

F. Public Participation and Notification

Public involvement provides an opportunity to involve concerned citizens, agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders in the environmental review process. The public participation and notification processes for the proposed Project focus on two areas of CEQA: (1) public scoping and (2) Draft EIR public review. This section describes the outreach methods that were used for this Project.

F.1 Notices of Preparation

The CPUC issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed Project on April 27, 2006. Consistent with CEQA (State Guidelines §15082), the NOP summarized the proposed Project, stated the CPUC's intention to prepare an EIR, and requested comments from interested parties. The NOP was filed with the State Clearinghouse, Office of Planning and Research, on April 27, 2006 (SCH# 2006041160), which began a 30-day comment period. The review period for the NOP ended on May 26, 2006. Over 450 copies of the NOP were distributed to federal, State, regional, and local agencies, and elected officials. Five additional copies of the NOP were delivered to the local repository sites. The NOP can be found in Appendix 1 of this EIR.

F.2 Scoping Process

The scoping process for the Antelope Transmission Project Segments 2 and 3 EIR consisted of four main elements, which are listed below.

- Publish a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR, which marks the beginning of the 30-day scoping period (Section F.1), announce public scoping meetings, and solicit comments from affected public agencies and members of the public.
- Conduct public scoping meetings.
- Summarize scoping comments in a Scoping Report.
- Establish an Internet web site, electronic mail address, a telephone hotline, and local EIR information repositories.

The scoping process was intended to allow interested parties to express their concerns regarding the proposed Project, thereby ensuring that relevant opinions and comments are considered in the environmental analysis. Scoping is an effective way to solicit and address the environmental concerns of the public, affected agencies, and other interested parties. Members of the public, relevant federal, State, regional and local agencies, interests groups, community organizations, and other interested parties may participate in the scoping process by providing comments or recommendations regarding issues to be investigated in the EIR.

In addition to the purpose of informing the public about the proposed Project, the scoping process is also meant to achieve the following: (1) identify potentially significant environmental impacts for consideration in the EIR; (2) identify possible mitigation measures for consideration in the EIR; (3) identify alternatives to the proposed Project for evaluation in the EIR; and (4) compile a mailing list of public agencies and individuals interested in future Project meetings and notices.

F.2.1 Scoping Meetings

Public meeting notices were prepared and advertised in five local newspapers. The advertisements provided a brief description of the Project, information on the meeting locations, information on where to send comments,

contact information, and the duration of the public comment period. The meeting advertisements were placed in the following newspapers:

- *Tehachapi News* on April 26, 2006
- *Antelope Valley Press* on April 27, 2006
- *Mojave Desert News* on April 27, 2006
- *Los Angeles Times, Valley Edition* on April 30, 2006
- *Acton/Agua Dulce News* on May 1, 2006

As part of the public scoping process, two public scoping meetings were held to present information to the public on the Project and to take public comments on the scope and content of this EIR, as well as alternatives and mitigation measures to be considered. The following public scoping meetings were held prior to selection of alternatives to be analyzed in this EIR:

- May 9, 2006, at 6:30 p.m. at the Wanda Kirk Branch, Kern County Library, Rosamond, California
- May 10, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. at Highland High School, Palmdale, California

F.2.2 Scoping Report Summary

In July 2006, a comprehensive Scoping Report was issued, summarizing issues and concerns received from the public and various agencies. A total of 24 written comments were submitted and ten individuals presented verbal comments during the public scoping meetings.

The specific issues raised during the public scoping process are summarized below according to the following major themes:

- Human Environment Issues and Concerns
- Physical Environment Issues and Concerns
- Alternatives
- Cumulative Projects
- Environmental Review and Decision-Making Process

Human Environment Issues and Concerns

The public expressed strong concerns with the potential impacts of the proposed Project on the human environment. These concerns focused on the potential loss of property and homes, disturbance of neighborhoods, and decrease in property values, but also included concerns about electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) on nearby residents, aesthetic impacts to private property, and increased noise.

- **Loss of Property.** Members of the general public, particularly those from Leona Valley and Rosamond, expressed concern that the proposed Project and Alternative A (eliminated from consideration in the PEA), respectively, would require the condemnation of their homes and properties through the eminent domain process. Many residents indicated their discontent with the eminent domain process and the potential that they may have to move from their existing residences and neighborhoods.
- **Impacts to Property Values.** Various commenters expressed concern that existence of the proposed Project would decrease the value of their property due to the adverse aesthetic or health/safety impacts, safety or operational restrictions placed on the property limiting current and future uses or activities.
- **EMFs.** Several commenters, including a representative from the Antelope Valley Union High School District (AVUHSD), expressed concern about the potential health and safety impacts of EMFs from the proposed Project. Commenters were concerned about residents, students and faculty, as well as livestock and pets that would be exposed to EMFs.

- **Aesthetics.** A commenter from Leona Valley expressed concern regarding the aesthetic impacts that would result from the proposed Project.
- **Noise.** A few residents expressed concerns with the crackling noise (corona noise) caused by the existing transmission lines, and are concerned about the increase of noise that would result from the proposed Project.
- **Health and Safety.** A number of residents expressed concern about non-EMF related health and safety issues that may result from the proposed Project being located close to residences. Some of these issues include the potential fire hazard, the danger of children playing on or around the tower structures, and the standing current/charge of 750 to 1250 kV that exists on transmission line wires.
- **Conflicts with Existing or Planned Land Uses.** The majority of comments regarding existing or planned land uses dealt with the impacts to properties and residences in Leona Valley and Rosamond. Several residents expressed concern that the proposed Project would be located close to their homes, disturb the existing neighborhoods, and ruin the rural atmosphere of the area. A few commenters stated that it would be improper to remove existing homes when there are Project alternatives that would not affect existing residences. Other land use comments were focused on the impacts to non-residential uses. Commenters stated that the proposed Project may affect a future AVUHSD school site, as well as the school district's funding, and the mining operations and wind development on property of California Portland Cement Company.

Physical Environment Issues and Concerns

Public agencies and residents expressed concerns with the potential impacts that the Project may have on the physical environment, particularly to air quality, biological, geological, hydrological, and traffic and transportation.

- **Air Quality.** Most comments received focused on compliance with local and State air quality regulations. Two California air districts, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and the Kern County Air Pollution Control District (KCAPCD) provided guidance for preparing localized significance thresholds, air quality analyses, and mobile source health risk assessments; developing mitigation measures; applicability of regulations; use of air district resources; and permitting issues.
- **Biological Resources Issues.** The Department of Fish and Game recommended the inclusion of the following data in the Draft EIR: assessment of flora/fauna, discussion of impacts, development of a range of alternatives, California Endangered Species Act permit, and also expressed its opposition to the elimination of watercourses as part of the proposed Project. Another commenter expressed concerns about project area maintenance, vegetation management, and noxious weed mitigation. His concerns included the potential increase and invasion of noxious and exotic plant species as a result of the proposed Project. It was requested that SCE not use herbicides in their attempt to manage noxious and exotic plants, as this would impact biological resources, and instead suggested that non-chemical vegetation maintenance be utilized.
- **Geology and Soils.** One comment raised concerns regarding the potential of the Project construction to cause soil erosion and exacerbate the occurrence of landslides.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality.** The Department of Water Resources (DWR) stated that the proposed Project would traverse the East Branch of the California Aqueduct (a DWR facility), which would require an encroachment permit from DWR. The Lahontan Region of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB) indicated that the Draft EIR must provide information on impacts due to changes in groundwater recharge, use its Water Quality Control Plan, identify best management practices (BMPs) and mitigation, and secure a General Construction Permit from the State Water Board. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) requested a complete evaluation of the potential impacts to water quality and riparian movement corridors, including alternatives, specifically the need for the Project to comply with the appropriate permits and regulations, including State Water Board; and Section 401 and 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act.
- **Transportation and Traffic.** Several State and local government transportation agencies submitted comments on the proposed Project. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 9 stated that a Utility Permit would be required in order for the proposed Project to cross State Route (SR) 58. Caltrans, District 7 expressed concern about the potential for the proposed Project to affect the development of existing or future right-of-way transportation facilities, particularly in the western Antelope Valley, and requested a provision to

accommodate the widening of SR 14 in the vicinity of Soledad Pass. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) stated that a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) with highway, freeway, and transit components is required under the State of California Congestion Management Program (CMP).

There were also comments received regarding aviation transportation issues. Caltrans, Division of Aeronautics stated that the proposed Project would be in the vicinity of several airports in Kern and Los Angeles Counties, and indicated that the Caltrans Airport Land Use Planning Handbook may need to be used in preparation of the Draft EIR. In addition, this agency stated that structural hazards near airports are prohibited according to the Public Utilities Code, and a Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration may be required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Another commenter indicated that military flight training routes exist in the area, and was concerned that widening the corridor/ROW for the proposed Project would increase the hazards from and to these flights.

- **Utilities and Public Service Systems.** One commenter expressed concern about the impacts resulting from the proposed Project on the quality of electrical transmission and delivery service.

Alternatives

Some comments focused on suggesting alternatives to the proposed Project, specifically the possibility of utilizing other routes for the proposed transmission line that would avoid impacts to existing residences, neighborhoods, and land uses.

- **Different Route Options.** Various alternative route options were suggested, including one that would not impact AVUHSD property, the use of the largest possible setback near the AVUHSD property, the use of existing transmission lines and existing utility corridors (particularly in Leona Valley and Rosamond), locating the Project on the farthest side of the corridor from the established residences, and making the utility corridor narrower.
- **Support/Opposition for Existing Alternatives.** Many commenters from the Leona Valley expressed strong opposition for the proposed Project, which would require the removal of three homes and create other impacts, such as decreased property values, disturbance of their neighborhood, health/safety concerns, and visual impacts. These commenters expressed support for SCE Alternative AV1, which would eliminate impacts to Leona Valley residents. A commenter from Rosamond expressed opposition to SCE Alternative A in Segment 3, which was eliminated from consideration in the PEA, due to the impacts it would have on her property and residence. Palmdale Hills Property, LLC, the developer of Ritter Ranch master plan community, is opposed to SCE Alternative AV2 because it would traverse Ritter Ranch development and a proposed school site. In addition, a commenter suggested speaking with Ritter Ranch developers about using Ritter Ranch property that is located east of existing transmission lines as an alternative.

Cumulative Projects

One commenter expressed concern that the proposed Project would create cumulative impacts with the planned expansion of Elizabeth Lake Road from two lanes to a four-lane divided road with frontage roads, thus, reducing the property sizes.

Environmental Review and Decision-Making Process

One commenter requested that Segment 3 of the proposed Project be studied further so as to avoid potential impacts to residents and property owners in Rosamond. The Lahontan Region of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB) requested that the Draft EIR include detailed mitigation measures and complete evaluation of cumulative impacts.

F.3 Notice of Completion and Availability

Per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15085, the Notice of Completion (NOC) is a document that must be filed with the State Clearinghouse, Office of Planning and Research, as soon as the Draft EIR is completed. The NOC should include: a description of the proposed Project, including location; the addresses where copies of

the Draft EIR are available for review; and the review period during which public comments may be received. The CEQA Lead Agency (CPUC) shall also provide public notice of the availability of the Draft EIR at the same time it sends the NOC to the State Clearinghouse (State CEQA Guidelines §15087). In addition to the information disclosed in the NOC, the Notice of Availability (NOA) should also include details for any scheduled public meetings or hearings (date, time, and place); a list of significant environmental effects; and whether the project site is listed under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (hazardous waste facilities).

F.4 Draft EIR Public Meetings

There will be a 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR. During the public review period, public meetings will be held at the dates and times indicated in the Notice of Availability. For more information on the public meetings, you may contact the Public Advisor at (866) 849-8390 or public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov.

F.5 Document Repository Sites

Placing documents in repository sites is an effective way of providing ongoing information about the project to a large number of people. The CEQA documents prepared as part of the proposed Project, which include the NOP, NOA, and Draft EIR, were made available at the following public repository sites:

Table F-1. Repository Sites	
Repository Site	Address
Tehachapi Branch, Kern County Library	1001 W. Tehachapi Blvd., Suite A-400, Tehachapi, CA 93561
Wanda Kirk Branch, Kern County Library	3611 Rosamond Blvd., Rosamond, CA 93560
Lancaster Regional Library	601 W. Lancaster Blvd., Lancaster, CA 93534
Quartz Hill Library	42018 N. 50th St. West, Quartz Hill, CA 93536
Palmdale City Library	700 E. Palmdale Blvd., Palmdale, CA 93550

A telephone hotline for project information has been established at (661) 449-3069. This number receives voice messages and faxes.

EIR information, including proposed Project information, the environmental review process, and the Draft EIR will be posted on the Internet at the following website:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspen/atp2-3/atp2-3.htm>

This website is used to post public documents during the environmental review process and to announce upcoming public meetings.

F.6 Draft EIR Distribution List

Notices regarding the availability of environmental documents, such as the NOP, NOA, and Draft EIR, were mailed to approximately 500 addresses. The notices were mailed to approximately 170 community organizations and interest groups, 130 persons from government agencies, and 200 property owners within 300 feet of the proposed Project and alternate routes identified in SCE's Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA).