

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

April 10, 2009

Donald Johnson
Project Manager
Southern California Edison
2131 Walnut Grove Ave.
Rosemead, C 911770

RE: SCE Antelope Transmission Project, Segment 2 – Variance Request #39

Dear Mr. Johnson,

On April 6, 2009, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance requesting to relocate a previously identified guard pole area southeast of Structures 34A and 37 west of the City of Palmdale on Segment 2 of the Antelope Transmission Project in Los Angeles County, California. **This Variance Request is approved by CPUC for the proposed activities based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

SCE requests a variance to relocate a previously identified guard pole area southeast of Structures 34A and 37. This area is being shifted northwest of its current location and will have a rectangular area of 200 feet by 400 feet. This new area will now serve as a guard pole location, as well as a wire site setup. This new location will limit the need for disturbance in already approved areas since this area will be used for multiple activities.

- **Biological Resources:** On March 26th, 2009 a biological survey was performed by biologist Catherine Stupar from Bio Resources Consultants for the proposed guard pole relocation on Segment 2 near Structures 34A and 37. The 200 foot by 400 foot area was surveyed, including 15 feet outside the perimeter for Juniper trees (*Juniperus californica*) and 100 feet for other biological resources. The habitat in the area is sagebrush scrub dominated by Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentate*), and Water Jacket (*Lycium andersonii*), with a few California Junipers and interspersed common non-native plants such as wild mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*) and annual grasses. The survey identified 10 California Juniper trees within the proposed disturbance area, as well as 17 California Junipers within 15 feet of the disturbance area. There were 16 woodrat (*Neotoma* sp.) nests found, which were recorded and mapped. No significant impacts to biological resources are anticipated with the implementation of the conditions noted below.
- **Cultural & Paleontological Resources:** Archaeological and historical background contexts were developed for Segment 2 by ECORP Consulting, Inc. (Ahmet et al. 2006). The proposed project area is undeveloped and has no known historic uses. A search for archeological and historical records for Segment 2 was also conducted by ECORP Consulting, Inc. (Ahmet et al. 2006). ECORP consulted the South Central Coastal Information Center, the Angeles National Forest Heritage Resource Section, the National Register of Historic Places, the California Inventory of Historic Resources, California Points of Historical Interest and the California Historical Landmarks. The subsequent Pacific Legacy report date November 2008 notes that proposed project area falls outside the boundary the site boundary of CA-LAN-3655. The Paleontological Resources Management Plan for Segments 2 and 3 was prepared by Cogstone Resource Management Inc. (Gust and Scott 2008). No paleontological localities are known and the rock unit, Pelona schist, has no sensitivity for

paleontological resources. Cogstone Resource Management conducted the survey of the proposed project area on March 26, 2009. The survey consisted of one person crew walking the project area while closely inspecting the ground surface. Transects were walked at 5 meter intervals. The survey area is approximately 200 by 400 feet. Vegetation cover was about 40 % limiting visibility. No archaeological or paleontological resources were observed and nothing was collected. Cogstone found that there is no indication of prehistoric or historic archaeological resources or paleontological resources within the proposed project footprint. No significant impacts to cultural resources are anticipated with the implementation of the condition noted below.

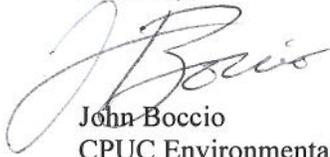
The conditions noted below shall be met by SCE and its contractors:

- Biological survey sweeps shall be conducted, including a 500 foot buffer for nesting birds, and results submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to equipment and vehicles mobilizing into an area. After complete surveys have been submitted and approved by the CPUC, site occupation can occur; however, if occupation does not occur within seven calendar days of survey submittals, biological clearance sweeps shall be re-conducted prior to site occupation, including nesting bird surveys during the breeding season.
- SCE has assigned Biological Monitors to the Project. They are responsible for ensuring that impacts to special-status species, native vegetation, wildlife habitat, or unique resources are minimized to the fullest extent possible. The Biological Monitor shall be on-site to monitor all work and shall conduct sweeps of the approved areas which will be impacted. If breeding birds with active nests are found, a biological monitor shall establish a 300-foot buffer around the nest and no activities will be allowed within the buffer until the young have fledged from the nest or the nest fails. The 300-foot buffer may be adjusted to reflect existing conditions including ambient noise and disturbance only with the approval of the CDFG and/or USFWS (Please note that the CPUC must be notified prior to the onset of construction). The biological monitor shall conduct regular monitoring of the nest to determine success/failure and to ensure that project activities are not conducted within the buffer until the nesting cycle is complete or the nest fails. If nesting birds move into the work area, SCE will monitor the nest to ensure that their activities do not result in the loss or failure of the nest. A preliminary 300-foot buffer area around the nest will be established and SCE shall coordinate with the CPUC, CDFG and/or USFWS.
- If avoidance of a woodrat midden is not feasible, it can be raked out by the monitoring biologist to minimize impacts to woodrats, following consultation with California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).
- Given the proximity of CA-LAN-3655, all ground disturbing activities shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist.
- If unanticipated cultural discoveries occur, work must halt in the immediate vicinity until the find can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist to determine if it meets significance criteria under CEQA.
- All project mitigation measures, compliance plans, and permit conditions shall be implemented during construction activities. Some measures are on-going/time-sensitive requirements and shall be implemented prior to and during construction where applicable.
- Prior to the commencement of construction activities, all crew personnel including haul truck and concrete truck drivers shall be appropriately WEAP trained on environmental issues including protocols for air quality, hazardous materials, biological resources, known and unanticipated cultural

materials, as well as SWPPP BMPs. A log shall be maintained on-site with the names of all crew personnel trained.

- All work boundaries shall be flagged prior to occupation. In addition, all approved access roads, spur roads and overland travel routes to be used shall be flagged prior to construction.
- If construction debris or spills enter into environmentally sensitive areas, the jurisdictional agencies and CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, and this Variance shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities where applicable, *including the variance request and maps.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Boccio".

John Boccio
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen