CHAPTER 1
Introduction

1.1 Purpose of This Document

Southern California Edison (SCE), in its California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) application for the Moorpark-Newbury 66 kilovolt (kV) Subtransmission Line Project (A.13-10-021), filed on October 28, 2013, requests a Permit to Construct (PTC) a new 66 kilovolt (kV) subtransmission line and related components pursuant to CPUC General Order (GO) No. 131-D (SCE, 2013a). This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is an informational document intended to disclose to the public and decision-makers the potential environmental impacts of the Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line Project (Proposed Project) proposed by SCE. This document assesses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that could occur as a result of the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Proposed Project and alternatives to the Proposed Project. The analysis in this document is based upon information submitted to the Lead Agency, the CPUC, as part of SCE's application for a permit to construct, operate, and maintain electrical facilities; SCE's Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) (SCE, 2013b); SCE's responses to the CPUC's requests for additional information; and from independent studies and research conducted by and on behalf of the CPUC.

This EIR examines all of the resource areas in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Appendix G Checklist and Appendix F, including: Aesthetics; Agriculture and Forestry Resources; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Energy Conservation; 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; and Utilities and Service Systems.

1.2 Project Overview

The Proposed Project would include constructing the new Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line and upgrading the existing Moorpark-Newbury-Pharmacy 66 kV Subtransmission Line to address forecasted overloads on a section of the existing line and to enhance reliability and operational flexibility. The Proposed Project is located within approximately 9 miles of existing SCE right-of-way (ROW) between SCE's Moorpark Substation and Newbury Substation, in the cities of Moorpark and Thousand Oaks, and in unincorporated Ventura County. A complete description of the Proposed Project is provided in Chapter 3, *Project Description*. In summary, the Proposed Project would consist of the following components:

- Installation of approximately 500 feet of new underground 66 kV subtransmission line and a new line position in the 66 kV switchrack entirely within Moorpark Substation.

- Installation of two tubular steel pole (TSP) foundations, four TSPs, the upper portion of one TSP, and approximately 5 miles of conductor on new and existing TSPs along the new Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line route on the south and east sides of SCE's existing Moorpark-Ormond Beach 220 kV ROW.

- Installation of eight TSP foundations, 13 double-circuit TSPs, approximately 3 miles of conductor on the new Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line, and reconductoring of 3 miles of the Moorpark-Newbury-Pharmacy 66 kV Subtransmission Line. Both of these subtransmission lines would be collocated on the new double-circuit TSPs. In addition, 14 existing lattice steel towers (LSTs) would be removed along this 3-mile segment.

- Installation of approximately 0.5 mile of conductor for the new Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line to be collocated with the Moorpark-Newbury-Pharmacy 66 kV Subtransmission Line on previously installed lightweight steel (LWS) poles into Newbury Substation. In addition, four TSP foundations, four TSPs, two LWS poles, and a new 66 kV subtransmission line position would be installed, and six wood poles would be removed at Newbury Substation. The existing subtransmission, distribution, and telecommunications facilities would be transferred onto the new TSPs and LWS poles.

Construction activities for the Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line project commenced in 2010. However all construction activity was halted in November 2011 due to issuance of CPUC Decision 11-11-019.[1] For the purposes of this CEQA review, the Proposed Project includes only those portions of the Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line project that have yet to be constructed. A description of past construction activities and the associated environmental effects are provided in Chapter 2, *Background*. A description of the environmental baseline, i.e., the environmental setting used to determine the impacts associated with the Proposed Project and alternatives, is provided in the introduction to Chapter 5, *Environmental Analysis*.

1.3 Proposed Project Objectives

Section 15126.6(a) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that a reasonable range of alternatives to a project be described and analyzed. The alternatives must feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the Proposed Project. Therefore, in order to guide CPUC's development and evaluation of alternatives, SCE was asked to identify its objectives for the Proposed Project. SCE identified the objectives for the Proposed Project in its PEA (SCE, 2013b) as follows:

- Add 66 kV subtransmission line capacity to meet forecasted electrical demand while providing long-term, safe and reliable electrical service in the electric needs area (ENA).

[1] CPUC Resolution E-4243 affirmed the findings of a previously issued CPUC Resolution E-4225 that found the project was exempt from PTC requirements. However, in response to the filing of an Application for a Rehearing of Resolution E-4243, CPUC issued Decision 11-11-019 in November 2011, which ordered SCE to cease construction activity, provide certain specified information, and file a PTC Application if it wished to build the project.

- Maintain sufficient voltage at the 66 kV substation buses during normal and abnormal system conditions.
- Provide greater operational flexibility to transfer load between 66 kV subtransmission lines and substations serving the ENA.
- Maintain and improve system reliability within the ENA.
- Utilize existing facilities constructed to date for the Project to minimize environmental impacts and shorten the construction schedule.
- Utilize existing ROW and manage existing ROW in a prudent manner in expectation of possible future needs.
- Design and construct the project in conformance with SCE's applicable engineering, design, and construction standards for substation, transmission, subtransmission, and distribution system projects.

According to SCE, the Proposed Project is needed to ensure the availability of safe and reliable electric service to meet customer demand in the ENA. Specifically, the Proposed Project would address: (1) a projected voltage drop that would exceed the acceptable 5 percent limit on the 66 kV bus at Newbury Substation under abnormal system conditions; and (2) a projected overload on the Moorpark-Newbury tap of the Moorpark-Newbury-Pharmacy 66 kV Subtransmission Line under a normal system configuration.

To better define the basic objectives of the Proposed Project for use in the alternatives screening process, the CEQA team conducted an independent assessment of the objectives. The basic project objectives identified by the CEQA team based on the additional analysis are:

- Add capacity to meet forecasted electrical demand while providing long-term, safe and reliable electrical service in the ENA.
- Maintain sufficient voltage in accordance with applicable requirements during normal and abnormal system conditions.
- Maintain system reliability within the ENA.
- Utilize existing ROW and manage existing ROW in a prudent manner in expectation of possible future needs.
- Maintain consistency with the Garamendi Principles passed in Senate Bill (SB) 2431 (Stats. 1988, Ch. 1457) by: (1) using existing ROW by upgrading existing transmission facilities, where technically and economically justifiable; and (2) encouraging the expansion of existing ROW when construction of new transmission lines is required, where technically and economically feasible (CEC, 2007).
- Design and construct the Proposed Project in conformance with SCE's applicable engineering, design, and construction standards for substation, transmission, subtransmission, and distribution system projects.
- Maintain consistency with CPUC GO 95.

Information on how the CEQA team developed the basic project objectives and used them in the alternatives screening process is provided in Chapter 4, *Project Alternatives*.

1.4 Agency Use of This Document

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

1.4.1 CPUC

Pursuant to Article XII of the Constitution of the State of California, the CPUC is charged with the regulation of investor-owned public utilities, including SCE. The CPUC is the Lead Agency for CEQA compliance in evaluation of the SCE's Proposed Project, and has directed the preparation of this EIR. This EIR will be used by the CPUC, in conjunction with other information developed in the CPUC's formal record, to act on SCE's application for a PTC for construction, operation, and maintenance of the Proposed Project. Under CEQA requirements, the CPUC will determine the adequacy of the Final EIR and, if adequate, will certify the document as complying with CEQA. If the CPUC approves a project with significant unavoidable environmental impacts, it must state why in a Statement of Overriding Considerations, which would be included in the CPUC's decision on the application.

1.4.2 Other Agencies

Several other state agencies will rely on information in this EIR to inform them in their decision over issuance of specific permits related to project construction, operation, and/or maintenance. In addition to the CPUC, state agencies such as the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and the Office of Historic Preservation would be involved in reviewing and/or approving the Proposed Project. On the federal level, an agency with potential reviewing and/or permitting authority includes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

No local discretionary (e.g., use) permits are required, since the CPUC has preemptive jurisdiction over the construction, operation, and maintenance of SCE facilities in California. SCE would still have to obtain all ministerial building and encroachment permits from local jurisdictions, and the CPUC's GO 131-D requires SCE to comply with local building, design, and safety standards to the greatest degree feasible to minimize project conflicts with local conditions. The CPUC's authority does not preempt special districts, such as air quality districts, or other state agencies or the federal government. SCE would obtain permits, approvals, and licenses as needed from, and would participate in reviews and consultations as needed with, federal, state, and local agencies as shown in **Table 1-1**, *Summary of Potential Permit Requirements.*

TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Permits and Other Requirements	Agency	Jurisdiction/Purpose
Federal		
Endangered Species Consultation (Section 7 or Section 10)	USFWS	If project has the potential to affect federally listed threatened or endangered species, consultation would be required
State		
Permit to Construct (PTC)	CPUC	Overall project approval and CEQA review
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction Stormwater Permit (NPDES)	RWQCB	Storm water discharges associated with construction activities disturbing more than 1 acre of land
Encroachment Permit	Caltrans	Construction, operation, and maintenance within, under, or over state highway (State Route 118) ROW
Endangered Species Consultation (California Endangered Species Act, California Fish and Game Code §2050 et seq., §3511, and §§1900-1913)	CDFW	Construction, operation, and maintenance that may affect a state-listed species or its habitat; incidental take authorization (if required)
Local		
Encroachment Permit	Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD)	Construction, operation, and maintenance in a VCWPD red-line stream that would alter the bed, bank or channel of the stream or is located within the floodway
Encroachment Permit (ministerial)	City of Moorpark City Thousand Oaks Ventura County	Construction, operation, and maintenance within, under, or over city road ROW
Tree Permit (ministerial)	City of Moorpark City Thousand Oaks Ventura County	Tree removal and trimming
After-hours Work Permit	City of Moorpark City of Thousand Oaks Ventura County	Construction activities outside of permitted hours
Private		
Railroad Crossing Permit	Union Pacific Railroad	Construction, operation, and maintenance within, under, or over railroad ROW

1.5 Public Review and Comment

1.5.1 Educational Outreach and Scoping

On Wednesday, March 26, 2014, the CPUC published and distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to solicit input from federal, state, and local agencies on the scope and content of information to be considered in this EIR for the Proposed Project. The NOP solicited both written and verbal comments on the EIR's scope during a 30-day comment period and provided information about an educational workshop/public scoping meeting. Additionally, the NOP presented the background, purpose, description, and location of the Proposed Project and potential issues to be addressed in the EIR.

In addition to the NOP, the CPUC notified the public about the educational workshop/public scoping meeting through legal advertisements in the Ventura County Star on March 28, 2014, and April 4, 2014; and the Proposed Project website at: http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/esa/Moorpark_Newbury/index.html. Notifications provided basic information about the Proposed Project; the date, time, and location of the scoping meeting; and a brief explanation of the public scoping process. The NOP and newspaper legal advertisements are presented in Appendix A.

The CPUC conducted the educational workshop/public scoping meeting on Thursday, April 10, 2014, at Santa Rosa Technology Magnet School, located at 13282 Santa Rosa Road, Camarillo, California. The meeting was held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Thirty-eight members of the public attended. Michael Rosauer of the CPUC; Michael Manka, Matt Fagundes, and Allison Chan of Environmental Science Associates (ESA), consultant to the CPUC also attended. Meeting attendees were provided with materials including presentation slides, written comment forms, and speaker cards. Copies of the NOP also were available upon request. During the workshop, the CPUC provided explanations concerning participants and their roles, the CPUC's decision and environmental review process, and the opportunities that existed for public participation. During the scoping meeting, the CPUC provided a Proposed Project overview, presented Proposed Project alternatives identified by SCE, solicited ideas about other possible alternatives, outlined next steps in the environmental review, and accepted public comments. The sign-in sheet from the scoping meeting and a copy of the scoping meeting presentation are provided in Appendix A.

Fifteen members of the public provided comments on the Proposed Project during the scoping meeting and the CPUC received additional comments in writing during the comment period, which closed on April 25, 2014. Appendix A of this Draft EIR contains the Scoping Report, which includes a detailed description of all verbal and written comments received, a description of comments that are not within the scope of CEQA, scoping meeting speaker cards, and copies of the written comments.

The overarching themes of the written and oral comments in the Scoping Report that fall within the purview of CEQA are as follows:

- Setting the baseline date for when environmental review should commence;
- Ensuring that alternatives are adequately addressed;
- Impacts on scenic views;
- Impacts from loss of agricultural land;
- Impacts to air quality from earth disturbance and vehicle emissions;
- Impacts to wildlife and plant life;
- Impacts to archaeological resources;
- Impacts to water quality and water runoff in the Proposed Project area;
- Impacts to the surrounding land uses;
- Noise impacts from operation of the subtransmission lines;
- Impacts to public health and safety;
- Impacts to the transportation systems; and
- Cumulative impacts.

1.5.2 Public Comment on the Draft EIR

This Draft EIR is being circulated to local, state, and federal agencies and to interested individuals who may wish to review and comment on the report. Appendix B provides a copy of the mailing list to whom the Draft EIR and /or Notice of Availability were sent. Written comments may be submitted to the CPUC during the 45-day public review period. Written and verbal comments on this Draft EIR will be accepted via regular mail, fax, and e-mail and at a noticed public meeting (either noticed in this document or under separate cover). All comments received will be addressed in a Response to Comments document, which, together with this Draft EIR, will constitute the Final EIR for the Proposed Project.

This Draft EIR identifies the environmental impacts of the Proposed Project on the existing environment, indicates how those impacts would be mitigated or avoided, and identifies and evaluates alternatives to the Proposed Project. This document is intended to provide the CPUC with the information required to exercise its jurisdictional responsibilities with respect to the Proposed Project, which would be considered at a separate noticed public meeting of the CPUC subsequent to publication of a Final EIR.

CEQA requires that a Lead Agency shall neither approve nor implement a project as proposed unless the significant environmental impacts have been reduced to an acceptable level. An acceptable level is defined as eliminating, avoiding, or substantially lessening significant environmental effects to below a level of significance. If the Lead Agency approves a project, even though significant impacts identified in the Final EIR cannot be fully mitigated, the Lead Agency must state in writing the reasons for its action. Findings of Fact and a Statement of Overriding Considerations must be included in the record of project approval and mentioned in the Notice of Determination (NOD).

1.6 Reader's Guide to This EIR

This EIR is organized as follows:

Executive Summary. Provides a summary description of the Proposed Project, the alternatives, their respective environmental impacts, and the Environmentally Superior Alternative. Also provides a summary table of the impacts and mitigation measures of the Proposed Project and alternatives.

Chapter 1, *Introduction*. Describes the purpose of this document and provides an overview of the Proposed Project including Proposed Project objectives, a brief description of public agency use of the EIR, and a discussion of the public review and comment process.

Chapter 2, *Background.* Provides an overview of past CPUC procedural activities and past construction activities associated with the Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission line, and a summary of environmental effects of past construction activities.

Chapter 3, *Project Description*. Provides a detailed description of the Proposed Project.

Chapter 4*, Project Alternatives*. Provides a description of the alternatives screening and evaluation process, describes the alternatives considered but eliminated from further analysis and the rationale therefore, and describes the alternatives analyzed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5*, Environmental Analysis*. Provides a comprehensive analysis and assessment of impacts and mitigation measures for the Proposed Project and alternatives. This chapter is divided into sections for each environmental issue area (e.g., Air Quality, Biological Resources, etc.) that contain the environmental and regulatory settings, and impacts and mitigation measures for the Proposed Project and each alternative.

Chapter 6*, Comparison of Alternatives*. Provides a discussion of the relative advantages and disadvantages of the Proposed Project and the alternatives that were evaluated, and identifies the CEQA Environmentally Superior Alternative.

Chapter 7*, Cumulative Effects*. Identifies the cumulative projects considered in the analysis of cumulative impacts. Provides a discussion of the cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project in combination with reasonable foreseeable past, present and future projects.

Chapter 8*, Other CEQA Considerations*. Provides a discussion of growth-inducing impacts, significant environmental effect that cannot be avoided, and irreversible environmental changes.

Chapter 9*, Report Preparers*. Identifies the primary authors of this Draft EIR

Chapter 10*, Mitigation Monitoring, Reporting, and Compliance Plan*. Provides a discussion of the CPUC's mitigation monitoring, reporting and compliance program requirements for the project as approved by the CPUC.

Appendix A*, Scoping Report.* Includes the NOP, newspaper legal advertisements, a detailed description of all verbal and written comments received, a description of comments that are not within the scope of CEQA, scoping meeting speaker cards, copies of the written comments, the sign-in sheet from the scoping meeting, and a copy of the scoping meeting presentation.

Appendix B*, Mailing List and Certificate of Service*. Provides a copy of the mailing list to whom the Draft EIR and/or Notice of Availability were sent, and copy of the Certificate of Service.

Appendix C*, Field Management Plan*. Informs the public, the CPUC, and other interested parties of SCE's evaluation of "no-cost and low-cost" magnetic field reduction design options for the Proposed Project, and SCE's proposed plan to apply these design options.

Appendix D*, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emission Estimates*. Provides air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions estimates for the construction and operation activities associated with the Proposed Project and alternatives.

References – Introduction

California Energy Commission (CEC), 2007. Forms and Instructions for Submitting Electric Transmission-Related Data, Appendix B. Commission Report, January 2007. Publication number 700-2007-002-CMF.

Southern California Edison (SCE), 2013a. *Application of Southern California Edison Company (U 338 E) for a Permit to Construct Electrical Facilities withy Voltages Between 50 kV and 200 kV: Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line Project, Appendix F, Field Management Plan*, October 2013.

SCE, 2013b. *Proponent's Environmental Assessment for the Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line Project*, October 2013.