



SCE West of Devers Upgrade Project Draft EIR/EIS

California SCH #2014051041

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To: Recipients of the Draft EIR/EIS
From: Billie C. Blanchard, CPUC, and Frank McMenimen, BLM, EIR/EIS Project Managers
Subject: Notice of Availability, Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for SCE's Proposed West of Devers Upgrade Project
Date: August 7, 2015

The California Public Utilities Commission, as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), as Lead Agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), have prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIR/EIS) for consideration of Southern California Edison Company's (SCE) application to build and operate the West of Devers (WOD) Upgrade Project.

Availability of the Draft EIR/EIS

This Draft EIR/EIS is being released for public review on August 7, 2015 and comments on the Draft EIR/EIS are due on or before September 22, 2015. It is also available for review at numerous area libraries (see list at end of this Notice) and for review and download on the project websites:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspen/westofdevers/westofdevers.htm>

<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/transmission/WestOfDeversProject.html>

Attached to this Notice is the complete Draft EIR/EIS. A limited number of additional copies of the complete three-volume Draft EIR/EIS document are available upon request by e-mail at westofdevers@aspeneq.com or by phone or fax at (888) 456-0254.

Description of the Proposed Project

As illustrated on Figure ES-1 (Project Overview; see page ES-3 of the Executive Summary), the Proposed Project would be located primarily within the existing West of Devers transmission corridor in incorporated and unincorporated areas of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, including the Morongo Band of Mission Indians reservation and the cities of Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Colton, Grand Terrace, Loma Linda, and Redlands. The West of Devers corridor traverses residential, commercial, agricultural, recreation, and open space land uses.

The WOD Upgrade Project as proposed by SCE includes the following major components:

- Removal of existing 220 kV transmission lines primarily within the existing WOD corridor in six segments, illustrated on the map at the end of this notice.
 - Installation of replacement 220 kV transmission lines in the WOD corridor
 - Upgrades of equipment at Devers, El Casco, Etiwanda, San Bernardino, and Vista Substations to accommodate increased power transfer on the new 220 kV lines.
 - Removal and relocation of 2 miles of existing 66 kV subtransmission lines and upgrades of equipment at Timoteo and Tennessee 66/12 kV Substations to accommodate the relocated 66 kV lines.
 - Removal and relocation of 4 miles of existing 12 kV electric distribution lines.
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- Installation of telecommunication lines and equipment for the protection, monitoring, and control of transmission lines and substation equipment.

Project Purpose and Objectives

The CPUC and BLM have defined three Basic Project Objectives for the Proposed Project:

1. To upgrade the WOD 220 kV transmission lines between Devers, El Casco, Vista, and San Bernardino substations to increase system deliverability by at least 2,200 MW
2. To support achievement of State and federal renewable energy goals.
3. To maximize the availability of remaining space in the corridor to the extent practicable, so future use of the corridor for additional transmission line upgrades is not precluded.

These objectives have guided the development of alternatives to the West of Devers Upgrade Project.

Contents of the Draft EIR/EIS

The Draft EIR/EIS contains over 2,300 pages in 3 volumes (see Table 3 at the end of this notice for a list of the contents of each volume). It includes the analysis of the environmental effects of the Proposed Project and of the three alternatives to all or part of the Proposed Project. It also includes analysis of the impacts of other projects, called “connected actions,” that are not proposed by SCE but that are likely to be built by others if the West of Devers Upgrade is built. The Draft EIR/EIS identifies the impacts that could be significant, and presents mitigation measures, which, if adopted by the CPUC, BLM, or other responsible agencies, could avoid, reduce, or minimize these impacts.

Impacts of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would have 5 significant unmitigable impacts in the following four issue areas: visual resources, cultural resources, noise, and air quality. Additionally, there would be a number of significant impacts that can be reduced to a level that is less than significant with mitigation, and other impacts that are adverse but would not require mitigation.

Alternatives to the Proposed Project. An intensive alternatives screening process culminated in the identification and preliminary screening of 14 potential alternatives. These alternatives encompass both the 220 kV and 66 kV lines and range from minor structure location adjustments within SCE’s existing right-of-way (ROW) to reduced build alternatives for the 220 kV transmission components. Eleven alternatives were eliminated from analysis after screening, and 3 alternatives were retained for full EIR/EIS analysis. The 3 retained alternatives are:

- **Tower Relocation Alternative:** To reduce potentially significant visual impacts, where the project passes through residential areas, this alternative would move the proposed towers farther from adjacent residences. The alternative would affect 25 pairs of structures in Segment 4 and four individual structures in Segment 6, relocating them approximately 50 feet to the north of their proposed locations.
- **Iowa Street 66 kV Underground Alternative.** A 1,600-foot underground alternative segment was developed by the EIR/EIS team to eliminate significant visual impacts of the proposed new 66 kV San Bernardino–Redlands–Tennessee subtransmission line to residences along Iowa Street in the City of Redlands. In the alternative, this section of 66 kV subtransmission line would be installed underground in Iowa Street from just north of Orange Avenue to the south side of Barton Road. This underground alternative would replace a similar length of proposed new overhead subtransmission line that is part of the Proposed Project.
- **Phased Build Alternative.** The purpose of this alternative is to reduce construction impacts along the entire approximately 48-mile corridor by retaining as many existing double-circuit tower structures as pos-

sible and installing lighter-weight but higher-performance conductors on the retained towers. Existing single-circuit structures would be replaced as proposed. In this alternative, the Iowa Street 66 kV Underground Alternative would not be required, but the new double-circuit towers replacing single-circuit structures would be constructed in the locations defined in the Tower Relocation Alternative.

Submitting Comments on the Draft EIR/EIS

Written comments on the Draft EIR/EIS must be postmarked or received by fax or e-mail no later than **September 22, 2015**. Please be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number with your comments. Written comments on the Draft EIR/EIS should be sent to:

CPUC/BLM
c/o Aspen Environmental Group
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 935
San Francisco, CA 94104

Fax: (888) 456-0254
E-mail: westofdevers@aspeneq.com

Informational Workshops

In order to help affected communities understand the Proposed Project, alternatives, and the Draft EIR/EIS, and to explain how the public can participate in the CPUC and BLM decision-making processes, the CPUC and BLM will hold informational workshops as shown in Table 1 below. These informal workshops are an opportunity to speak with the specialists who wrote the Draft EIR/EIS and ask questions. At the start of each workshop, a brief presentation will summarize the EIR/EIS process, the Proposed Project and alternatives evaluated, the conclusions of the Draft EIR/EIS, and the decisionmaking process. Presentation notes will be available at all workshops, so attendance at the presentation at the beginning of the workshop is not required. While written comments may be submitted during these workshops, there will be no facilities to record oral comments.

Details on the informational workshops are shown in Table 1. Table 2 lists the public repository sites at which project documents may be reviewed, and Table 3 presents the organization of the Draft EIR/EIS.

Table 1. Public Workshops on Draft EIR/EIS

Location	Beaumont, CA	Beaumont, CA	Banning, CA
Day & Date	Wednesday, August 26, 2015	Wednesday, August 26, 2015	Tuesday, September 1, 2015
Time(s)	2:00 to 4:00 PM	6:00 to 8:00 PM	7:00 to 9:00 PM
Address	Holiday Inn Express 1864 Oak Valley Village Circle Beaumont, CA 92223	Holiday Inn Express 1864 Oak Valley Village Circle Beaumont, CA 92223	City Council Chambers 99 E. Ramsey Street Banning, CA 92220

For additional information or to read the Draft EIR/EIS online, please go to the Internet websites presented on page 1 of this notice.

Table 2. Project Document Repository Sites

City of Riverside Library	3581 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501	(951) 826-5201
San Bernardino County Library	777 East Rialto Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92415	(909) 387-5723
Colton Public Library	656 N. Ninth Street, Colton, CA 92324	(909) 370-5083
Grand Terrace Library	22795 Barton Road, Grand Terrace, CA 92313	(909) 783-0147
City of Loma Linda Library	25581 Barton Road, Loma Linda, CA 92354	(909) 796-8621
A.K. Smiley Public Library	125 West Vine Street, Redlands, CA 92373	(909) 798-7565
Mentone County Library	1331 Opal Avenue, Mentone, CA 92359	(909) 794-2657
Yucaipa Branch Library	12040 5th Street, Yucaipa, CA 92399	(909) 790-3146
Calimesa City Library	974 Calimesa Boulevard, Calimesa, CA 92320	(909) 795-9807
Beaumont Library District	125 East 8th Street, Beaumont, CA 92223	(951) 845-1357
Banning Public Library	21 W Nicolet Street, Banning, CA 92220	(951) 849-3192
Morongo Band of Mission Indians Environmental Protection Department	12700 Pumarra Road, Banning, CA 92220	(951) 755-5128
U.S Bureau of Land Management Offices		
Palm Springs/So. Coast Field Office	1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92262	(760) 833-7100
California Desert District Office	22835 Calle San Juan de los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553	(951) 697-5200

Table 3. Contents and Organization of Draft EIR/EIS

Volume 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impact Summary Tables ▪ Section A, Introduction ▪ Section B, Project Description ▪ Section C, Alternatives ▪ Section D.1, Introduction to Environmental Analysis ▪ Section D.2, Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section D.3, Air Quality ▪ Section D.4, Biological Resources – Vegetation ▪ Section D.5, Biological Resources – Wildlife ▪ Section D.6, Climate Change ▪ Section D.7, Cultural Resources ▪ Section D.8, Socioeconomics & Environmental Justice ▪ Section D.9, Geology and Soils
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section D.10, Hazards and Hazardous Materials ▪ Section D.11, Land Use and BLM Realty ▪ Section D.12, Mineral Resources ▪ Section D.13, Noise ▪ Section D.14, Paleontological Resources ▪ Section D.15, Recreation ▪ Section D.16, Transportation and Traffic ▪ Section D.17, Utilities and Public Services ▪ Section D.18, Visual Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section D.19, Water Resources and Hydrology ▪ Section D.20, Wildland Fire ▪ Section D.21, Electrical Interference & Safety ▪ Section E, Cumulative Impacts ▪ Section F, Other CEQA & NEPA Requirements ▪ Section G, Comparison of Alternatives ▪ Section H, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting ▪ Section I, Public Participation and Consultation ▪ Section J, Glossary ▪ Section K, Index
Volume 3	Appendices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ App. 1, Project Description Information ▪ App. 2, Detailed Project Maps ▪ App. 3, Morongo Lease Agreement ▪ App. 4, SCE’s EMF Field Management Plan ▪ App. 5, Alternatives Screening Report ▪ App. 6, Air Quality Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ App. 7, Biological Resources ▪ App. 8, Cultural Resources ▪ App. 9, Policy Screening Report ▪ App. 10, Visual Resources ▪ App. 11, Persons Consulted ▪ App. 12, Preparers and Reviewers ▪ App. 13, Recipients of the EIR/EIS