



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
ELDORADO–IVANPAH TRANSMISSION PROJECT
PROPOSED BY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON COMPANY
APPLICATION No. 09-05-027

To: All Interested Parties
From: Monisha Gangopadhyay, California Public Utilities Commission, EIR Project Manager
Subject: Notice of Availability, Final Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement for the Eldorado–Ivanpah Transmission Project
Date: November 5, 2010

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have prepared this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for consideration of the Application (No. 09-05-027) filed by Southern California Edison (SCE) for the proposed 230-kV Eldorado–Ivanpah Transmission Project (EITP). The Final EIR/EIS has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and incorporates changes resulting from comments submitted during the 45-day public comment period for the Draft EIR/EIS that was published April 30, 2010 which concluded on June 26, 2010. The original Application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the project was filed by SCE on May 28, 2009.

A. Description of the Proposed Project and Location

The EITP would upgrade approximately 35 miles of existing single-circuit 115-kV subtransmission line to double-circuit 230-kV transmission line between the Ivanpah Dry Lake area and the existing Eldorado Substation, construct a new substation (Ivanpah Substation), install upgrades within the existing Eldorado Substation, and install a redundant telecommunications path between the Ivanpah and Eldorado substations. The redundant telecommunications path would be strung along the existing 500-kV Eldorado–Lugo transmission line for approximately 25 miles before it would be installed in a new underground duct for approximately 5 miles along the northern edge of Nipton Road to a new microwave tower outside Nipton, California. The EITP would be located in Clark County, Nevada and San Bernardino County, California near Primm, Nevada.

B. Contents of the Final EIR

The Final EIR/EIS consists of two volumes completely reprinted from the Draft EIR/EIS. All appendices are available as a separate CD, Volume 3. Changes made to the Draft EIR/EIS are marked in Volumes 1 and 2; inserted text is underlined and deleted text is shown in ~~strike through~~. There were 15 comment letters received on the Draft EIR/EIS.

The Final EIR/EIS documents the evaluation of 19 alternatives, including the No Project/ No Action Alternative. Alternatives are described and screened for compliance with CEQA and NEPA in the Alternates Screening Report (ASR) in Appendix A, then summarized in the Final EIR/EIS in Section 2.3: Project Alternatives. Alternatives that meet the CEQA/NEPA criteria are analyzed along with the proposed project in 13 environmental issue areas in Chapter 3 of the EIR/EIS.

The EIR/EIS identifies feasible mitigation measures in each resource area analysis in Chapter 3 and in the Mitigation Monitoring Plan as defined in Section 9. These mitigation measures, if adopted, would avoid or minimize impacts of the proposed project and alternatives.

C. Changes Made to the Draft EIR/EIS

In response to comments on the Draft EIR/EIS, changes have been made to the project description. None of these changes led to an increase in the significance or severity of a CEQA or NEPA impact determination. Revised information is indicated below.

- **ISEGS Whole of the Action Description:** The ISEGS project description is now updated based on the recent CEC Final Decision and BLM FEIS and ROD. The ISEGS Mitigated Ivanpah 3 Alternative is now discussed in this document since this alternative replaced the original proposed project in the ISEGS CEQA and NEPA environmental review documents.
- **Clarifications on Grid Interconnection:** The ISEGS/EITP interconnection is now further described in response to comments and new information provided by the applicant.
- **Land Disturbance Values:** Corrections have been made to the land disturbance values presented for spur/access roads, helicopter staging areas and construction yards, undergrounding, and temporary disturbance from the 33-kV distribution line.
- **Microwave Site Listed in Project Description Summary:** The microwave communication site is now described as a telecommunication component in the project description summary. The microwave site was previously described and analyzed in the Draft EIR/EIS but had been left out of the summary.
- **Potential EITP Users Clarified:** Text is now included that clarifies that EITP may connect other sources of energy to the grid in the future and not just solar generation.
- **115-kV Subtransmission Line Clarification:** Text is now included that clarifies that a piece of the existing 115-kV transmission line from Mountain Pass will remain and will terminate at the Ivanpah Substation.
- **Underground Fiber-optic Cable Segment Lengths:** Adjustments have been made to the lengths (~2 miles in Nevada and 3 miles in California) reported for the fiber-optic cable segments.
- **Underground Alert Service:** Updated Underground Alert Service information is now provided for Nevada.
- **33-kV Distribution Circuitry Adjustments:**
 - The applicant revised the description of voltages of the EITP distribution lines (from 12-kV to 33-kV), and this information is now included in this document.
 - The lengths of new ducts and circuitry required are now updated (400 feet of new ducts, 1-mile segment of circuitry).
 - Underground/overhead line lengths are now updated: 5,200 feet underground and 5,900 feet overhead.

- **Access and Spur Roads Lengths Adjusted:** The applicant revised the description of the access roads and spur roads. The updated values are now incorporated: 1.7 miles of new spur roads (originally 1.2 miles) and 1.2 miles of new access roads.
- **Transformer banks at the Ivanpah Substation to reflect current CAISO recommendations:** The proposed Ivanpah Substation now includes two 280-MVA 230/115-kV transformer banks (originally three) and three 230-kV lines in the switchrack (originally five).
- **Transformer Installation:** The applicant now intends to install the transformers by truck (towing) instead of using cranes.
- **Helicopter staging areas:** The applicant revised the description of HS-1. The size of HS-1 has been adjusted from 3.6 to 5.0 acres.
- **Water usage:**
 - The applicant provided new information on water usage and water source:
 - Construction: water will be sourced from wells owned by Molycorp, Minerals, LLC.
 - Operations: no water will be used for routine line washing.
- **Erosion control:** An updated erosion-control description has been added.
- **SF₆ recovery procedures:** Additional information on SF₆ recovery procedures provided by the applicant has been added to the document.
- **Type of fuel to be used in emergency generator:** Additional information on fuels provided by the applicant has been added to the document.
- **Fuel truck use and spill containment procedures:** Additional information on fuel truck use provided by the applicant has been added to the document.
- **Area Transmission Lines:** Corrections to maps and references to transmission lines crossed by the proposed EITP route have been made.
- **Non-transmission Alternatives:** Expanded discussion of the in-basin generation and demand-side alternatives were included in response to public comments to the DEIR/EIS.

In two cases, new information provided by the applicant on the project after the publication of the DEIR/EIS led to a reduction in the significance or severity of an impact under CEQA and/or NEPA. These instances are described below.

IMPACT HYDRO-2: Lowering of Water Table of Interference with Aquifer Recharge.

IMPACT PUSVC-2: Project construction temporarily increases water use, and project operation contributes to increased long-term water consumption.

These impacts were determined to be significant in the DEIR/EIS. When the draft was published, the source of the water to be used for dust suppression during construction was unknown. The water supply in the proposed project area is limited, and therefore there was a possibility that the impact on groundwater supplies could be significant. After the DEIR/EIS was published, the applicant submitted information on water supply that included a designated source, wells owned by the Molycorp Mine. This information was incorporated into the hydrology and water quality

analysis and the public services and utilities analysis. The updated CEQA determination is less than significant with mitigation for both of these impacts. The potential for lowering local groundwater levels during project construction would be negligible, localized, and short term.

D. Significant Adverse Environmental Impacts from the Proposed Project

The Final EIR/EIS has identified significant and unavoidable adverse impacts on biological resources and air quality that would result from construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed project. Under NEPA, the proposed project would result in major, adverse and unavoidable impacts on aesthetics and visual resources for one of the eight KOPs analyzed; with mitigation, impacts on aesthetics and visual resources would be less than significant under CEQA. All other project impacts were determined to be less than significant, or can be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of the mitigations measures listed in the Final EIR/EIS. No portion of the EITP would be located on a hazardous materials site pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

E. Environmentally Superior Alternative

Alternative 1, the No Project / No Action Alternative, would be environmentally superior to the project on the basis of the minimization or avoidance of physical environmental impacts. However, this alternative would not meet the proposed project objectives. Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines states that "the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives." In terms of effects on the environment, it has been determined that the environmentally superior alternative is the proposed project as it would have less temporary and permanent land disturbance, less significant impacts on sensitive biological resources, and meet all of the project's objectives. The Whole of the Action, which includes the ISEGS project, does not impact this determination as the differences among EITP alternatives relate only to EITP and not to ISEGS. However, this alternative would still result in significant and unavoidable impacts to desert tortoise habitat and air quality, under CEQA. Taken together with ISEGS, this alternative would result in significant and unavoidable impacts on several sensitive plant species (biological resources) and visual resources. The two projects also contribute to significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts on land use.

F. CPUC Actions After Final EIR/EIS Publication

There is no further CEQA comment period following issuance of the Final EIR. The CPUC will determine the adequacy of this Final EIR and will issue a Proposed Decision as part of the formal proceeding evaluating the application for the proposed project. After a 30-day period, the CPUC will issue a Final Decision on the EITP application, which will be announced and published concurrent with a scheduled CPUC Meeting. The Final Decision is expected in December 2010. For further information on the CPUC's decision-making process, call the CPUC Public Advisor at (415) 703-2074.

If the CPUC approves the project or an alternative, the CPUC will implement a Mitigation Monitoring, Reporting, and Compliance Program as defined in Section 9 of this EIR/EIS. This program will ensure that the approved route is constructed as defined and that all adopted mitigation measures and Applicant-Proposed Measures are implemented such that effects on the environment do not exceed those defined in this EIR/EIS.

G. BLM Actions after Final EIR/EIS is Made Public

BLM will not issue a decision on the EITP ROW application until at least 30 days from the date of publication of the Notice of Availability of the Final EIS in the Federal Register. The BLM will decide whether to approve, approve with modification, or deny issuance of a ROW authorization to SCE for the proposed EITP.

H. Availability of Final EIR/EIS

Copies of the Final EIR/EIS have also been mailed to parties to the General Proceeding and Federal, State, and local government agencies that commented on the Draft EIR/EIS, as well as some members of the public. The document is available on the CPUC's project website at:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/ene/ivanpah/ivanpah.html> and at the repository sites listed below. EIR-related documents, including the Scoping Report, the Draft EIR/EIS, and this Final EIR/EIS are available at these public locations:

List of Repositories for EITP Documents

Agency	Address	Phone Number
DOI, Bureau of Land Management		
BLM Needles Field Office	1303 South Highway 95 Needles, CA 92363-4428	(760) 326-7000
County and City Public Libraries		
Las Vegas Library	833 Las Vegas Blvd. North Las Vegas, NV 89101	(702) 507-3500
Searchlight Library	200 Michael Wendell Way Searchlight, NV 89046	(702) 297-1442
Barstow Library	304 Buena Vista St. Barstow, CA 92311	(760) 256-4850

Copies of the Final EIR/EIS on CD may be requested by phone at (415) 981-2811, by email at ivanpah@ene.com, or by fax at (415) 981-0801. The CPUC also has a limited number of copies of the complete Final EIR/EIS document available to the public upon request at:

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