

CHAPTER 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Southern California Gas Company (“SCG”) and San Diego Gas and Electric (“SDG&E”) have filed applications with the California Public Utilities Commission (“CPUC”) to request authorization to implement a new tariff¹ service. The new tariff service (the “program”) would allow SCG/SDG&E to install conduit within its active gas pipelines using a proposed technology referred to as “fiber-in-gas” or “FIG.” The new service would establish tariff rates, terms and conditions allowing telecommunications carriers and cable television companies (“Carriers”) to place fiber optic cable in conduit previously installed by SCG/SDG&E in its active gas pipelines under new Schedule No. G-FIG.

If requested to do so by a Carrier, SCG/SDG&E would place conduit into its pipeline using a FIG technology.² The Carrier requesting the conduit would then be responsible for installing the fiber optic cable within the conduit and constructing the handholes³ alongside or on top of the pipeline. Since there is no definitive project that would apply a FIG technology being proposed at this time, the EIR addresses potential impacts at a general, programmatic level. Consequently, no baseline conditions are presented. The new service would be applicable to the existing pipeline distribution systems owned by SCG/SDG&E in their service territories in 13 southern California counties including Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare, and Ventura, which therefore defines the study area.

As the agency responsible for regulation of public utilities in the State of California pursuant to Article XII of the Constitution of the State of California (Public Utilities Code Sections 227 and 228), the CPUC is the lead State agency responsible for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance in evaluation of the proposed program (see CEQA Guidelines §15051). Under CEQA requirements, the CPUC will determine the adequacy of the EIR once it is finalized and, if adequate, will certify the document as complying with CEQA.

¹ A tariff defined for this project is a scale of rates or charges for an established service.

² The application applies to any FIG technology. Although there are several FIG technologies currently available (e.g., from Nortel Network, Alcatel, and GasTec), SCG/SDG&E has been asked by only one company to test, and approve, its technology for potential use in SCG’s active gas distribution pipelines (the “FIG Technology”). This is the only technology reviewed in this IS/MND because information relevant to an environmental review is not known regarding other FIG technologies.

³ Handholes are approximately four feet long and wide; the depth of the handhole will be approximately three feet. The excavation required to install the handhole may be three to four feet deep.

An Initial Study was prepared by the CPUC to assess which environmental issues would potentially be affected by SCG/SDG&E's proposal. The Initial Study identified environmental issues that should be addressed in the EIR and also those environmental issues that could be excluded from further analysis.

The EIR analyzes potentially significant impacts associated with implementation of the proposed program and identifies the mitigation measures or processes needed to reduce each potential impact identified. FIG installation and related construction would be confined to the geographic scope of the study area as described and illustrated in the Project Description and evaluated in the EIR. No unauthorized construction requiring CEQA review would be permitted in areas beyond the scope of the EIR or outside the study area.

1.2 DESCRIPTIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE

SCG/SDG&E would make available natural gas distribution mains of two inches in diameter and larger, and service lines one inch in diameter and larger, that operate at medium or low pressure (60 pounds per square inch [psi] or lower) upon request by a Carrier for this service for placement of conduit utilizing a FIG technology. Only conduit of a maximum diameter of 1.2 inches would be placed in any pipeline to accommodate fiber optic cable. Under this proposed service, SCG/SDG&E would install and own all facilities necessary to place fiber optic cable in their pipelines except for the handhole structure, including conduit and required fittings. SCG/SDG&E would not install the fiber optic cable itself, but would install only the conduit in the active gas lines to house (or accommodate) the fiber optic cable.

SCG/SDG&E is not requesting to provide telecommunications services or to become a licensed telecommunications provider, therefore, the fiber optic cable would be owned by the Carrier for whom the conduit is installed. The Carrier would be responsible for installing the fiber optic cable within the conduit and constructing the handholes for installation and future access to its fiber optic network or cable system. SCG/SDG&E would, however, have trained pipeline inspectors present during the installation of the Carrier's fiber optic cable once the conduit has been fully installed within the gas pipeline.

By offering this proposed new service, SCG/SDG&E would make available an additional option for routing fiber optic cable that could potentially reduce impacts on the environment, especially in densely populated metropolitan areas. In addition, consumers of services delivered through the use of fiber optic cable could also benefit by the reduced costs associated with providing those services. Cost reduction could also contribute to increases in the availability of services to the public, thus promoting the access of greater numbers of, and institutions serving, the public to the internet and other services delivered over fiber optic cable.

1.3 ALTERNATIVES

The EIR addresses three alternatives to the proposed program: (1) a No Project Alternative; (2) Standard Fiber Optic Cable Installation Alternative; and (3) Use of Existing Infrastructure Alternative. The alternatives analyzed in the EIR do in some cases either reduce impacts or result

in impacts greater than those associated with the proposed program. However, none of the proposed alternatives would meet the basic objective of the program as proposed by SCE/SDG&E. It should be noted that as gas corporations and not telecommunications carriers, SCG and SDG&E would not currently be in a position to implement Alternatives Two or Three. However, these alternatives have been included because the Carriers that would utilize the new service as proposed by SCG/SDG&E could potentially employ these alternative approaches to install fiber optic cable not using the FIG technology or the applicant's line as gas pipelines for fiber optic cable deployment; therefore, it was deemed important to briefly describe the effects associated with these alternatives for informational purposes to more fully inform the public.

1.4 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Table 1-1 presents a summary of all the impacts and mitigation measures identified for the program. The proposed program would not have any significant unmitigable environmental impacts. Potential effects on aesthetics, biological and cultural resources, hazards and public safety, traffic and transportation, and utilities and service systems may occur as a result of the program that are potentially significant. The majority of the program impacts result from construction activities. They are temporary impacts that can be mitigated to less than significant levels with the mitigation measures identified in the EIR. Operational impacts were also identified as potentially significant effects to public safety and operational pipeline capacity. These operational impacts were also determined mitigable; no significant unavoidable operational or temporary impacts would result. Mitigation proposed as part of the program, as well as measures identified in this EIR, would avoid or reduce all of the impacts to a less than significant level.

TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR
SCG/SDG&E SCHEDULE NO. G-FIG “FIBER OPTIC CABLE IN GAS PIPELINES”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION	MITIGATION MEASURES	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION
Aesthetics			
AES-1: Possible temporary, minor changes to the resources visible from a scenic vista or State Scenic Highway might result from construction activities and FIG operation.	Less than Significant	No mitigation required.	
AES-2: Possible minor changes in the existing visual character or quality of a site might result from construction activities and FIG operation.	Potentially Significant	AES-2a: SCG/SDG&E would minimize visual impacts of program facilities and comply with local regulations, keep construction and staging areas orderly and free of trash and debris, and restore areas disturbed by construction activities to their pre-construction condition.	Less than Significant
Air Quality			
AIR-1: Introduction of additional emissions sources in a region for which air quality plans have been developed.	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	
AIR-2: Increase in local pollutant concentrations.	Potentially Significant	AIR-2a: SCG/SDG&E would require the construction contractors to implement a dust abatement program to reduce dust and air emissions.	Less than Significant
AIR-3: FIG installation would create an increase in local pollutant concentrations.	Potentially Significant	Implement Mitigation Measure AIR-2a.	Less than Significant
AIR-4: FIG installation could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.	Potentially Significant	Implement Mitigation Measure AIR-2a.	Less than Significant

TABLE 1-1 (continued)
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR
SCG/SDG&E SCHEDULE NO. G-FIG “FIBER OPTIC CABLE IN GAS PIPELINES”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION	MITIGATION MEASURES	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION
<p>Biology</p> <p>BIO-1: FIG installations located within or adjacent to areas that support natural habitat and special-status species may adversely affect these species.</p>	Potentially Significant	<p>BIO-1a: Prior to construction, a qualified biologist will conduct preconstruction surveys of proposed FIG installation locations which, may support special status species habitat.</p> <p>BIO-1b: If the qualified biologist determines that FIG installation sites support natural habitat (i.e., wetlands, other water resources, upland communities) that may support special-status species, project activities will be relocated outside of these habitats. Natural habitat will be avoided by subsequent activities that may impact special status species.</p> <p>BIO-1c: If the qualified biologist determines that FIG installation sites are adjacent to natural habitat (i.e., wetlands, other water resources, upland communities) that may support special-status species, the following measures will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A qualified biological monitor will demarcate the construction zone in the field to ensure that special-status species habitat is not disturbed during construction activities. • A qualified biological monitor will be present for construction activities adjacent to sensitive habitat or areas, which may support special-status species. 	Less than Significant

TABLE 1-1 (continued)
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR
SCG/SDG&E SCHEDULE NO. G-FIG “FIBER OPTIC CABLE IN GAS PIPELINES”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION	MITIGATION MEASURES	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If preconstruction surveys determine that special-status wildlife species have the potential to enter the construction zone from adjacent natural habitat, exclusion fencing shall be constructed and maintained in good condition between construction areas and potential habitat for special-status wildlife species. The temporary fence shall be constructed with typical silt fencing, and shall be substantial enough to deter animals from entering the work area and to prevent parking construction vehicles or staging or storage of construction materials on road shoulders adjacent to habitat. The location of the fence shall be determined by the biological monitor. 	

TABLE 1-1 (continued)
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR
SCG/SDG&E SCHEDULE NO. G-FIG “FIBER OPTIC CABLE IN GAS PIPELINES”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION	MITIGATION MEASURES	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If preconstruction surveys identify potential nesting habitat for special-status birds or roosting habitat for special-status bats adjacent to proposed project activities, a no-disturbance buffer zone would be established around active nests and roosts during the breeding season. If construction activities are scheduled to occur during the breeding season of birds (February through August) or bats (March through August), pre-construction surveys will be conducted within 500 feet of project activities. If construction activities are scheduled to occur during the non-nesting season, then no surveys would be required. If surveys indicate that nests/roosts are inactive or potential habitat is unoccupied during the construction period, no further mitigation would be required. If active nests/roosts are found, SCG/SDG&E would establish a no-disturbance buffer acceptable in size to CDFG around the active nest/roost. 	
BIO-2: Potential short-term disturbance of waters of the U.S. (including wetland communities).	Potentially Significant	Implement Mitigation Measures BIO-1a , BIO-1b , and BIO-1c .	Less than Significant
BIO-3: FIG installation could result in impacts to heritage or other significant trees in the project area.	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	
BIO-4: FIG installation may conflict with provisions of Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Community Conservation Plans, or other approved conservation plans.	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant

TABLE 1-1 (continued)
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR
SCG/SDG&E SCHEDULE NO. G-FIG “FIBER OPTIC CABLE IN GAS PIPELINES”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION	MITIGATION MEASURES	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION
Cultural Resources			
CUL-1: Possible substantial effects can occur to known, but unevaluated prehistoric and historic archaeological deposits from ground disturbing construction operations (construction related impact, particularly portals outside of previously excavated areas).	Potentially Significant	<p>CUL-1a: For any excavation outside of previously excavated areas, conduct a records search for the proposed study area and the lands within a one-mile radius from the appropriate California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS).</p> <p>CUL-1b: For any proposed locations that have the potential for buried prehistoric cultural material or fossils, all grading and excavation for fiber in gas installation will be monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Monitoring is required within 500 feet of the boundaries of known cultural resources (including extant architectural features) and within 1,000 feet of the locations of modern and historic stream crossings. Monitors must have 2 years of professional experience and be certified by the CPUC. Monitors will be under the supervision of the cultural resources specialist.</p>	Less than Significant

TABLE 1-1 (continued)
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR
SCG/SDG&E SCHEDULE NO. G-FIG “FIBER OPTIC CABLE IN GAS PIPELINES”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION	MITIGATION MEASURES	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION
<p>CUL-2: Potential discovery or disturbance of unique paleontological resources during construction could constitute an impact. Because significant fossil discoveries can be made in areas designated as low, as well as moderate to high potential, excavation activities could possibly unearth significant paleontological resources. While this is unlikely, should such resources be encountered, this would be a significant impact.</p>	Potentially Significant	<p>CUL-2a: In the event that fossil remains are encountered, either by the cultural resources monitor or by construction personnel, qualified paleontological specialists will be contacted. Construction within 50 feet of the find will be temporarily halted or diverted until the discovery is examined by a qualified vertebrate paleontologist. The paleontologist shall notify the appropriate agencies to determine procedures that would be followed before construction is allowed to resume at the location of the find. Significant fossils will be salvaged through a program of excavation, analysis, and documentation. Fossil remains collected during the salvage program shall be cleaned, sorted, catalogued, and then deposited in a public, non-profit institution with research interests in the materials.</p>	Less than Significant
<p>CUL-3: Possible substantial effects may occur to human burials from construction operations. Subsurface excavation in the areas known or suspected to contain burials or archaeological sites of the type known to possess burials (occupation sites), could disturb or destroy significant human remains. This could include burials of prehistoric remains or non-Indian pioneers.</p>	Potentially Significant	<p>CUL-3a: If human remains are found at any time during site preparation or excavation activities, all work will immediately stop within 100 feet of the find. The project archaeologist will be notified immediately and will, in turn, immediately notify the county coroner for the appropriate county in compliance with Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code. Upon the completion of compliance with all relevant sections of the California Health and Safety Code, the cultural resources specialist will implement Mitigation Measure CUL-1b.</p>	Less than Significant

TABLE 1-1 (continued)
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR
SCG/SDG&E SCHEDULE NO. G-FIG “FIBER OPTIC CABLE IN GAS PIPELINES”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION	MITIGATION MEASURES	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION
Hazards and Public Safety			
HAZ-1: Possible temporary exposure to or release of hazardous materials during construction.	Potentially Significant	<p>HAZ-1a: Ensure proper labeling, storage, handling, and use of hazardous materials.</p> <p>HAZ-1b: Report all significant releases or threatened releases of hazardous materials.</p> <p>HAZ-1c: Reduce excavation impacts.</p>	Less than Significant
HAZ-2: FIG installation activities could require disposal of potentially contaminated soils.	Potentially Significant	<p>HAZ-2a: Implement an Awareness Training Program to educate field personnel regarding the unexpected discovery of contaminated soil.</p> <p>HAZ-2b: Characterize excavated materials for disposal if those materials have the odor or appearance of contamination and report all discovery of significant hazardous waste, including soil and groundwater contamination, to the inspector of the local agency.</p>	Less than Significant
HAZ-3: Potential public health hazard associated with a pipeline rupture during FIG installation and operation that could lead to an explosion resulting in property damage or fatalities.	Potentially Significant	HAZ-3a: SCG/SDG&E will continue to update safety procedures to address FIG installation procedures in compliance with all federal and state pipeline safety regulations.	Less than Significant
HAZ-4: Possible Exposure of the Public or Environment to Hazardous Materials Sites.	Potentially Significant	Implement Mitigation Measure HAZ-2a and HAZ-2b .	Less than Significant
HAZ-5: Possible Temporary Limited Emergency Access.	Potentially Significant	Implement Mitigation Measure TRA-1a .	Less than Significant

TABLE 1-1 (continued)
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR
SCG/SDG&E SCHEDULE NO. G-FIG “FIBER OPTIC CABLE IN GAS PIPELINES”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION	MITIGATION MEASURES	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION
Noise			
NOI-1: Construction activities could generate noise levels in excess of local standards during construction and FIG operation.	Potentially Significant	<p>NOI-1a: SCG/SDG&E would require construction contractors to comply with the construction hours limitations and construction equipment standards set forth in the local general plan noise element and the noise ordinance of all applicable jurisdictions of cities and counties, or in compliance with conditions outlined in acquired permits from those applicable jurisdictions.</p> <p>NOI-1b: To reduce daytime noise impacts due to construction, SCG/SDG&E shall require construction contractors to implement the following measures when operating adjacent to sensitive receptors in order to maintain compliance with local noise standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment and trucks used for construction shall utilize the best available noise control techniques (e.g., improved mufflers, equipment redesign, use of intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures and acoustically-attenuating shields or shrouds, wherever feasible); 	Less than Significant

TABLE 1-1 (continued)
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR
SCG/SDG&E SCHEDULE NO. G-FIG “FIBER OPTIC CABLE IN GAS PIPELINES”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION	MITIGATION MEASURES	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact tools (e.g., jack hammers, pavement breakers, and rock drills) used for construction shall be hydraulically or electrically powered wherever possible to avoid noise associated with compressed air exhaust from pneumatically powered tools. However, where use of pneumatic tools is unavoidable, an exhaust muffler on the compressed air exhaust shall be used; this muffler can lower noise levels from the exhaust by up to about 10 dBA. External jackets on the tools themselves shall be used where feasible, and this could achieve a reduction of 5 dBA. Quieter procedures shall be used, such as drills rather than impact equipment, whenever feasible; and • Construction equipment shall be located as far from sensitive receptors as possible. 	
NOI-2: Exposure of sensitive receptors to localized groundborne vibration and groundborne noise during FIG installation.	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	
NOI-3: Temporary and intermittent noise increases during FIG installation.	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	
Transportation and Public Services			
TRA-1: Pipeline access points for FIG installation within streets would reduce the number of, or the available width of, travel lanes on roads, resulting in temporary disruption of traffic flows and increases in traffic congestion.	Potentially Significant	TRA-1a: Obtain and comply with local and state road encroachment permits, and railroad encroachment permits.	Less than Significant

TABLE 1-1 (continued)
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR
SCG/SDG&E SCHEDULE NO. G-FIG “FIBER OPTIC CABLE IN GAS PIPELINES”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION	MITIGATION MEASURES	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION
TRA-2: FIG installation within or adjacent to roadways would temporarily increase the potential for accidents.	Potentially Significant	Implement Mitigation Measure TRA-1a.	Less than Significant
TRA-3: FIG installation within or adjacent to streets would affect emergency access.	Potentially Significant	Implement Mitigation Measure TRA-1a.	Less than Significant
TRA-4: Construction required for FIG installation would generate a temporary demand for parking spaces for construction worker vehicles; in addition, FIG installation would temporarily displace existing on-street parking on a number of streets.	Potentially Significant	Implement Mitigation Measure TRA-1a.	Less than Significant
TRA-5: FIG installation could temporarily disrupt bus service near pipeline access points.	Potentially Significant	Implement Mitigation Measure TRA-1a.	Less than Significant
TRA-6: FIG installation could temporarily disrupt existing transportation and circulation patterns in the vicinity, and impact response times for fire and police emergencies, by disrupting traffic flows and street operations.	Potentially Significant	Implement Mitigation Measure TRA-1a.	Less than Significant
Utilities and Service Systems			
UTL-1: The placement of fiber optic cable within existing gas pipelines would reduce the service capacity of the existing gas pipelines.	Potentially Significant	UTL-1a: Application of the Schedule No. G-FIG’s Terms and Special Conditions shall address/avoid potentially significant impacts to pipeline service capacity.	Less than Significant
UTL-2: The proposed new form of service will have service implications including potential impacts on operations.	Potentially Significant	UTL-2a: Primary operations and maintenance procedures shall be modified to address potential operational impacts.	Less than Significant