

1.0 Introduction

On March 13, 2015, Southern California Edison Company (SCE, or the applicant) filed an application (A.15-03-003) with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for a Permit to Construct (PTC) the Mesa 500-kilovolt (kV) Substation Project (Mesa Substation Project, or proposed project). The CPUC deemed the application complete on May 15, 2015.

The CPUC, as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to inform the CPUC's consideration of SCE's application and to inform the public, as well as other local, state, and federal agencies. This EIR evaluates potential environmental impacts expected to occur due to construction and operation of the proposed project. It also contains recommended mitigation measures that, should the CPUC adopt them, would reduce or avoid many significant environmental impacts. This EIR also contains potentially feasible project alternatives.

1.1 Overview of Proposed Project

1.1.1 Proposed Project Components

SCE's proposed project is described in the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) as follows:

- Construction of the new 500/220/66/16-kV Mesa Substation and demolition of the existing 220/66/16-kV substation, increasing the substation's footprint from about 22 acres to 69 acres.
- Replacement (removal and installation) and modification of transmission lines,¹ subtransmission lines,² and distribution structures to accommodate the new 500/220/66/16-kV Mesa Substation.
- New telecommunications lines and modifications to an existing line, mostly on existing poles and in existing ducts.
- Temporary modifications to 220-kV equipment at several existing substations to prevent electrical outages during construction.
- Relocation of an existing 72-inch water pipe that traverses the substation site.
- Electrical and/or telecommunications equipment upgrades at 27 existing substations.
- Undergrounding of three spans of overhead streetlight conductor.

¹ *Transmission lines* are designed to operate at or above 200 kV (CPUC 1995).

² For the purposes of this document, the term *subtransmission line* refers to a powerline designed to operate between 50 kV and 200 kV.

1.1.2 Proposed Project Location

Components of the proposed project would be located in several jurisdictions in Los Angeles County. Locations of the key proposed project components are identified in Table 1-1 and shown in Figure 2-1.

Table 1-1 Locations of the Key Proposed Project Components

Jurisdiction	Component(s)
Bell Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street light source line conversion
Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 220-kV structure replacement Staging Yard 5
Los Angeles County (Unincorporated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telecommunications Routes 1 and 3
Montebello	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 220-kV transmission lines 500-kV transmission lines Telecommunications Routes 1, 2, and 3 Staging Yards 2 and 3
Monterey Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16-kV distribution lines 66-kV subtransmission lines 220-kV transmission lines 500-kV transmission lines Telecommunications Routes 1 and 2 Staging Yards 1 and 3
Pasadena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary 220-kV structure installation Telecommunications rerouting Staging Yard 4
Rosemead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staging Yard 6
South El Monte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staging Yard 7

1.2 Project Objectives

1.2.1 SCE’s Objectives

SCE explained in their PEA that the objectives of the proposed project are:

1. Provide safe and reliable electrical service.
2. Address reliability concerns resulting from the recent retirement of the San Onofre Nuclear Generation Station (SONGS) and from Once-Through Cooling (OTC) shutdowns expected by December 31, 2020.
3. Allow greater flexibility in the siting of future generation projects to meet local reliability needs in the Western Los Angeles Basin while reducing the total amount of new generation required by providing additional transmission import capability.
4. Maintain or improve system reliability within the Electrical Needs Area (ENA).
5. Comply with all applicable reliability planning criteria required by North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC), and California Independent System Operator (CAISO).
6. Meet proposed project needs while minimizing environmental impacts.

- 1 7. Design and construct the proposed project in conformance with SCE’s approved
2 engineering, design, and construction standards for substation, transmission,
3 subtransmission, distribution, and telecommunications system projects.
4

5 **1.2.2 CPUC’s Project Objectives**
6

7 **1.2.2.1 CEQA Project Objectives**
8

9 The CPUC independently formulated three objectives of the proposed project.³ The CPUC relied
10 upon SCE’s stated objectives; project data, including additional data submitted by the applicant in
11 response to requests; and transmission planning standards. The CPUC also formulated the
12 objectives based on independent review of power flow data, reliability standards, and the proposed
13 project. The objectives identified by the CPUC are as follows:
14

- 15 1. Address anticipated violations of the NERC Standard TPL-001-04 (NERC 2015), WECC
16 Regional Business Practice TPL-001-WECC-RBP-2 (WECC 2011), and CAISO Planning
17 Standards that would occur upon retirement by December 31, 2020, of generators that use
18 OTC.
- 19 2. Avoid introduction of new violations of NERC, WECC, and CAISO standards.
- 20 3. Maintain electrical service by minimizing service interruptions during project
21 implementation.
22

23 **1.2.2.2 Consideration of SCE’s Objectives**
24

25 In developing the three basic project objectives set forth above, the CPUC considered SCE’s stated
26 objectives and formulated its own objectives under CEQA for purposes of developing a reasonable
27 range of alternatives (CEQA Guidelines §§ 15124(b), 15126.6(a)). The CPUC’s rationale for
28 incorporating, or not incorporating, SCE’s stated objectives is explained here:
29

- 30 • **SCE’s objectives: Provide safe and reliable electrical service. Maintain or improve**
31 **system reliability within the ENA. Comply with all applicable reliability planning**
32 **criteria required by NERC, WECC, and CAISO.** CPUC incorporated these goals into CPUC
33 Objectives 1 and 2. Addressing anticipated violations of reliability criteria as well as
34 avoiding creation of new violations of reliability criteria is directly related to the provision
35 of safe and reliable electrical service, maintenance or improvement of system reliability in
36 the ENA, and compliance with reliability planning criteria. Objectives 1 and 2 are specific
37 enough to aid CPUC in defining a reasonable range of alternatives to evaluate in the EIR
38 (CEQA Guidelines §§ 15124(b), 15126.6(a)).
- 39 • **SCE’s objective: Address reliability concerns resulting from the recent retirement of**
40 **the SONGS and from OTC shutdowns expected by December 31, 2020.** After careful
41 review, including consideration of SCE’s responses to requests for additional information

³ As stated in *In re Bay-Delta etc.* (2008) 43 Cal.4th 1143, 1163, “The process of selecting the alternatives to be included in the EIR begins with the establishment of project objectives *by the lead agency*. ‘A clearly written statement of objectives will help the lead agency develop a reasonable range of alternatives to evaluate in the EIR and will aid the decision makers in preparing findings The statement of objectives should include the underlying purpose of the project’” (emphasis added, quoting CEQA Guidelines section 15124(b)).

1 (SCE 2015), CPUC incorporated only the OTC shutdown portion of this objective into its
2 Objective 1. SCE stated that “[i]f no OTC units retire between [September 2015] and
3 [December 31, 2020], it is unlikely the [p]roposed [p]roject would be necessary to maintain
4 reliability and serve 2020 peak load” (SCE 2015). The proposed project, if implemented,
5 would address reliability concerns resulting from OTC retirement and not from SONGS
6 retirement.

- 7 • **SCE’s objective: Allow greater flexibility in the siting of future generation projects to**
8 **meet local reliability needs in the Western Los Angeles Basin while reducing the total**
9 **amount of new generation required by providing additional transmission import**
10 **capability.** CPUC crafted problem-focused objectives to address specific contingencies⁴ that
11 would cause violations of reliability criteria (CEQA Guidelines § 15124(b)). This allows
12 CPUC to consider alternatives that would address the specific violations the proposed
13 project is meant to address, which are listed in Appendix B.
- 14 • **SCE’s objective: Meet proposed project needs while minimizing environmental**
15 **impacts.** CPUC, through fulfilling CEQA requirements, is ensuring minimization of
16 environmental impacts; alternatives considered must meet basic project objectives. CPUC
17 therefore did not find it necessary to incorporate this objective into the CPUC objectives.
- 18 • **SCE’s objective: Design and construct the proposed project in conformance with SCE’s**
19 **approved engineering, design, and construction standards for substation,**
20 **transmission, subtransmission, distribution, and telecommunications system**
21 **projects.** CPUC decided not to incorporate this SCE objective into the CPUC objectives
22 because it does not speak to the underlying purpose of the project.
23

24 1.2.3 Consideration of the CAISO Transmission Planning Process

25
26 Another factor in CPUC’s development of project objectives is the CAISO Transmission Planning
27 Process. CAISO manages about 80 percent of California’s bulk transmission system by dispatching
28 power to meet demand through the electric grid. Every year, CAISO undertakes a transmission
29 planning process to identify transmission projects that are needed to address reliability, cost, and
30 infrastructure needs. The planning process takes into account numerous scenarios (e.g., wildfires,
31 peak demand) as well as projected growth in demand. In its 2013–2014 Transmission Plan, CAISO
32 identified several loading concerns. These were caused by OTC generation retirement in concert
33 with SONGS retirement. CAISO recommended implementing the Mesa Substation Project in its
34 2013–2014 Transmission Plan as part of a group of projects that would address these concerns
35 (CAISO 2013).
36

37 The CPUC has considered CAISO’s recommendation in formulating its project objectives. However
38 CAISO’s recommendation of the Mesa Substation Project does not replace the CPUC’s independent
39 analysis in the CEQA document for the proposed project, nor does it affect the range of alternatives
40 the CPUC must consider in this EIR. Per CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(a), an EIR must “describe
41 a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would
42 feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any
43 of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.”
44

⁴ NERC defines a contingency as “[t]he unexpected failure or outage of a system component, such as a generator, transmission line, circuit breaker, switch or other electrical element” (NERC 2016).

1 **1.2.4 Detailed Description of CPUC Project Objectives**
2

3 The CPUC objectives are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.
4

5 **1.2.4.1 Project Objective 1: Address projected violations of NERC Standard TPL-001-04, WECC
6 Regional Business Practice TPL-001-WECC-RBP-2, and CAISO Planning Standards that
7 would occur upon retirement by December 31, 2020, of generators that use OTC.**
8

9 Operation of the proposed project would serve the Western Los Angeles Basin ENA in southern Los
10 Angeles County and northern Orange County (Figure 1-1), where most of SCE’s load is located. The
11 ENA is also a Local Reliability Area. A Local Reliability Area is an area where there is constrained
12 ability to import power from elsewhere.
13

14 **Reliability Standards and Transmission Planning**

15 SCE must comply with NERC standards, WECC regional business practices, and CAISO planning
16 standards. Table 1-2 briefly summarizes the planning standards that SCE cited in its PEA with
17 which the proposed project would allow compliance.
18

Table 1-2 Planning Standards Relevant to the Proposed Project

Planning Standard	Description
NERC Standard TPL-001-04 ⁽¹⁾	NERC standards provide criteria for system performance requirements that must be met under a varied but specific set of operating conditions. TPL-001-04 sets performance requirements for bulk electric systems. It outlines a set of planning scenarios that must be evaluated and planned for in transmission systems, including single outages (N-1) and multiple outages (N-1-1, or N-2) of infrastructure such as transmission lines, substations, and generators.
WECC Regional Business Practice TPL-001-WECC-RBP-2	WECC is one of the eight regional electric reliability councils under NERC. WECC standards are based on and in compliance with NERC transmission planning standards (WECC 2014). The WECC TPL system performance criteria sets forth additional requirements that must be met under a varied but specific set of operating conditions. WECC TPL-001-WECC-RBP-2 sets standards related to voltage stability for normal conditions, single contingencies, and multiple contingencies.
CAISO Planning Standards	CAISO Planning Standards specify the grid planning criteria to be used in the planning of CAISO transmission facilities. CAISO standards are based on and in compliance with NERC transmission planning standards (CAISO 2015). CAISO Planning Standards outline normal and emergency voltage requirements and also outline when load shedding is allowed in high-density urban areas.

Note:
(1) Note that while Southern California Edison Company cited NERC Standards TPL-001-3, TPL-002-2b, TPL-003-2b, and TPL-004-2a in its Preliminary Environmental Assessment, the standards were superseded in 2015 by TPL-001-04.

Key:
CAISO California Independent System Operator
NERC North American Electric Reliability Corporation
TPL Transmission Planning
WECC Western Electricity Coordinating Council

19 **Retirement of Once-Through Cooling Units**
20

21 By December 31, 2020, it is expected that approximately 4,250 megawatts of electric generation in
22 the Western Los Angeles Basin will be retired to comply with the State Water Resources Control
23 Board OTC policy, which aims to eliminate as much as possible coastal or estuarine water usage for

1 cooling.⁵ Some units will be retrofitted to use air cooling or otherwise modified to comply with the
2 order. However, a substantial number of OTC units are slated to be retired. OTC generation
3 shutdown would stress the existing transmission system and impact its ability to provide reliable
4 electric service beginning January 1, 2021 (CAISO 2014) under peak load conditions.⁶ OTC units are
5 important to reliability in the Los Angeles Basin because:

6
7 *Much of the energy produced by these units is needed to meet local reliability requirements, as*
8 *well as provide inertia[7] to maintain adequate levels of import capability into Southern*
9 *California.[...] When these units are needed to meet local spinning reserve requirements, they*
10 *must be turned on and operated at minimum set points around the clock to be available and*
11 *increase output as needed during the day. New generation construction outside the Los*
12 *Angeles Basin would contribute to Southern California's need for adequate inertia but could*
13 *not provide local reliability services (CEC 2010).*

14
15 The CPUC has therefore determined that one objective of the proposed project is to address the
16 violations of planning criteria that would result from OTC retirement. Specific reliability impacts of
17 OTC retirement are discussed below under “Reliability Standards and Transmission Planning.”

18 19 **Retirement of San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station**

20 The Mesa Substation Project is ultimately meant to address reliability concerns that would likely
21 occur only after OTC unit retirement (December 31, 2020), although SCE's objectives from the PEA
22 state that the proposed project is meant to address reliability concerns from SONGS and OTC
23 retirement. Although SONGS' retirement resulted in reliability concerns,⁸ SCE has since stated that
24 the Mesa Substation Project would likely not be necessary to maintain reliability unless OTC units
25 are also retired by the end of 2020 (SCE 2015). The CPUC therefore focused on crafting objectives
26 related to impending retirement of OTC units to address reliability concerns and then used the
27 objectives to evaluate alternatives that would address those concerns.
28

⁵ State Water Resources Control Board Resolution No. 2013-0018.

⁶ A 1-in-10-year peak demand is the demand that occurs during a heat event of the magnitude expected to occur once every 10 years. Such a peak would occur for a few hours on a weekday for a period of less than a week, every 10 years.

⁷ “The rotation of generation turbines in Southern California produces *inertia*, necessary to stabilize the transmission grid and allow energy to be imported into the region. The OTC units are primarily steam turbines, which provide more inertia per megawatt of capacity than combined-cycles or other generation technologies” (CEC 2010).

⁸ “San Onofre represented approximately 16% of the local electricity generation supply, serving an average of 1.4 million homes served by SCE, San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) and City of Riverside in southern California. In addition to meeting essential energy needs, it was especially important because of its location on a critical transmission path between Orange County and San Diego. As a result, its closure creates more than a shortage of electricity. It also creates a shortage of voltage support—an electrical characteristic analogous to water pressure that is necessary to move power between Los Angeles and southern Orange County/San Diego.

“Complicating the challenge of replacing resources that came from San Onofre is the nature of voltage support, which can only be supplied by conventional generation, combined heat and power, or specialized equipment such as synchronous condensers that operate like large electrical motors” (CEC 2010).

1 **Violation of Planning Criteria**

2 After OTC retirement, under peak load conditions, several violations of the previously described
3 planning criteria would occur. SCE identified all contingencies resulting in violations that the Mesa
4 Substation Project would address. The list of violations is provided in Appendix B. Examples of
5 violations include:

- 6
- 7 • Outage of the Lewis–Serrano No. 1 230-kV Transmission Line followed by an outage of the
8 Serrano–Villa Park No. 2 230-kV Transmission Line, which causes a thermal overload on the
9 Serrano–Villa Park No. 2 230-kV Transmission Line.
- 10 • Outage of the Lewis–Serrano No. 2 230-kV Transmission Line followed by an outage of the
11 Serrano–Villa Park No. 1 230-kV Transmission Line, which causes a thermal overload on the
12 Serrano–Villa Park No. 2 230-kV Transmission Line.
- 13

14 Thermal overloads indicate that there is insufficient capacity on transmission lines to import
15 energy to meet demand after OTC retirement because the Serrano Corridor would be used to
16 import energy from the east through the Serrano Substation. Prior to OTC retirement, generators to
17 the west of the ENA have provided a substantial amount of energy. After OTC retirement, more
18 energy would need to be imported through the Serrano Corridor, but it would have insufficient
19 capacity. The CPUC has therefore determined that an objective of the proposed project is to address
20 reliability concerns related to OTC retirement, which include specific violations of planning
21 standards, as provided by SCE.

22

23 **1.2.4.2 Project Objective 2: Avoid introduction of new violations of NERC, WECC, and CAISO**
24 **standards.**

25

26 Without implementation of the proposed project, OTC retirement would result in violation of NERC,
27 WECC, and CAISO standards. It is plausible that a project that solves the violations listed in
28 Appendix B would create new violations of NERC, WECC, and CAISO standards. For example, a
29 violation may occur when a transmission line is overloaded between two substations. That
30 transmission line segment could be upgraded to increase its capacity; however, the overload may
31 then occur on a different transmission segment.⁹ Therefore, one of the CPUC-defined objectives of
32 the proposed project is to avoid introduction of new violations of NERC, WECC, and CAISO
33 reliability.

34

35 **1.2.4.3 Project Objective 3: Maintain electrical service by minimizing service interruptions during**
36 **project implementation.**

37

38 The Western Los Angeles Basin ENA includes numerous substations serving many customers,
39 including:

- 40
- 41 • **Northwest Los Angeles Basin Sub-area:** El Segundo, Chevmain, El Nido, La Cienega, La
42 Fresa, Redondo, Hinson, Arcogen, Harborgen, Long Beach, Lighthipe, and Laguna Bell.
- 43 • **Western Central Los Angeles Basin Sub-area:** Center, Del Amo, Mesa, Rio Hondo, Walnut,
44 and Olinda.

⁹ This scenario is analogous to a garden hose. If a garden hose has insufficient capacity to carry water, making only one segment of the garden hose larger in diameter would still result in capacity issues in the narrower sections of the garden hose.

- **Southwest Los Angeles Basin Sub-area:** Alamitos, Barre, Lewis, Villa Park, Ellis, Huntington Beach, Johanna, Santiago, and Viejo.

The region is also in the Los Angeles—Long Beach—Anaheim high-density urban load areas. In these areas, CAISO standards do not allow for load shedding (i.e., turning off power) due to the potential for “high impacts to the community from hospitals and elevators to traffic lights and potential crime” (CAISO 2015). Interruption of power for construction of a project would be undesirable in an area with a large number of customers. Thus, an objective of the proposed project is to maintain electrical service by minimizing service interruptions during construction of a project.

1.3 CEQA Environmental Review and Intended Uses of This EIR

1.3.1 CEQA Environmental Review Process

1.3.1.1 Overview

This EIR is meant to fulfill the requirements of CEQA, as contained in Public Resources Code section 21000 *et seq.*, as well as the Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA, as amended, contained in California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 *et seq.* It is also prepared in compliance with CPUC Rules of Practice and Procedure, Rule 2.4, CEQA Compliance.

The CPUC is the lead agency for CEQA compliance in evaluation of the proposed project. As the CEQA lead agency, the CPUC determined that an EIR was appropriate because the project may have a significant effect on the environment. The purpose of the EIR is to ensure informed decision making and identify ways to avoid or reduce environmental impacts through feasible mitigation measures and/or project alternatives, and to provide public disclosure. The CPUC has prepared this Draft EIR for the purpose of examining the direct and indirect environmental impacts associated with the proposed project, feasible mitigation measures, and alternatives that would reduce or avoid the proposed project’s significant effects, prior to making a discretionary decision on the PTC application. This Draft EIR does not make a recommendation regarding the approval or denial of the project. The CPUC cannot approve a project before the CEQA review is complete.

The EIR process contains several steps, including several opportunities for public involvement:

- Public scoping
- Preparation of a Draft EIR for public comment
- Preparation of a Final EIR, including responses to significant environmental issues raised during the public comment period
- Certification of the EIR
- Consideration of the project by the CPUC
- Adoption of findings regarding any significant impacts
- Adoption of a Statement of Overriding Considerations for any significant and unavoidable impacts (if the proposed project is approved)

1 **1.3.1.2 Scoping**
2

3 The scoping process allows the lead agency to receive input from agencies, tribes, organizations,
4 and individuals on the scope, content, and focus of the EIR, including alternatives, environmental
5 resources, and mitigation measures. A scoping report detailing outreach efforts as well as public
6 comments is included in Appendix A.
7

8 On June 5, 2015, the CPUC initiated public scoping by publishing and distributing the Notice of
9 Preparation (NOP) to the State Clearinghouse, responsible and trustee agencies, and other
10 interested parties to notify them that an EIR would be prepared for the proposed project. The NOP
11 was distributed to 167 representatives of federal, state, regional, and local agencies, planning
12 groups, and institutions. The NOP was also sent to eight tribal representatives. Additionally, the
13 NOP was distributed to more than 4,770 individuals, including property owners within 500 feet of
14 the existing and proposed right-of-way and substations and within 1,500 feet of proposed
15 disturbance areas associated with work at the Mesa Substation. The CPUC placed notices
16 announcing the public scoping meetings and the release of the NOP in the *San Gabriel Valley*
17 *Tribune* and the *Pasadena Star-News*.
18

19 The CPUC held a public scoping meeting on Tuesday, June 23, 2015, at the Langley Senior Center,
20 located in Monterey Park, California. Four members of the public attended and signed in for the
21 meeting; one oral comment from a member of the public was received. The CPUC received four
22 written comment letters from government agencies, one comment letter from a tribal
23 representative, and five comment letters from members of the public. The comments received
24 pertaining to environmental impacts include comments on:
25

- 26 • Project alternatives, including the No Project Alternative
- 27 • Potential aesthetic impacts from construction and operation of the new substation
- 28 • Analysis and mitigation of potentially significant air quality impacts
- 29 • Potential impacts to sensitive species
- 30 • Cultural resources monitoring during construction
- 31 • Coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regarding an adjacent
32 Superfund site
- 33 • Relocation of a Metropolitan Water District water pipeline
- 34 • Potential conflict with Monterey Park land use regulations
- 35 • Potentially significant traffic impacts, including impacts to California Department of
36 Transportation infrastructure
37

38 Some comments received do not pertain to environmental impacts and will not be considered in the
39 EIR. These topics include:
40

- 41 • Impacts to property values
- 42 • Whether SCE's application should be for a PTC or a certificate of public convenience and
43 necessity

1 The Scoping Report in Appendix A of this EIR summarizes all comments received and includes
2 copies of comment letters.

3
4 **1.3.1.3 Draft EIR and Public Comment**

5
6 The Draft EIR is being circulated to local, regional, and state agencies and interested individuals
7 who may wish to review and comment on it. Written comments may be submitted to the CPUC
8 during the 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR at the address below:
9

Mail:	Lisa Orsaba	Email:	Mesa.CPUC@ene.com
	California Public Utilities Commission	Fax:	(415) 398-5326
	RE: Mesa 500-kV Substation Project		
	c/o Ecology and Environment, Inc.		
	505 Sansome Street, Suite #300		
	San Francisco, CA 94111		

10 **1.3.1.4 Final EIR**

11
12 All comments on the Draft EIR will be addressed in writing in a Responses to Comments document
13 that, together with the Draft EIR and any revisions to the Draft EIR, will constitute the Final EIR.
14 The CPUC and other state, regional, and local agencies will rely on the information presented in the
15 Final EIR to inform decision-making regarding the issuance of permits related to construction and
16 operation of the proposed project, as described in Section 1.3.2, “Agency Roles and Intended Uses of
17 This EIR.”
18

19 **1.3.2 Agency Roles and Intended Uses of This EIR**

20
21 Section 15124(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR contain a statement briefly
22 describing the intended uses of the EIR. The CEQA Guidelines indicate that the EIR should identify
23 the ways in which the Lead Agency and any responsible agencies would use this document in their
24 approval or permitting processes. The following discussion summarizes the roles of the agencies
25 and the intended uses of the Draft EIR.
26

27 **1.3.2.1 California Public Utilities Commission**

28
29 The CPUC regulates investor-owned public utilities, including SCE, pursuant to Article XII of the
30 California Constitution. The CPUC is the lead agency for CEQA review of the proposed project and
31 must determine through the CEQA process whether the proposed project would result in significant
32 environmental impacts and whether those impacts can be avoided or reduced. The EIR will be used
33 by the CPUC with other information in the CPUC’s formal record to act on SCE’s application for a
34 PTC to construct and operate the proposed project. The CPUC has exclusive authority to issue or
35 deny the PTC; however, SCE may also need permits from other agencies to build the proposed
36 project.
37

38 Per CEQA, the CPUC will consider the Final EIR and, if adequate, will certify the document as
39 complying with CEQA. If the CPUC approves a project with significant environmental impacts that
40 cannot be mitigated to less than significant levels, it must make certain specific findings, and it must
41 adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations explaining why the project’s benefits outweigh its
42 environmental impacts, which would be included in the CPUC’s decision on the application.

1
2 **1.3.2.2 State and Regional Agencies**
3

4 In addition to the CPUC, other state and regional agencies—such as the California Department of
5 Transportation, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, South Coast Air Quality Management
6 District, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and State Office of Historic
7 Preservation—may be involved in reviewing and/or permitting the proposed project. These
8 agencies may rely on the information presented in the Final EIR to inform their decision regarding
9 the issuance of permits related to construction or operation of the proposed project.

10
11 **1.3.2.3 Local Agencies**
12

13 The CPUC's General Order 131-D, section XIV.B, states that public utilities shall consult with local
14 agencies regarding land use matters. The CPUC expects SCE to work collaboratively to address local
15 agencies' concerns. SCE would need to obtain all ministerial building and encroachment permits
16 from local jurisdictions. SCE is not required to obtain local discretionary permits because the
17 CPUC's jurisdiction over SCE preempts local jurisdiction. Article XII, Section 8 of the California
18 Constitution states that "[a] city, county, or other public body may not regulate matters over which
19 the Legislature grants regulatory power to the [CPUC]. Thus under the Constitution, as to matters
20 over which the [C]PUC has been granted regulatory power, the [C]PUC's jurisdiction is exclusive." ¹⁰
21

22 **1.3.2.4 Special Districts and Federal Agencies**
23

24 The CPUC's authority does not preempt special districts, such as air quality management districts,
25 other state agencies, or the federal government. Federal agencies with potential permitting or
26 review authority over the proposed project include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish
27 and Wildlife Service. While this EIR may be informative to federal agencies, federal agencies would
28 ultimately rely on a document prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act to make
29 decisions about permits or other federal actions necessary to implement the proposed project.

30
31 The applicant would obtain permits, approvals, and licenses as needed and would participate in
32 reviews and consultations as needed with federal, state, and local agencies (Section 2.7, "Permitting
33 and Consultation Requirements").
34

35 **1.4 Organization of the EIR**
36

37 This EIR is organized as follows:
38

39 **Executive Summary.** Presents a summary of the proposed project, environmental impacts, and
40 mitigation measures identified to reduce or eliminate significant impacts. The Executive Summary
41 also presents a summary of alternatives to the proposed project.
42

43 **Chapter 1: Introduction.** Provides a discussion of the background and objectives of the proposed
44 project. A summary of the public scoping process, other public agencies, and other planned uses of
45 the EIR are explained.
46

¹⁰ *Southern California Gas Co. v. City of Vernon* 41 Cal. App. 4th 209, 215 (1995) (internal quotation marks omitted).

1 **Chapter 2: Project Description.** Provides a detailed description of the proposed project, lists
2 Applicant Proposed Measures that are incorporated into the design of the proposed project to
3 minimize environmental impacts, and provides a summary of permits and consultations that may
4 be required.

5
6 **Chapter 3: Description of Alternatives.** Summarizes the alternatives evaluation process and
7 provides a description of the alternatives considered in this EIR.

8
9 **Chapter 4: Environmental Analysis.** Provides a comprehensive analysis and assessment of
10 environmental impacts and mitigation measures for the proposed project. This chapter is divided
11 into sections based on the resource areas identified in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G (e.g., Aesthetics,
12 Air Quality, and Biological Resources). The environmental and regulatory settings for each section
13 describe the environmental baseline conditions at the time the NOP for the proposed project's EIR
14 was circulated (June 5, 2015).

15
16 **Chapter 5: Comparison of Alternatives.** Compares the alternatives with the proposed project,
17 including a comparison of major characteristics and significant environmental effects, and identifies
18 the CEQA environmentally superior alternative.

19
20 **Chapter 6: Cumulative Analysis and Other CEQA Considerations.** Identifies and evaluates past,
21 present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects within the cumulative study area that may be
22 constructed or commence operation during the timeframe of activity associated with the proposed
23 project. The purpose of the cumulative impacts analysis is to identify impacts from the proposed
24 project that might not be significant when considered alone but may contribute to significant
25 impacts when considered in conjunction with impacts from past, present, and reasonably
26 foreseeable future projects. This section also provides a discussion of growth-inducing impacts,
27 mandatory findings of significance, significant irreversible environmental changes, and significant
28 and unavoidable environment effects.

29
30 **Chapter 7: List of Preparers, Agencies, and Persons Contacted.** Identifies the primary authors of
31 this EIR and provides a list of agencies and persons consulted during the preparation of this report.

32
33 **Chapter 8: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan.** A single Mitigation Monitoring and
34 Reporting Plan (MMRP) will be prepared for publication in the Final EIR. The MMRP will reflect any
35 changes the CPUC may make to the alternatives and mitigation measures in consideration of public
36 comments on the Draft EIR.

37
38 **Chapter 9: References.** Provides a list of references used throughout the document and organized
39 by section.

40
41 **Appendices:** Air quality and greenhouse gas data, biological surveys, additional project design
42 information, and other technical reports for the proposed project are also included as appendices.
43 For a complete list of appendices, refer to the Table of Contents for this EIR.