

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298**Notice of Preparation
Environmental Impact Report****Antelope Transmission Project, Segments 2 and 3
Proposed by Southern California Edison Company****Application No. A.04-12-008****To: All Interested Parties**

Si usted necesita una copia de este documento en español o si necesita información acerca del proyecto por favor llame a (661) 449-3069.

A. Subject

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) will direct the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Segments 2 and 3 of the Antelope Transmission Project (proposed Project) proposed by Southern California Edison (SCE). Under the direction of the CPUC as the lead agency, a draft and final EIR will be prepared for the proposed Project to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

B. Summary of the Proposed Project

The proposed Project includes both Segment 2 and Segment 3 of the Antelope Transmission Project, which are addressed together in SCE's application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) submitted to the CPUC on December 9, 2004 (Application No. 04-12-008), and amended on September 30, 2005. The proposed Project involves construction of new transmission line infrastructure from the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area in southern Kern County, California, to SCE's existing Vincent Substation in Los Angeles County, California. The Tehachapi Wind Resource Area is one of the State's greatest potential sources for the generation of wind energy. A variety of wind energy projects are currently in development for this region.

The main project components are described below and indicated on the General Location Map, attached. Substation Two and Substation One, in addition to the 9.6 miles of 220-kV transmission line facilities connecting them and the 25.6 miles of 500-kV transmission line facilities between Substation One and Antelope Substation, are collectively referred to as Segment 3 of the proposed Project. The 21.0 miles of 500-kV transmission line facilities and the 0.5 miles of 220-kV transmission line facilities between Antelope and Vincent Substations are referred to as Segment 2 of the proposed Project. SCE is proposing to construct the following new transmission system components as part of the proposed Project:

- Substation Two, a 500/220/66-kV substation located near SCE's existing Monolith Substation, northwest of Cal Cement Substation in the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area of southern Kern County (Segment 3).
- 9.6 miles of 220-kV transmission line between Substation Two and Substation One (Segment 3).

- Substation One, a 500/220/66-kV substation located southeast of Substation Two, near the Western Area Power Administration's existing Cal Cement Substation in the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area of southern Kern County (Segment 3).
- 25.6 miles of 500-kV transmission line between Substation One in the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area and Antelope Substation in the City of Lancaster (Segment 3).
- Approximately 21.0 miles of 500-kV transmission line between Antelope Substation in the City of Lancaster and Vincent Substation, near the community of Acton in unincorporated Los Angeles County, as well as 0.5 miles of 220-kV transmission line connecting to Vincent Substation (Segment 2).

Segment 3 would be constructed in both Los Angeles and Kern Counties (please see the attached General Location Map). The 9.6-mile portion of Segment 3 between Substation Two and Substation One would be constructed through a sparsely populated section of the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area in southern Kern County. The portion of Segment 3 between Substation One and Antelope Substation would be located in a new transmission right-of-way (ROW) through the City of Lancaster for the majority of its length. Segment 2 of the proposed Project would be constructed completely within Los Angeles County and would parallel existing SCE transmission line corridors for most of its length between SCE's existing Antelope and Vincent Substations (please see the attached General Location Map). A portion of the proposed route would be constructed through open space areas on the planned Ritter Ranch development in western Palmdale.

The proposed Project includes electrical interconnections at the existing Antelope Substation (Segments 2 and 3) and Vincent Substation (Segment 2). The proposed Project would help to accommodate up to 4,400 megawatts (MW) of potential new wind generation in the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area north of Antelope Substation. The 500-kV transmission lines would initially operate at 220 kV and would serve to reduce increasing loading on SCE's Antelope-Mesa 220-kV transmission line. Segments 2 and 3 of the Antelope Transmission Project are part of SCE's plans to interconnect and integrate potential wind energy projects to SCE's electrical system. Segment 2 has the potential added benefit of improving overall electric system reliability by increasing capacity between Antelope Substation and Vincent Substations.

C. Project Alternatives

SCE is considering a variety of possible alternatives to the proposed Project, including the No Project alternative as required by CEQA, in addition to transmission line route alternatives, substation site alternatives, and construction alternatives, which are summarized below.

No Project Alternative

Under the No Project alternative, neither the environmental impacts nor the benefits associated with the proposed Project would occur. It is considered likely that if the proposed Project is not implemented, another transmission project would need to be built in order for the transmission grid to accommodate the power generated by renewable energy producers in southern California.

Transmission Line Route Alternatives

SCE has identified the following potential transmission line alternatives to the proposed Project:

- Alternative Antelope-Vincent 1 (AV1) includes a 2.1-mile variation of the proposed route for Segment 2 of the proposed Project. Alternative AV1 would depart from the Segment 2 route at Mile 5.7 and rejoin the proposed route at Mile 7.6 in order to avoid the removal of three existing

homes along this segment of the proposed route for Segment 2. This alternative would cross the entire Big Creek Corridor two times, requiring one pair of 180-foot towers at each crossing.

- Alternative Antelope-Vincent 2 (AV2) includes a 3.1-mile variation of the proposed route for Segment 2 of the proposed Project. Alternative AV2 would depart from the proposed Segment 2 route at Mile 8.1 and rejoin the proposed route at Mile 14.9 in order to parallel the existing transmission corridor, thereby reducing the overall length of Segment 2 by 3.7 miles. Alternative AV2 would traverse the Ritter Ranch development as well as the Anaverde development.
- Alternative A would provide a 25.9-mile route alternative to the portion of Segment 3 between Antelope Substation and Substation One. Alternative A would be situated roughly parallel and east of the proposed Segment 3 route. This alternative would divert around a planned community north of Antelope Substation and align with 100th Street at Mile 5.2, crossing into Kern County at Mile 10.1.
- Alternative B would provide a 26.0-mile alternative to the portion of Segment 3 between Antelope Substation and Substation One. Alternative B would be situated roughly parallel and west of the proposed Segment 3 route. This alternative would align with 110th Street, crossing into Kern County at Mile 9.8.
- Alternative C would provide a 9.5-mile alternative to the portion of Segment 3 between Substation One and Substation Two. Leaving Substation One, Alternative C would follow Oak Creek Road for the first 1.7 miles after leaving Substation One. This alternative would then turn to the north and run parallel to the existing Cal Cement-Goldtown-Monolith-Windlands 66-kV transmission line, east of the proposed Segment 3 route.

Substation Site Alternatives

SCE has identified the following potential substation site alternatives to the proposed Project:

- Alternative 1A would provide an alternate location to the proposed Substation One. This alternative site is west of the proposed site for Substation One, on desert terrain with a 3 to 4 percent slope. The site would need to be graded to a slope of 1.5 to 2 percent in order to accommodate substation construction. The Alternative 1A site is also bisected by a buried pipeline, which would require relocation if this alternative were selected.
- Alternative 1B would provide an alternate location to the proposed Substation One. This alternative site is east of the proposed site for Substation One. As with Alternative 1A, this alternative is situated on desert terrain with a 3 to 4 percent slope, which would require grading prior to construction.
- Alternative 1C would provide an alternate location to the proposed Substation One. This alternative is located approximately 3.5 miles northwest of the proposed Substation One, adjacent to the east side of Cameron Canyon Road. This site is crossed by two buried pipelines as well as a seasonally active streambed situated near the center of the site in a narrow draw. In addition, the site for Alternative 1C is traversed by the existing Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT). Use of this alternative site would require relocation of the underground utilities, alteration of the streambed alignment, and impacts to the PCT.
- Alternative 2A would provide an alternative location to the proposed Substation Two. This alternative site is located about 1,000 feet east of the proposed Substation Two. Alternative 2A is bisected by a buried natural gas pipeline. The eastern site boundary is the low point of concentration of an estimated 200 acres of hillside drainage, which would require stormwater management.

- Alternative 2B would provide an alternative location to the proposed Substation Two. This alternative site is located north of Tehachapi Blvd., about one mile north of the proposed Substation Two. The substation facilities would be situated along the eastern boundary of this site, in order to avoid several streambeds that cross the site as well as a railroad spur that serves a private facility to the north.

In addition to the alternatives listed above, additional alternatives may be evaluated in the Draft EIR based on input from agencies and the public, as well as possible additional analysis conducted by the CPUC.

D. Available Information

According to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d), the lead agency for a project may forego the detailed initial review of a project and begin work on the preparation of an EIR if the lead agency is able to determine that an EIR would be clearly required for the project. CEQA further stipulates that in such a circumstance, the lead agency must focus the EIR on the significant effects of the project and indicate why other potential effects would not be significant. With regards to the proposed Project, the CPUC, as lead agency, has identified a clear potential for significant impacts on the environment. Therefore, an initial study was not prepared for the proposed Project. With this Notice of Preparation (NOP), the CPUC is soliciting public and agency comment on the scope of the analysis and issues to be considered in the EIR for the proposed Project. Please note that this NOP and all future project-related documents are available for review at the following project information repository locations:

Quartz Hill Library

42018 N. 50th Street West

Quartz Hill, CA 93536

Phone: 661-943-2454

Business hours: Sun: closed; Mon: 10:00a.m.-5:00p.m.;

Tues/Wed: 10:00a.m.-8:00p.m.; Thurs/Fri: 10:00a.m.-

5:00p.m.; Sat: 11:00a.m.-5:00p.m.

Lancaster Regional Library

601 West Lancaster Blvd.

Lancaster, CA 93534

Phone: 661-948-5029

Business hours: Sun: closed; Mon/Tues/Wed: 10:00a.m.-

8:00p.m.; Thurs/Fri: 10:00a.m.-5:00p.m.; Sat: 11:00a.m.-

5:00p.m.

Palmdale City Library

700 East Palmdale Blvd.

Palmdale, CA 93550

Phone: 661-267-5600

Business hours: Sun: closed; Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs:

10:00a.m.-8:00p.m.; Fri/Sat: 10:00a.m.-5:00p.m.

Kern County Library, Wanda Kirk (Rosamond) Branch

3611 Rosamond Blvd.

Rosamond, CA 93560

Phone: 661-256-3236

Business hours: Sun/Mon: closed; Tues/Wed: 12:00p.m.-

8:00p.m.; Thurs/Fri/Sat: 10:00a.m.-6:00p.m.

Kern County Library, Tehachapi Branch

1001 W. Tehachapi Blvd., Suite A-400

Tehachapi, CA 93561

Phone: 661-822-4938

Business hours: Sun/Mon: closed; Tues/Wed: 12:00p.m.-

8:00p.m.; Thurs/Fri: 10:00a.m.-6:00p.m.; Sat: 9:00a.m.-5:00p.m.

Internet Website: Information about the proposed Project and its environmental review process will be posted on the Internet at:

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

This website will be used to post all CEQA-related public documents during the environmental review process and to announce any upcoming public meetings for the proposed Project.

SCE's Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) is available for review in electronic format at the web site listed above. The PEA includes a detailed description of the project that SCE proposes to undertake and it evaluates potential impacts of the project from SCE's perspective.

Project Information Hotline. You may request project information by leaving a voice message or sending a fax to (661) 449-3069.

E. The EIR Process

CEQA requires the CPUC to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from the proposed Project, and requires the preparation of an EIR if the Project has the potential to result in significant impacts to the environment. CEQA also requires that the EIR development process include public notice of the proposed Project and address relevant environmental concerns that the public may have regarding the proposed Project. The initial public scoping and comment period for the proposed Project will extend from April 27, 2006, until May 27, 2006. During this period, public comments will be accepted and two public scoping meetings will be held, prior to selection of alternatives and the preparation of the analysis documented in the EIR. The intent of the scoping process is to obtain input from affected agencies and members of the public on the scope and content of the EIR.

The Draft EIR will include an objective analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project. In addition, the Draft EIR will provide a discussion of alternatives, including a comparison of each alternative to the proposed Project. When completed, the Draft EIR will be distributed for a 45-day public review period. A notice of completion of the Draft EIR will be sent to the State Clearinghouse by the CPUC. The CPUC will consider all comments on the Draft EIR and revise the document as necessary prior to issuance of a Final EIR. The Final EIR will include responses to comments received on the Draft EIR during the public review period.

F. Proposed Scope of the EIR

The EIR will present the analysis of the environmental impacts, as well as identify appropriate mitigation measures for potentially significant impacts. The EIR will address all issue areas for which potential significant impacts are anticipated, including:

- **Air Quality.** Construction and operation emissions and effects.
- **Biological Resources.** Effects on native habitats that support rare, threatened, or endangered species; impacts on sensitive habitats or species as a result of sedimentation or erosion; damage to native plant habitats due to construction or widening of the ROW; loss of habitat due to vegetation removal; and effects of noise disturbance on nesting and foraging of wildlife species.
- **Cultural Resources.** Construction effects on prehistoric sites, structures, regional districts or other physical evidence associated with human activity; disturbance during grading and excavation, illicit artifact collection by transmission line workers and construction equipment encroachment in sensitive areas.
- **Environmental Contamination.** Potential for encountering previously contaminated soils during construction; potential for introducing contaminants into the environment during construction or operation; health effects associated with electric and magnetic fields from transmission lines.
- **Geology, Soils, and Paleontology.** Slope stability and seismic impacts associated with fault rupture and liquefaction/lateral spreading; damage to above ground structures from earthquake-induced ground shaking; potential for landslides and erosion in areas disturbed by construction.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality.** Potential construction impacts resulting in sedimentation, effects on water quality, altered drainage patterns, and flooding.

- **Land Use and Public Recreation.** Construction and operation effects on land uses, including residential, agricultural, and recreational uses; potential for long-term safety risks to existing or planned uses in project vicinity.
- **Noise.** Construction and operation effects on sensitive land uses.
- **Traffic and Transportation.** Construction effects on project area's transportation system, traffic congestion, pedestrian circulation and emergency access.
- **Visual Resources.** Construction and operation effects on visual resources resulting from presence of equipment, materials, workers, and aboveground facilities, especially in visually sensitive areas.
- **Cumulative and Growth-Inducing Impacts.** According to CEQA, a "cumulative impact" results when two or more individual effects are considerable when combined, or when an action compounds or increases other environmental impacts (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). A "growth-inducing impact" occurs either directly or indirectly when an action causes an increase to the economy, population, or available housing in the surrounding environment.

G. Project Scoping Process and Scoping Meetings

The EIR will focus on the potentially significant environmental effects associated with Segments 2 and 3 of the Antelope Transmission Project. The process of determining the focus and content of the EIR is known as scoping. Scoping helps to identify the range of actions, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in the EIR. Scoping also eliminates any issues from detailed study that do not have the potential to result in significant impacts to the environment. Scoping is an effective way to determine the concerns of the public, affected agencies, and other interested parties. Significant issues may be identified through public and agency comments.

Scoping, however, is not conducted to resolve differences concerning the merits of the project or to anticipate the ultimate decision on the proposal. Rather, the purpose of scoping is to help ensure that a comprehensive and focused EIR will be prepared that provides useful information for the decision-making process. Members of the public, affected government agencies, the proponent of the action, interest groups, and other interested parties may participate in the scoping process for this project by providing written and verbal comments or recommendations concerning the issues to be analyzed in the EIR. Comments can be given by attending the scheduled scoping meetings listed below and/or sending written comments to the address listed below.

The CPUC will conduct two public scoping meetings at the following dates, times, and locations.

Public Scoping Meetings

Date	Tuesday, May 9, 2006	Wednesday, May 10, 2006
Time	6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Location	Wanda Kirk Branch Kern County Library Community Room 3611 Rosamond Blvd. Rosamond, CA 93560 Phone: (661) 256-3236	Highland High School Library 39055 25th Street West Palmdale, CA 93551 Phone: (661) 538-0304

Each meeting location listed above is wheelchair accessible. If other accommodations for the handicapped are required (e.g., sign language interpreters), you must call the EIR public involvement manager at (661) 449-3069.

Please send written comments postmarked by May 27, 2006, to:

**Andrew Barnsdale
California Public Utilities Commission
c/o Aspen Environmental Group
30423 Canwood Street, Suite 215
Agoura Hills, CA 91301**

By Electronic Mail: E-mail communications are welcome; however, please remember to include your full name and return address in the e-mail message. E-mail messages should be sent to the following address: atp2-3@aspeneq.com.

By Fax: You may fax your comment letter to (661) 449-3069. If handwritten comments are being provided, please write clearly to ensure that your comments are legible. Please remember to include your full name and return address in the fax.

A **Scoping Report** will be prepared, summarizing all comments received (including oral comments made at the scoping meetings). This report will be posted on the project website (<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspen/atp2-3/atp2-3.htm>), and will be available for review at the project information repository locations listed above in Section D (Available Information). In addition, a limited number of copies will be available upon request to the CPUC.

H. Agency Comments

This NOP has been sent to responsible and trustee agencies, cooperating federal agencies, and the State Clearinghouse. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information, which reflects your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project. Once again, responses should identify the issues to be considered in the Draft EIR, including significant environmental issues, alternatives, mitigation measures, and whether the responding agency will be a responsible agency or a trustee agency. Due to the time limits mandated by State laws, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but no later than 30 days (May 27, 2006) after receipt of this notice. Please send your response to:

**Andrew Barnsdale
California Public Utilities Commission
c/o Aspen Environmental Group
30423 Canwood Street, Suite 215
Agoura Hills, CA 91301**

The California Public Utilities Commission hereby issues this Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report.

Andrew Barnsdale
California Public Utilities Commission
(415) 703-3221

April 27, 2006

General Location Map

