

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Commission) has prepared this final environmental impact report (FEIR) to address Sempra Communications' application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. This report has been prepared to finalize the environmental review associated with the proposal by Sempra Communications to provide telecommunications infrastructure and services to selected markets throughout California. The proposal analyzed by the CPUC does not address any specific construction project, network or system but instead proposes a Telecommunications Program (the "Project").

The purpose of the FEIR is to inform the public and the permitting agencies about the potential adverse and beneficial environmental impacts of the proposed project and its alternatives, and recommend mitigation measures that would reduce any significant adverse impacts to the maximum extent possible and, where feasible, to a less than significant level.

1.2 CEQA PROCESS

The CEQA statutes and *Guidelines* require lead agencies to consult with public agencies having jurisdiction over a proposed project, and to provide the public and other interested parties with an opportunity to comment on the DEIR. This FEIR has been prepared to respond to those comments received on the DEIR.

The CPUC filed a Notice of Completion (NOC) with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse and a Notice of Availability (NOA) was published on June 15, 2002. On July 15, 2002, the CPUC (Lead Agency) released for public review a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR or DEIR) on the proposed Sempra Communications project (A.00-02-020). The 57-day public review and comment period on the Draft EIR began on July 15, 2002, and closed on September 10, 2002. The DEIR was distributed to responsible and trustee agencies. Agency meetings on the DEIR were held on July 13-15 in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento, and the public review and comment period on the DEIR ended on September 10, 2002. Copies of all written comments received on the DEIR, and a summary of all comments made at the agency meetings, are contained in this report.

The Draft EIR for the Sempra Communications project, together with the Response to Comments, and text changes (initiated by the CPUC and those resulting from comments on the Draft EIR), constitute the Final EIR for the proposed project. The Commission will review this FEIR for

adequacy and consider it for certification pursuant to the requirements of Section 15090 of the CEQA *Guidelines*. After Commission certification of the Final EIR, and if the project is approved pursuant to findings on the feasibility of reducing or avoiding significant environmental effects and a statement of overriding considerations, a Notice of Determination will be prepared and filed with the State Clearinghouse.

1.3 METHOD OF ORGANIZATION

This Final EIR for the proposed Sempra Communications project contains information in response to issues raised during the public comment period.

Following this introductory Chapter 1, Chapter 2 contains all comments received during circulation of the Draft EIR and responses to those comments. A “Master Response” to comments regarding the programmatic nature of the project and the method for analyzing the potential impacts from subsequent activities is presented on page 2-1.

Following the master response is a summary of all comments made at the agency meetings held during the DEIR comment period, and responses to those comments. Copies of all letters and other comments received on the DEIR then follow the meeting comments. Each letter has been assigned a letter of the alphabet and each comment within that letter has been assigned a specific number. For example, the first comment in the first letter presented in this document (from the U.S. Forest Service) is identified as A-1, the second comment in that letter is A-2, etc. Written responses to each comment are assigned the same number. Those responses follow each comment letter.

Chapter 3 of this document contains text changes (initiated by the CPUC and those resulting from comments on the Draft EIR) and errata to the Draft EIR.