



California Public Utilities Commission



To: State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Property Owners & Interested Parties

From: Mr. Boris Sanchez, CPUC Project Manager

Subject: NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING FOR THE IRONWOOD TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT (A.25-09-008)

Date: August 7, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Horizon West Transmission, LLC (HWT) has filed an application (A.25-09-008) with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) for the proposed Ironwood Transmission Line Project (Project). The Project would involve construction of a new approximately 86-mile-long 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line extending between Arizona Public Service Company's (APS) North Gila Substation in Arizona and San Diego Gas & Electric Company's (SDG&E) Imperial Valley Substation in California. The Project is proposed to improve regional transmission reliability and increase transmission system capacity between Arizona and California. Portions of the Project would cross lands administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The CPUC, as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed Project in compliance with CEQA. The CPUC has reviewed the application submitted by HWT and determined the application is complete. In order to obtain early feedback regarding the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR, the CPUC is initiating the scoping process for the Project. The scoping process is intended to inform the scope and content of the CEQA environmental review, including environmental issues, alternatives, and potential mitigation measures to be evaluated in the EIR.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS NOTICE

(See details on the last page of this notice)

Two meetings will be held via Zoom (and accessible by phone):

August 27, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

August 27, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

Scoping Comments are due by September 21, 2026

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WHAT IS SCOPING?

The purpose of this NOP is to inform recipients that the CPUC is beginning the scoping process and preparing an EIR for the proposed Project. Scoping is the process of soliciting public and agency input regarding the scope and content of an EIR, in advance of its preparation. Pursuant to CEQA, the CPUC is requesting comments to inform the scope and content of the EIR and help identify the actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and environmental effects to be analyzed in the EIR.

This notice includes a brief description of the Project, a brief summary of the anticipated potential impacts, information on public meetings, and how to provide input on the scope and content of the EIR. After the public scoping period has ended, a Scoping Report will be prepared to summarize the comments received. This NOP and the Scoping Report will be included as an appendix to the EIR and is also available on the CPUC's website for the Project along with other Project documents and reports, including HWT's application and Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA), at the following link:

<https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/ecorp/ironwood/index.html>

SEPARATE NEPA REVIEW

Portions of the Project would cross federal lands administered by the BLM. Accordingly, the Project is also subject to environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The BLM will serve as the lead federal agency for the NEPA review process. The CPUC will review the Project under CEQA. The CPUC and BLM are anticipated to coordinate environmental review efforts to the extent feasible; however, the CEQA and NEPA review processes will remain separate decision-making processes under their respective legal authorities. Separate notices and documents, with separate review and comment periods, will be published by CPUC to comply with CEQA and BLM to comply with NEPA.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Project would be located in Imperial County, California and Yuma County, Arizona. The Project is generally located south of Interstate 8 and east of the communities of El Centro, Heber, and Calexico in Imperial County, California. Figure 1, Project Location, depicts an overview of the proposed Project in the context of regional jurisdictions.



Figure 1. Project Location

2020-196.03 Horizon North Gila to Imperial Valley



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project would involve construction, operation, and maintenance of a new approximately 86-mile-long 500 kV transmission line extending between the APS North Gila Substation in western Yuma County, Arizona and SDG&E's Imperial Valley Substation in Imperial County, California. The Project would traverse a combination of federal, state, and private lands, including lands administered by the BLM.

Major Project components would include installation of new overhead 500 kV transmission line facilities, transmission structures and foundations, conductor and fiber optic communication lines, temporary and permanent access roads, staging and pulling sites, work areas, and associated improvements and infrastructure necessary to support construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission line. Construction activities would include vegetation clearing, grading, excavation, foundation installation, structure assembly, conductor stringing, site restoration, and related activities. The Project would also



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include use and improvement of existing access routes and development of temporary work areas and staging areas to support construction activities.

Construction of the Project would occur in phases and would require use of heavy equipment, construction vehicles, temporary workforce facilities, and traffic control measures. Following construction, temporary work areas would be restored to the extent feasible, while permanent facilities would remain in operation as part of the regional electrical transmission system.

Applicant Proposed Measures

As part of the Project, HWT has committed to implementing Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) intended to avoid, minimize, or reduce potential environmental impacts associated with construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project. The proposed APMs address a range of environmental resource areas, including, but not limited to, biological resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, air quality, hydrology and water quality, hazardous materials, noise, wildfire prevention, traffic and public safety, and restoration of temporary disturbance areas. The EIR will evaluate these measures as part of the proposed Project, and the CPUC may identify additional mitigation measures, where necessary and feasible, to avoid or reduce potentially significant environmental impacts identified during the CEQA review process.

Project Objectives

HWT states that the purpose of the Project is to improve regional electric transmission reliability and increase transmission system capacity between Arizona and California. The Project is intended to support the transfer of electricity across the regional transmission system and address existing and forecast transmission constraints identified through regional transmission planning processes.

HWT has identified the following primary objectives for the Project:

- Improve transmission system reliability between Arizona and California;
- Increase regional transmission capacity and operational flexibility within the bulk electric transmission system;
- Support delivery of electricity across the regional transmission network;
- Respond to existing and forecast transmission system needs identified through regional planning processes; and
- Construct and operate a new 500 kV transmission line connecting APS's North Gila Substation and SDG&E's Imperial Valley Substation.



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As lead agency under CEQA, the CPUC is responsible for identifying appropriate CEQA project objectives, which may differ from HWT's objectives described above, to inform the CEQA review process, including the evaluation of alternatives and mitigation measures. The CPUC has not yet finalized the CEQA objectives for the Project.

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE EIR

It has been determined that an EIR is required for the CEQA review because the Project could result in potentially significant impacts to environmental resources. The EIR will address all of the issues identified in the CEQA Environmental Checklist Form (see CEQA Guidelines Appendix G), including aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural and tribal resources, energy conservation, geology and soils (including paleontology), greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire.

Probable Environmental Effects

HWT has indicated that the Project's most substantial environmental impacts would likely be associated with aesthetics and visual resources, biological resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, hydrology and water quality, air quality, noise, recreation, transportation, wildfire, and hazards and hazardous materials. These impacts are summarized below.

- ***Aesthetics and Visual Resources:*** Construction and operation of the proposed 500 kV transmission line and associated infrastructure could substantially alter visual character and scenic views in portions of the Project area, including views from public roads, recreational areas, and public lands administered by BLM.
- ***Air Quality:*** Construction activities could result in temporary emissions of criteria pollutants and dust from grading, excavation, vehicle travel, and operation of heavy equipment, which could affect nearby sensitive receptors and contribute to regional emissions.
- ***Biological Resources:*** Construction and operation of the Project could result in temporary and permanent impacts to desert habitats, sensitive vegetation communities, jurisdictional waters and washes, wildlife movement, and special-status plant and wildlife species, including federally and state-listed species and designated critical habitat.
- ***Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources:*** Ground-disturbing activities associated with Project construction could result in disturbance or damage to known or previously undiscovered archaeological resources, historic resources, tribal cultural resources, or human remains.



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- ***Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources: Construction*** activities, including grading and excavation, could result in erosion, soil disturbance, and impacts to paleontological resources or unique geologic features.
- ***Hazards and Hazardous Materials:*** Construction, operation, and maintenance activities could involve the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials and could create risks associated with accidental releases, wildfire ignition, or public safety hazards.
- ***Hydrology and Water Quality:*** Construction activities could temporarily or permanently affect washes, drainage features, and other potentially jurisdictional waters and could result in erosion, sedimentation, runoff, or degradation of surface water or groundwater quality.
- ***Noise:*** Construction activities could generate temporary increases in noise and vibration levels from heavy equipment, vehicle traffic, and transmission line construction activities in the vicinity of sensitive receptors and recreational areas.
- ***Recreation:*** Temporary construction activities could disrupt or limit access to recreational resources and public lands within portions of the Project area.
- ***Transportation and Traffic:*** Construction-related vehicle trips, oversized equipment transport, and temporary lane or access restrictions could affect local and regional roadway operations and access.
- ***Wildfire:*** Construction and operation of transmission facilities could increase wildfire risk through ignition sources associated with equipment operation, vehicles, or transmission infrastructure.

Mitigation Measures, Cumulative Impacts, and Alternatives

The EIR will include the CPUC's independent evaluation of the environmental effects identified above, as well as other potentially significant environmental impacts associated with construction, operation, maintenance, and eventual decommissioning of the Project. Where necessary and feasible, the CPUC may recommend mitigation measures, in addition to or in place of HWT's APMs, to avoid, minimize, or reduce potentially significant environmental impacts identified during the CEQA review process.

The EIR will also evaluate cumulative environmental impacts associated with the Project when considered together with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the region. The cumulative analysis will consider projects and activities occurring within Imperial County, California, Yuma County, Arizona, and surrounding areas that could contribute to cumulative effects on environmental resources.

Alternatives identified to date include those evaluated in the PEA, including alternative transmission corridors, route segment variations, and substation interconnection configurations. These alternatives represent different feasible alignments between the North Gila Substation and the Imperial Valley Substation and reflect engineering, environmental, and land use considerations.

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Consistent with CEQA, the EIR will evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed Project, including a No Project Alternative, that could feasibly attain most of the Project's basic objectives while avoiding or substantially reducing significant environmental impacts. The EIR will also consider additional alternatives or route variations identified through agency consultation, public comments received during the scoping process, or environmental analysis conducted during preparation of the EIR.

Public Resources Code Section 21092.6(a)

Per Public Resources Code Section 21092.6(a), if the Project site or any Project alternative site to be analyzed is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List), that information must be included in the NOP. According to the PEA, several known hazardous materials release sites are located within one mile of portions of the proposed Project in California; however, no known release sites included on the Cortese List are located within the proposed Project footprint or alignment.

ISSUES THAT WILL NOT BE ADDRESSED IN THE EIR

Non-environmental issues such as economic impacts and assessment of Project need are outside the scope of CEQA and will not be addressed in the EIR, but those issues may be addressed through the CPUC's concurrent proceeding for the Project. The EIR will also not consider electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) that would be generated by the Project in the context of the CEQA analysis of potential environmental impacts, for two reasons: (1) there is no agreement among scientists that EMFs create a potential health risk; and (2) there are no defined or adopted CEQA standards for defining health risk from EMFs.

PUBLIC SCOPING PERIOD FOR THIS NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Pursuant to CEQA, the scoping period will be 45 days following the release of this NOP. The scoping period for this Project begins on Monday, August 7, 2026, and closes at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 21, 2026. Please include the name, organization or agency (if applicable), mailing address, and e-mail address of the contact person if you would like to receive future notifications related to this process. Public comments will become part of the public record and will be published in a Scoping Report on the CPUC website.

Please send your comments by mail to:

Boris Sanchez, CPUC
Ironwood Transmission Line Project; Attn. A. Surdzial
c/o ECORP Consulting, Inc.
215 North 5th Street, Redlands, CA 92374

or via electronic mail: CEQA@IronwoodTransmissionProject.com

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SCOPING MEETINGS

In order for the public and regulatory agencies to have an opportunity to submit comments on the scope of the EIR for the Project, virtual meetings will be held during the EIR scoping period. Information about the virtual meetings is included in the table below. For the first half hour of the meetings, CPUC will present information to clarify a) the CPUC's process for reviewing the application; b) the environmental review process; and c) details on how the public can become involved with each of these processes. Following the educational presentation, the CPUC will hold the official scoping meeting beginning with a brief presentation providing an overview of the Project and alternatives identified to date. Following this presentation, agencies and the public will have an opportunity to provide verbal comments to inform the scope of the environmental review. Written comments will be accepted throughout the NOP scoping period to the address and/or email provided above.

REMINDER: comments will be accepted by e-mail, or mail postmarked through September 21, 2026. Please include the name, organization or agency (if applicable), mailing address, and e-mail address of the contact person if you would like to receive future notifications related to this process. Note that comments become public record.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

Meeting Information	Virtual Meeting No. 1	Virtual Meeting No. 2
Day and Date	Thursday, August 27, 2026	Thursday, August 27, 2026
Time	3:00 p.m.	6:30 p.m.
Register to attend the meeting at this link	https://tinyurl.com/IronwoodTLscoping1	https://tinyurl.com/IronwoodTLscoping2