# Executive Summary

## Introduction and Project Overview

Southern California Edison Company (SCE or the applicant) provides electrical service to more than 14 million customers throughout southern California. The applicant's Santa Barbara County South Coast area (Electrical Needs Area [ENA]) is primarily served by the Goleta-Santa Clara No. 1 220-kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line and Goleta-Santa Clara No. 2 220-kV Transmission Line. Additionally, three 66-kV subtransmission systems serve as a back-up source to the aforementioned 220-kV transmission lines. In the event that the 220-kV transmission lines would be out of service, the 66-kV subtransmission systems would not provide safe and reliable electrical service to the ENA. The applicant is requesting to reinforce two of the three 66-kV subtransmission line to better support the existing 220-kV transmission lines.

The applicant filed an application (A.12-10-018) and Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) for a Permit to Construct (PTC) with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on October 26, 2012 to construct the Santa Barbara County Reliability Project (the proposed project). The application was deemed complete on March 4, 2013.

In 1999, SCE commenced construction in the project area on Segments 1, 2, and 3A and several surrounding substations without notifying or obtaining a permit from the CPUC. Additionally, SCE did not obtain any permit from the County of Santa Barbara as Segment 3A is located within the County of Santa Barbara's coastal zone. A description of the unpermitted work that occurred along Segments 1, 2, and 3A and several surrounding substations is provided in Chapter 6, "Cumulative Impacts and Other CEQA Considerations." For reasons further discussed in Chapter 1, "Introduction," the past work along Segment3A is also described in Chapter 7, "Environmental Impacts of the Past Work Along Segment 3A." Past work along Segments 1 and 2 are also described in Chapter 8, "Environmental Impacts of the Past Work Along Segments 1 and 2."

## Description of the Proposed Project

The following activities are major components of the proposed project:

- Reconstruction of existing 66-kV subtransmission facilities, primarily those located within the current utility right-of-ways (ROWs);
- Modification of subtransmission and substation equipment within the Carpinteria Substation, Casitas Substation, and Santa Clara Substation;
- Replacement of line protection relays within existing substation equipment rooms or cabinets at the Getty Substation, Goleta Substation, Ortega Substation, and Santa Barbara Substation;
- Installation of telecommunications facilities;
- Installation of a fault return conductor on subtransmission structures; and
- Removal of subtransmission infrastructure foundations.
- A complete description of the proposed project and associated figures are provided in Chapter 2, "Project Description."

### Objectives of the Proposed Project

The CPUC developed objectives of the proposed project include:

1. Provide long-term reliability and continuity of service to the Electrical Needs Area.
2. Enhance operational flexibility by providing the ability to transfer the electric load between local substations and remove existing 220 kV or 66 kV lines from service when needed for maintenance purposes.
3. Increase energy efficiency of the 66-kV subtransmission line.

A complete discussion of the objectives of the proposed project is provided in Chapter 1, "Introduction."

### Approach to Environmental Review

As lead agency, the CPUC must determine through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process whether the proposed project would result in significant impacts to the environment, and whether those impacts could be avoided, eliminated, compensated for, or reduce to less than significant levels. This EIR will become part of a body of evidence that the CPUC will use in deciding whether to approve SCE's application.

~~The CPUC is seeking public comments on this Draft EIR. The CPUC will respond to comments on the Draft EIR, conduct additional analysis as necessary, and modify mitigation measures as appropriate.~~ If the CPUC approves the project, CPUC staff would closely monitor the applicant's compliance with the requirements imposed by the mitigation measures.

### Less than Significant Impacts (Including Significant Impacts that Can Be Mitigated)

The EIR addresses all potentially significant environmental impacts identified during the public scoping. The evaluation of potential project impacts resulted in the determination that the following environmental impacts would be less than significant with or without mitigation (Chapter 4, "Environmental Analysis")

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Utilities
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic

The mitigation measures identified to reduce significant impacts to less than significant levels are discussed in ~~Chapter 9, "Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan"~~ Chapter 10, "Mitigation Monitoring Plan."

**Alternatives**

Alternatives to the proposed project have been identified and evaluated in accordance with CEQA Guidelines. CEQA Guidelines (§15126.6[a]) state:

> *An EIR shall describe a reasonable range of alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.*

CEQA Guidelines (§15364) define feasibility as:

> *….capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.*

Alternatives to the proposed project were suggested during the scoping period by the public and government agencies after the applicant submitted its application to the CPUC. Some of the alternatives reviewed in this report were presented in the PEA and others were identified by the CPUC Energy Division as a result of the agency's independent review. In total, three alternatives were identified, including reduced scope and undergrounding alternatives (Appendix H, "Screening Report").

The alternatives were evaluated based on a screening process that considered the following criteria: meet the basic objectives of the project, lessens significant impacts, is feasible, and represents a reasonable range of alternatives. Alternatives were eliminated from consideration if they failed to meet these criteria. Two alternatives were retained for further consideration in the EIR and are discussed further in Chapter 3, "Description of Alternatives" and Chapter 5, "Consideration of Alternatives":

1. Alternative A - Reduce the Scope of Work Along Segments 1 and 2;
2. Alternative B - Install Some Structures Along Segment 4 via Helicopter; and
3. No Project Alternative.

**Cumulative Impacts and Other CEQA Considerations**

The CEQA Guidelines require that potential cumulative impacts be assessed by developing either a list of past, present, and probable future projects that would produce related or cumulative effects in combination with the proposed project or a summary of projections contained in adopted general plans or related planning documents. The discussion of cumulative impacts presented in Chapter 6, "Cumulative Impacts and Other CEQA Considerations," of this EIR describes the potential cumulative impacts for each resource area addressed in Chapter 4, "Environmental Analysis." An analysis of whether the proposed project would result in growth-inducing impacts or significant and irreversible environmental changes is also presented in Chapter 6.

### Environmental Impacts of the Past Work along Segment 3A

Chapter 7, "Environmental Impacts of the Past Work along Segment 3A," analyzes the environmental impacts that resulted from the past work within the Coastal Zone (Segment 3A) to identify any long-term significant impacts, e.g., visual impacts. Significant long-term impacts to aesthetics and~~,~~ land use ~~, and geology~~ were identified based on information that was compiled from the PEA, the applicant's responses to data requests, previous field investigations conducted by the applicant, and estimates based on available GIS data.

The analysis also includes project options that would modify the design of the proposed project along Segment 3A in order to reduce long-term significant impacts. Similar to alternatives to the proposed project, project options were identified by the applicant, the public, and the CPUC and screened in the Screening Report (Appendix H). The environmental impacts of four options were also analyzed in Chapter 7. The analyses provided in Chapter 7 will be used by the County of Santa Barbara in order to issue a retroactive Coastal Development Permit.

### Major Conclusions of the Final~~Draft~~ EIR

The Draft EIR resulted in the following major conclusions:

- **Significant Air Quality Impact.** One significant and unavoidable adverse environmental impact has been identified. Construction of the proposed project would result in a significant and unavoidable adverse environmental impact related to air quality as described in Section 4.3, "Air Quality."

- **Environmentally Superior Alternative.** Among the alternatives considered in this EIR, it was determined that the proposed project would be the environmentally superior alternative.

### Draft Mitigation Monitoring Plan

A Draft Mitigation Monitoring Plan for the proposed project is presented in Chapter 10, "Mitigation Monitoring ~~and Reporting~~ Plan," of this EIR. A final Mitigation Monitoring Plan will be prepared for the Final EIR that incorporates any changes to the proposed project or mitigation measures that are made as a result of public review of the Draft EIR and further consideration of the proposed project by the CPUC. A Mitigation, Monitoring, Reporting, and Compliance Program will then be prepared if the CPUC approves the project.