyst Printed name	For California Public Utilities Commission

EXPLANATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM:

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," may be cross-referenced).

5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

   a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.

   b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.

   c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

EXPLANATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM:

6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. The explanation of each issue should identify:
   a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
   b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significant
9. This checklist has been adapted from the form in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, as amended effective January 1, 1999 and the additional provisions of the CPUC's Rule 17.1 for implementing CEQA.

	ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
1.	**AESTHETICS** – Would the project:				
	a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☒	☐	☐
	c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☒	☐	☐
	d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐
2.	**AGRICULTURE RESOURCES** – 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 (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:				
	a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	c) Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☒	☐
3.	**AIR QUALITY** – Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
	a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☒	☐	☐
	c) Result in a cumulatively considerable 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 which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
	d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐
4.	**BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES** – Would the project:				
	a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
	c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinance protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☒	☐	☐
	f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☒	☐	☐
5.	**CULTURAL RESOURCES** – Would the project:				
	a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☐	☒

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
6. **GEOLOGY AND SOILS** – Would the project:				
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? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☒	☐	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒
7. **HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS** – Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Be 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 it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☒	☐
8. **HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY** – Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., 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)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or 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 which would result in flooding on- or offsite?	☐	☐	☒	☐

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☒	☐
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	☒
9. **LAND USE AND PLANNING** – Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with any 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) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
10. **MINERAL RESOURCES** – Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
11. **NOISE** – Would the project result in:				
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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 project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
12. **POPULATION AND HOUSING** – Would the project:				
a) Induce 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)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
13. **PUBLIC SERVICES**				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental 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:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
14. **RECREATION**				
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
15. **TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC** – Would the project:				
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the 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 ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the County Congestion Management Agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
16. **UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS** – Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Result in determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider/s existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒
17. **MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

SECTION 5.0
DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The following provides a discussion of the environmental impacts that are anticipated to occur as a result of constructing the proposed Pala Substation project. This section provides a brief explanation for the answers provided in the Initial Study/Environmental Checklist.

5.1 AESTHETICS

a) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. There are no existing or planned sensitive receptors (e.g., residences, schools, parks, scenic vistas) within 1,900 feet of the proposed project. However, the proposed substation site is adjacent to Pala Road (SR 76). Pala Road is shown as a scenic highway corridor on the San Diego County Scenic Highway Element of the General Plan. The site is currently visible from motorists along Pala Road.

The overall visual environment is characteristic of the rural atmosphere of the Pala area exhibiting primarily undeveloped land, agricultural uses, and a sand gravel mining operation. The site is in a relatively natural state, with an existing substation located along the western extreme of the proposed substation and several wooden power poles and lines leading to and from the existing substation.

Construction of the proposed project would cause short-term and long-term visual quality impacts to motorists along Pala Road. Site preparation for construction would include grading and removal of vegetation. Short-term visual impacts directly related to these construction activities may be adverse, but due to their temporary nature, are not considered significant.

Long-term visual impacts include removal of vegetation and adverse changes in the existing visual setting due to grading impacts and views of permanent above-ground facilities.

The proposed project would impact approximately 2.8 acres including landscaping and access driveways. The substation pad will require an area approximately 0.84 acre in size. Substation equipment will be low-profile with a maximum height of 13 feet. The substation will be enclosed by a perimeter wall to prevent views to the interior

of the substation. The perimeter wall will be 10 to 13 feet high and constructed of textured concrete block, buff in color with a contrasting gray scored concrete-block stripe. Two gates of redwood will be in the northern wall. Additionally, the periphery of the substation will be landscaped and screened in a naturalistic manner.

The existing 69 kV line will be routed in and out of the substation underground using two 80-foot cable poles. These two cable poles would be in addition to the existing wooden poles on the east side of the substation. The structures and equipment to terminate the incoming and outgoing transmission lines will be low profile with a maximum height of 12-feet.

Although elements of the proposed project would be greater in height than the proposed 10 to 13 foot perimeter wall, as illustrated in *Figures 6 and 7*, it is anticipated that the perimeter wall coupled with the lower elevations of the surrounding roadway and proposed landscaping would provide adequate screening of the proposed substation facility and associated equipment. Furthermore, as described in Section 2.6 of this MND, SDG&E will coordinate with the Pala-Pauma Sponsor Group in finalizing the landscape plan for the proposed substation. Therefore, visual impacts from the proposed substation are considered to be less than significant.

b) Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. See *response 5.1-a*.

c) Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. See *response 5.1-a*.

d) Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less than Significant Impact. Depending upon construction techniques and hours, new sources of light and glare may be present during project construction. However,

Figure 6 Project Site Existing View

Figure 7 Project Site Simulated View

due to the short-term nature of construction, any light or glare effects are anticipated to be less than significant.

During operation, shadows and glare are not expected to be a problem as project facilities would generally be constructed of non-reflective materials. Additionally, the substation will ordinarily not be lighted at night.

5.2 AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

a) Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

No Impact. The "San Diego County Important Farmland 1998" mapping from the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program does not show any farmland on the proposed substation site. Therefore, no impacts to prime, unique or farmland of statewide importance would occur with project implementation.

b) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

Less than Significant Impact. The site is zoned A-72 by the County of San Diego, a "General Agriculture" zone, and is also part of a 200-acre parcel under a Williamson Act contract. While part of the 200-acre site is used for growing oranges, the area where the new substation is proposed is not in active agricultural use. The substation would use about two acres of the 200-acre site. The project would not necessitate a Williamson Act cancellation or withdrawal since utilities are consistent with the site's General Agricultural zoning and the project would not displace any current or historical agricultural use of the site. The existing substation has been operational while the current Williamson Act contract has been in place and has caused no interference or conflict with the agricultural use of the site. It is anticipated that the proposed substation would likewise similarly cause no conflict and would not impact the current and future agricultural use and status of the project site.

c) Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?

Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of the project would convert approximately 2.8 acres out of the 203-acre site owned by SDG&E from vacant land to non-agricultural use. Development of the property from vacant land to substation use would not be a significant conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use. Furthermore, the expansion of the existing substation would not increase local economic activity and therefore is not anticipated to provide incentives to landowners to develop their property (see response 5.12-a).

5.3 AIR QUALITY

a) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The project site is located in the San Diego Air Basin, which is a federal and state non-attainment area for ozone (O_3), and a state non-attainment area for particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}). The applicable O_3 attainment plan is the Regional Air Quality Strategy (RAQS), which is prepared and administered by the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (APCD). Federal guidelines relative to implementation of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments contain emission thresholds at levels that are presumed not to interfere with the attainment process for national clean air standards. They are applicable to both construction and operational activity emissions. On an average daily basis, the federal thresholds are:

SOx	–	250 pounds/day
NO_x	–	275 pounds/day
CO	–	550 pounds/day
PM_{10}	–	550 pounds/day

The San Diego APCD does not have specific significance thresholds for air pollutants generated during construction. However, the APCD does specify Air Quality Impact Analysis (AQIA) Trigger Levels for review of new stationary sources. Although these

trigger levels are specified for stationary sources, they are used here to assess the potential impacts due to air emissions during project construction. The AQIA Trigger Levels are:

NOx	–	250 pounds/day
SOx	–	250 pounds/day
CO	–	550 pounds/day
PM_{10}	–	100 pounds/day

There are no AQIA Trigger Levels specified for ROCs. If anticipated project emissions exceed any of these Trigger levels, a more detailed AQIA may be required by the APCD.

The proposed project is not expected to release any air emissions during operation. Construction emissions would come from heavy equipment exhaust, construction-related trips by workers, material hauling trucks, and associated fugitive dust generation from clearing and grading activities. Heavy construction equipment will be diesel-powered. The principal pollutants would be carbon dioxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOC), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and PM_{10}. VOC and Nox are the precursors of ozone (O_3). Project emissions during construction were estimated using the California Air Resources Board *Urbemis 7G version 3.2 Air Emissions Program* (SDG&E, January 2000). *Table 3* provides estimated maximum projected daily air emissions during construction.

TABLE 3
CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS

Total Emissions	NO_x Daily lbs/day	CO Daily lbs/day	PM_{10} Daily lbs/day	SO_x Daily lbs/day
Site Development	158	92	26	<158

Source: SDG&E, January 2001.

As shown in *Table 3*, total daily construction emissions are not anticipated to exceed identified significance thresholds. Additionally, measures to reduce fugitive dust impacts during construction as required by the APCD have been incorporated into the project (see *Section 2.6,* of this MND). Therefore, short-term construction activities are expected to have a less than significant impact to air quality.

b) Would the project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. See *response 5.3-a*.

c) Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Implementation of the project would result in short-term impacts to air quality associated with construction. The cumulative effect of the proposed project and other projects in the vicinity would incrementally contribute to the San Diego Air Basin's inability to attain federal and state AAQS for O_3 and PM_{10}. It is anticipated that short-term cumulative effects to air quality due to construction activities can be mitigated to a level of less than significant through implementation of mitigation measures on a project-by-project basis designed to control construction generated particulate matter (PM_{10}) through dust abatement procedures in accordance with APCD rules and control construction-generated O_3 and NO_x through proper maintenance of construction vehicles and traffic management.

Operations of the proposed project would not generate air quality impacts. Therefore, the project would not contribute to long-term cumulative impacts to ambient air quality.

d) Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less than Significant Impact. There are no existing or planned sensitive receptors (e.g., residences, schools, parks) within 1,900 feet of the proposed project. As discussed in *response 5.3-a*, the proposed project is not expected to release any air emissions during operation and short-term emissions during construction are expected to be less than significant. In addition, mitigation measures would further reduce impacts as discussed in *response 5.3-a*. Therefore, emissions associated with the proposed project are expected to have a less than significant impact to sensitive receptors.

e) Would the project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

Less than Significant Impact. Construction of the substation may produce odors; however, perception of the odor would be short-term in nature and not considered a significant impact. Operation of the substation will not produce noticeable odors.

5.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

a) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly 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 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Biological field surveys and reports were conducted for the proposed project in July 2000 (Ecological Ventures California), August 2000 (O'Farrel Biological Consulting) and in March 2001 (HDR Engineering). The following discussion is based on these reports.

The northern portion of the project site supports non-native grassland dominated by ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), storks-bill (*Erodium* spp.), wild oat (*Avena* sp.), and other annual grasses and forbs. Habitat which would be affected to the south and west consists of burned, successional coastal age scrub vegetation. Indicators in this area include California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), flat-top buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) and Laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*). A small patch of mule fat scrub, indicated by mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) and various upland and weedy species, is present immediately offsite to the southeast at the bottom of a seasonal drainage. The proposed lay down is located north of the orchard road. This area has been previously disturbed and supports non-native grassland dominated by ripgut brome, storks-bill wild oat, and other annual grasses and forbs.

As shown in *Table 1,* the proposed substation would permanently impact approximately 1.12 acres including approximately 0.13 acre coastal sage scrub and the remainder non-native annual grassland. Temporary impacts to 1.66 acres of non-native grassland and coastal sage scrub will also occur. No host plant species for the

quino checkerspot butterfly were detected onsite (Ecological Ventures California, July 2000). Focused surveys for the Stephens' kangaroo rat were negative on or adjacent to the site (O'Farrel, August 2000).

While no sensitive species were observed on the site, coastal sage scrub generally provides breeding and foraging habitat for the federally-listed threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*) as well as other sensitive wildlife and plant species, including orange-throated whiptail (*Cnemidophorus hyperythrus beldingi*), San Diego horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei*) and northern red-diamond rattlesnake (*Crotalus ruber ruber*). Mitigation for impacts to coastal sage scrub and sensitive species which may potentially breed and forage in coastal sage scrub will be in accordance with the SDG&E NCCP, which was approved by CDFG and USFWS on December 18, 1995. As created, this Plan allows for "incidental take" of species covered under the Plan, under Section 10(a) of the U.S. Endangered Species Act and under Sections 2081 and 2800 et. seq. of the California Endangered Species Act. According to the SDG&E Plan, "incidental take" of covered species is allowed for utility actions relating to maintenance and construction of new facilities.

Under the terms of the Plan, SDG&E will notify the resource agencies of the project and its potential impacts. Reporting will be in the form of an Environmental Field Survey which describes the project, location, existing habitat, impacts, recommendations to minimize impacts, and form of mitigation. More specifically, mitigation for temporary impacts to coastal sage scrub and non-native grassland will be reseeding impacted areas and a two-year monitoring program to determine success. Mitigation for permanent impacts to coastal sage scrub and non-native grassland will come in the form of a deduction from SDG&E's Conservation Bank at a 1:1 ratio. Additionally, SDG&E will implement the protective measures described in the SDG&E NCCP. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included into the Project*, and *Appendix B* to this MND, *SDG&E's Subregional NCCP – Mitigation Measures*.

The proposed project is in close proximity (0.6 miles) to the San Luis Rey River, which is known occupied breeding habitat and designated as Critical Habitat (Unit 14) for the arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*). Arroyo toads have been detected at least 0.6 mile into upland habitats adjacent to occupied breeding habitat, and therefore, could occur onsite. Mitigation to avoid impacts to the arroyo toad will be implemented in the form of an exclusion fence to be installed no more than 24 hours prior to construction to prevent arroyo toads from entering the work zone. The exclusionary fence will be

maintained throughout the duration of the proposed project's construction by a project biologist with a Section 10(a)(1)(B) permit for handling arroyo toad. Surveys shall be conducted in the morning before each days construction to ensure that no arroyo toads have breached the fence. If arroyo toads are found in the exclusion fence perimeter, the toad(s) shall be removed and relocated by the permitted biologist in consultation with the USFWS.

Least Bell's vireo is known to breed in riparian habitat associated with the San Luis Rey River. No habitat was observed onsite that would support the least Bell's vireo, however, because of the site's proximity to the San Luis Rey River, and mulefat scrub in an adjacent tributary west of the site, mitigation measures will be incorporated to ensure potential impacts to the least Bell's vireo will be minimized. Should construction of the proposed project occur during the breeding season (15 March through 15 September), a biological monitor will conduct protocol-level surveys for the presence of covered bird species nesting in the nearby riparian habitat. If a nest or nesting behavior is identified during the breeding season, a temporary noise barrier will be used during construction to ensure that noise levels at the nest site do not exceed 60 dB(A).

Implementation of the above mitigation measures will ensure avoidance and minimization of impacts to sensitive biological resources and therefore, project impacts to sensitive biological resources are considered to be less than significant.

b) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. Please refer to response 5.4-a

c) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

No Impact. The project would not directly impact federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

d) Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any

native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project consists of above and below ground facilities that will not have a significant effect on wildlife corridors and habitat linkages. The project consists of limited above-ground facilities (i.e., substation and transmission/ distribution improvements). Because of their size, use and location in areas that are not likely to constitute important wildlife movement sites, the proposed project is not anticipated to disrupt use of wildlife corridors and linkages.

e) Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinance protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in response 5.4-a, 0.13 acre of coastal sage scrub would be impacted. However, mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project that would reduce impacts to coastal sage scrub to levels below significant. The site is located in Unit 14 of arroyo toad critical habitat as designated by the USFWS. Mitigation has been incorporated to avoid impacts to the arroyo toad. Please refer to Section 2.6 of this MND and response 5.4-a.

f) Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The project site is not within the boundaries of any Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved habitat conservation plan. Please refer to response 5.4-e.

5.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?

No Impact. A cultural resources survey was performed for the proposed project site (Affinis, August 2000) and is provided as *Appendix C*. No archaeological resources were found within the proposed substation site and therefore, no impacts on cultural resources would occur.

b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

No Impact. Please refer to *response 5.5-a.*

c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less than Significant. The geotechnical investigation for the project noted no unique or notable geologic conditions or features. Geological formations on the site consist of topsoil and colluvium over granitic rock of the southern California batholith (Geocon 2000). Colluvium and topsoil have a low potential for paleontological resources, and the southern California batholith has zero potential (Demere and Walsh 1994).

d) Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

No Impact. Based on the results of the cultural resources survey performed for the site, no disturbance of human remains are anticipated.

5.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

a) Would the project 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? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

No Impact. A geotechnical investigation has been prepared for the project (*GEOCON INC. 2000*). Based on a review of this report, there are no known active faults as defined by the California Division of Mines and Geology located in the project vicinity. Therefore, the potential for fault rupture is considered extremely low.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The project site will likely be subject to ground shaking in response to either a local moderate or more distant large magnitude earthquake. As described in *Section 2.6* of this MND, project design will adhere to the "Uniform Building Code" currently adopted by the County of San Diego (*GEOCON INC. 2000*) and will be designed to meet CPUC's General Order for seismic standards.

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less than Significant Impact. Design of the substation was based on probabilistic evaluation of ground shaking from all faults in the area. Geologic conditions onsite are not conducive to liquefaction. Therefore, the risk of seismically induced soil liquefaction occurring at this site is considered very low.

iv. Landslides?

No Impact. Landslides are not present on or adjacent to the site and none are known to be present in proximity to the site. Therefore, it is not anticipated that landslides would adversely impact the proposed site location (*GEOCON INC 2000*).

b) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Clearing and grading of the site for project construction would result in the potential to increase erosion onsite. All cut and fill slopes would be landscaped and Best Management Practices for control of erosion will be employed during the construction phase, including the short-term use of sandbags, matting, mulch, berms, hay bales, or similar devices along all graded areas to minimize sediment transport. The exact design, location and schedule of use for such devices will be determined pursuant to direction and approval by the San Diego County (see *Section 2.6,* of the MND). Also, please refer to response 5.8-a.

c) Would the project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in, on or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The geotechnical investigation found excavated soils and weathered rock to be suitable for use as fill materials. No landslides are present on the site or in close proximity, the potential for liquefaction is very low, and no significant geologic hazards that would adversely affect the proposed project were observed or are known to exist on the site (Geocon 2000). As described in Section 2.6 of this MND, all grading will be performed in accordance with the *Recommended Grading Specifications* contained in the geotechnical report (Geocon 2000) and the *Grading Ordinance* for the County of San Diego. Adherence to grading specifications and the County's ordinance would reduce potential geologic impacts to below a level of significance.

d) Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks of life or property?

No Impact. A majority of the soils onsite have been characterized as having a low expansion potential as defined by Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994). Additionally, all grading shall be conducted in accordance with the recommendations made within the geotechnical report regarding expansive soils. No impact from expansive soil is expected.

e) Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal or wastewater?

No Impact. No sewer or wastewater disposal is required as part of the project.

5.7 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

a) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less than Significant Impact. The project poses a risk due to hazardous materials both during construction and demolition of the existing substation and operation of the proposed substation. The removal of the existing substation equipment will begin after facilities are installed so that uninterrupted electric service would be provided to customers. Prior to dismantling and demolition, all equipment containing cooling oil will be tested for PCBs. If PCBs are present, the oil will be disposed of utilizing all applicable federal, state and local requirements to a facility authorized to accept hazardous waste. If the oil is not contaminated, it will be sold and transferred to a fuel oil storage and distribution company for use. After all of the cooling oil has been safely removed, the existing substation will be dismantled and all hardware that is reusable will be refurbished at SDG&E's Kearny Mesa facility for use at other SDG&E substations with similar equipment. Material that cannot be reused, such as wiring, metal works and similar material will be disposed of at an approved landfill or sold and transferred to a recycling company. Any asphalt and concrete from the equipment pad area would be removed with standard construction and demolition equipment, sold and transferred to a concrete and asphalt recycling company.

All transport, handling, use, and disposal of substances such as petroleum products, solvents, and paints related to construction, operation, and maintenance of the substation shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws regulating the management and use of hazardous materials.

The only hazardous material that would be used in operation of the substation is transformer oil. Aboveground, concrete containment basins would be constructed

around the transformers to contain the oil in the event of a spill. Transformer oil would not be stored onsite, but at SDG&E's central maintenance facility in San Diego. Used oil and oil saturated materials generated from maintenance and operation activities would be transported to SDG&E's central maintenance facility for disposal. All use of hazardous materials and disposal of hazardous wastes would be in compliance with state Title 22 and federal Title 40 requirements, including the oil spill control and countermeasure plan (SCCP) required by Title 40 CFR Section 112.7. No extraordinary risk of accidental explosion or the release of hazardous substances is anticipated with development and implementation of the proposed substation.

b) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. No extraordinary risk of accidental explosion or the release of hazardous substance is anticipated to result during the construction or operational phase of the proposed project. Please refer to *response 5.7-a*. Also please refer to *Section 6.0* of this document for a discussion on electric magnetic fields (EMF).

c) Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Less than Significant Impact. Please refer to *response 5.7-a* and *5.7-b*. There are no schools or proposed schools within one-quarter mile of the proposed facility.

d) Would the project be 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 it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

No Impact. Upon review of the County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health web site (http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/deh/permits/index.html) no record was found, which would indicate that the proposed project would be located on a hazardous materials site. As a result it is not anticipated that the proposed project's implementation would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

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?

No Impact. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan area nor within two miles of an airport.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. No private airstrips exist within the vicinity of the project site.

g) Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. Some traffic hazards would occur during construction activities which could interfere with emergency response plans or evacuation plans (see *response 5.15-d*). However, with proper traffic control, construction activities would have a less than significant impact to emergency or emergency evacuation plans.

h) Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Less than Significant Impact. The project is an unmanned facility and development of the substation pad would remove all flammable vegetation in a 200-foot by 260-foot area. The pad would be cleared, graded, paved, and then surrounded by a 10 to 13-foot high masonry wall and drainage ditches. No vegetation is proposed within the walled area and a 30-foot wide fire break around the substation will be maintained. Consequently, the addition of the substation to the project site is not anticipated to increase the fire hazard in the area beyond those that currently exist and therefore, impacts related to increased fire hazard due to the substation will remain below a level of significance.

Although energized lines that fall to the ground would be automatically de-energized by protective relays, the possibility of a brush fire still exists. Because the project basically involves the addition of underground lines and the replacement of existing overhead lines with new lines, the potential for brush fires ignited by power lines would remain unchanged. Therefore, impacts related to increased fire hazard due to power lines are anticipated to be below a level of significance.

5.8 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

a) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The project will result in 1.12 acres of permanent impacts and 1.66 acres of temporary impacts as shown in *Table 1*.

During construction grading, there is the potential for some short-term erosion to occur and discharge of pollutants, especially during wet weather seasons. All project runoff will be directed into catch basins that will discharge into the existing drainage channel on the west side of Pala Road. The project will implement short-term construction best management practices and will employ the protective erosion control measures described in the SWRCB General Permit for Discharges associated with construction activities (Permit No. CA 0108758) as described in Section 2.6 of this MND. It is anticipated that adherence to the guidelines of the NPDES permit would reduce surface water quality impacts during project construction to less than significant.

Runoff from the developed site will be directed to a catch basin with underground pipes discharging into the existing drainage channel west of Pala Road. Design and construction of these drainage structures would be in conformance with County of San Diego to assure that water quality standards and waste discharge requirements would not be violated.

b) Would the project substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of a local groundwater table level (e.g., 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)?

Less than Significant Impact. Operation of the substation itself would not require the use of water. Irrigation water for the landscaping proposed to screen the facility will be obtained from an existing well located just to the south of Pala Road on property formerly owned by SDG&E. SDG&E has retained water and access rights to the well and an existing water transmission pipe and associated easement is in place that traverses under Pala Road into the project site adjacent to the proposed substation. It is estimated that approximately 2.08 acre-feet per year will be used for landscaping needs. It is anticipated that this usage will not excessively draw down the aquifer.

The project would result in less than one acre of additional impervious area (including the substation pad and access driveway). This additional impervious area would have a less than significant impact on groundwater recharge.

c) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or offsite?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.8-a and 5.8-b*. Runoff from the project site would be conveyed into the existing drainage channel on the west side of Pala Road. These channeled drainages would not involve alteration of natural drainage courses nor substantially increase velocities so as to increase erosion or siltation.

d) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or 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 which would result in flooding on or offsite?

Less than Significant Impact. Relative to stormwater runoff and downstream flooding impacts, a drainage study was prepared for the project by Cherry Engineering in October 2000. Based on the study, which identified affected drainage basins and before and after developed condition storm flow Q's, the existing and proposed drainage facilities are adequately sized to accommodate storm flows from the 100-year storm condition (see *response 5.8-c*).

e) Would the project create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.8-d.*

f) Would the project otherwise degrade water quality?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.8-a*. No other degradation of water quality would result from project implementation.

g) Would the project place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary of Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?

No Impact. No housing is proposed by the project.

h) Would the project place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?

No Impact. Upon review of the SanGIS Natural Feature Maps (www.sangis.org/isa/nnatsangis), it has been concluded that no construction is proposed within a 100-year flood plain. The 100-year flood plain affiliated with the San Luis Rey River ends along the south side of Pala Road (SR-76). The proposed project site is located along the north side of Pala Road. It can therefore be concluded that no structures would impede or redirect flood flows as a result of the proposed project's implementation.

i) Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.8-h.* All above-ground structures would be placed outside of the 100-year floodplain and therefore there is no risk of exposing structures to flooding hazards. Additionally, given that drainage improvements will be incorporated into the project, the potential for the project to cause water-related hazards to people or property is considered to be less than significant.

j) Would the project be susceptible to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

No Impact. Hydrologic and topographic conditions of the project site and surrounding area do not lend themselves to these conditions. The proposed project is not near any water body that would potentially be effected by a seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. It is not anticipated that the proposed project would be susceptible to any of the above stated natural phenomena.

5.9 LAND USE AND PLANNING

a) Would the project physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The project site is part of a larger 203-acre property owned by SDG&E that includes vacant and agricultural lands as well as an existing substation. The project would impact approximately 2.8 acres and would expand the existing substation by approximately one acre. Lands adjoining the site are vacant and there are no residences within 1,900 feet of the project site. There is no established community surrounding the proposed project site. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not physically divide an established community.

b) Would the project conflict with any 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) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Less than Significant Impact. Local General Plan and Zoning Policies, as they relate to the project site, are summarized below. It should be noted, however, that the CPUC has exclusive jurisdiction over the proposed project. Therefore, the project is not subject to local or county plans, policies, or zoning regulations. The CPUC is however required to consider local land use regulations and policies when making decisions. The following data are presented, therefore, to assist in determining land use compatibility.

The project site is located within the Pala/Pauma Subregional Area of the San Diego County General Plan. The proposed project is the expansion of the existing Pala Substation on vacant land (see response 5.9-a). The County's General Plan designates only agriculture and mining uses within 500 feet of the site. The site is zoned A-72, a designated general agricultural land use. The applicable Pala/Pauma Subregional Plan policy designates existing agricultural areas as intensive agriculture, agricultural preserve or multiple rural use to limit the intrusion of incompatible uses into existing agricultural areas. Because the existing substation is a utility already established on the site and the proposed expansion would take place on vacant land, not in active agriculture, it is not considered a new land use and therefore is not considered to be in conflict with the County's General Plan designation or zoning. Also, please refer to response 5.2-a, 5.2-b and 5.2-c.

c) Would the project conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. Please refer to *response 5.4-f.*

5.10 MINERAL RESOURCES

a) Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

No Impact. No known mineral resources are known for the project site.

b) Would the project 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?

No Impact. See *response 5.10-a*.

5.11 NOISE

a) Would the project result in 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?

Less than Significant Impact. Construction and operation of the proposed project would result in an increase in existing noise levels due to construction equipment and operation of transformers. The proposed project is located in a rural area within the County of San Diego. The County of San Diego Noise Ordinance places limits on noise generated by stationary sources. The noise level limits are specified in A-weighted decibels [dB(A)] at the boundary of the property. For rural residential properties and agricultural properties, the noise ordinance specifies a daytime limit of 50 dB(A) and a nighttime limit of 45 dB(A).

The noise ordinance also sets specific limits on construction activities. Construction is governed by Section 36.410 of the ordinance, which limits the hours of construction on Monday through Saturday, 7 AM to 7 PM, and prohibits construction on Sundays and holidays. This section of the ordinance also limits construction noise at or within any developed or used residential property, to a maximum of 75 dB(A) for a period of eight hours.

Construction Noise: Construction will occur within the limits described above (Monday through Saturday, 7 AM to 7 PM). Construction equipment noise generally ranges from 70 to 95 dB(A) at 50 feet from the source. At about 500 feet from the source, intermittent levels from the loudest construction equipment would be about 75 dB(A). Since there are no residences or other sensitive receptors within 1,900 feet of the construction site, there will be no significant effect on sensitive receptors from construction of the project.

Operational Noise: Operation of the proposed facilities would result in the production of long-term noise from transformers. Each transformer would generate a maximum sound level of 61 dB(A) (SDG&E, PEA January, 2001).

The County's noise ordinance specifies a noise level of 75 dB(A) at the property line as the acceptable limit anytime. For point sources such as transformers, noise decreases by approximately 6 dB for each doubling of distance for a hard, flat site with

no topography. The maximum calculated noise levels from the substation at any point on the property lines of the parcel containing the substation would be 43 dB(A) on the west property line opposite the middle of the substation. Operational noise from the substation would be well below the County limit of 75 dB(A) along the north, east, and south property lines, and also well below the County limit of 62.5 dB(A) during daylight hours and 60 dB(A) during evening and nighttime hours at the west property line (SDG&E, PEA January, 2001). Additionally, it should be noted that the calculations did not take into account topography or the fact that the transformers would be surrounded by a 10 to 13-foot high masonry block wall. Therefore, noise from substation operation would comply with County of San Diego noise standards and are considered to be less than significant.

b) Would the project result in exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than Significant Impact. See response 5.11-a. Project construction may require blasting that would generate vibrations near the source. Blasting will be performed by a state-licensed professional, as defined in the California Administrative Code to ensure that blasting is in conformance with all state, County and municipal ordinances and therefore, vibration associated with blasting is anticipated to be less than significant.

c) Would the project result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.11-a*.

d) Would the project result in a substantial temporary of periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.11-a*.

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 project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. No airport exists within two miles of the project.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. No private airstrip exists within two miles of the project.

5.12 POPULATION AND HOUSING

a) Would the project induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes or businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

Less than Significant impact. SDG&E provides electrical power services to the Pala area in the County of San Diego. The 1999 peak load for the existing Pala Substation was 9.9 MVA. The forecast peak load based on approved, in place or planned uses in accordance with the adopted San Diego County General Plan and Pala Indian Reservation is 13.2 MVA in 2001 (including area load growth and the additional 2 MVA for the new Pala Casino). The existing 69/12-kV transformer is 43 years old and is rated at 9.4 MVA for normal operation and 11.1 MVA for planned load limit operation. Additional overloading of the existing transformer will significantly decrease reliability.

Construction of the Pala Substation expansion is proposed to replace the existing 43-year-old substation equipment with newer more reliable equipment and to eliminate a 19 percent overload on the existing single bank station due to normal area load growth and the new Pala Casino recently completed (April 2001). The substation expansion is necessary to meet the anticipated electrical demand and load growth in the Pala area and to prevent potential outages or disruptions of service to existing and

new customers in the Pala area. No portion of the project would result in the generation of additional population. The project will not provide additional long-term employment opportunities. No residences are proposed as part of the proposed project, and no extension of services beyond that currently planned for is associated with the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate additional population or cumulatively exceed official regional or local population projections, nor would it induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly.

b) Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. No housing will be displaced or otherwise affected by the proposed project.

c) Would the project displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. See *response 5.12-b*.

5.13 PUBLIC SERVICES

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for 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 following public services:

i. Fire protection?

Less than Significant Impact. See response 5.7-h.

ii. Police protection?

No impact. As discussed under *response 5.12-a*, the proposed project would not generate population growth; therefore, no new demand would be placed on police protection.

iii. Schools?

No impact. As discussed under *response 5.12-a*, the proposed project would not generate population growth; therefore, no new demand would be placed on schools.

iv. Parks?

No Impact. The proposed substation would be an unmanned facility and no population increase would result with project implementation. There would be no increase in the demand for parks or other recreational facilities.

v. Other public facilities?

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed under *response 5.12-a*, the proposed project would not generate population growth; therefore, no new demand would be placed on public facilities. Heavy trucks used during construction and maintenance of project facilities may result in a minimal increase in the need for roadway maintenance.

5.14 RECREATION

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?

No Impact. As discussed under *response 5.12*-a, no population would be generated by the proposed project. Therefore, no demand for recreational facilities would occur.

b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. No recreational facilities are included or would be required as part of the proposed project.

5.15 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

a) Would the project cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the 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 ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?

Less than Significant Impact. During operation, the proposed project is expected to generate approximately one or two vehicle trips per day. This limited number of vehicle trips would result in less than significant impacts to traffic or traffic congestion.

During construction, testing and energizing the station (approximately nine months), traffic will be generated by construction crews and equipment/material deliveries (see *Table 2*).

All construction equipment, vehicles, personnel and material staging areas would be accommodated within the property lines of the proposed substation property. Construction traffic would primarily utilize Pala Road (SR-76) between the project site and Interstate 15. Typically from four to fifteen workers would travel to and from the site daily during construction. During peak construction activities, an estimated 35 truck trips per day associated with cut soil and concrete delivery would occur at the site over 10-15 day period. It is expected that this short-term construction-related traffic would not create a substantial impact on traffic volumes nor change traffic patterns in such a way that congestion and delay would be substantially increased on street segments or at intersections.

b) Would the project exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the County Congestion Management Agency for designated roads or highways?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.15-a*-and *5.15-d*. Short-term and limited construction-related traffic would not create a substantial impact on traffic volumes nor change traffic patterns in such a way as to affect the level of service (LOS) or vehicle to congestion ratio on study area roadways.

c) Would the project 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?

No Impact. No airport exists within two miles of the project; therefore, the proposed project would not result in an alteration to aircraft traffic or safety risks.

d) Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves of dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Access to the site during construction and operation of the substation would be from Pala del Norte Road. Some traffic hazards could result at the intersection of Pala del Norte and Pala Road (SR-76) during construction while slow-moving, heavy equipment access the site. A traffic control plan will be included as part of the proposed project. The traffic control plan will address construction traffic at the intersection of Pala del Norte and Pala Road. Traffic control will include signage and flagmen when necessary to allow the heavy equipment to utilize Pala del Norte. The configuration of Pala Road (SR-76) provides adequate sight distance in the vicinity of the proposed substation and, in combination with standard construction traffic control, would ensure that construction traffic would not cause any undue or extraordinary safety impacts. Upon completion of construction, no traffic impact would result from operation of the project (see *response 5.15-a*).

e) Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.15-d*. The project will not close access to any property or existing roads; therefore, less than significant impacts to emergency access or access to nearby uses are expected due to the project.

f) Would the project result in inadequate parking capacity?

No Impact. Parking areas onsite are sufficient to accommodate construction and operation of the proposed project. Therefore, no impacts to parking capacity onsite or offsite would occur due to the project.

g) Would the project conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?

No Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with adopted policies or involve elimination of facilities supporting alternative transportation such as bus turnouts or bicycle racks.

5.16 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

a) Would the project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?

No Impact. Project implementation would not impact wastewater treatment. Sewer is not required nor part of the proposed project.

b) Would the project require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects?

Less than Significant Impact. Operation of the substation itself would not require the use of water. Irrigation water for the landscaping proposed to screen the facility will be obtained from an existing well located just to the south of Pala Road on property formerly owned by SDG&E. SDG&E has retained water and access rights

to the wetland and an existing water transmission pipe and associated easement is in place that traverses under Pala Road into the project site adjacent to the proposed substation. It is estimated that approximately 2.08 acre-feet per year will be used for landscaping needs. This usage will have a less than significant impact on groundwater resources.

c) Would the project require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less than Significant Impact. Development of the project site would result in additional impervious area of less than one acre and would not significantly increase impervious areas within the local drainage basin. Drainage improvements would be engineered to accommodate minor flows from the project and impacts would not be significant so as to require or alter offsite drainage systems. See *response 5.8-a*.

d) Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?

Less than Significant Impact. See response 5.16-b.

e) Would the project result in determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider/s existing commitments?

No Impact. No wastewater treatment would be required by the proposed unmanned substation.

f) Would the project be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?

Less than Significant Impact. The project will generate a limited amount of solid waste during construction. It is anticipated that the solid waste generated by project construction would have a less than significant impact on local solid waste facilities. No regular solid waste disposal is proposed as part of the substation project. Wastes

produced at the substation by maintenance and repair activities would be transported back to the central SDG&E maintenance facility in San Diego for disposal. The amount of solid waste generated by the proposed substation would not be substantial or interfere with the sufficient permitted capacity of nearby landfills.

g) Would the project comply with federal, state, and local statues and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact. See *response 5.16-f*. All solid waste will be disposed of in an approved site in compliance with federal, state and county regulations.

It should also be noted that California law now requires a 50 percent reduction by the year 2005 in solids requiring disposal, through composting, recycling, and reducing the generation of solid wastes. It is assumed that, as part of the construction plan for the project, a substantial portion of waste vegetation would be recycled and used for mulch/compost on the site. Therefore, much of the waste generated by the project may not require disposal in a county solid waste landfill. This would further decrease the negligible impact of the project on solid waste capacity.

5.17 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in *response 5.5-a* and *5.5-b*, the project would cause no impacts to archaeological resources; however, as discussed in *response 5.4*-a, the project would cause impacts to biological resources.

The proposed project would impact approximately 2.8 acres including approximately 0.13 acre of coastal sage scrub and the remainder ruderal non-native annual grassland.

The vegetation on and adjoining the site is of moderate habitat value, with a potential for California gnatcatcher and arroyo toad, two federally-listed species. Additionally, least Bell's vireo is known to breed on the San Luis Rey River, east of the project site, and southern willow scrub was found in a small drainage west of the site. The project could therefore (directly or indirectly) affect habitat for the federally and state-listed endangered least Bell's vireo, federally-threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, and the federally-listed endangered arroyo toad. While no sensitive species were observed on the site, coastal sage scrub generally provides breeding and foraging habitat for the federally-threatened California gnatcatcher and other sensitive wildlife and plant species.

Mitigation to reduce impacts to coastal sage scrub and sensitive species which generally breed and forage in coastal sage scrub will be in accordance with SDG&E's approved Section 10(a) permit and NCCP and USFWS and CDFG requirements. In addition to complying with the requirements of SDG&E's NCCP, measures are included to mitigate potential impacts to the federally endangered arroyo toad, least Bell's vireo, as well as California gnatcatcher. Implementation of these measures will reduce impacts to biological resources to less than significant (see *Section 2.6* of this MND as well as *Section 5.4, Biological Resources,* for further discussion).

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. As revealed by the previous discussions for each environmental category, impacts from the proposed project are considered to be less than significant or no impact after the incorporation of mitigation measures. Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce impacts associated with hydrology and water quality, air quality, traffic, biological resources, hazards, noise, and visual resource impacts to less than significant (see *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project*). No long-term significant impacts are associated with the project. In the absence of significant impacts, incremental accumulation of effects would not occur. Therefore, the proposed project does not incrementally contribute to cumulative impacts.

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less than Significant Impact. Based on the analysis of all the above questions, it has been determined that there would be no significant direct or indirect effect on human beings.

SECTION 6.0
ELECTRIC MAGNETIC FIELDS (EMF)

During the last several years, representatives of the public have expressed concern about the potential health risk associated with power frequency electric and magnetic fields (EMF). Numerous internationally recognized scientific organizations and independent regulatory advisory groups have conducted scientific reviews of the EMF research literature. The results of this research are inconclusive and public concern and scientific uncertainty remain regarding the potential health effects of EMF exposure.

In January 1991, the CPUC issued an Order Instituting Investigation to develop policies and procedures for addressing potential health effects of magnetic fields from utility facilities. The CPUC formed the California Consensus Group (CCG), a committee of 17 stakeholds representing diverse interests and perspectives, to provide guidance on interim EMF measures the CPUC might have adopted while waiting for resolution of scientific uncertainties. In March 1992, the CCG issued its report. In part, the report recommended that the CPUC authorize utilities to implement magnetic field reduction techniques if those techniques could be implemented at little or no cost. In November 1993, the CPUC issued Decision 93-11-013 adopting interim policy regarding EMF. California's electric utilities were authorized to implement no- and low-cost (low cost is defined as 4% of total project cost) field management techniques to reduce EMF levels from new and upgraded electrical facilities if a noticeable reduction could be achieved.

The proposed project incorporates measures to reduce EMF exposure in compliance with CPUC Decision 93-11-013. SDG&E's EMF Design Guidelines for Transmission, Distribution and Substation Facilities (SDG&E EMF Design Guidelines, May 1994) describe engineering techniques for reducing exposure to magnetic fields created by its electric facilities in compliance with CPUC Decision 93-11-013. Field management technique/guidelines for the Pala Substation project are described in SDG&E's Magnetic Field Management Plan (March 8, 2001) and for the substation include:

1) Locate substation equipment as close to the center of the substation as possible.
2) Use metal clad switchgear for 12 kV bus work which reduces phase spacing and produces lower magnetic fields.
3) Optimally configure the 69 kV underground transmission line extension between the substation rack and the transmission corridor.

SECTION 7.0
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SECTION 8.0
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- *SDG&E Subregional Natural Community Conservation Program Plan,* December 15, 1995.
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8.2 PERSONS CONSULTED

- Joe Chisholm, Chairman, Pala-Pauma Sponsor Group

8.0 References

8.0 References