



CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON'S CAL CITY SUBSTATION 115 kV UPGRADE PROJECT

Scoping Report

January 2024



A.23-03-005

State Clearinghouse No. 2023110218

Prepared for:
California Public Utilities Commission

Prepared by:
Environmental Science Associates





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SCOPING REPORT

Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project

1. Introduction

In its California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) application (A.23-03-005), filed on March 14, 2023, Southern California Edison Company (SCE) requests a Permit to Construct (PTC) the Cal City Substation 115 kilovolt (kV) Upgrade Project (Project). The CPUC is serving as the lead agency for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. Based on its review of the application and the Proponent’s Environmental Assessment (PEA), the CPUC is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate potential effects of the Project, pursuant to CEQA.

The CPUC issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR for the Project on November 8, 2023, which initiated agency consultation about the scope and content of information to be analyzed in the EIR (a process called “scoping”) and invited early public input about potential environmental concerns (Pub. Res. Code § 21080.4(a); CEQA Guidelines §§ 15082(b), 15083). CEQA Guidelines Section 15083 provides that a “Lead Agency may...consult directly with any person...it believes will be concerned with the environmental effects of the project.” Section 15083(a) states that scoping can be “helpful to agencies in identifying the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects to be analyzed in depth in an EIR and in eliminating from detailed study issues found not to be important.” Scoping is an effective way to bring together and consider the concerns of affected State, regional, and local agencies, the project proponent, and other interested persons (CEQA Guidelines § 15083(b)).

This scoping report provides an overview and summary of the written and oral comments provided by agencies and individuals during the 30-day scoping period, which commenced November 8, 2023, and closed on December 8, 2023. The CPUC will use this scoping report to inform the preparation of a comprehensive EIR tailored to agency and community concerns. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, all public comments within the scope of CEQA will be considered in the EIR process.¹

¹ Comments not within the scope of CEQA will not be addressed through the CEQA process.

2. Description of the Project

2.1 Project Summary

As proposed by SCE, the Project would include expansion of the existing 5-acre Cal City Substation by approximately 10 acres to upgrade the substation from 33/12 kV to 115/33 kV and 115/12 kV. Fourteen new underground 12 kV distribution getaways and two new underground 33 kV distribution getaways from Cal City Substation are proposed. The Project would also include construction of two new 115 kV subtransmission lines, a 42-mile overhead line from Kramer Substation to Cal City Substation, and a new overhead 28-mile line from Cal City Substation to Holgate Switchyard with a tap line to serve Edwards Substation located on Edwards Air Force Base. The proposed new 115 kV subtransmission lines would be installed with telecommunication cables and telecommunication improvements would also be installed at the existing Holgate Switchyard and Cal City, Kramer, and Edwards substations. The Project would require electrical infrastructure improvements to accommodate the new 115 kV lines within the existing fence lines at Edwards Substation, Holgate Switchyard, and Kramer Substation.

The Project would also include the transfer of several miles of distribution lines onto the proposed new subtransmission line structures, including: the transfer of a total of approximately 7 miles of existing 33 kV distribution line to the new Kramer-Cal City 115 kV line structures, and removal of approximately 151 existing distribution structures along the line segments; and the transfer of approximately 2 miles of existing 33 kV and approximately 2 miles of existing 12 kV distribution lines to the new Cal City- Edwards-Holgate 115 kV line structures, and removal of approximately 90 existing distribution structures along the line segments.

2.2 Project Location

The Project would be in the Mojave Desert region of southern California on lands managed by unincorporated Kern and San Bernardino Counties, the City of California City, state agencies (California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW] and California Department of Transportation [Caltrans]), and federal agencies (Bureau of Land Management [BLM] and the U.S. Department Of Defense [DoD]), and on private lands and lands owned and managed by SCE.

3. Scoping Process

3.1 Notification

On November 8, 2023, the CPUC published and distributed an NOP to solicit input from federal, state, and local agencies, and the public to inform the scope and content to be considered in the EIR being prepared for the Project. A copy of the NOP was provided to the State Clearinghouse of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, which assigned State Clearinghouse Number 2023110218 as the Project's unique State identification number for the CEQA review. The Notice of Scoping Meetings and Release of the NOP was mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the Project routes and locations, and the NOP was mailed directly to responsible and trustee agencies, and individuals that had previously shown interest in the Project. The NOP provided a

brief description of the Project, included a map showing the location of proposed components of the Project, identified potential areas of environmental impacts, and provided notice for virtual public scoping meetings, which were held on Thursday, November 30, 2023. **Appendix A** includes documentation of the State Clearinghouse submittal, and the mailing list of agencies and organizations that were directly mailed the NOP to street or electronic addresses, and **Appendix B** includes a copy of the Notice of Scoping Meetings and Release of Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report, and the NOP.

To announce the release of the NOP and provide details about the public scoping meetings, the CPUC published a legal notice in the Mojave Desert News, a weekly periodical in general circulation in the Project vicinity. The legal notice was published for two successive weeks, on November 8, 2023, and November 15, 2023. Proof of the publication is provided in **Appendix C**. The meeting announcement and an electronic copy of the NOP was also posted on the CPUC's website established for the Project at:

<https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/CalCity/index.html>.

The NOP was also posted on November 8, 2023, for a 30-day review period with the Kern County Clerk and the San Bernardino County Clerk of the Board. Proof of the postings is provided in **Appendix C**.

3.2 Opportunities for Comment

3.2.1 Public Workshops and Scoping Meetings

The CPUC conducted two virtual scoping meetings on November 30, 2023. The meetings were held from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. and from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Fourteen people attended the afternoon meeting, and four attended the evening meeting. Boris Sanchez of the CPUC, as well as Matt Fagundes, Maria Hensel, and Olivia Silverstein of Environmental Science Associates (ESA), consultant to the CPUC, hosted the meetings.

During the meetings, the CPUC summarized the lead agency's decision and environmental review process and noted the opportunities for public participation within the CEQA process. A brief description of the Project identified by SCE in its PEA was presented and the range of environmental issue areas to be addressed in the EIR was discussed. The types of alternatives that can be considered in the EIR and the next steps in the environmental review process were also addressed at the scoping meetings. Following the presentation, the public was provided with an opportunity to submit oral and/or written comments. A copy of the scoping meeting presentation is included in **Appendix D**.

3.2.2 Agency Consultation

In October of 2023, on behalf of the CPUC, ESA conducted early outreach to local agencies and officials and resource agencies to inform them about the upcoming Project and its scoping period. Agencies and officials contacted included the city of California City, Kern and San Bernardino counties, Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District, Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District, CDFW, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Federal Regulatory Energy Commission, and the BLM. The CPUC conducted a conference call with BLM on October 10,

2023, to coordinate the environmental reviews of the two agencies and to receive any early BLM input on the scope of the EIR analysis. The BLM provided input about the status of its review of the Project under the National Environmental Protection Act and suggested cumulative projects to be considered as part of the environmental review.

4. Scoping Comments

Three members of the public provided oral comments on the Project during the November 30, 2023, afternoon scoping meeting, and one person commented during the evening meeting session. Transcripts from the virtual scoping meetings are included in **Appendix E**.

The CPUC received five written comments during the scoping period. Copies of the written comments are provided in **Appendix F**. Commenting parties are listed in **Table 1** and summaries of the issues identified by the commenters are provided in Section 4.1, *Issues to be Considered under CEQA*, and Section 4.2, *Issues Not Analyzed under CEQA*.

**TABLE 1
PARTIES THAT SUBMITTED EIR SCOPING COMMENTS**

Name	Title, Organization/Affiliation	Date
Oral Comments		
Judy Hermann	Property Owner	11/30/2023
Karen Macedonio	Council Member, City of California City	11/30/2023
J. Gerhard	Property Owner	11/30/2023
Joan Schmitt	Property Owner	11/30/2023
Written Comments		
Cameron Vela	Cultural Resources Analyst, Native American Heritage Commission	11/16/2023
Judy Hermann	Property Owner	11/30/2023 and 12/4/2023
Jeff Flores	Chairman, Kern County Board of Supervisors	11/30/2023
Joan Schmitt	Property Owner	12/4/2023
Julie A. Vance	Regional Manager, California Department of Fish and Wildlife	12/7/2023

4.1 Raised Issues to be Considered under CEQA

The following discussions are summaries of the issues identified by the public that will be considered under CEQA in the EIR. The summaries are grouped by topic with oral comments listed first alphabetically by last name/organization, followed by written comments listed alphabetically by last name/organization.

Biological Resources

J. Gerhard: The commenter noted that the Project alignment appeared to be near desert tortoise critical habitat areas and inquired about how discovery of tortoises during construction would be managed.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife: The CDFW noted that special-status species have been documented in the study area per the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). Protected species with potential to occur in the project area include State protected furbearing mammal desert kit fox; the State fully protected golden eagle; the State candidate endangered Crotch’s bumble bee; the State and federally threatened desert tortoise; the State threatened Swainson’s hawk, and Mohave ground squirrel; the State watch list prairie falcon; and the State species of special concern American badger, pallid bat, Townsend’s big-eared bat, spotted bat, loggerhead shrike, burrowing owl, and gray vireo. Special-status plant species have been documented in the study area that include but are not limited to State candidate threatened western Joshua tree; the State endangered and California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B.2 Barstow woolly sunflower, Charlotte’s phacelia, alkali mariposa-lily, Red Rock poppy, desert cymopterus, and recurved larkspur; the CRPR 1B.3 Creamy blazing star; the CRPR 2B.2 sagebrush loefingia and pink funnel lily; the CRPR 2B.3 Booth’s evening-primrose; and the CRPR 4.2 Mojave fish-hook cactus, golden goodmania, solitary blazing star, Mojave spineflower, white pygmy-poppy, and crowned muilla.

CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a habitat assessment during biological studies in support of the EIR in advance of Project implementation to determine if the Project area or its immediate vicinity contains suitable habitat for any of the special-status species mentioned and what follow-up measures may be necessary. Focus surveys were recommended in the comment for western Joshua tree in support of the Draft EIR. CDFW also recommends that the Draft EIR include measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts related to riparian and wetland habitats. The comment letter noted that the Project applicant is responsible for ensuring that implementation of the Project does not result in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or relevant Fish and Game Codes sections. CDFW is required to comply with CEQA in the issuance of a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement; therefore, it is recommended that the CEQA document adequately describe the Project and its impacts to lakes or streams.

Cultural Resources

Native American Heritage Commission: The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) noted the tribal consultation requirements set forth by Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) and Senate Bill 18 (SB 18) are applicable to the project. This letter also includes the NAHC’s recommendations for conducting cultural resource assessments. The NAHC recommends consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of your proposed project as early as possible to avoid inadvertent discoveries of Native American human remains and best protect tribal cultural resources. Regulatory requirements and guidance for best practices specific to AB 52 and SB 18 were included with the comment letter.

4.2 Raised Issues Not to be Analyzed under CEQA

The EIR will be used to guide Project decision-making by the CPUC by providing an assessment of the potential environmental impacts that would result from the Project. The weighing of Project benefits (environmental, economic, or otherwise) against adverse environmental effects is

outside the scope of the EIR. When the CPUC considers whether to approve SCE’s application for the Project, it will consider the EIR along with economic and other considerations.

Summaries of the scoping comments received on issues that will not be analyzed under the CEQA review for the Project as well as the associated discussions are presented below.

Economics-Related Comments Received

J. Schmitt: The commenter indicated that an 85-foot tower proposed for the property next to theirs would affect their property value.

Discussion

Under CEQA, the analysis of potential impacts “shall be limited to substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse changes in physical conditions” in the environment (Pub. Res. Code §21151(b); CEQA Guidelines §15358(b)). CEQA’s definition of the environment includes “the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, noise, objects of historic or aesthetic significance” (Pub. Res. Code §21060.5). CEQA’s definition of the environment does not include economic or social effects (including psychological or social impacts on community character) unless those effects result in a change in the physical environment. The CEQA Guidelines are clear in emphasizing this point. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15131, subdivision (a):

Economic or social effects of a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment. An EIR may trace a chain of cause and effect from a proposed decision on a project through anticipated economic or social changes resulting from the project to physical changes caused in turn by the economic or social changes. The intermediate economic or social changes need not be analyzed in any detail greater than necessary to trace the chain of cause and effect. The focus of the analysis shall be on the physical changes.

Additionally, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064 states, “Economic and social changes resulting from a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment. Economic or social changes may be used, however, to determine that a physical change shall be regarded as a significant effect on the environment.”

A potential change in property value is considered an economic concern. There is no evidence that potential changes in property values would result in physical changes to the environment. Therefore, CEQA does not require analysis of this issue. Additionally, projecting the magnitude of any decrease in property values, which would be affected by multiple factors, would require real estate market analysis and is beyond the scope of environmental review under CEQA.

Project Need-Related Comments Received

Kern County Board of Supervisors: The comment letter from Kern County expresses general support and requests that the CPUC expedite the Project. The comment letter notes that the Kern County economy is in transition and that the board of supervisors is working to improve

economic viability within the County. Among the reasons for supporting the Project and requesting that it be expedited, the comment notes the need for increased electrical capacity to facilitate the creation of new jobs. The letter also notes the potential of the Project to provide resiliency to Edwards Air Force Base and capacity for renewable (energy) projects in the region, which is needed to enable the State to meet its greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Discussion

The EIR will not consider comments that pertain to Project need. The CEQA process does not require the EIR to assess Project need. In addition, CPUC General Order 131-D does not require an affirmative showing of need for projects under 200 kV and this issue is not generally litigated in PTC proceedings. The EIR will include analysis of a “No Project Alternative,” which will examine the environmental impacts of not building the Project. Thus, the analysis of the No Project Alternative will consider what would happen from an electrical standpoint if the Project objectives were not met.

General Comments

J. Hermann: The commenter asked if their family property would be next to a tower and how tall would the towers be.

Discussion

An electronic mail response was provided to J. Hermann on December 4, to address the question about the property and to state that the light-weight steel structures near the property would have a height of 85 feet.

K. Macedonio, Council Member for the City of California City: The council member requested a copy of the scoping meeting presentation and asked about logistics related to submittal of scoping comments.

Discussion

The CPUC’s CEQA team responded to K. Macedonio’s questions about scoping comment submittal logistics at the afternoon Scoping Meeting on November 30, 2024, and followed-up with an electronic mail on December 8, 2023, that provided the scoping meeting presentation as an attachment.

J. Schmitt: The commenter indicated that a 85-foot tower is proposed for the property next to theirs and requested information about whether properties would be purchased for the Project.

Discussion

The EIR will not consider comments related to whether SCE has the proper easements or rights-of-way (ROWs) for construction, operation, or maintenance of the Project. Negotiations of ROWs or easements occur between SCE and affected property owner(s) and generally do not require discretionary approval from a State or local agency. Consequently, such agreements would be outside the scope of CEQA. Any environmental impacts that would occur within a newly acquired ROW as part of the Project would be assessed in the EIR.

Regardless, an electronic mail response was provided to J. Schmitt on January 11, 2024, to address the question.

Appendix A
**State Clearinghouse
Documentation and Notice of
Preparation Mailing list**

SCE Cal City Substation 115kV Upgrade Project

Summary

SCH Number

2023110218

Lead Agency

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)

Document Title

SCE Cal City Substation 115kV Upgrade Project

Document Type

NOP - Notice of Preparation of a Draft EIR

Received

11/8/2023

Present Land Use

Various: Commercial, Industrial, Public Facilities, Residential, Resource, State, and Federal: California Desert Conservation Area, Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Area, Edwards Air Force Base

Document Description

The Project would include the expansion of the existing 5-acre Cal City Substation by approximately 10 acres to upgrade the substation from 33/12 kV to 115/33 kV and 115/12 kV. Fourteen new underground 12 kV distribution getaways and two new underground 33 kV distribution getaways from Cal City Substation are also proposed. The Project would include construction of two new 115 kV subtransmission lines, a 42-mile overhead line from Kramer Substation to Cal City Substation, and a new overhead 28-mile line from Cal City Substation to Holgate Switchyard with a tap line to serve Edwards Substation located on EAFB. The proposed new 115 kV subtransmission lines would be installed with telecommunication cables and telecommunication improvements would also be installed at the existing Holgate Switchyard and Cal City, Kramer, and Edwards substations. The Project would require electrical infrastructure improvements to accommodate the new 115 kV lines within the existing fence lines at Edwards Substation, Holgate Switchyard, and Kramer Substation. The Project would include the transfer of several miles of distribution lines onto the proposed new subtransmission lines, including: the transfer of a total of approximately 5 miles of existing 33 kV distribution lines to the new Kramer-Cal City 115 kV line structures, and removal of approximately 151 existing distribution structures along the line segments; and the transfer of approximately 2 miles of existing 33 kV and approximately 2 miles of existing 12 kV distribution lines to the new Cal City-Edwards-Holgate 115 kV line structures, and removal of approximately 90 existing distribution structures along the line segments.

Contact Information

Name

Boris Sanchez

Agency Name

CPUC

Job Title

Public Utilities Regulatory Analyst III

Contact Types

Lead/Public Agency

Address

505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Phone

(415) 696-7360

Email

Boris.Sanchez@cpuc.ca.gov

Name

David De Leon

Agency Name

Southern California Edison

Job Title

Major Construction Project Manager

Contact Types

Project Applicant

Address

2 Innovation Way
Pamona, CA 91768

Phone

(909) 274-3479

Email

Davis.Deleon@sce.com

Location

Coordinates

35°8'33.34"N 117°58'7.31"W

Cities

California City

Counties

Kern, San Bernardino

Regions

Citywide, Countywide, Southern California

Cross Streets

Multiple: Hacienda Blvd., California City Blvd.; SR 395

Zip

93505

Total Acres

10+ linear

Jobs

5

Parcel #

multiple

State Highways

SR 395, SR 58

Airports

California City Airport

Township

32S

Range

37E

Section

14

Base

Diablo

Notice of Completion

State Review Period Start

11/8/2023

State Review Period End

12/8/2023

State Reviewing Agencies

California Air Resources Board (ARB), California Department of Conservation (DOC), California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Inland Deserts Region 6 (CDFW), California Department of Parks and Recreation, California Department of Transportation, District 8 (DOT), California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics (DOT), California Department of Transportation, Division of Transportation Planning (DOT), California Department of Water Resources (DWR), California Energy Commission, California Highway Patrol (CHP), California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), California Natural Resources Agency, California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Fresno Region 5 (RWQCB), California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region 7 (RWQCB), Central Valley Flood Protection Board, Department of Toxic Substances Control, Office of Historic Preservation

Development Types

Power:Electric Transmission Lines (Subtransmission)(Megawatts 0.01)

Local Actions

Site Plan

Project Issues

Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Cumulative Effects, Energy, Flood Plain/Flooding, Geology/Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Growth Inducement, Hydrology/Water Quality, Land Use/Planning, Mineral Resources, Noise, Population/Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Solid Waste, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities/Service Systems, Vegetation, Wildfire

Attachments

Draft Environmental Document [Draft IS, NOI_NOA_Public notices, OPR Summary Form, Appx,]

NOP_CalCitySub_Nov7_2023_clean PDF 1990 K

Notice of Completion [NOC] Transmittal form

NOC_Environmental Document Transmittal_CalCitySub_11082023_ PDF 317 K

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Notice of Preperation Mailing List

State Agencies			
Organization	Department / Title	First Name	Last Name
California Air Resources Board	Executive Officer	Dr. Steven	Cliff
California State Water Resources Control Board	Eng. Geologist, 401 Certification Unit	Snejana	Toneva
California State Water Resources Control Board	Exective Director	Eileen	Sobeck
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Region 4)	Regional Manager	Julie	Vance
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Region 6)	Regional Manager	Heidi	Calvert
California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	Central Region (Region 4)		
California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	Central Region (Region 6)		
California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife	Director	Charlton	Bonham
California Department of Health Services	Director	Michelle	Bass
California Department of Transportation	Office of the Director		
California Department of Transportation	Acting Division Chief, Div. of Aeronautics	Marlon	Flournoy
California Department of Transportation District 8	Acting District Director	Rebecca	Guirado
California Department of Transportation District 9	District Director	Ryan	Dermody
California Department of Transportation	District 8 Director	Catalino	Pining III
California Department of Transportation	District 9 Director	Ryan	Dermody
California Energy Commission	Executive Director	Drew	Bohan
California Natural Resources Agency	Secretary	Wade	Crowfoot
California Public Utilities Commission	Energy Division Dir	Leuwam	Tesfai
California Public Utilities Commission	CPUC Public Advisor	Allison	Brown
California Office of Historic Preservation	SHPO	Julianne	Polanco
California Regional Water Quality Control Board	Supervising Engineering Geologist, Lahontan Region	Jen	Zimmerman
California Regional Water Quality Control Board	Executive Officer Lahontan Region	Peter	Pumphrey
California State Lands Commission	Executive Director	Jennifer	Lucchessi
California State Water Resources Control Board	Engineering Geologist 401 Certification Unit	Snejana	Toneva
California State Water Resources Control Board	Executive Director	Eileen	Sobeck
Federal Agencies			
Organization	Department / Title	First Name	Last Name
Federal Aviation Administration	Western-Pacific Regional Administrator	Erik	Amend

Federal Aviation Administration	Manager Western-Pacific Region Airports Office Los Angeles Airports District Office	Cathryn	Carson
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	Regional Engineer	Frank	Blackett
U.S. Air Force	Edwards Air Force Base Realty Specialist	Imelda	Bantilan
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Regulatory Division Los Angeles District	Division Chief	David	Castanon
U.S. Bureau of Land Management	PMC Project Manager California Desert District Office	Joan	Patrovsky
U.S. Bureau of Land Management	Barstow Field Office Manager	Marc	Stamer
U.S. Bureau of Land Management	NEPA Contact, Field Office	Jeremy	Vargas
U.S. Department of Defense/ Edwards Airforce Base	Environmental Public Affairs		
U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management, California Desert District Office	MPA Realty Specialist	Abraham	Stanton
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Public Affairs Specialist	Brandon	Honig
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Regional Director, Pacific Southwest Region	Paul	Souza
Local Agencies			
Organization	Department / Title	First Name	Last Name
City of California City	City Clerk, City Council	Socorro	Chavez
City of California City	Mayor	Kelly	Kulikoff
City of California City	City Planner	LeShelle	Cooper
City of California City	Chair, Planning Commission	Jay	Dunham
City of California City	Council Member	Karen	Macedonio
City of California City	Planning Administrator	Lilia	Garcia
City of California City	Acting City Manager	Joe	Barragan
City of California City Public Works	Administrative Clerk, Public Works	Jennifer	Guzman
Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District	Administrative Office	Glen	Stephens
Kern County	County Administrative Officer	James	Zervis
Kern County	Director Planning & Natural Resources Dept.	Lorelei	Oviatt
Kern County	Chair Planning Commission	Joe	Ashley
Kern County	Chairman Board of Supervisors District 3	Jeff	Flores
Kern County	Supervisor District 2	Zack	Scrivner
Kern County	Vice Chair of Board of Supervisors District 1	Philip	Peters
Kern County Council of Governments		Becky	Napier

Kern County Economic Development Corporation	Administrative Specialist	Christina	Miller
Kern County Supervisors	Clerk of the Board of Supervisors	Kathleen	Krause
Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District	Executive Director	Brad	Poirez
Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District	Planning Air monitoring supervisor	Chris	Anderson
San Bernardino County	Assistant Director, Planning and Operations	Noel	Castillo
San Bernardino County	Third District Supervisor	Dawn	Rowe
San Bernardino County	First District Supervisor	Paul	Cook
San Bernardino County	Chair Planning Commision	Jonathan	Weldy
San Bernardino County	Assisstant Director Special Districts	David	Doublet
San Bernardino County	Chief Executive Officer	Luther	Snoke
San Bernardino County Planning	Land Use Services Director	Heidi	Duron
San Bernardino County Public Works	Public Works Director	Brendon	Biggs
Southern California Association of Governments	Government and Public Affairs	Sarah	Patterson
NAHC Non-Statutory Tribes			
Organization	Department / Title	First Name	Last Name
Kern Valley Indian Community	Chairperson	Robert	Robinson
Kitanemuk & Yowlumne Tejon Indians	Chairperson	Delia	Dominguez
San Fernando Band of Mission Indians	Chairperson	Donna	Yocum
Serrano Nation of Mission Indians	Co-Chairperson	Wayne	Walker
Serrano Nation of Mission Indians	Co-Chairperson	Mark	Cochrane
Tubatulabals of Kern Valley	Chairperson	Robert	Gomez
Tule River Indian Tribe	Chairperson	Neil	Peyron
North American Electric Reliability Council			
Other Groups			
Organization	Department / Title	First Name	Last Name
Big West			
Western Energy Coordinating Council	Administrative Services		

Appendix B

Notice of Scoping Meetings and Release of the Notice of Preparation and Notice of Preparation



California Public Utilities Commission




California Public Utilities Commission

Notice of Scoping Meetings and Release of Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project

Notice is hereby given that the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), as lead agency for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review, has released a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and will be hosting scoping meetings for the proposed Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project (Project). The Project would be located in unincorporated Kern and San Bernardino Counties, the City of California City, lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and in Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB) in the Mojave Desert region of California. The primary components of the Southern California Edison (SCE) Project include expansion of the existing Cal City Substation, construction of two new overhead 115 kV subtransmission lines with telecommunication cables, and telecommunication and electrical infrastructure improvements at the existing Holgate Switchyard, Kramer Substation, and Edwards Substation. SCE is proposing the Project to provide the necessary capacity to meet the electrical needs of its customers in the Electrical Needs Area (ENA) identified for the Project.

Pursuant to CEQA, the CPUC is preparing an EIR for the Project and 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 it. The NOP may be accessed online at the CPUC’s website for the Project:

<https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/CalCity/index.html>. The NOP is also available for public review by request at the California City Branch Library: 9507 California City Blvd. in California City. Initiated by the release of the NOP, the 30-day scoping period is from Wednesday, November 8, 2023, through Friday, December 8, 2023. Scoping comments may be submitted in writing during the 30-day NOP scoping period by mail to: Boris Sanchez, CPUC Cal City Project; Attn. M. Hensel c/o Environmental Science Associates at 775 Baywood Drive, Suite 100, Petaluma, CA 94954; or by email to CalCitySub@esassoc.com. In order for the public and regulatory agencies to have an opportunity to submit verbal comments on the scope of the EIR, two virtual meetings will be held on Thursday, November 30, 2023. One meeting will be from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. and one will be from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. The meetings will be accessible via Zoom: <https://bit.ly/CPUCScopingMeeting> or by phone at: (888) 788-0099. Webinar ID: 850 0342 5465

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The CPUC regulates privately owned electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water, railroad, rail transit, and passenger transportation companies.



@CaliforniaPUC



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 Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project (A.23-03-005)


Date: November 8, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Southern California Edison (SCE) has filed an application (A.23-03-005) with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for a Permit to Construct (PTC) its proposed Cal City Substation 115 kilovolt (kV) Upgrade Project (Project). SCE is proposing the Project to provide the necessary capacity to meet the electrical needs of its customers in the Electrical Needs Area (ENA) identified for the Project. The CPUC, as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to analyze the effects of the proposed Project in compliance with CEQA. The CPUC has reviewed the application submitted March 14, 2023, and deemed the application complete. In order to obtain early feedback on the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR, the CPUC is initiating the scoping process to inform the CEQA review with a scoping period from November 8 through December 8, 2023.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS NOTICE

Two Zoom meetings will be held Thursday, November 30, 2023

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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 with other Project documents and reports, including SCE's application and PEA, at the following link:

<https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/CalCity/index.html>

Separate NEPA Review

As described below, portions of the Project would be constructed and operated on federal lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) at Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB); therefore, the Project will also be subject to environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The federal environmental review process will occur independent of the CEQA review process and is anticipated to begin mid-2024.

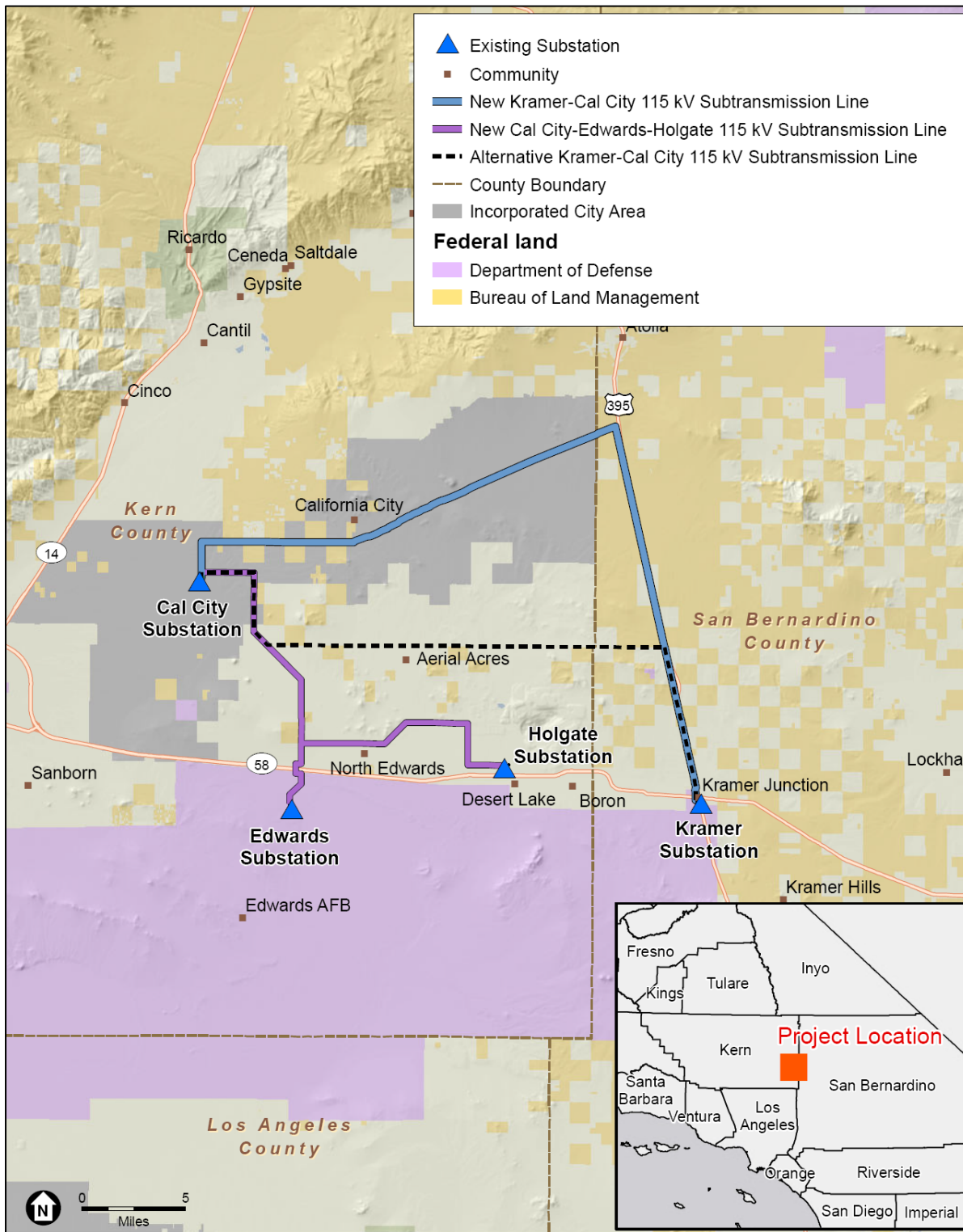
PROJECT LOCATION

The Project would be located in unincorporated Kern and San Bernardino Counties, the City of California City, and lands managed by BLM and DoD in the Mojave Desert region of California. Figure 1, *Project Location*, depicts an overview of the proposed Project in the context of regional jurisdictions.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project would include the expansion of the existing 5-acre Cal City Substation by approximately 10 acres to upgrade the substation from 33/12 kV to 115/33 kV and 115/12 kV. Fourteen new underground 12 kV distribution getaways and two new underground 33 kV distribution getaways from Cal City Substation are also proposed. The Project would include construction of two new 115 kV subtransmission lines, a 42-mile overhead line from Kramer Substation to Cal City Substation, and a new overhead 28-mile line from Cal City Substation to Holgate Switchyard with a tap line to serve Edwards Substation located on EAFB. The proposed new 115 kV subtransmission lines would be installed with telecommunication cables and telecommunication improvements would also be installed at the existing Holgate Switchyard and Cal City, Kramer, and Edwards substations. The Project would require electrical infrastructure improvements to accommodate the new 115 kV lines within the existing fence lines at Edwards Substation, Holgate Switchyard, and Kramer Substation.

The Project would also include the transfer of several miles of distribution lines onto the proposed new subtransmission lines, including: the transfer of a total of approximately 5 miles of existing 33 kV



SOURCE: ESA, 2023; SCE, 2023

Figure 1
 Project Location

distribution lines to the new Kramer-Cal City 115 kV line structures, and removal of approximately 151 existing distribution structures along the line segments; and the transfer of approximately 2 miles of existing 33 kV and approximately 2 miles of existing 12 kV distribution lines to the new Cal City-Edwards-Holgate 115 kV line structures, and removal of approximately 90 existing distribution structures along the line segments.

Applicant Proposed Measures

As part of the Project, SCE has committed to implementing applicant proposed measures (APMs) to reduce its potential impacts. The EIR will evaluate these measures as part of the SCE's Project, and the CPUC will develop additional mitigation measures to reduce or avoid any significant impacts of the Project identified in its analysis.

Project Objectives

SCE's stated purpose of the Project is to add load-serving capacity in the identified ENA to serve current and long-term forecast electrical demand. The Project would improve system operational flexibility for SCE to provide power to the ENA (adjacent to military base) by minimizing reliance on the Edwards Substation (located on a military base with restricted access). By providing diverse routes of power supply to the region, including a second 115 kV source line to Edwards Substation, the Project would improve overall system reliability within the ENA.

SCE has identified the following basic objectives for the Project:

- Add load-serving capacity in the ENA to serve current and long-term forecast electrical demand;
- Improve system reliability within the ENA by providing diverse routes of power supply to the region;
- Improve system operational flexibility by minimizing the reliance on Edwards Substation (located on military base with restricted access) to provide power to the ENA (adjacent to military base); and
- Improve system reliability within the ENA by providing a diversely-routed second 115 kV source line to Edwards Substation.

As lead agency under CEQA, the CPUC is responsible for identifying appropriate Project objectives, which may differ from SCE's objectives described above, to inform the CEQA process/evaluation, including the development and screening of Project alternatives. The CPUC has not yet identified 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

SCE has indicated that the Project environmental impacts that would be most severe would be associated with: aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, paleontological resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology, noise, and recreation. Those impacts identified by SCE are summarized below.

- ***Aesthetics:*** In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points); the Project would potentially impact the visual character of public lands used for recreational purposes;
- ***Air Quality:*** Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard; expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations;
- ***Biological Resources:*** Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); the Project would be located in designated critical habitat of Mohave Desert Tortoise and may effect habitats of other listed species; have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS; have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, and coastal) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means; conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance;
- ***Cultural Resources:*** Inadvertent disturbance of any cultural resources or human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries;
- ***Paleontology:*** Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature;
- ***Hazards and Hazardous Materials:*** Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials or reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment; emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school; create a significant hazard to air traffic from the installation of new power lines and structure; expose people to a significant risk of injury or death involving unexploded ordnance;
- ***Hydrology and Water Quality:*** Based on the current design, the proposed Project would result in approximately 16 acres of temporary impacts to potentially jurisdictional wetlands or waters during construction. Site disturbance may violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality; substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area in a manner which could: result in substantial erosion or siltation on site or off site; substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; and/or contribute runoff water which would exceed the

capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. The Project could also impede or redirect flood flows; risk release of pollutants due to project inundation; and may conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan;

- **Noise:** Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies; and
- **Recreation:** Reduce or prevent access to a designated recreation facility or area.

Mitigation Measures, Cumulative Impacts, and Alternatives

The EIR will include CPUC's independent evaluation of the effects described above and other potentially significant environmental effects of the Project, including those resulting from its construction, operation, and maintenance. Where necessary and feasible, mitigation measures will be recommended (in addition to or to supersede SCE APMs) to avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts. The EIR will also address potential cumulative environmental impacts of the Project, when considered with past, other current, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the region.

The EIR will include a discussion and analysis of a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project, including a No Project alternative scenario, and alternatives to the Project that could attain most of its basic CEQA objectives while avoiding or reducing any of its significant environmental effects. SCE has identified several alternatives in its PEA, including the Sequoia Boulevard Alternative (depicted as the Alternative Kramer-Cal City 115 kV Substation Line on Figure 1), that will be considered by the CPUC's environmental review team and potentially carried forward for full analysis in the EIR. Other alternatives may be added to the analysis based on input received during the 30-day scoping period following issuance of this NOP, or by the EIR team to reduce or eliminate potentially significant environmental impacts identified during the EIR process.

Public Resources Code Section 21092.6(a)

Per Public Resources Code Section 21092.6(a), if the Project site or site of any project alternative to be analyzed is a site listed on the "Cortese list" of hazardous waste site, then this information must be included in the NOP. According to SCE, EAFB is a known hazardous materials release site and is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List) and two Cleanup and Abatement Orders were issued on EAFB in 1987 and 1988, which have an active status and pertain to a Leaking Underground Storage Tank case located approximately 3 miles south of the Project alignment on EAFB.

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


Information to be included in the EIR will be based in part on input and comments received during the scoping period. Decision-makers, responsible and trustee agencies under CEQA, property owners, and members of the public will also have an opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR once it is issued. Pursuant to CEQA, the scoping period will be 30 days following the release of this NOP. The scoping period for this Project begins on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, and closes at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 8, 2023. Please include the name, organization (if applicable), mailing address, and e-mail address of the contact person for all future notifications related to this process. Public comments will become part of the public record and will be published in a Scoping Report.

Please send your comments by mail to:

Boris Sanchez, CPUC
Cal City Project; Attn. M. Hensel
c/o Environmental Science Associates
775 Baywood Drive, Suite 100, Petaluma, CA 94954;
or via electronic mail: CalCitySub@esassoc.com

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 November 30, 2023 during the NOP scoping period. Information about the virtual meetings is included in the table below. For the first half hour of the meetings, CPUC will host a workshop 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 workshop, 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. A QR code to join either meeting is also provided.

Meeting Information	Virtual Meeting No. 1	Virtual Meeting No. 2
Day and Date	Thursday, November 30, 2023	Thursday, November 30, 2023
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Appendix C
**Newspaper Notices and County
Clerk Postings**

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

State of California

County of Kern

I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of the County aforesaid; I am over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to or interested in the above-entitled matter. I am the principal clerk of the Mojave Desert News, a newspaper that has been adjudicated to be a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court of the County of Kern, State of California on October 13th 1939 Case number 34058 in and for the County of Kern State of California that the notice which the annexed is a true printed copy, has been published in each regular and entire issue of said newspaper and not in any supplement thereof on the following dates, to wit
I certify under the penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true.

11/8/2023

11/15/2023

signed: *Misty Hickok*

Misty Hickok

11/15/2023

California Public Utilities Commission Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Notice of Scoping Meetings for the Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project

Notice is hereby given that the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), as lead agency for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review, has released a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and will be hosting scoping meetings for the proposed Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project (Project). The Project would be located in unincorporated Kern and San Bernardino Counties, the City of California City, lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and in Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB) in the Mojave Desert region of California. The primary components of the Southern California Edison (SCE) Project include expansion of the existing Cal City Substation, construction of two new overhead 115 kV subtransmission lines with telecommunication cables, and telecommunication and electrical infrastructure improvements at the existing Holgate Switchyard, Kramer Substation, and Edwards Substation. SCE is proposing the Project to provide the necessary capacity to meet the electrical needs of its customers in the Electrical Needs Area (ENA) identified for the Project.

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Published in The Mojave Desert News
11/08, 11/15/2023



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 Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project (A.23-03-005)

Date: November 8, 2023

CLERK OF THE BOARD

Received on:

11/8/23

Removed on:

12/9/23


COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
NOV 08 2023
CLERK OF THE BOARD

INTRODUCTION

Southern California Edison (SCE) has filed an application (A.23-03-005) with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for a Permit to Construct (PTC) its proposed Cal City Substation 115 kilovolt (kV) Upgrade Project (Project). SCE is proposing the Project to provide the necessary capacity to meet the electrical needs of its customers in the Electrical Needs Area (ENA) identified for the Project. The CPUC, as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to analyze the effects of the proposed Project in compliance with CEQA. The CPUC has reviewed the application submitted March 14, 2023, and deemed the application complete. In order to obtain early feedback on the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR, the CPUC is initiating the scoping process to inform the CEQA review with a scoping period from November 8 through December 8, 2023.

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1123 738
CEQA

RECEIVED
KERN COUNTY

NOV 08 2023

Transmittal Memorandum for 2023

AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER-COUNTY CLERK
BY TS DEPUTY

Attach one transmittal memorandum to the front of the original CEQA document. Clip copies in back.
1) If notice requires F&W receipt, you must provide a minimum of 3 copies of the document.
2) If notice does not require F&W receipt, you must provide a minimum of 2 copies of the document.

TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

LEAD AGENCY: California Public Utilities Commission

PROJECT TITLE: Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project

PROJECT APPLICANT: Southern California Edison

PHONE NUMBER: (909) 274-3479

PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS: 2 Innovation Way, Pomona, California 91768

WORK ORDER # _____ 30-Day Posting 35-Day Posting 45-Day Posting Other _____

CONTACT PERSON: Matt Fagundes PHONE NUMBER: 707.815.7331

CHECK DOCUMENT BEING FILED:

Notice of Availability.....No Fee

Notice of Intent.....No Fee

Notice of Preparation.....No Fee

Notice of Public Hearing.....No Fee

Other _____.....No Fee

Environmental Impact Report (EIR).....\$3839.25
 Previously paid F&W (must attach F&W receipt) F&W Receipt Number# _____
 DFG No Effect Determination (F&W letter must be attached).....No Fee
 County Administrative Fee.....\$50.00

Mitigated Negative Declaration or Negative Declaration.....\$2764.00
 Previously paid F&W (must attach F&W receipt) F&W Receipt Number# _____
 DFG No Effect Determination (F&W letter must be attached).....No Fee
 County Administrative Fee.....\$50.00

Notice of Exemption.....No Fee
 County Administrative Fee.....\$50.00

TOTAL \$ _____

*Additional copies to be returned to: _____

*Method of return: Hold for pick-up/Call # _____ Interoffice Mail

PAYMENT METHOD: ALL APPLICABLE FEES MUST BE PAID AT THE TIME OF FILING

- JV - Trans Code _____ Dept _____ Fund _____ Expense Key _____
- Money Order
- Check

Notice of Environmental Document
Posted by County Clerk on 11/08/2023
and for 30 days thereafter, Pursuant to
Section 21152(C), Public Resources Code

24460



California Public Utilities Commission

FILED
KERN COUNTY

NOV 08 2023

AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
AUDITOR CONTROLLER-COUNTY CLERK
BY PD DEPUTY

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 Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project (A.23-03-005)


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Notice of Environmental Document
 Posted by County Clerk on 11/08/2023
 and for 30 days thereafter, pursuant to
 Section 21152(C), Public Resources Code

24460

Appendix D
Scoping Meeting Presentation




California Public Utilities Commission



SCE Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project

CEQA Scoping Meeting

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CPUC Cal City Project Webpage:

<https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/CalCity/index.html>.

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@CaliforniaPUC

Scoping Meeting Agenda

- Introductions
- Purpose of the Meeting
- Application and Permitting Process
- Environmental Review Process (CEQA)
- Project Overview
- Scoping: Environmental Impacts and Alternatives
- Public Comments
- Next Steps



Introductions

State Lead Agency (CEQA): California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)

- Boris Sanchez, CPUC Project Coordinator

Consultant: Environmental Science Associates (ESA)

- Matt Fagundes, ESA Project Manager
- Maria Hensel, ESA
- Olivia Silverstein, ESA

Project Applicant: Southern California Edison Company (SCE)



Purpose of this Meeting



To receive input from the public, agencies, and interested parties to inform the scope and content of the environmental review.

Your ideas are welcome and invited.



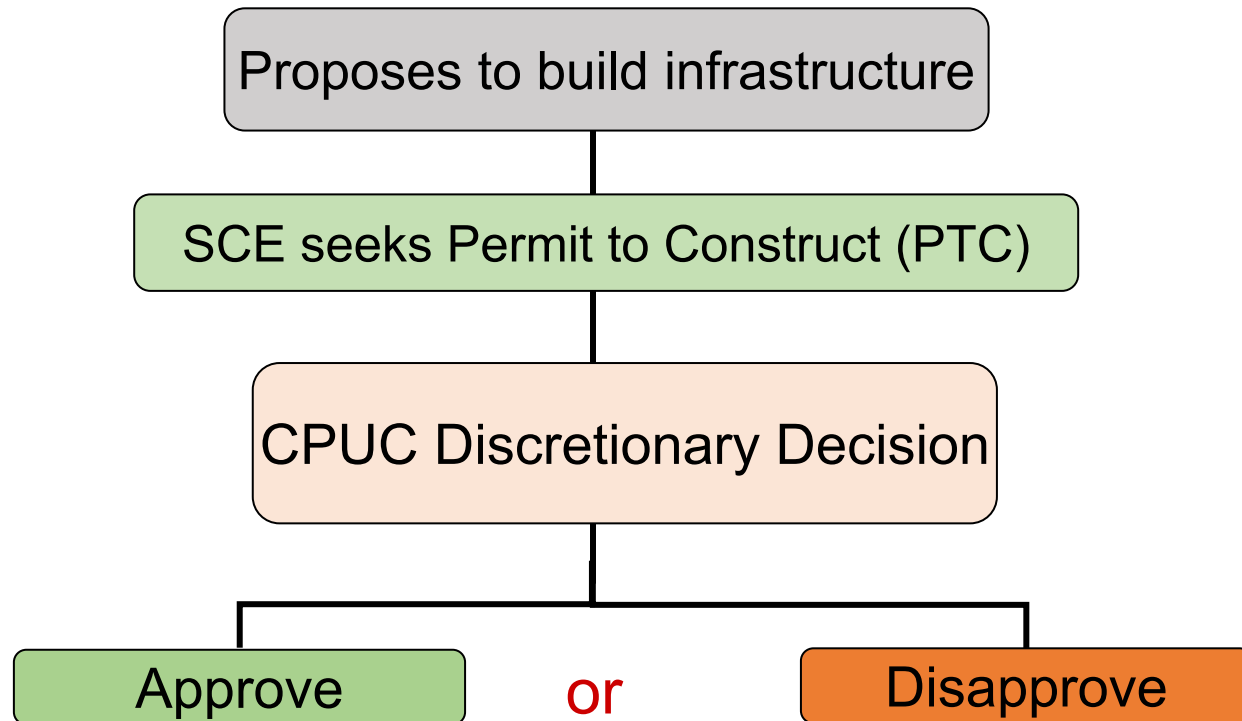
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- Scoping is the process of soliciting public and agency input regarding the scope and content of an EIR, in advance of its preparation.
- CPUC is requesting comments to inform the scope and content of the EIR and help identify the actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and environmental effects to be analyzed in the EIR.



Application Process

Southern California Edison (SCE)

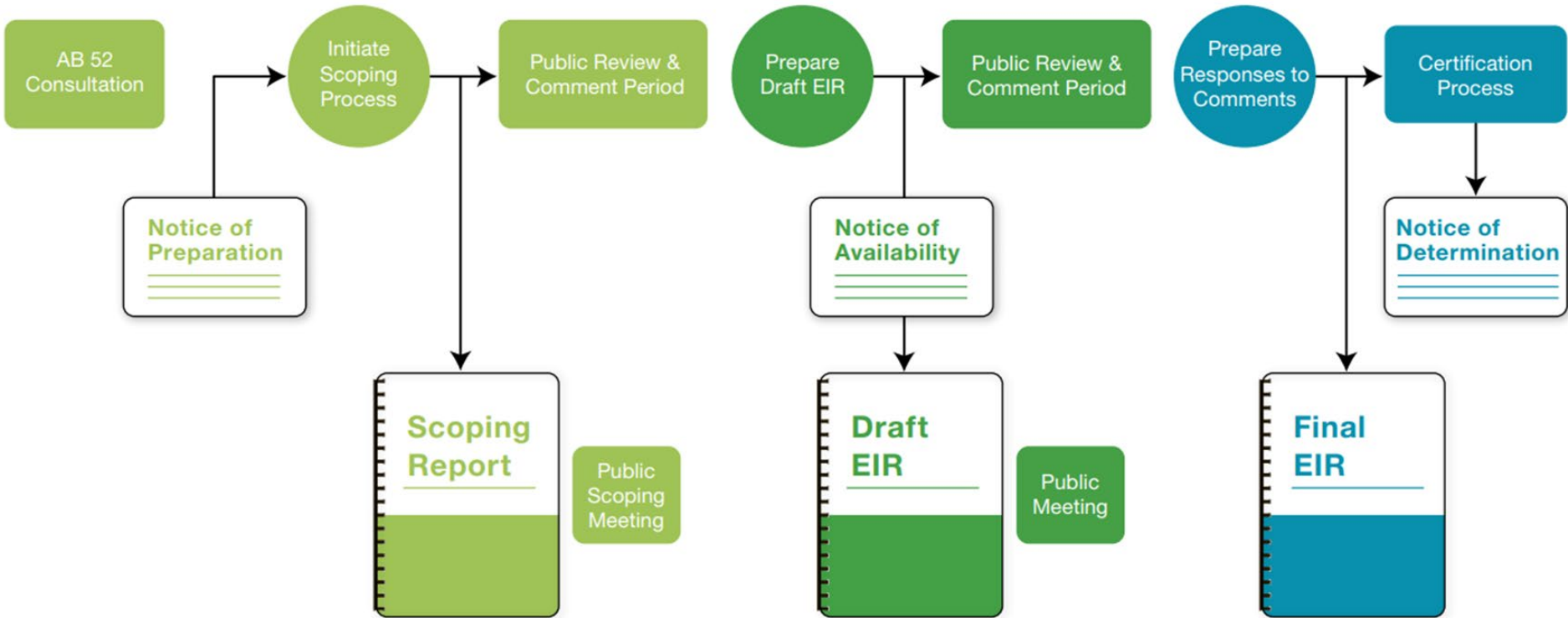


CEQA Overview

- The California Environmental Quality Act
 - Inform decision makers and the public about the potential significant environmental effects of a proposed project
 - Identify ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced
 - Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures
 - Disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project if significant environmental effects are involved
- Focus on physical impacts to the environment



CEQA EIR Process



CEQA: Project Description

- **Construction**

- What would be built
- How would the project be built
 - Construction methodology
 - Equipment required
 - Workers required
- Project schedule- duration/phases



- **Operations**

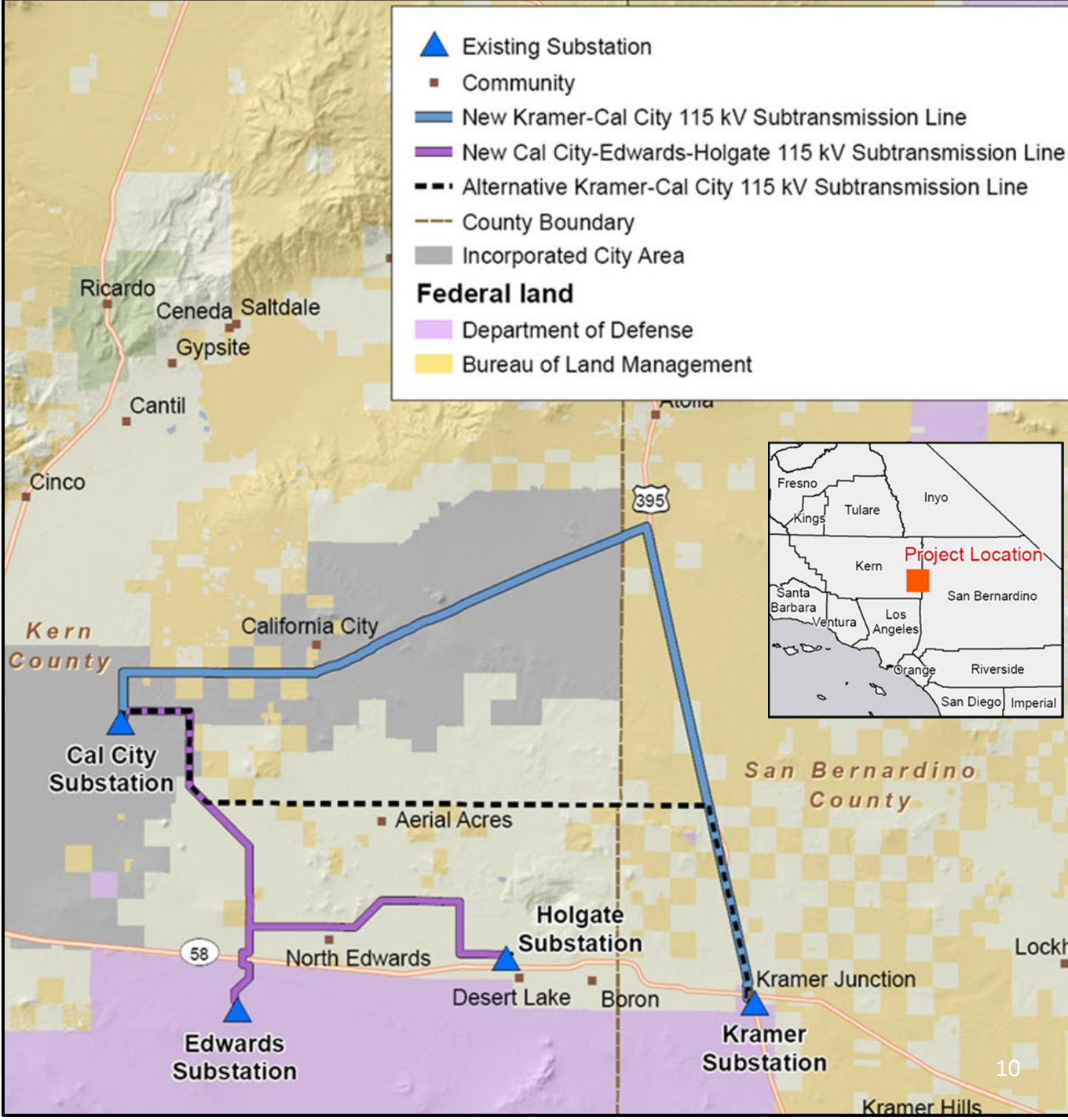
- How would the project be operated
- Operational personnel required

- **Maintenance**

- How is the project maintained
- When is maintenance performed
- Maintenance personnel required

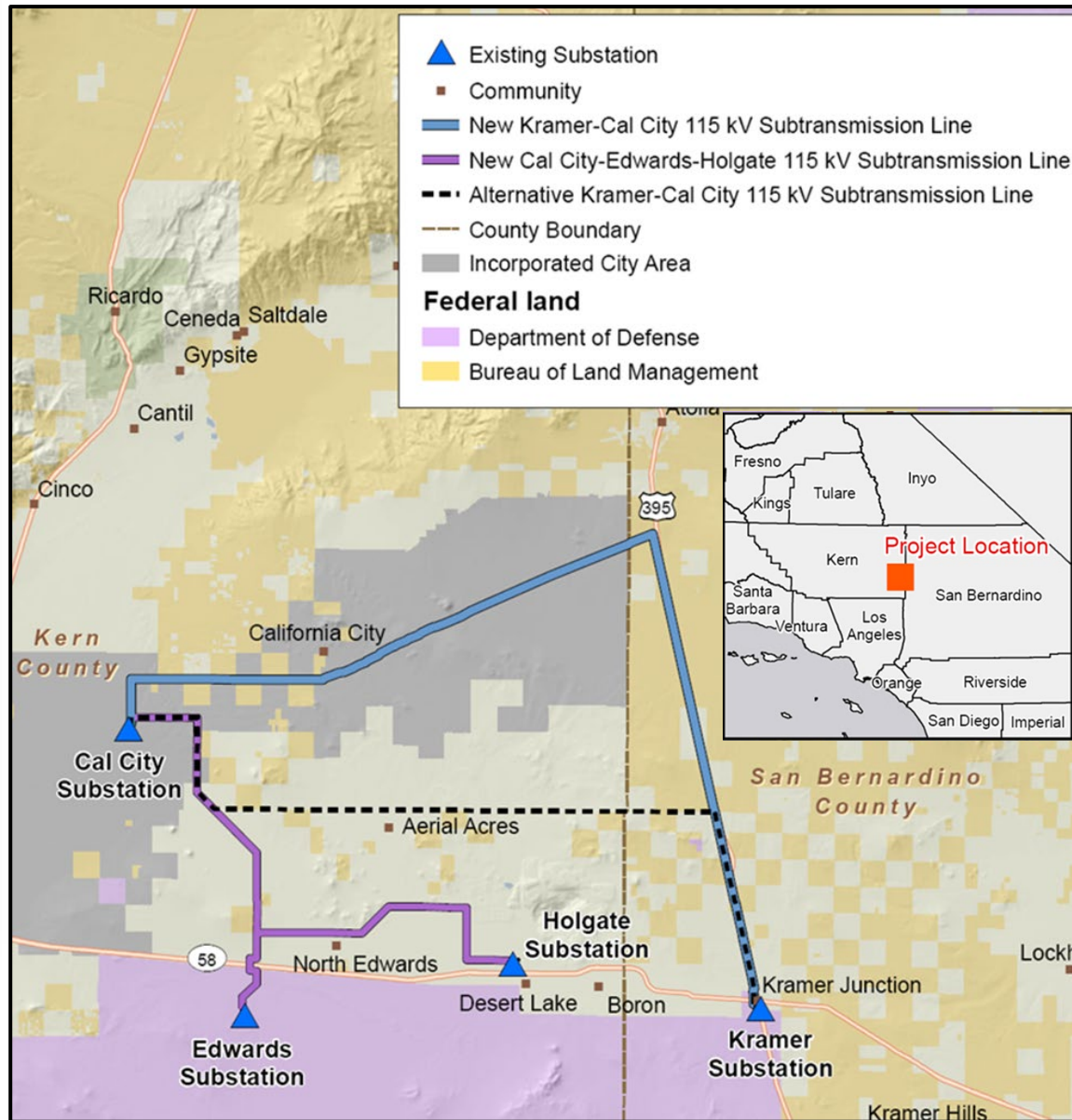


Project Location



Project Description

- 10-acre expansion of the existing (5-acre) Cal City Substation
- Upgrade the Cal City substation from 33/12 kV to 115/33 kV and 115/12 kV
- Fourteen new underground 12 kV distribution getaways
- Two new underground 33 kV distribution getaways from Cal City Substation

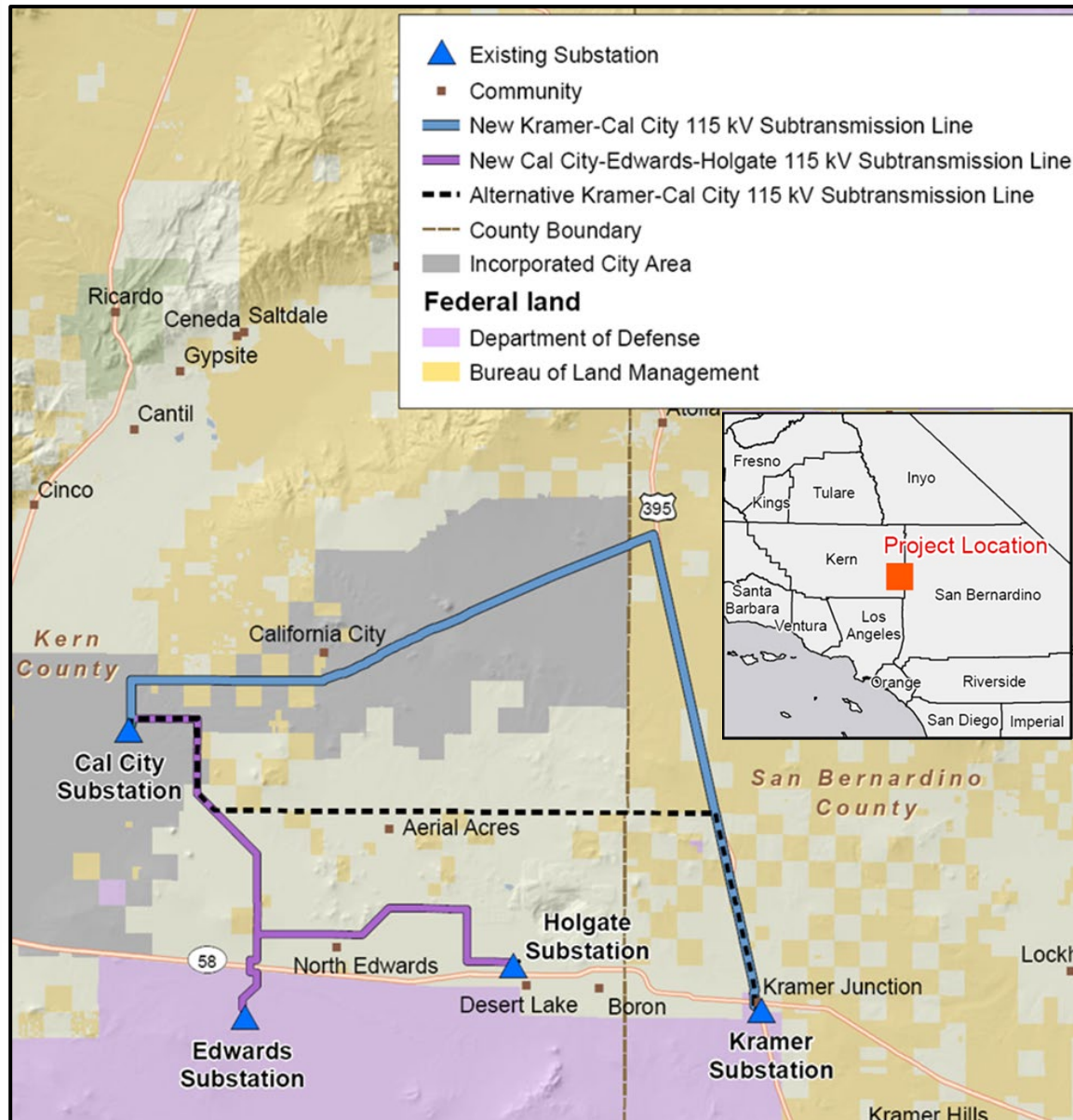




Existing Cal City Substation

Project Description

- Two new 115 kV subtransmission lines
 - 42-mile overhead line from Kramer Substation to Cal City Substation
 - 28-mile overhead line from Cal City Substation to Holgate Switchyard with a tap to Edwards Substation.
- Electrical and telecommunication upgrades
 - Kramer Substation
 - Edwards Substation (EAFB)
 - Holgate Switchyard



CEQA: Environmental Resource Areas

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- 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 and Traffic
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire



For Each Resource Area . . .

- Define and Describe Existing Setting
 - Environmental setting
 - Regulatory setting
- Establish Thresholds of Significance
 - What defines a “significant” impact
- Identify Project Impacts and Mitigation
 - CPUC Mitigations
 - Significance after mitigation
- Evaluate Cumulative Impacts
- Impacts of Alternatives



CEQA: Project Alternatives

- Identify a range of reasonable alternatives to avoid or substantially lessen significant effects of the project
- Feasible
 - Legal, regulatory, technical
- Meet most basic project objectives



Project Objectives

SCE has identified the following objectives for the Project:

- Add load-serving capacity in the electrical needs area (ENA) to serve current and long-term forecast electrical demand;
- Improve system reliability within the ENA by providing diverse routes of power supply to the region;
- Improve system operational flexibility by minimizing the reliance on Edwards Substation (located on military base with restricted access) to provide power to the ENA (adjacent to military base); and
- Improve system reliability within the ENA by providing a diversely-routed second 115 kV source line to Edwards Substation.



Alternatives may include . . .

- Those considered or suggested by the
 - Southern California Edison
 - Public/agencies
 - Developed by CEQA team
- Project Alternatives:
 - Locations
 - Routes
 - Technology (e.g., underground lines)
 - Others?
- “No Project” alternative



To Get Involved in the CEQA Process

- You're on the right track!
 - Please stay on and provide your scoping input
- Scoping Process
 - Notice of Preparation sent on November 8, 2023
 - Scoping Period closes on December 8, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.
 - How to comment:
 - Verbally at this Scoping Meeting and/or by submitting a Comment Letter via Mail, or via Email
- Draft EIR
 - Anticipated release is March 2024

CPUC Project Webpage:

<https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/CalCity/index.html>



How to Submit a Scoping Comment

Public Comment Mailing Address:

Boris Sanchez, CPUC

C/O Environmental Science Associates, Attn. M. Hensel

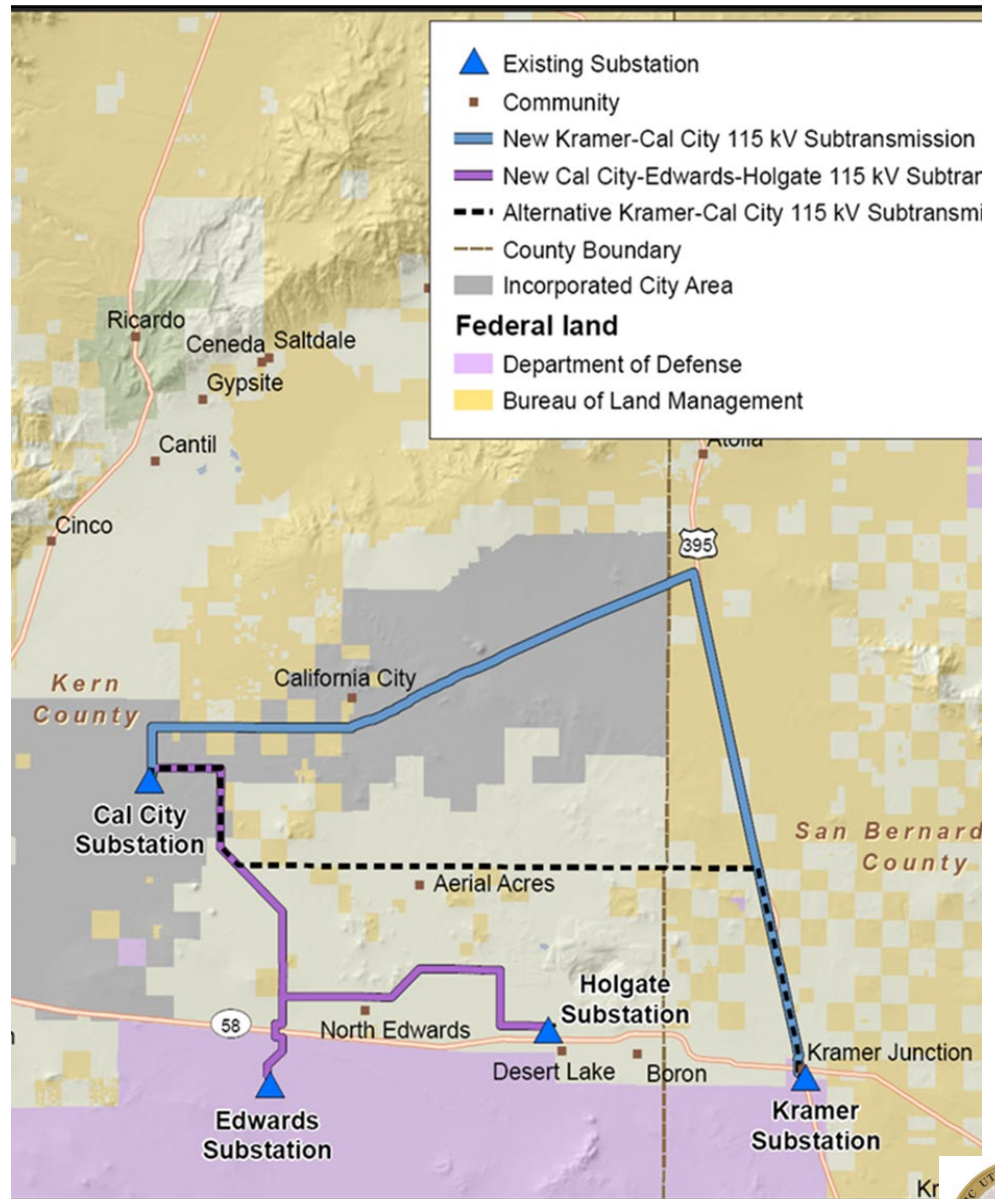
775 Baywood Drive; Suite 100, Petaluma, CA 94954

E-mail: CalCitySub@esassoc.com

Scoping Comment Deadline: (5 p.m.) December 8, 2023



Public Comments



Discussion Guidelines

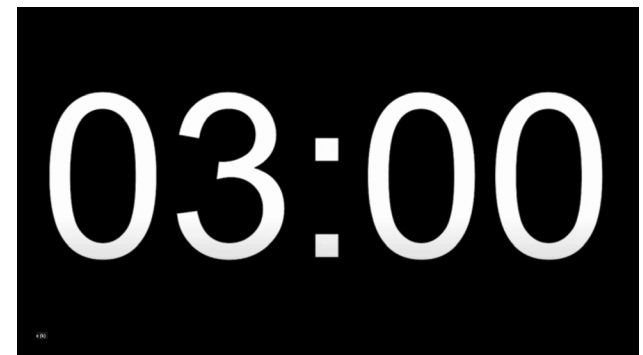
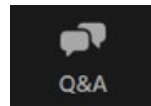
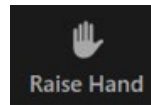
- Be concise
- Stay on topic
- Respect others' opinions
- Comments will be recorded
- Written comments are encouraged



Public Comments

Via the Zoom Platform

- Click the Raise Hand icon to be called on
- Submit comments in the Q&A box



By Telephone

- Dial *9 to request to raise hand



Thank you for joining!

Mailing Address:

Boris Sanchez, CPUC

C/O Environmental Science Associates, Attn. M. Hensel

775 Baywood Drive; Suite 100 Petaluma, CA 94954

E-mail: CalCitySub@esassoc.com

Scoping comments will be accepted through December 8, 2023

Webpage: <https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/CalCity/index.html>



Appendix E

Scoping Meeting Transcripts

WEBVTT

1

00:00:00.560 --> 00:00:01.240

Maria Hensel, ESA: Hmm!

2

00:00:04.030 --> 00:00:06.089

Maria Hensel, ESA: A few discussion guidelines

3

00:00:07.780 --> 00:00:16.350

Maria Hensel, ESA: for the scoping meeting. Be concise if you can. Stay on topic. please respect others opinions.

4

00:00:18.070 --> 00:00:20.119

Maria Hensel, ESA: comments will be recorded.

5

00:00:21.160 --> 00:00:22.880

Maria Hensel, ESA: Written comments are encouraged.

6

00:00:23.230 --> 00:00:29.310

Maria Hensel, ESA: And please limit your comments to 3 min to give everyone a chance to provide input today.

7

00:00:34.140 --> 00:00:36.010

Maria Hensel, ESA: If you're calling in by phone.

8

00:00:36.710 --> 00:00:42.910

Maria Hensel, ESA: and you'd like to speak, please dial star 9 on your phone's keypad to request to speak.

9

00:00:44.350 --> 00:00:49.010

Maria Hensel, ESA: or if using the Zoom Platform, please press the raised hand icon.

10

00:00:49.780 --> 00:00:52.599

Maria Hensel, ESA: or submit your comments in the Q And A Box.

11

00:00:55.930 --> 00:00:57.840

Maria Hensel, ESA: And now we'd like to hear your input.

12

00:00:59.170 --> 00:01:02.589

Maria Hensel, ESA: it looks like we have one hand raised so far.

13

00:01:02.880 --> 00:01:06.899

Maria Hensel, ESA: Judy Herman. So I'm gonna hand it over to Stephen to

14

00:01:13.730 --> 00:01:23.330

Judy Hermann: mute. Okay, my property is section 25, township 11, range 10,

15

00:01:23.660 --> 00:01:30.020

Judy Hermann: and it looks like the yeah when I did the habitat

16

00:01:30.110 --> 00:01:46.099

Judy Hermann: site map, it looks like it's going right through the property. Is this going to be where the underground cables are? Or is this the wired

17

00:01:46.210 --> 00:01:51.740

Judy Hermann: terminals I'm see north of?

18

00:01:52.370 --> 00:01:57.190

Judy Hermann: Right at the you know. Do you see where I am

19

00:01:57.380 --> 00:01:58.990

Judy Hermann: where my property is.

20

00:02:02.810 --> 00:02:04.070

Judy Hermann: can you?

21

00:02:04.250 --> 00:02:09.550

Matt Fagundes, ESA: I'm sorry I don't. I don't think we have a map up it.

22

00:02:09.850 --> 00:02:17.580

Judy Hermann: That indicates where that property is. Is in the vicinity of Cal City substation. Yes. is

23

00:02:17.780 --> 00:02:29.420

Judy Hermann: Let me see, I think it's Rosamond Boulevard. It goes it. It's right right north of the freeway interchange.

24

00:02:31.080 --> 00:02:39.570

Judy Hermann: and it's east of way east of California City Boulevard, and it's between California City Boulevard and

25

00:02:39.700 --> 00:02:42.440

Judy Hermann: what is that Castle Butte drive?

26

00:02:42.470 --> 00:02:45.940

Judy Hermann: I think it's Rosamond

27

00:02:46.700 --> 00:02:49.609

Judy Hermann: boulevard that it's right.

28

00:02:49.750 --> 00:02:51.330

Judy Hermann: It's right off of right.

29

00:02:51.490 --> 00:02:56.389

Judy Hermann: But east west of that. Oh, gosh! Like

30

00:02:57.150 --> 00:03:01.559

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Judy, if I can give you my email address. Can you

31

00:03:02.560 --> 00:03:06.550

Matt Fagundes, ESA: provide me that information? We can get back to you on that?

32

00:03:07.080 --> 00:03:09.080

Judy Hermann: Okay, sure. What is it?

33

00:03:09.660 --> 00:03:21.999

Matt Fagundes, ESA: It's M FAGUNDES at ESA ssoc.com

34

00:03:22.480 --> 00:03:26.239

Judy Hermann: ESAS SOC

35

00:03:26.280 --> 00:03:28.320

Matt Fagundes, ESA: dot com correct.

36

00:03:29.650 --> 00:03:53.510

Matt Fagundes, ESA: we'd be glad to look at those maps and and find out exactly where your property is relative to the property tower. That is right next door. The underground component is right, pretty much on the grounds of the substation. So it's likely that there are towers in that area.

37

00:03:54.010 --> 00:03:56.540

Judy Hermann: Okay? And how tall are the Towers.

38

00:03:57.370 --> 00:04:04.080

Matt Fagundes, ESA: I don't have that information offhand. But again, if you send me those questions, we can get right back to you.

39

00:04:04.410 --> 00:04:05.430

Judy Hermann: Okay.

40

00:04:05.580 --> 00:04:16.179

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: And, Judy, if you have any trouble with that email address that you wrote down, the website will have all the information as well for an email and where to leave a voicemail and we'll be sure to get back to you.

41

00:04:16.339 --> 00:04:20.040

Judy Hermann: Okay. thank you very much, of course. Thank you.

42

00:04:32.490 --> 00:04:41.189

Maria Hensel, ESA: Okay, I don't currently see any other hands raised. Does anyone else have interest in providing some input or have questions?

43

00:04:42.240 --> 00:04:43.410

Maria Hensel, ESA: If so.

44

00:04:45.200 --> 00:04:46.300

Maria Hensel, ESA: raise your hand.

45

00:04:57.800 --> 00:04:59.689

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Maybe we could wait another

46

00:05:00.690 --> 00:05:04.289

Matt Fagundes, ESA: 5 min, 10 min or so. See if anyone else joins.

47

00:05:08.390 --> 00:05:15.740

Matt Fagundes, ESA: And again, if you do not want to provide verbal input, please feel free to provide written input.

48

00:05:16.520 --> 00:05:21.499

Matt Fagundes, ESA: the addresses we provided earlier.

49

00:05:31.660 --> 00:05:34.379

Maria Hensel, ESA: Okay, we have a few

50

00:05:37.160 --> 00:05:42.659

Maria Hensel, ESA: Karen Macedonian. Macedonio is requesting to speak.

51

00:05:43.970 --> 00:05:45.579

Maria Hensel, ESA: and there are a few others.

52

00:05:45.910 --> 00:05:55.990

Karen Macedonio: Macedonio. I am a council member for the city of California City. I'm wondering if these slides are accessible so that I can

53

00:05:56.150 --> 00:06:02.689

Karen Macedonio: tell residents where they can go get more information. Or if there's a recording of this.

54

00:06:06.100 --> 00:06:10.889

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: the slides will be available once this meeting is concluded, and you can

55

00:06:11.030 --> 00:06:16.889

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: feel free to share this information for the next meeting that will be taking place at 6 30 as well.

56

00:06:17.120 --> 00:06:25.930

Karen Macedonio: Okay. So do you just sign in with our email to get in, do you just automatically send the slides out? Or are they on your website.

57

00:06:27.510 --> 00:06:33.469

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Matt? Stephen? Do you know, if it's just to be posted on the website, it will be posted on the website. But

58

00:06:35.050 --> 00:06:39.429

Matt Fagundes, ESA: oh, actually it, it's a pretty big file, that PowerPoint presentation.

59

00:06:39.780 --> 00:06:44.709

Matt Fagundes, ESA: I was going to offer to send it out. But some email accounts can't

60

00:06:44.910 --> 00:06:46.479

Matt Fagundes, ESA: handle it.

61

00:06:46.820 --> 00:06:49.719

Matt Fagundes, ESA: we will eventually be posting this on

62

00:06:51.050 --> 00:06:52.910

Matt Fagundes, ESA: the CPUC's

63

00:06:52.960 --> 00:06:55.370

Matt Fagundes, ESA: web page, though not immediately.

64

00:06:55.480 --> 00:06:57.299

Matt Fagundes, ESA: we provided a link to the project web page.

65

00:06:58.010 --> 00:07:10.630

Karen Macedonio: okay. So if our residents didn't get a chance to know about this today, and they're not available tonight, their next opportunity is the EIR draft correct?

66

00:07:10.960 --> 00:07:24.689

Matt Fagundes, ESA: They can still provide written comments through next Friday related to this scoping, and then after that, right correct, it'll be We anticipate that draft EIR will be ready sometime.

67

00:07:24.860 --> 00:07:27.099

Matt Fagundes, ESA: early to mid

68

00:07:27.290 --> 00:07:37.799

Karen Macedonio: next year. Okay, so could you please email me the addresses where the written comments could go so that I can make that available on the city website?

69

00:07:39.540 --> 00:07:42.270

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Yes, Steven, do you want? Can you? So, I think on the next slide we have that information as well.

70

00:07:42.860 --> 00:07:49.830

Karen Macedonio:

71

00:07:54.320 --> 00:08:00.640

Maria Hensel, ESA: And, Karen, I can get you a copy of this presentation. After this call.

72

00:08:01.110 --> 00:08:03.500

Maria Hensel, ESA: if you'd like to.

73

00:08:04.470 --> 00:08:08.879

Maria Hensel, ESA: do you submit a comment. Through the scoping email.

74

00:08:08.990 --> 00:08:13.299

Maria Hensel, ESA: The email is: calcitysub@esassoc.com.

75

00:08:13.380 --> 00:08:18.259

Maria Hensel, ESA: Yeah, I can send it to you. Okay, that would be perfect calcity.

76

00:08:19.960 --> 00:08:30.250

Karen Macedonio: I'm sorry I have a broken left wrist, so I only have one hand to use. Even writing is difficult calcity sub at Esa.

77

00:08:31.780 --> 00:08:34.510

Maria Hensel, ESA: ssoc.com.

78

00:08:34.539 --> 00:08:41.759

Karen Macedonio: Okay, perfect cause. I wanna make sure that if any of our residents have comments that they have the opportunity to make them

79

00:08:42.400 --> 00:08:44.389

Matt Fagundes, ESA: absolutely, we appreciate that.

80

00:08:44.630 --> 00:08:45.610

Karen Macedonio: Thank you.

81

00:08:49.490 --> 00:08:57.990

Maria Hensel, ESA: Okay. Next up looks like we have. J. Gerhard. To comment.

82

00:09:00.600 --> 00:09:09.699

jgerhard: yeah, Hi, I had a question. I have a couple pieces of land that are affected by this this project, and one of them is pretty close to

83

00:09:09.870 --> 00:09:12.329

jgerhard: the tortoise preserve, and I just wondered.

84

00:09:12.440 --> 00:09:24.470

jgerhard: how do you guys handle work if you're you know digging or come across one of these critters? What do you do? Do you stop work? And a team comes out and relocates it, or what do you do? In that case?

85

00:09:31.470 --> 00:09:32.180

Maria Hensel, ESA:

86

00:09:33.200 --> 00:09:42.960

Maria Hensel, ESA: I guess I could take that one. We understand that some of the project will be traversing critical critical habitat areas for the desert tortoise.

87

00:09:44.330 --> 00:09:47.850

Maria Hensel, ESA: So this will be evaluated as part of the EIR.

88

00:09:48.150 --> 00:09:52.729

Maria Hensel, ESA: and there'll be mitigation measures. Most likely, and/or avoidance measures

89

00:09:53.350 --> 00:09:54.510

Maria Hensel, ESA: to address that.

90

00:09:56.470 --> 00:09:58.230

jgerhard: Okay, thank you.

91

00:10:08.010 --> 00:10:12.749

Maria Hensel, ESA: Okay. Looks like Judy Herman has raised her hand again.

92

00:10:16.830 --> 00:10:27.490

Judy Hermann: Actually, you answered it because I know I wanted clarification of the email address for Boris Sanchez. So thank you.

93

00:10:36.340 --> 00:10:46.009

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: And again, we'll be displaying that information on the next slide, for you know. Full. Thank you. And then the best way to to gather all this information is the project web page.

94

00:11:11.320 --> 00:11:20.639

Maria Hensel, ESA: Okay, if anyone else has a comment or would like to speak. I just want to remind you you can dial star 9 on your phone

95

00:11:21.140 --> 00:11:30.270

Maria Hensel, ESA: or press the raise hand, icon, if you can't find it, it's if you look at the more at the base of your screen, it should be a

96

00:11:30.870 --> 00:11:38.230

Maria Hensel, ESA: Icon it says more, and it has 3 dots above it, and it could click on it. And it'll give you an option to raise your hand.

97

00:12:13.900 --> 00:12:21.440

Matt Fagundes, ESA: whereas maybe we can wait 5 more minutes or so. See if anyone else decides to provide a comment.

98

00:12:22.120 --> 00:12:23.779

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: Okay, sounds great

99

00:12:27.200 --> 00:12:32.300

Matt Fagundes, ESA: and just want to reiterate that. You know it's not only verbal comments. If you

100

00:12:32.360 --> 00:12:36.349

Matt Fagundes, ESA: would rather submit your written comments, please go ahead and do that as well.

101

00:13:41.540 --> 00:13:44.280

Maria Hensel, ESA: Stephen. Maybe we could just go ahead to the next slide

102

00:13:58.030 --> 00:14:11.660

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: again. Thank you. Thanks everyone for joining the email address is listed on this slide to be made out to myself or bsanchezcpuc. Care of Environmental Science Associates.

103

00:14:11.900 --> 00:14:19.079

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: Attention to M. Hensel. 775, Baywood Drive, Suite 100 Petaluma, California.

104

00:14:19.160 --> 00:14:24.680

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: 94954. The email again is calcitysub@esassoc.com

105

00:14:24.840 --> 00:14:28.979

Boris Sanchez, CPUC:

106

00:14:29.950 --> 00:14:35.390

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: And as a reminder, you'll be able to the easiest way if you're online

107

00:14:35.960 --> 00:14:41.400

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: calling in, you'll be able to Google search CPUC, calcity, current projects.

108

00:14:41.580 --> 00:14:48.230

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: CPUC, and it'll take you to the CPUC website, and you can scroll utilities. SCE

109

00:14:48.320 --> 00:14:51.889

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: Calcity and the project information will be there.

110

00:14:51.900 --> 00:14:57.879

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: including phone numbers, emails, mailing address, and all information pertaining to this project

111

00:15:02.660 --> 00:15:11.160

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: and feel free to join us for the meeting at 6 30. If you feel like you had any questions that you wanted to answer in person.

112

00:15:15.980 --> 00:15:23.510

Maria Hensel, ESA: It looks like we have another person raising their hand. Karen Macedonia. Hope I got your name right.

113

00:15:24.520 --> 00:15:36.859

Karen Macedonio: Macedonia. We're getting better by the third time we've got it perfect. Could you repeat the Google search, whether the search words and the Google search that's going to be something easy for me to spread there. Yeah, that should be easier. So CPUC.

114

00:15:37.560 --> 00:15:38.869

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: Cal City

115

00:15:40.270 --> 00:15:47.209

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: current projects and the first link will lead everybody to a list of utilities and the projects.

116

00:15:47.510 --> 00:16:05.139

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: and as long as they search SCE, it's the second one currently listed. And that'll link directly to the project website. Okay, that's something I think I can do even with my technology demons. And

then I can tell other people how to find it. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Yes.

117

00:16:19.590 --> 00:16:21.159

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: wait 2 more minutes.

118

00:16:22.170 --> 00:16:25.909

We'll finish the meeting at 305. If no one has any further questions.

119

00:17:57.430 --> 00:18:09.210

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: Okay, with that, if there's no further questions, I think we conclude the first virtual meeting and again feel free to join the 6 30 virtual meeting and to follow up on the project website

120

00:18:09.450 --> 00:18:13.190

Boris Sanchez, CPUC: to find more ways to get in touch with us. Thank you very much.

121

00:18:14.830 --> 00:18:15.900

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Thank you. Everyone.

122

00:18:16.600 --> 00:18:17.549

Maria Hensel, ESA: Thank you.

WEBVTT

1

00:00:45.370 --> 00:00:50.319

Boris Sanchez: Good evening, everyone. We'll give everyone a few minutes before we get started today.

2

00:02:28.500 --> 00:02:30.760

Boris Sanchez: Welcome everyone. I'm starting in 2 minutes.

3

00:03:53.620 --> 00:04:05.610

Boris Sanchez: Okay, let's get started. This is CPUC. CEQA Scoping meeting second Virtual meeting for today for SCE's calcity substation 115 kv upgrade project.

4

00:04:06.250 --> 00:04:11.840

This meeting is being recorded, and the presentation will also be available once the meeting is concluded.

5

00:04:12.520 --> 00:04:22.530

Boris Sanchez: If you know anybody that would like to attend this meeting. Please go ahead and share the Zoom link or the phone number listed on the slide. Right now.

6

00:04:22.630 --> 00:04:34.160

Boris Sanchez: you can also share the QR code as well. And the project website is listed as well. And that website's going to have all the important information regarding this project, including

7

00:04:34.230 --> 00:04:40.089

Boris Sanchez: phone numbers mailing address and just any updates following along.

8

00:04:40.210 --> 00:04:43.679

Boris Sanchez: And for anybody on the phone.

9

00:04:43.990 --> 00:04:58.409

Boris Sanchez: you can reach this website by googling the keywords CPUC calcity current projects. It should be the first link. You can scroll through the utilities in bold and find calcity underneath the SCE

10

00:05:00.860 --> 00:05:04.569

Boris Sanchez: thread of the project Information. next slide.

11

00:05:06.300 --> 00:05:10.289

Boris Sanchez: So for the scoping meeting, the agenda is, we're going to start with introductions.

12

00:05:11.300 --> 00:05:24.749

Boris Sanchez: the purpose of the meeting, the application and permitting process, the environmental review process for CEQA, project overview, scoping environmental impacts and alternatives.

13

00:05:24.990 --> 00:05:29.090

Boris Sanchez: and we'll pause for public comments and then discuss next steps.

14

00:05:32.010 --> 00:05:44.420

Boris Sanchez: So for introductions. My name is Boris Sanchez. I'm the CPUC Project Coordinator, and with the lead agency. and the consultant is ESA Matt Fagundes is the ESA Project manager.

15

00:05:44.690 --> 00:05:48.899

Boris Sanchez: Maria Hensel, supporting staff along with the Olivia Silverstein who's on the call as well.

16

00:05:50.100 --> 00:05:54.389

Boris Sanchez: and the project applicant is Southern California, Edison, SCE.

17

00:05:57.720 --> 00:06:06.550

Olivia Silverstein: The purpose of the scope of meeting is to receive input from agencies and the public on the scope and content of the environmental impact report.

18

00:06:06.570 --> 00:06:09.229

Olivia Silverstein: Your ideas are welcome and invited.

19

00:06:12.500 --> 00:06:35.040

Olivia Silverstein: Scoping is the process of soliciting public and agency input regarding the scope and content of an EIR in advance of its preparation. 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.

20

00:06:38.200 --> 00:06:45.210

Olivia Silverstein: This flow chart shows a high-level overview of the CPUC's Permit to construct application process.

21

00:06:45.380 --> 00:06:59.500

Olivia Silverstein: In this case, Southern California, Edison is proposing to construct and operate the Cal City substation 115 KV Upgrade project and is seeking a permit to construct the project from the CPUC.

22

00:07:00.110 --> 00:07:07.780

Olivia Silverstein: The CPUC will have a discretionary decision to make as to whether or not to approve the permit to construct application.

23

00:07:11.120 --> 00:07:17.729

Olivia Silverstein: In order to inform the CPUC's decision on the project. The CPUC must comply with CEQA.

24

00:07:18.300 --> 00:07:33.499

Olivia Silverstein: The purpose of CEQA is to inform decision makers and the public about potential significant environmental effects of a proposed project, identify ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced.

25

00:07:33.580 --> 00:07:49.569

Olivia Silverstein: prevent significant avoidable damages to the environment through the use of alternatives or mitigations, and disclose the public the reason why a governmental agency approves the project if significant environmental effects are involved.

26

00:07:49.750 --> 00:07:53.820

Olivia Silverstein: CEQA Review focuses on physical impacts to the environment.

27

00:07:57.400 --> 00:08:01.559

Olivia Silverstein: This flow chart shows the CEQA process in general terms.

28

00:08:01.690 --> 00:08:07.710

Olivia Silverstein: scoping is one of the initial stages of the CEQA process and the stage we are currently in.

29

00:08:07.750 --> 00:08:10.360

Olivia Silverstein: It's shown in light green. In this chart

30

00:08:10.930 --> 00:08:31.600

Olivia Silverstein: the CPUC will document all public and agency input received during the scoping period in a scoping report to inform preparation of the draft EIR. There will also be a public review period

for the draft. EIR when it's available. And then a full EIR will be prepared to address all comments received on the draft EIR.

31

00:08:36.380 --> 00:08:50.639

Matt Fagundes, ESA: thanks, Olivia. So for the next few slides, we'll go over some of the content of an environmental impact report. The project. Description's an important part of an EIR. It needs to consider the whole of the project, including all construction.

32

00:08:50.990 --> 00:09:02.670

Matt Fagundes, ESA: operation and maintenance activities. The following slides will provide an overview of SCE's proposed Cal City 115 KV. Substation upgrade project.

33

00:09:09.030 --> 00:09:19.579

Matt Fagundes, ESA: The proposed project, as shown in this overview map, would be located in the city of California City, depicted by Gray on the map. and an unincorporated Kern and San Bernardino counties.

34

00:09:19.840 --> 00:09:30.599

Matt Fagundes, ESA: and also on lands managed by Federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, shown as tan here. and the US Department of Defense shown as purple on the map.

35

00:09:33.820 --> 00:09:42.520

Matt Fagundes, ESA: The project would include a 10 acre expansion of the existing 5 acre Cal City substation to upgrade the substation from 33,

36

00:09:42.690 --> 00:09:54.100

Matt Fagundes, ESA: 12 kv To 115 33 kv. And 115 12 kv. The substation will include 14 new underground, 12 kv. Distribution, getaways.

37

00:09:54.260 --> 00:09:58.220

Matt Fagundes, ESA: and 2 new underground 33 kv. Distribution getaways.

38

00:09:58.690 --> 00:10:06.819

Matt Fagundes, ESA: distribution getaways are the lower voltage distribution cables and conduit and vaults that go out just beyond the substation

39

00:10:07.070 --> 00:10:14.190

Matt Fagundes, ESA: where featured distribution lines that would connect to Southern California Edison customers would enter or exit the substation.

40

00:10:17.690 --> 00:10:25.530

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Let's see, here's a photo of Southern California, Edison's calcity substation just for reference of the topography out there.

41

00:10:28.090 --> 00:10:32.570

Matt Fagundes, ESA: The project will also include 2 new, 115 KV sub transmission lines.

42

00:10:32.870 --> 00:10:38.010

including a 42-mile overhead line from Kramer, substation to calcity, substation

43

00:10:38.560 --> 00:10:51.209

Matt Fagundes, ESA: shown here as the blue light and a 28-mile overhead line from cal city substation to Holgate Switchyard with that tap to Edward substation shown as the purple lights in this map.

44

00:10:51.900 --> 00:10:55.600

Matt Fagundes, ESA: There'll also be electrical and telecom upgrades

45

00:10:55.610 --> 00:10:59.670

Matt Fagundes, ESA: at the existing Kramer substation, Edwards substation

46

00:11:00.180 --> 00:11:07.659

Matt Fagundes, ESA: that Edwards Air Force Base. and at Holgate Switchyard indicated Here is the blue triangles at the bottom of the map.

47

00:11:11.290 --> 00:11:21.240

Matt Fagundes, ESA: with regards to the environmental analysis, the EIR will evaluate all the environmental resource areas shown here consistent with the CEQA guidelines. Appendix G.

48

00:11:24.380 --> 00:11:32.140

Matt Fagundes, ESA: EIR will include a section for each resource area that will define and describe the existing environmental and regulatory setting.

49

00:11:32.380 --> 00:11:45.699

Matt Fagundes, ESA: establish thresholds of significance, to define what would be considered a significant impact identify impacts of the proposed project and mitigation measures to reduce impacts, if significant impacts are identified.

50

00:11:46.590 --> 00:11:52.419

Matt Fagundes, ESA: and the sections will also identify any residual impacts after application mitigation measures.

51

00:11:52.970 --> 00:12:00.199

Matt Fagundes, ESA: In addition, cumulative impacts of the project and the impacts of the alternatives will also be evaluated for each issue.

52

00:12:03.590 --> 00:12:11.230

Matt Fagundes, ESA: In addition to environmental issues associated with the project. We're also looking for your input regarding the project alternatives to be evaluated in EIR

53

00:12:11.670 --> 00:12:18.769

Matt Fagundes, ESA: The EIR must identify a range of reasonable alternatives to avoid or substantially lessen significant effects of the project.

54

00:12:19.910 --> 00:12:28.930

Matt Fagundes, ESA: and the alternatives must be feasible from a legal, regulatory and technical standpoint, and must meet most of the basic objectives of the project

55

00:12:31.890 --> 00:12:46.779

Matt Fagundes, ESA: here are Southern California Edison's project objectives that are identified for the project and SCE's application materials. they are to add boat serving capacity and electrical needs. Area

56

00:12:47.080 --> 00:12:59.409

Matt Fagundes, ESA: improve system reliability within electrical needs, area improve system, operational flexibility by maintaining reliance. by minimizing reliance on Edwards substation

57

00:12:59.820 --> 00:13:18.359

Matt Fagundes, ESA: and to provide system reliability within electrical needs area by providing a diverse sub transmission line route to Edwards substation. As a CEQA lead agency. The CPUC may identify additional or different objectives during the environmental review to be considered for the purposes of alternative screening.

58

00:13:21.300 --> 00:13:28.570

Matt Fagundes, ESA: The alternatives that will be included in the EIR may include those considered or suggested by Southern California, Edison, the public.

59

00:13:28.810 --> 00:13:31.540

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Other agencies other than CPUC.

60

00:13:31.680 --> 00:13:42.590

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Or those developed by the CPUC CEQA Review team. The project alternatives could consist of different locations, different sub transmission, mine routes or other technology

61

00:13:42.650 --> 00:13:50.059

Matt Fagundes, ESA: for the proposed facilities or anything else that you could think of that adheres to the criteria. We discussed a couple slides ago.

62

00:13:50.920 --> 00:13:57.200

Matt Fagundes, ESA: The EIR must also evaluate a no project alternative, which is a scenario where neither the proposed project

63

00:13:57.500 --> 00:14:01.350

Matt Fagundes, ESA: nor a project alternative is approved or developed.

64

00:14:05.380 --> 00:14:14.880

Matt Fagundes, ESA: We're just about ready to hear your input. But first we wanted to remind you how to get involved in the CEQA Process for the CPUC's evaluation of Southern California Edison's project

65

00:14:15.930 --> 00:14:26.810

Matt Fagundes, ESA: for starters. If you're participating in the scoping meeting, you're on the right track. So please stay on, Provide your scoping input and we'll be starting that part of the meeting In a couple minutes.

66

00:14:28.140 --> 00:14:35.400

Matt Fagundes, ESA: the scoping process was kicked off with the publication of the notice of preparation of the EIR on November eighth.

67

00:14:36.040 --> 00:14:46.709

Matt Fagundes, ESA: and will be open through close of business on December eighth, which is next Friday. You can comment verbally at this meeting, or submit written comments via mail or email.

68

00:14:47.790 --> 00:15:02.839

Matt Fagundes, ESA: You'll also have an opportunity to comment on the draft, EIR. When that's released. Estimated to be some time in the

spring. Next year. You can also obtain information and updates on the project, including SCE's application materials

69

00:15:03.380 --> 00:15:10.180

Matt Fagundes, ESA: at the CPUC's web page for the project at the link at the bottom of the screen. There's also voicemail

70

00:15:10.400 --> 00:15:15.129

Matt Fagundes, ESA: number at that web page where you can leave us a message. If you have any questions.

71

00:15:18.740 --> 00:15:30.090

Matt Fagundes, ESA: excuse me. In addition to providing any verbal input at this meeting, we want to also encourage you to provide written comments by mail to Boris Sanchez at the CPUC.

72

00:15:30.720 --> 00:15:41.739

Matt Fagundes, ESA: There are environmental science associates. Attention. M. Hensel. At 775 Baywood Drive, Suite, 100 in Petaluma, California, 94954.

73

00:15:42.250 --> 00:15:54.070

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Or you can email Boris at calcitysub@esassoc.com. And just another reminder that all scoping comments and input must be provided by the scoping deadline

74

00:15:54.500 --> 00:15:59.640

Matt Fagundes, ESA: of next Friday by 5 PM. Which is December eighth.

75

00:16:02.540 --> 00:16:11.999

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Okay, now we're ready to open the meeting up to public comment. If anyone wants to provide a verbal comment on

76

00:16:12.630 --> 00:16:14.269

Matt Fagundes, ESA: the scope of the EIR

77

00:16:16.520 --> 00:16:21.879

Olivia Silverstein: thanks, Matt. Discussion. Guidelines are as follows, be concise.

78

00:16:22.100 --> 00:16:26.530

Olivia Silverstein: stay on topic. respect others opinions.

79

00:16:26.750 --> 00:16:31.669

Olivia Silverstein: comments will be recorded and written comments are also encouraged.

80

00:16:34.160 --> 00:16:38.729

Olivia Silverstein: If calling in by phone, please dial star 9 to request to speak.

81

00:16:38.850 --> 00:16:48.100

Olivia Silverstein: And if you're using the online Zoom Platform, please press the raise hand icon, or submit your comments in the Q and A Box.

82

00:16:48.350 --> 00:16:50.850

Olivia Silverstein: And now we would like to hear input.

83

00:17:17.069 --> 00:17:18.359

Olivia Silverstein: Joan Schmidt.

84

00:17:27.819 --> 00:17:34.699

Olivia Silverstein: Joan, you can go ahead and unmute yourself, and let us know what your comment is when you're ready.

85

00:17:36.240 --> 00:17:37.710

Joan Schmitt: Okay, can you hear me?

86

00:17:37.760 --> 00:17:46.650

Joan Schmitt: Yes, we can. Okay. My question is on the the purple line. It's going up from Edwards.

87

00:17:46.820 --> 00:17:48.260

Joan Schmitt: My!

88

00:17:48.520 --> 00:18:07.189

Joan Schmitt: Our property is really close to that would there be an easement there for that We would have to grant Or are you proposing to buy our property? Depending on how tall the tower would be? Cause? I

89

00:18:07.530 --> 00:18:14.130

Joan Schmitt: do believe that it's going to be above ground wires that's going to be going there and

90

00:18:14.190 --> 00:18:21.289

Joan Schmitt: Could you give me some information about the tower and the wires and that kind of stuff?

91

00:18:21.890 --> 00:18:26.929

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Yeah, I can. I think, answers some of those questions. So

92

00:18:27.590 --> 00:18:35.129

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Joan, it might be helpful if you could provide us some information on

93

00:18:35.510 --> 00:18:50.320

Matt Fagundes, ESA: the exact location of your property. If you could maybe provide us that information via email that we could get back to you and tell you exactly where the line is relative to your property.

94

00:18:50.880 --> 00:18:53.640

Matt Fagundes, ESA: The property does have a

95

00:18:54.740 --> 00:18:58.790

Matt Fagundes, ESA: I believe it's a 50. Let me check here.

96

00:18:59.910 --> 00:19:09.070

Matt Fagundes, ESA: A 50 foot wide ride of way 50 foot wide. Right of way.

97

00:19:09.630 --> 00:19:14.940

Matt Fagundes, ESA: And the towers are about 85 feet tall in that area.

98

00:19:17.050 --> 00:19:21.010

Matt Fagundes, ESA: I forget if you had any other questions.

99

00:19:21.420 --> 00:19:25.490

Matt Fagundes, ESA: that I didn't get to yet.

100

00:19:27.090 --> 00:19:35.389

Joan Schmitt: Okay, I will. I can go ahead and and send you an email with where the property is

101

00:19:37.700 --> 00:19:46.709

Matt Fagundes, ESA: that would be great. And that email is calcitysub@ESASSoc.com.

102

00:19:46.830 --> 00:19:53.639

Matt Fagundes, ESA: and we can get back to you. on specifically, if the line does cross your property.

103

00:19:53.810 --> 00:19:54.800

Joan Schmitt: Okay.

104

00:19:58.760 --> 00:19:59.570

Matt Fagundes, ESA: thank you.

105

00:20:06.280 --> 00:20:17.500

Matt Fagundes, ESA: And addition to providing verbal comments, just want to remind you that you can send written comments if you prefer, if you prefer to do that in lieu of providing oral comments, and that

106

00:20:17.640 --> 00:20:23.260

Matt Fagundes, ESA: you can use that same email address: calcitysub@esassoc.com.

107

00:20:41.330 --> 00:20:45.770

Matt Fagundes, ESA: I don't see any other hands raised, but maybe if we can wait for another

108

00:20:47.180 --> 00:20:48.530

Matt Fagundes, ESA: 5 min or so

109

00:21:01.820 --> 00:21:08.509

Boris Sanchez: while we wait as well. Stephen, do you mind just displaying the next slide so that the mailing list and the website information is available?

110

00:21:10.410 --> 00:21:11.240

Boris Sanchez: Thank you.

111

00:21:21.620 --> 00:21:25.859

Boris Sanchez: People who would be joining online.

112

00:21:26.650 --> 00:21:28.040

Boris Sanchez: for this recording

113

00:21:28.710 --> 00:21:33.930

it will be really helpful for you to just go through the web page and find the

114

00:21:34.710 --> 00:21:40.379

Boris Sanchez: the project website so that you can find all the information, including this mailing address, email.

115

00:21:40.850 --> 00:21:44.530

all current information on the project as we move along as well, so

116

00:21:45.020 --> 00:21:48.050

Boris Sanchez: feel free to to search that web page.

117

00:23:43.820 --> 00:23:48.819

Boris Sanchez: Yeah, we'll give it another minute. If you guys decide you have any more questions for verbal.

118

00:24:58.560 --> 00:25:06.299

Boris Sanchez: Okay, with that, since there are no further questions, I'd like to thank everybody for participating. I'd like to thank the ESA team for

119

00:25:06.680 --> 00:25:12.110

creating this presentation. The slides that we're working with today and for anybody

120

00:25:12.260 --> 00:25:16.430

Boris Sanchez: listening to this recording again, please visit the web page to

121

00:25:16.840 --> 00:25:24.319

Boris Sanchez: gather all the information that you need to have communication as this project. Move along. Thank you very much. Appreciate your time.

122

00:25:27.320 --> 00:25:29.239

Matt Fagundes, ESA: Thank you, everybody. Bye, bye.

123

00:25:29.980 --> 00:25:31.210

Olivia Silverstein: thank you.

Appendix F
Written Scoping Comments

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

November 16, 2023

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Nov 17 2023
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Boris Sanchez
CPUC
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: 2023110218, SCE Cal City Substation 115kV Upgrade Project, Kern and San Bernardino Counties

Dear Mr. Sanchez:

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) has received the Notice of Preparation (NOP), Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) or Early Consultation for the project referenced above. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code §21000 et seq.), specifically Public Resources Code §21084.1, states that a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. (Pub. Resources Code § 21084.1; Cal. Code Regs., tit.14, §15064.5 (b) (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5 (b))). If there is substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before a lead agency, that a project may have a significant effect on the environment, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) shall be prepared. (Pub. Resources Code §21080 (d); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 5064 subd.(a)(1) (CEQA Guidelines §15064 (a)(1))). In order to determine whether a project will cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, a lead agency will need to determine whether there are historical resources within the area of potential effect (APE).

CEQA was amended significantly in 2014. Assembly Bill 52 (Gatto, Chapter 532, Statutes of 2014) (AB 52) amended CEQA to create a separate category of cultural resources, "tribal cultural resources" (Pub. Resources Code §21074) and provides that a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. (Pub. Resources Code §21084.2). Public agencies shall, when feasible, avoid damaging effects to any tribal cultural resource. (Pub. Resources Code §21084.3 (a)). **AB 52 applies to any project for which a notice of preparation, a notice of negative declaration, or a mitigated negative declaration is filed on or after July 1, 2015.** If your project involves the adoption of or amendment to a general plan or a specific plan, or the designation or proposed designation of open space, on or after March 1, 2005, it may also be subject to Senate Bill 18 (Burton, Chapter 905, Statutes of 2004) (SB 18). **Both SB 18 and AB 52 have tribal consultation requirements.** If your project is also subject to the federal National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.) (NEPA), the tribal consultation requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (154 U.S.C. 300101, 36 C.F.R. §800 et seq.) may also apply.

The NAHC recommends consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of your proposed project as early as possible in order to avoid inadvertent discoveries of Native American human remains and best protect tribal cultural resources. Below is a brief summary of portions of AB 52 and SB 18 as well as the NAHC's recommendations for conducting cultural resources assessments.

Consult your legal counsel about compliance with AB 52 and SB 18 as well as compliance with any other applicable laws.



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AB 52 has added to CEQA the additional requirements listed below, along with many other requirements:

- 1. Fourteen Day Period to Provide Notice of Completion of an Application/Decision to Undertake a Project:** Within fourteen (14) days of determining that an application for a project is complete or of a decision by a public agency to undertake a project, a lead agency shall provide formal notification to a designated contact of, or tribal representative of, traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes that have requested notice, to be accomplished by at least one written notice that includes:
 - a.** A brief description of the project.
 - b.** The lead agency contact information.
 - c.** Notification that the California Native American tribe has 30 days to request consultation. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1 (d)).
 - d.** A "California Native American tribe" is defined as a Native American tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC for the purposes of Chapter 905 of Statutes of 2004 (SB 18). (Pub. Resources Code §21073).

- 2. Begin Consultation Within 30 Days of Receiving a Tribe's Request for Consultation and Before Releasing a Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or Environmental Impact Report:** A lead agency shall begin the consultation process within 30 days of receiving a request for consultation from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1, subs. (d) and (e)) and prior to the release of a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration or Environmental Impact Report. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1 (b)).
 - a.** For purposes of AB 52, "consultation shall have the same meaning as provided in Gov. Code §65352.4 (SB 18). (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1 (b)).

- 3. Mandatory Topics of Consultation If Requested by a Tribe:** The following topics of consultation, if a tribe requests to discuss them, are mandatory topics of consultation:
 - a.** Alternatives to the project.
 - b.** Recommended mitigation measures.
 - c.** Significant effects. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.2 (a)).

- 4. Discretionary Topics of Consultation:** The following topics are discretionary topics of consultation:
 - a.** Type of environmental review necessary.
 - b.** Significance of the tribal cultural resources.
 - c.** Significance of the project's impacts on tribal cultural resources.
 - d.** If necessary, project alternatives or appropriate measures for preservation or mitigation that the tribe may recommend to the lead agency. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.2 (a)).

- 5. Confidentiality of Information Submitted by a Tribe During the Environmental Review Process:** With some exceptions, any information, including but not limited to, the location, description, and use of tribal cultural resources submitted by a California Native American tribe during the environmental review process shall not be included in the environmental document or otherwise disclosed by the lead agency or any other public agency to the public, consistent with Government Code §6254 (r) and §6254.10. Any information submitted by a California Native American tribe during the consultation or environmental review process shall be published in a confidential appendix to the environmental document unless the tribe that provided the information consents, in writing, to the disclosure of some or all of the information to the public. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (c)(1)).

- 6. Discussion of Impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources in the Environmental Document:** If a project may have a significant impact on a tribal cultural resource, the lead agency's environmental document shall discuss both of the following:
 - a.** Whether the proposed project has a significant impact on an identified tribal cultural resource.
 - b.** Whether feasible alternatives or mitigation measures, including those measures that may be agreed to pursuant to Public Resources Code §21082.3, subdivision (a), avoid or substantially lessen the impact on the identified tribal cultural resource. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (b)).

- 7. Conclusion of Consultation:** Consultation with a tribe shall be considered concluded when either of the following occurs:
- a.** The parties agree to measures to mitigate or avoid a significant effect, if a significant effect exists, on a tribal cultural resource; or
 - b.** A party, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.2 (b)).
- 8. Recommending Mitigation Measures Agreed Upon in Consultation in the Environmental Document:** Any mitigation measures agreed upon in the consultation conducted pursuant to Public Resources Code §21080.3.2 shall be recommended for inclusion in the environmental document and in an adopted mitigation monitoring and reporting program, if determined to avoid or lessen the impact pursuant to Public Resources Code §21082.3, subdivision (b), paragraph 2, and shall be fully enforceable. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (a)).
- 9. Required Consideration of Feasible Mitigation:** If mitigation measures recommended by the staff of the lead agency as a result of the consultation process are not included in the environmental document or if there are no agreed upon mitigation measures at the conclusion of consultation, or if consultation does not occur, and if substantial evidence demonstrates that a project will cause a significant effect to a tribal cultural resource, the lead agency shall consider feasible mitigation pursuant to Public Resources Code §21084.3 (b). (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (e)).
- 10. Examples of Mitigation Measures That, If Feasible, May Be Considered to Avoid or Minimize Significant Adverse Impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources:**
- a.** Avoidance and preservation of the resources in place, including, but not limited to:
 - i.** Planning and construction to avoid the resources and protect the cultural and natural context.
 - ii.** Planning greenspace, parks, or other open space, to incorporate the resources with culturally appropriate protection and management criteria.
 - b.** Treating the resource with culturally appropriate dignity, taking into account the tribal cultural values and meaning of the resource, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - i.** Protecting the cultural character and integrity of the resource.
 - ii.** Protecting the traditional use of the resource.
 - iii.** Protecting the confidentiality of the resource.
 - c.** Permanent conservation easements or other interests in real property, with culturally appropriate management criteria for the purposes of preserving or utilizing the resources or places.
 - d.** Protecting the resource. (Pub. Resource Code §21084.3 (b)).
 - e.** Please note that a federally recognized California Native American tribe or a non-federally recognized California Native American tribe that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC to protect a California prehistoric, archaeological, cultural, spiritual, or ceremonial place may acquire and hold conservation easements if the conservation easement is voluntarily conveyed. (Civ. Code §815.3 (c)).
 - f.** Please note that it is the policy of the state that Native American remains and associated grave artifacts shall be repatriated. (Pub. Resources Code §5097.991).
- 11. Prerequisites for Certifying an Environmental Impact Report or Adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration or Negative Declaration with a Significant Impact on an Identified Tribal Cultural Resource:** An Environmental Impact Report may not be certified, nor may a mitigated negative declaration or a negative declaration be adopted unless one of the following occurs:
- a.** The consultation process between the tribes and the lead agency has occurred as provided in Public Resources Code §21080.3.1 and §21080.3.2 and concluded pursuant to Public Resources Code §21080.3.2.
 - b.** The tribe that requested consultation failed to provide comments to the lead agency or otherwise failed to engage in the consultation process.
 - c.** The lead agency provided notice of the project to the tribe in compliance with Public Resources Code §21080.3.1 (d) and the tribe failed to request consultation within 30 days. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (d)).

The NAHC's PowerPoint presentation titled, "Tribal Consultation Under AB 52: Requirements and Best Practices" may be found online at: http://nahc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/AB52TribalConsultation_CalEPAPDF.pdf

SB 18

SB 18 applies to local governments and requires local governments to contact, provide notice to, refer plans to, and consult with tribes prior to the adoption or amendment of a general plan or a specific plan, or the designation of open space. (Gov. Code §65352.3). Local governments should consult the Governor's Office of Planning and Research's "Tribal Consultation Guidelines," which can be found online at: https://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/09_14_05_Updated_Guidelines_922.pdf.

Some of SB 18's provisions include:

1. **Tribal Consultation**: If a local government considers a proposal to adopt or amend a general plan or a specific plan, or to designate open space it is required to contact the appropriate tribes identified by the NAHC by requesting a "Tribal Consultation List." If a tribe, once contacted, requests consultation the local government must consult with the tribe on the plan proposal. **A tribe has 90 days from the date of receipt of notification to request consultation unless a shorter timeframe has been agreed to by the tribe.** (Gov. Code §65352.3 (a)(2)).
2. **No Statutory Time Limit on SB 18 Tribal Consultation**. There is no statutory time limit on SB 18 tribal consultation.
3. **Confidentiality**: Consistent with the guidelines developed and adopted by the Office of Planning and Research pursuant to Gov. Code §65040.2, the city or county shall protect the confidentiality of the information concerning the specific identity, location, character, and use of places, features and objects described in Public Resources Code §5097.9 and §5097.993 that are within the city's or county's jurisdiction. (Gov. Code §65352.3 (b)).
4. **Conclusion of SB 18 Tribal Consultation**: Consultation should be concluded at the point in which:
 - a. The parties to the consultation come to a mutual agreement concerning the appropriate measures for preservation or mitigation; or
 - b. Either the local government or the tribe, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached concerning the appropriate measures of preservation or mitigation. (Tribal Consultation Guidelines, Governor's Office of Planning and Research (2005) at p. 18).

Agencies should be aware that neither AB 52 nor SB 18 precludes agencies from initiating tribal consultation with tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with their jurisdictions before the timeframes provided in AB 52 and SB 18. For that reason, we urge you to continue to request Native American Tribal Contact Lists and "Sacred Lands File" searches from the NAHC. The request forms can be found online at: <http://nahc.ca.gov/resources/forms/>.

NAHC Recommendations for Cultural Resources Assessments

To adequately assess the existence and significance of tribal cultural resources and plan for avoidance, preservation in place, or barring both, mitigation of project-related impacts to tribal cultural resources, the NAHC recommends the following actions:

1. Contact the appropriate regional California Historical Research Information System (CHRIS) Center (https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30331) for an archaeological records search. The records search will determine:
 - a. If part or all of the APE has been previously surveyed for cultural resources.
 - b. If any known cultural resources have already been recorded on or adjacent to the APE.
 - c. If the probability is low, moderate, or high that cultural resources are located in the APE.
 - d. If a survey is required to determine whether previously unrecorded cultural resources are present.
2. If an archaeological inventory survey is required, the final stage is the preparation of a professional report detailing the findings and recommendations of the records search and field survey.
 - a. The final report containing site forms, site significance, and mitigation measures should be submitted immediately to the planning department. All information regarding site locations, Native American human remains, and associated funerary objects should be in a separate confidential addendum and not be made available for public disclosure.
 - b. The final written report should be submitted within 3 months after work has been completed to the appropriate regional CHRIS center.

3. Contact the NAHC for:
 - a. A Sacred Lands File search. Remember that tribes do not always record their sacred sites in the Sacred Lands File, nor are they required to do so. A Sacred Lands File search is not a substitute for consultation with tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the project's APE.
 - b. A Native American Tribal Consultation List of appropriate tribes for consultation concerning the project site and to assist in planning for avoidance, preservation in place, or, failing both, mitigation measures.

4. Remember that the lack of surface evidence of archaeological resources (including tribal cultural resources) does not preclude their subsurface existence.
 - a. Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plan provisions for the identification and evaluation of inadvertently discovered archaeological resources per Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15064.5(f) (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(f)). In areas of identified archaeological sensitivity, a certified archaeologist and a culturally affiliated Native American with knowledge of cultural resources should monitor all ground-disturbing activities.
 - b. Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plans provisions for the disposition of recovered cultural items that are not burial associated in consultation with culturally affiliated Native Americans.
 - c. Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plans provisions for the treatment and disposition of inadvertently discovered Native American human remains. Health and Safety Code §7050.5, Public Resources Code §5097.98, and Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15064.5, subdivisions (d) and (e) (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5, subds. (d) and (e)) address the processes to be followed in the event of an inadvertent discovery of any Native American human remains and associated grave goods in a location other than a dedicated cemetery.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at my email address:
Cameron.Vela@nahc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Cameron Vela

Cameron Vela
Cultural Resources Analyst

cc: State Clearinghouse

From: [Judy Hermann](#)
To: [Matthew Fagundes](#)
Cc: [Sanchez, Boris](#); [Maria Hensel](#); [CalCitySub](#)
Subject: Re: CalCity substation
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 6:46:58 AM

Thank you for the information.

Judy Hermann

On Mon, Dec 4, 2023, 5:48 AM Matthew Fagundes <MFagundes@esassoc.com> wrote:

Thank you for your participation at the scoping meeting, Judy.

Based on the blue square in your attached image, it appears that the proposed Cal City-Edwards-Holgate 115 kV Subtransmission Line would be approximately 250 feet east of the indicated property. The subtransmission line would parallel the west side of 140th Street at a distance of approximately 70 feet from the centerline of the road. The nearest subtransmission line structures associated with the line would be about 200 feet north (structure 4194-1) and 550 feet north (structure 4193-1) of Glendower Avenue.

The light-weight steel structures would have a height of 85 feet.

Matt

Matthew Fagundes

Air Quality & Acoustics Analyst IV

ESA | Environmental Science Associates
707.815.7331 **direct**

We've Moved! Please update your records: 775 Baywood Drive, Suite 100, Petaluma, CA 94954.

From: Judy Hermann <hermannja@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 4:16 PM
To: Matthew Fagundes <MFagundes@esassoc.com>
Subject: CalCity substation

Is my folks' property next to a tower? How tall are they?

Thank you

Judy Hermann

Parcel: 234-310-26

I want to...

Description

[View Assessor's Property Profile](#) | [View Assessor's Parcel Map](#)

Attribute Preview

APN: 234-310-26
 Address:
 Approximate 2.59
 Acreage:
 Legal Type: S
 Short Legal: SECTION 25 , TOWNSHIP 11 ,
 RANGE 10 , QUARTER
 Tax Rate Area: 098017
 Use Code: 0060
 Roll Type: 1
 Land Value: 3300
 Mineral Value: 0
 Improvement Value: 0
 Other Imp's and
 Fixtures Value:
 Personal Property
 Value: 0
 Exemption Value: 0
 Exemption Type:
 ATN: 23431026010

Details

APN_LABEL
 234-310-26

Layers Parcel: 234-310-26



0 0.2 0.4mi
 Scale 1: 36,112 Go



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISORS

Phillip Peters District 1
Zack Scrivner District 2
Jeff Flores District 3
David Couch District 4
Leticia Perez District 5



KATHLEEN KRAUSE
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, CA 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay (800) 735-2929

Thursday, November 30, 2023

Boris Sanchez, CPUC c/o Environmental Science Associates
Attn. M. Hensel Cal City Project
775 Baywood Drive, Suite 100
Petaluma, CA 94954

**RE: Southern California Edison Company's Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project
(Application No. A.23-03-005)**

Dear Mr. Boris,

I write on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to request that California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) expedite Southern California Edison Company's Cal City Substation 115 kV Upgrade Project (Application No. A.23-03-005).

Among the most critical reasons that we support this project and request that it be expedited are:

1. Kern County's economy is in transition. The Board of Supervisors, in partnership with the community, is working to improve the economic viability of Kern County by facilitating the creation and retention of new jobs. To do this, we must have increased electrical capacity.
2. In addition to resolving electrical capacity in California City, this project will provide resiliency to Edwards Air Force Base and has the potential of providing capacity for additional renewable projects in the region that will enable the State to meet its Green House Gas reduction goals.

We respectfully ask that CPUC commit to expediting the aforementioned project within Kern County and appreciate your consideration of our request. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact our Chief Administrative Officer, James Zervis, at zervisj@kerncounty.com or (661) 868-3198.

Sincerely,

Jeff Flores, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Alice Reynolds, President, California Public Utilities Commission
Dee Dee Myers, Senior Advisor & Director, Governor's Office of Business &
Economic Development (GoBiz)
Honorable Members, Kern County Legislative Delegation
Michael Backstrom, Vice President, Regulatory Affairs, SCE
Andrew R. Baldonado, Vice President, State Public Affairs, SCE
Larry Chung, Vice President, Local Public Affairs, SCE
Calvin Rossi, Region Manager, SCE
Lorelei Oviatt, Director, Kern County Planning & Natural Resources Department
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange
Carter Wetch & Associates
Karen Douglas, Assigned Commissioner for the CPUC
Karen Mouritsen California State Director, BLM
Michelle Lynch , California Desert District Manager, BLM
Brandon Anderson, California Desert District Assistant District Manager

From: [J Schmitt](#)
To: [CalCitySub](#)
Subject: Cal City Property
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 2:52:23 PM

I'm writing on behalf of my family regarding the property APN 234-310-26-01-0, James and Sarah Lee Trust. My sister Judy Hermann has forwarded the information to us that the 85 foot tower will be installed on the next property over from ours. Which will affect our property value. So are you planning on purchasing any of the properties?

Sent from my iPhone



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710
(559) 243-4005
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



December 7, 2023

Boris Sanchez
California Public Utilities Commission
c/o Environmental Science Associates
775 Baywood Drive, Suite 100
Petaluma, California 94954

Subject: Cal City Substation 115kV Upgrade Project (Project)
Notice of Preparation (NOP)
State Clearinghouse No. 2023110218

Dear Boris Sanchez:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a NOP for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) from the California Public Utilities Commission, as Lead Agency for the Project pursuant the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.¹

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, CDFW appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under Fish and Game Code.

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California's **Trustee Agency** for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State (Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a)). CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (*Id.*, § 1802). Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public

¹ CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

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agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources. CDFW is also submitting comments as a **Responsible Agency** under CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381). CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As proposed, for example, the Project may be subject to CDFW's lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority (Fish & G. Code, § 1600 et seq.). Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in "take" as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.), related authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code will be required.

CDFW has jurisdiction over actions with potential to result in the disturbance or destruction of active nest sites or the unauthorized take of birds. Fish and Game Code sections that protect birds, their eggs, and nests include section 3503 (regarding unlawful take, possession or needless destruction of the nest or eggs of any bird), section 3503.5 (regarding the take, possession or destruction of any birds-of-prey or their nests or eggs), and section 3513 (regarding unlawful take of any migratory nongame bird).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Proponent: Southern California Edison

Description and Objective: The Project is proposed to include the expansion of the existing five-acre Cal City Substation by approximately 10 acres to upgrade the substation from 33/12 kV to 115/33 kV and 115/12 kV. Fourteen new underground 12 kV distribution getaways and two new underground 33 kV distribution getaways from the Cal City Substation are also proposed. The Project would include construction of two new 115 kV subtransmission lines, a 42-mile overhead line from Kramer Substation to Cal City Substation, and a new overhead 28-mile line from Cal City Substation to Holgate Switchyard with a tap line to serve Edwards Substation location on Edwards Air Force Base. The proposed new 115 kV subtransmission lines would be installed with telecommunication cables and telecommunication improvements would also be installed at the existing Holgate Switchyard and Cal City, Kramer, and Edwards substations. The Project would require electrical infrastructure improvements to accommodate the new 115 kV lines within the existing fence lines at Edwards Substation, Holgate Switchyard, and Kramer Substation.

The Project would also include the transfer of several miles of distribution lines onto the proposed new subtransmission lines. This would entail the transfer of approximately five total miles of existing 33 kV distribution lines to the Kramer-Cal City 115kV line structures and the removal of approximately 151 existing distribution structures along

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the line segments. Also included would be the transfer of approximately two miles of existing 33 kV and approximately two miles of existing 12 kV distribution lines to the new Cal City-Edwards-Holgate 115 kV lines structures and removal of approximately 90 existing distribution structures along the line segments.

Timeframe: Construction start date in 2026, and estimated construction would last 18 months

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The NOP lacks detailed information with regard to the footprint of the entire Project and does not address methods and materials, ground disturbance related to each activity, staging and laydown areas, and other specific Project-related activities that could threaten biological resources and result in potentially significant environmental impacts within the Project area. CDFW anticipates these details to be provided in the draft EIR, in addition to details such as specific locations of activities relative to private or public property and adjacent roads and the need for any night work.

Special-status species are known to exist in the vicinity of the Project, and the Project could potentially impact State and federally listed species. Aerial imagery of the Project boundary and its surroundings confirms that the Project area supports allscale saltbush (*Atriplex polycarpa*) and creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) habitats. Records from the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) document species that could potentially be impacted by Project activities. Special-status animal species that could be impacted include the State protected furbearing mammal desert kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis arsipus*); the State fully protected golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*); the State candidate endangered Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*); the State and federally threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*); the State threatened Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), and Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*); the State watch list prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*); and the State species of special concern American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), spotted bat (*Euderma maculatum*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), and gray vireo (*Vireo vicinior*).

The Project alignment is also within the geographic range of several special status plant species, including but not limited to the State candidate threatened western Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*); the State endangered and California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B.2 Barstow woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum mohavense*), Charlotte's phacelia (*Phacelia nashiana*), alkali mariposa-lily (*Calochortus striatus*), Red Rock poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora* ssp. *twisselmannii*), desert cymopterus (*Cymopterus deserticola*), and recurved larkspur (*Delphinium recurvatum*); the CRPR 1B.3 Creamy blazing star (*Mentzelia tridentata*); the CRPR 2B.2 sagebrush loeflingia (*Loeflingia squarrosa* var.

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artemisiarum) and pink funnel lily (*Androstephium breviflorum*); the CRPR 2B.3 Booth's evening-primrose (*Eremothera boothii* ssp. *boothii*); and the CRPR 4.2 Mojave fish-hook cactus (*Sclerocactus polyancistrus*), golden goodmania (*Goodmania luteola*), solitary blazing star (*Mentzelia eremophila*), Mojave spineflower (*Chorizanthe spinosa*), white pygmy-poppy (*Canbya candida*), and crowned muilla (*Muilla coronate*).

Mohave Ground Squirrel

The Project is within the historical range of Mohave ground squirrel and is located within the species' current distribution. Based on aerial imagery, the Project area contains suitable habitat (CDFW 2023a), which comprises all broadly described plant communities in the western Mojave Desert including saltbush scrub, creosote bush scrub, western Joshua tree woodland, and sagebrush scrub (Gustafson 1993).

CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a Mohave ground squirrel habitat assessment for a biological study report to be included with the draft EIR. If suitable habitat is identified, consultation with CDFW is recommended for guidance on developing a Project-specific survey methodology in advance of Project activity. CDFW recommends that the draft EIR require consultation regarding surveys and, if the surveys reveal the presence of Mohave ground squirrel, additional consultation with CDFW for guidance on whether the Project can avoid take of Mohave ground squirrel or for guidance on obtaining an Incidental Take Permit, pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081, subdivision (b).

Swainson's Hawk

Swainson's hawks exhibit high nest-site fidelity (CDFW 2016) and the Project may involve noise, groundwork, and movement of workers that could affect any nests that are present and potentially result in nest abandonment or other forms of reduced productivity. CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a habitat assessment for nest sites suitable for the species within the Project area and a 0.5-mile buffer, for a biological study report to be included with the draft EIR. CDFW recommends that the draft EIR describe protocol surveys to be conducted following the survey methods developed by the Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee (2000) within the nesting season immediately prior to Project activity in areas of suitable nesting habitat within the Project area and a 0.5-mile buffer. CDFW recommends maintaining a minimum no-disturbance buffer of 0.5 mile around active nests until the breeding season has ended or until a qualified biologist has determined that the birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest site for survival. If an active Swainson's hawk nest is detected during surveys and a 0.5-mile buffer is not feasible, it is also recommended that consultation with CDFW occur for guidance on how to implement the Project and avoid take or to obtain an Incidental Take Permit, pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081, subdivision (b).

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CDFW also recommends compensation for the loss of Swainson's hawk foraging habitat as described in the "Staff Report Regarding Mitigation for Impacts to Swainson's Hawks" (Staff Report) (CDFG 1994) to reduce impacts to foraging habitat to less than significant. The Staff Report recommends that mitigation for habitat loss occur within a minimum distance of 10 miles from known nest sites; CDFW has the following recommendations for the Draft EIR:

- For projects within one mile of an active nest tree, a minimum of one acre of habitat management (HM) land for each acre of development is advised.
- For projects within five miles of an active nest but greater than one mile, a minimum of 0.75 acre of HM land for each acre of development is advised.
- For projects within 10 miles of an active nest tree but greater than five miles from an active nest tree, a minimum of 0.5 acre of HM land for each acre of development is advised.

Desert Tortoise

The Project area is within the known geographic range of desert tortoise (CDFW 2023a). Desert tortoise is most common in desert scrub, desert wash, and Joshua tree habitats (CDFW 2018a). Based on aerial imagery, the Project alignments contain desert scrub communities. CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a desert tortoise habitat assessment, for a biological study report to be included with the Draft EIR. Within areas of suitable habitat, CDFW recommends that the Draft EIR require protocol surveys over all areas (i.e., 100 percent coverage) proposed to be directly or indirectly affected by the Project, conducted following the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (2019) "Preparing for Any Action That May Occur Within the Range of the Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*)" prior to the start of Project activity, with survey results submitted to CDFW prior to Project activity.

To reduce the likelihood of nonconcurrency with proposed surveys, methodology, and qualifications of biologists, CDFW recommends working with the USFWS and CDFW concurrently to ensure a consistent and adequate approach to Project planning (USFWS 2019). If surveys reveal the presence of desert tortoise, it is also recommended that the Draft EIR require consultation with CDFW for guidance on how to implement the Project and avoid take of the species or for guidance on obtaining an Incidental Take Permit, pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081, subdivision (b).

Crotch's Bumble Bee

Crotch's bumble bee has been documented in the vicinity of the Project, which is within the current range of the species (CDFW 2023a and 2023b). The species is known to inhabit areas of grasslands and scrub that contain requisite habitat elements for nesting,

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such as small mammal burrows and bunch or thatched grasses. Based on aerial imagery, the Project appears to contain habitat suitable to support Crotch's bumble bee.

CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a habitat assessment for Crotch's bumble bee for a biological study report to be included with the Draft EIR. Foraging resources and potential nesting sites, which include all small mammal burrows, perennial bunch grasses, thatched annual grasses, brush piles, old bird nests, dead trees, and hollow logs are advised to be documented as part of the assessment. In areas of suitable habitat, CDFW recommends that the Draft EIR require a qualified biologist to conduct a bumble bee survey using a protocol developed according to the CDFW (2023b) "Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Candidate Bumble Bee Species," to identify bumble bees and potential nesting sites during the vegetation blooming period prior to activities at Project sites. If any Crotch's bumble bees or nests are detected, CDFW advises consultation with CDFW to develop adequate take avoidance measures, and if a nest is observed at any time, avoidance would also include protection for underground overwintering queens. If avoidance of take is not feasible, CDFW advises take authorization via an Incidental Take Permit, pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081, subdivision (b).

Burrowing Owl

Burrowing owls have been documented to occur near the Project alignment (CDFW 2023a). Burrowing owls inhabit open, dry grassland and desert habitats, and other landscape features containing small mammal burrows, a requisite habitat feature for nesting and cover (CDFW 2018b). Burrowing owls rely on burrow habitat year-round for their survival and reproduction. Based on aerial photography, potential habitat occurs both within and bordering the Project alignment.

CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a habitat assessment for burrowing owls, for a biological study report to be included with the Draft EIR. In areas of suitable habitat, CDFW recommends that the Draft EIR require presence/absence surveying for burrowing owl by a qualified biologist following the California Burrowing Owl Consortium (1993) "Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines" and CDFW's "Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation" (CDFG 2012). If burrowing owls are detected, CDFW recommends no-disturbance buffers as outlined in the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation during any ground-disturbing activities, as shown in the following table.

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Location	Time of Year	Level of Disturbance		
		Low	Med	High
Nesting sites	April 1-Aug 15	200 m*	500 m	500 m
Nesting sites	Aug 16-Oct 15	200 m	200 m	500 m
Nesting sites	Oct 16-Mar 31	50 m	100 m	500 m

* meters (m)

In the event that burrowing owls are found within these recommended buffers and avoidance is not possible, CDFW recommends that the Draft EIR analyze the potentially significant impact of excluding owls from a burrow. CDFW recommends that any burrow exclusion be conducted by qualified biologists and only during the non-breeding season, before breeding behavior is exhibited and after the burrow is confirmed empty through non-invasive surveillance methods. CDFW also recommends replacement of occupied burrows with artificial burrows at a ratio of one burrow collapsed to one artificial burrow constructed (1:1) as mitigation for evicting owls.

Desert Kit Fox

The Project is within the known geographic range of desert kit fox and this species is known to inhabit sparsely vegetated scrub habitats within the California desert that support small mammal populations (McGrew 1979). Based on aerial imagery, the Project area appears to have suitable habitat for desert kit fox denning and foraging.

Desert kit fox is protected under the California Code of Regulations, Chapter 5, Section 460, which prohibits take of the species for any reason. CDFW therefore cannot permit the incidental take of this species. CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a desert kit fox habitat assessment for the Project area, for a biological study report to be included with the Draft EIR. In areas of suitable habitat, CDFW recommends that the Draft EIR prescribe focused field surveys for the species and any sign, such as potential dens, prior to the start of Project activity. If any individuals or any active or potential dens are found, CDFW recommends consultation with CDFW for guidance on take avoidance measures for desert kit fox.

Special Status and Other Bat Species

The Project area is within the known geographic range of Townsend's big-eared bat, pallid bat, and spotted bat, and suitable habitat may be present for these species within the Project alignment (CDFW 2023a). CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a habitat assessment for day-roosting roosting bats in areas that could be impacted by Project activities, for a biological study report to be included with the draft EIR. CDFW recommends that for any suitable roosting sites, the draft EIR prescribe development of a robust study design by a qualified biologist to survey for bats. If

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Boris Sanchez
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roosting bats are found, CDFW recommends avoidance of occupied roosts, and consultation with CDFW for guidance on eviction of bats, if roost structures cannot be avoided, while avoiding nursery/maternal roosts where dependent young could be present.

Other Special Status Animal Species

The Project is within the known geographic range of American badger and suitable habitat for this species may be present within the Project area (CDFW 2023a). CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a habitat assessment for American badger for a biological study report to be included with the draft EIR. If potential habitat is present, CDFW recommends that the draft EIR direct a qualified biologist to conduct focused surveys for American badger and their requisite habitat features to evaluate potential Project impacts, and describe avoidance, minimization, and mitigation as warranted to address potentially significant impacts.

Western Joshua Tree

The Project is within the known geographic range of western Joshua tree, and the Project area provides habitat that is suitable for the species. CDFW recommends that a qualified botanist conduct focused surveys to identify the locations, number, and health of individuals as part of the biological technical studies conducted in support of the Draft EIR. If any western Joshua trees are identified at any time, CDFW recommends that the Draft EIR require a 290-foot no-disturbance buffer, which is warranted to avoid impacts to individual trees as well as potential impacts to the seed bank. Vander Wall et al. (2006) documented 290 feet as the maximum distance of seed dispersal when carried by rodents. If 290-foot buffers cannot be maintained to avoid trees and seeds, consultation with CDFW would be warranted regarding take authorization as allowed under CESA or the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act.

Other Special-Status Plant Species

Other plants listed pursuant to federal Endangered Species Act, CESA, and the Native Plant Protection Act, as well as other special status plants, may also occur in the Project area. Special-status plant species are threatened with habitat loss and habitat fragmentation resulting from development, vehicle and foot traffic, and introduction of non-native plant species (CNPS 2023). The Project has the potential to significantly impact populations of the species mentioned above if present.

CDFW recommends that a qualified botanist conduct a habitat assessment for special-status plant species, for a biological study report to include with the Draft EIR. If suitable habitat is present, CDFW recommends that the Draft EIR prescribe individual Project sites to be surveyed for special-status plants by a qualified botanist following the

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“Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities” (CDFW 2018c) during the blooming season prior to Project activities. If non-listed special-status plants are detected, CDFW recommends that they be avoided using a no-disturbance buffer of at least 50 feet from the outer edge of the plant population(s) or specific habitat type(s) required by special-status plant species. If buffers cannot be maintained, consultation with CDFW is recommended to determine appropriate minimization or mitigation measures. If a State-listed plant species is identified during botanical surveys, consultation with CDFW would be warranted to determine if the Project can avoid take or to comply with the Native Plant Protection Act and/or obtain take authorization pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081, subdivision (b) or California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 786.9, subdivision (b).

Riparian and Wetland Habitat Impacts

Based on aerial imagery, the Project area contains multiple streams and drainages. CDFW recommends that the Draft EIR include mapping and describe the methodology used in determining the extent of all streams, and associated wetlands in the Project area. CDFW recommends that the potential direct and indirect impacts to stream/riparian and associated wetland habitats be analyzed according to each Project activity. Based on those potential impacts, CDFW recommends that the Draft EIR include measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate those impacts. CDFW recommends that impacts to riparian habitat, including biotic and abiotic features, take into account the effects to stream function and hydrology from riparian habitat loss or damage, as well as potential effects from the loss of riparian habitat to special-status species already identified herein.

CDFW recommends that the Draft EIR require that losses to riparian habitats be offset with corresponding, appropriate habitat restoration.. If on-site restoration to replace habitats is not feasible, CDFW recommends offsite mitigation by restoring or enhancing in-kind riparian or wetland habitat and providing for the long-term management and protection of the mitigation area, to ensure its persistence.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS

Impacts to CDFW Lands: The NOP states that the Project would traverse one property within the CDFW West Mojave Desert Ecological Reserve in San Bernardino County. It is not clear from the materials provided where work would occur relative to the West Mojave Desert Ecological Reserve, which supports both Mohave ground squirrel and desert tortoise and is managed by CDFW for the protection of these and many other special status species.

California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 630 states “All ecological reserves are maintained for the primary purpose of developing a statewide program for protection of

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rare, threatened, or endangered native plants, wildlife, aquatic organisms, and specialized terrestrial or aquatic habitat types” and therefore, public access on these lands is restricted. CDFW requests that the draft EIR clearly describe the location(s) of and Project activities that are proposed on or adjacent to the properties, in addition to the details of any right-of-way or an easement that may exist on CDFW properties in the Project alignment. Absent an existing easement, encroachment onto the West Mojave Desert Ecological Reserve would not be allowed. Ongoing coordination with CDFW is necessary to address the Project alignment and work areas.

Lake and Streambed Alteration: Jurisdictional activities are subject to CDFW’s authority pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 1600 et seq. Fish and Game Code section 1602 requires an entity to notify CDFW prior to commencing any activity that may (a) substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream, or lake; (b) substantially change or use any material from the bed, bank, or channel of any river, stream, or lake (including the removal of riparian vegetation); (c) deposit debris, waste or other materials that could pass into any river, stream, or lake. “Any river, stream, or lake” includes those that are ephemeral, intermittent, or episodic, as well as those that are perennial, regardless of the duration, frequency, or volume of flow.

CDFW is required to comply with CEQA in the issuance of a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement; therefore, if the CEQA document approved for the Project does not adequately describe the Project and its impacts to lakes or streams, a subsequent CEQA analysis may be necessary for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement issuance. For information on notification requirements, please refer to CDFW’s website (<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/LSA>) or contact the CDFW staff listed below or the Lake and Streambed Alteration Program: the Central Region office at (559) 243-4593 or R4LSA@wildlife.ca.gov and the Inland Deserts Region at (909) 484-0523 or R6LSA@wildlife.ca.gov.

California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB): Please note that the CNDDDB is populated by and records voluntary submissions of species detections. As a result, species may be present in locations not depicted in the CNDDDB but where there is suitable habitat and features capable of supporting species. A lack of an occurrence record in the CNDDDB does not mean that a species is not present. In order to adequately assess any potential Project-related impacts to biological resources, surveys conducted by a qualified biologist during the appropriate survey period(s) and using the appropriate protocol survey methodology are warranted in order to determine whether or not any special status species are present.

Wildlife Movement and Connectivity: The Project area supports numerous biological resources and contains habitat connections and migratory pathways for many wildlife species. The Project area also supports movement across the broader landscape, sustaining both transitory, migratory, and permanent wildlife populations. CDFW

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recommends that on-site features that contribute to habitat connectivity be evaluated and maintained, and that aspects of the Project that could create physical barriers to wildlife movement and migration, including direct or indirect Project-related activities, be identified and addressed in the Draft EIR.

Project Alternatives Analysis: CDFW recommends that the information and results obtained from the biological technical surveys, studies, and analyses conducted in support of the Draft EIR be used to develop and modify the Project's alternatives to avoid and minimize impacts to biological resources to the maximum extent possible. When efforts to avoid and minimize have been exhausted, remaining impacts to sensitive biological resources may need to be mitigated to reduce impacts to a less than significant level, if feasible.

Cumulative Impacts: CDFW recommends that a cumulative impact analysis be conducted for all biological resources that will either be significantly or potentially significantly impacted by implementation of the Project, including those whose impacts are determined to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated or for those resources that are rare or in poor or declining condition and will be impacted by the Project, even if those impacts are relatively small (i.e., less than significant). CDFW recommends that cumulative impacts be analyzed using an acceptable methodology to evaluate the impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects on resources and be focused specifically on the resource, not the Project. An appropriate resource study area identified and utilized for this analysis is advised. CDFW staff is available for consultation in support of cumulative impacts analyses as a trustee and responsible agency under CEQA.

Federally Listed Species: CDFW recommends consulting with the USFWS on potential impacts to federally listed species, including but not limited to desert tortoise. Take under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) is more broadly defined than CESA; take under ESA also includes significant habitat modification or degradation that could result in death or injury to a listed species by interfering with essential behavioral patterns such as breeding, foraging, or nesting. Consultation with the USFWS in order to comply with ESA is advised well in advance of any ground-disturbing activities.

Nesting Birds: CDFW encourages that Project implementation occur outside the bird nesting season; however, if ground-disturbing or vegetation-disturbing activities must occur during the breeding season of February through mid-September, the Project applicant is responsible for ensuring that implementation of the Project does not result in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or relevant Fish and Game Codes as referenced above.

To evaluate Project-related impacts on nesting birds, CDFW recommends that a qualified wildlife biologist conduct pre-activity surveys for active nests no more than

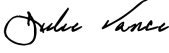
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10 days prior to the start of ground or vegetation disturbance to maximize the probability that nests that could potentially be impacted are detected. CDFW also recommends that surveys cover a sufficient area around the Project site to identify nests and determine their status. A sufficient area means any area potentially affected by the Project. In addition to direct impacts (i.e. nest destruction), noise, vibration, and movement of workers or equipment could also affect nests. Prior to initiation of construction activities, CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a survey to establish a behavioral baseline of all identified nests. Once construction begins, CDFW recommends having a qualified biologist continuously monitor nests to detect behavioral changes resulting from the Project. If behavioral changes occur, CDFW recommends halting the work causing that change and consulting with CDFW for additional avoidance and minimization measures.

If continuous monitoring of identified nests by a qualified wildlife biologist is not feasible, CDFW recommends a minimum no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet around active nests of non-listed bird species and a 500-foot no-disturbance buffer around active nests of non-listed raptors. These buffers are advised to remain in place until the breeding season has ended or until a qualified biologist has determined that the birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or on-site parental care for survival. Variance from these no-disturbance buffers is possible when there is compelling biological or ecological reason to do so, such as when the construction area would be concealed from a nest site by topography. CDFW recommends that a qualified wildlife biologist advise and support any variance from these buffers and notify CDFW in advance of implementing a variance.

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the NOP to assist the California Public Utilities Commission in identifying and mitigating Project impacts to biological resources. If you have any questions, please contact Benessa Galvan, Senior Environmental Scientist Specialist, at (559) 580-3197 or by email at Benessa.Galvan@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager

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ec: Kyle Maxwell
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