

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



March 26, 2012

Susan J. Nelson, AIA
Regulatory Affairs
Southern California Edison
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue, Quad 3D, GO1
Rosemead, CA 91770

RE: SCE Antelope Transmission Project (Antelope-Tehachapi 500kV and 220kV Transmission Line), Segment 3B - Modification #1 to Notice to Proceed (NTP) #30

Dear Ms. Nelson,

On March 21, 2012, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance request for a Modification to Notice to Proceed (NTP) #30 seeking authorization from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for use of an existing access road located west of Structures 3B-9 through 3B-14 on Segment 3B Transmission Line (T/L) of the Antelope Transmission Project (ATP) in unincorporated Kern County, California.

The SCE Antelope 500 kV Transmission Project (Project) was evaluated in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and a Certification of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) was granted by CPUC Docket #A.04-12-008, SCH #2006041160 on March 15, 2007. NTP #30 for Segment 3B Structures 1 – 14 was issued by the CPUC on February 21, 2012. **This Modification #1 to NTP #30 is granted by CPUC for the proposed activities based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

SCE is requesting a Modification to Notice to Proceed (NTP #30 dated February 21, 2012) for use of an existing access road located west of Structures 3B-9 through 3B-14 on Segment 3B T/L of the ATP in unincorporated Kern County. Subsequent to approval of the Segment 3B NTPR (NTP #30) by the CPUC, final design was completed and access road modifications were identified for the project. Specifically, the road commonly known as "Rancher's Road", located west of Structures 3B-9 through 3B-14 in unincorporated Kern County, was identified for Project use. This road is 4,150 feet long and would be expanded from roughly 12 feet to 18 feet, resulting in approximately .60 acres (4,150feet of 6 feet of additional road width) of disturbance not previously identified. However, Road AR 11-14, as defined in the Access Roads Report for Structures 3B-1 through 3B-14 and shown in the NTPR will not be used as a result. Construction of AR 11-14 would have resulted in approximately 1.9 acres of disturbance. Therefore, use of Rancher's Road between Structures 3B-9 and 3B-14 will result in a net reduction of 1.3 acres of disturbance.

- **Biological Resources:** SCE submitted biological information with the variance request. The Segment 3B "Rancher's Road" two-track (Project Component) is located west of Structures 3B-9 through 3B-14. The Project Component overlaps and is immediately adjacent to rabbitbrush scrub and California annual grassland vegetation communities. The 500-foot buffer around the Project Component is comprised of disturbed/developed, southern willow scrub, rabbitbrush scrub, agriculture, and California annual grassland vegetation communities. The Project Component and buffer are not located within critical habitat for any listed species. Potential burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) features occur within the 500-foot buffer and will not be impacted by the Project Component. Special-status biological resources are demarcated in the

field by Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) staking where applicable. Construction has been on-going in this area since March 12, 2011 and the following surveys have been conducted in the area: general biological preconstruction (December 7 and 9, 2011 and February 28, 2012) and burrowing owl preconstruction (December 7, 8, and 9, 2012 and February 28, March 7 and 8, 2012). Jurisdictional resources occur within the 500-foot buffer; however, no impacts are anticipated from the Project Component.

No additional impacts to biological resources are anticipated.

- **Cultural Resources:** SCE submitted a memorandum titled *Southern California Edison Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project Cultural and Paleontological Resources Guidelines for Segment 3B – Use and Improvement of the Ranchers Road*, dated March 20, 2012, with the variance request. The memorandum states that no known cultural resources will be impacted by the request for the use and improvement of the “Rancher’s Road” two-track located west of Structures 3B-9 through 3B-14 in support of the TRTP on Segment 3B. A cultural record search and survey (Pacific Legacy 2012), and a paleontological literature review (Gust and Scott 2009) have been previously conducted for this area. No cultural resources were found during the surveys conducted in support of Segment 3B along the Rancher’s Road (Pacific Legacy 2012). Per the Construction Phase Management Plan (CPMP 2012) a cultural ESA is located approximately 200 feet northeast of the proposed road. This ESA is currently flagged and will not be impacted by the proposed activities.

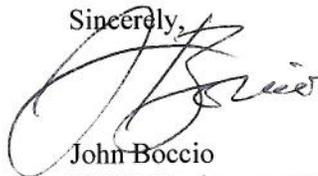
The Paleontological Resources Management Plan (PRMP) indicates that the proposed access road is located within an area that has a low potential for yielding paleontological resources (Gust and Scott 2009). Per the PRMP, spot checking of the area by a paleontological monitor is required if ground disturbing activities will exceed two (2) feet in depth.

No additional impacts to cultural or paleontological resources are anticipated.

The conditions noted below shall be met by SCE and its contractors:

- Per the PRMP, spot checking of the area by a paleontological monitor is required if ground disturbing activities will exceed two (2) feet in depth.
- All conditions required by NTP #30 shall apply to the subject area and activities.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, NTP #30, and this Modification #1 to NTP #30 shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities where applicable.

Sincerely,



John Boccio
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen