STATE OF CALIFORNIA ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

February 16, 2010

Donald Johnson
Project Manager
Southern California Edison
2131 Walnut Grove Ave.
Rosemead, C 911770

RE: SCE Antelope Transmission Project (Antelope-Vincent 500 kV Transmission Line), Notice to Proceed (NTP # 28)

Dear Mr. Johnson,

On February 10, 2010, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) requested authorization from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to prepare and utilize a marshalling yard, referred to as the Highwind Marshalling Yard, to support construction of Segment 3B of the Project, located south of Tehachapi Boulevard along Jameson Street in the Tehachapi area of Kern County, California.

The SCE Antelope 500 kV Transmission Project (Project) was evaluated in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and a Certification of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) was granted by CPUC Docket #A.04-12-008, SCH #2006041160 on March 15, 2007. **NTP # 28 is granted by CPUC for the proposed activities based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

  SCE has requested to prepare and utilize a marshalling yard, referred to as the Highwind Marshalling Yard, to support construction of Segment 3B of the Project. The proposed yard is located south of Tehachapi Boulevard along Jameson Street in the Tehachapi area of Kern County, California. The proposed yard is a 9.55 acre area within an approximately 56.2 acre parcel located adjacent and to the west side of Jameson Street, at the intersection with Highland Road, and less than one mile south of Tehachapi Boulevard. The proposed yard is on the eastern edge of the proposed Highwind Substation. The proposed yard is in a relatively undeveloped area on the outskirts of Tehachapi. The elevation of the proposed yard is approximately 4,023 feet. The Highwind yard is located within a slightly larger, fenced in parcel that is in condemnation. SCE has been granted the order of possession by Kern County for this parcel of land. There are no businesses or residences within 1000 feet of the proposed yard. The immediate surrounding land is vacant with the exception of existing roads.

  The primary use of the yard will be for material and equipment storage. Access to the yard will be along a new permanent access road approximately 213 feet long, which parallels Highline Road. There will be an access gate approximately 12 feet wide where the access road meets the yard. Chain link fencing will be erected around the perimeter of the yard to protect material and equipment.

  Activities and items that will possibly be present or active at the proposed yard throughout the duration of the project include office trailers, vehicle parking, equipment storage, spill kit storage, fire equipment storage, wire storage, roll off trash and scrap steel container, portable toilets, steel stub angles, rebar and rebar cages, setup, form cans, and associated foundation items. Fueling from saddle tanks and fuel trucks and welding and torch work activities are limited to emergency and mechanical needs only. Open flame activities that may be performed on this property will have a water truck and fire watch present at all times.

Fuel will be stored on site in fuel trucks, however, a Spill Prevention Countermeasure and Control Plan (SPCC) will not be required because the aggregate aboveground storage capacity of the facility will be less than 1,320 gallons. It is therefore determined that the Project meets the exemptions set forth in 40 CFR 112.1(d) (Federal Register, 67, July 17, 2002:47140-47152), and a SPCC is not required by the federal government. Additionally, the project does not meet the 10,000 gallon threshold for the California State requirements and therefore a SPCC is not required by the state.

Use of the proposed yard will require brush clearing and removal in accordance with the Vegetation Management Plan. A biological monitor will be present for the brush clearing and removal activities within the proposed yard. The proposed yard disturbance area and access road are relatively flat and will not require any substantial blade work beyond the smoothing of ruts and the placement of gravel. If blade work for safety purposes does prove necessary, a site specific plan will be created and approved prior to work.

Any lights to be used at the yard shall be shielded from directing glare towards Jameson Road.

The proposed yard will be used from February 2010 until June 2011.

- **Biological Resources**: SCE submitted a report from Burns & McDonnell dated February 4, 2010 and titled *Biological Survey for the Newly Proposed Highwind Marshalling Yard for the Antelope Transmission Project, Segment 3B in Kern County, California.* The site has been characterized as heavily cattle, sheep and horse grazed *Ericameria nauseosus* Alliance (rabbitbrush scrub) (Sawyer, Keeler-Wolfe and Evens 2008) with an understory of non-native grasses on sandy loam soils. The dominant onsite perennial is rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosus*). The understory consists of non-native grasses. The understory habitat is dominated by cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*) with redstem stork's bill (*Erodium cicutarium*), rancher's fire weed (*Amsinckia menziesii*), and miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*). The eastern road edge and adjacent drainage to the north of the site support some native perennials that do not occur on the site including: big sage brush, gumplant, and tarragon. Due to the survey period (winter), most annual species could not be identified. On February 3, 2010, a biological survey for the proposed site was conducted by biologist Russell Kokx with ECORP. The mapped disturbance area for the Highwind Marshalling Yard with a 500-foot buffer was surveyed for biological resources. Weather conditions during the surveys were cloudy, cold, with variable winds and were not ideal for floral observations. Two sensitive resources were found within the project area and the 500-foot buffer. A single loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), a Species of Special Concern, was observed flying over the project site. Also, a single one meter tall California juniper tree is located within the 500-foot buffer area, but will not be disturbed. The proposed Highwind Yard is north of the Tehachapi Mountains and outside the CDFG approved survey limits for desert tortoise. The proposed Highwind Yard consists of Rubber Rabbitbrush and non-native grass with sandy soils. The site was previously an orchard and would not be considered suitable desert tortoise habitat.

- **Cultural Resources:** The proposed disturbance area for the Highwind Marshalling Yard was surveyed for cultural resources by ECORPS (Ahmet et al 2006) and Pacific Legacy (Holsen 2010). The ECORPS study included a review of site records, historical maps, and documents relative to the project area, maintained at the south Central Coastal Information Center, California State University, Fullerton. On February 3, 2010, a field inspection was conducted by Jack Sprague of Pacific Legacy. The area was inspected utilizing 10-meter transect spacing walking in a north/south direction over the entire parcel. In addition, a one hundred foot buffer zone around the site was inspected. Surface visibility was approximately 30 percent due to vegetation. Surface inspection focused on cleared areas and around areas of rodent disturbance. The field survey of the proposed yard did not result in the discovery of any cultural resources. On the north side of the project area, the hood and frame of

an older car was noted approximately 75 to 100 feet north of the staked site. There is a fence line between the staked boundary of the site and the car parts. The car parts are not within the proposed site. The proposed disturbance area was surveyed for paleontological resources by Cogstone Resources Management (Scott and Gust 2008). The paleontological study found that the proposed disturbance area is located within Quaternary recent alluvium and Quaternary older alluvium. Quaternary older alluvium is sediment known to contain significant paleontological resources. As a result, a paleontology monitor will be required during earth moving activities such as grading, trenching, or digging at the Highwind Yard. With the implementation of the conditions below, cultural resources impacts are not expected to occur during this phase of construction.

The conditions noted below shall be met by SCE and its contractors:

- As identified in the Biology Mitigation Measures and Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) in the EIR/EIS, SCE would assign Biological Monitors to the Project. They would be responsible for ensuring that impacts to special-status species, native vegetation, wildlife habitat, or unique resources would be minimized to the fullest extent possible. The Biological Monitor shall be on-site to monitor all work and will conduct sweeps of the approved areas, especially areas with high burrow concentrations which will be impacted. Monitors would flag the boundaries of areas where activities need to be restricted in order to protect wildlife including special-status species. These restricted areas would be monitored to ensure their protection during construction. This will include protecting species covered under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and CDFG codes regarding the protection of nests and eggs. If breeding birds with active nests are found, a biological monitor shall establish a 300-foot buffer around the nest and no activities will be allowed within the buffer until the young have fledged from the nest or the nest fails. The 300-foot buffer may be adjusted to reflect existing conditions including ambient noise and disturbance with the approval of the CDFG and USFWS (as well as CPUC notification). The biological monitor shall conduct regular monitoring of the nest to determine success/failure and to ensure that project activities are not conducted within the buffer until the nesting cycle is complete or the nest fails.

- Biological survey sweeps shall be conducted and results submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to equipment and vehicles mobilizing into an area. After complete surveys have been submitted and approved by the CPUC, site occupation can occur; however, if occupation does not occur within seven calendar days of survey submittals, biological clearance sweeps shall be re-conducted prior to site occupation, including nesting bird surveys during the breeding season.

- Per SCE, a biological monitor will be present for the brush clearing and removal activities within the proposed yard.

- After completion of use of the marshalling yard, the site shall be restored to preconstruction conditions.

- If special-status plant or animal species are observed within the project area, the CPUC EM and CDFG shall be notified immediately.

- Per Mitigation Measure G-8, a certified paleontological monitor will monitor compliance at construction areas where excavation is being conducted in geologic units of moderate to high sensitivity. Areas of low sensitivity will be spot-checked periodically. Paleontological monitoring reports will be submitted to the CPUC for review on a monthly basis.

- All project mitigation measures, compliance plans, and permit conditions shall be implemented during construction activities and use of the proposed yard spaces. Some measures are on-going/time-sensitive requirements and shall be implemented prior to and during construction where applicable.

- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, and this Notice to Proceed shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities.

- Prior to the commencement of construction activities, all crew personnel including haul truck and concrete truck drivers shall be appropriately WEAP trained on environmental issues including protocols for air quality, hazardous materials, biological resources, known and unanticipated cultural materials, as well as SWPPP BMPs. A log shall be maintained on-site with the names of all crew personnel trained.

- All work boundaries shall be flagged prior to occupation.

- No movement or staging of construction vehicles or equipment shall be allowed outside of the approved areas. If additional temporary workspace areas or access routes, or changes to construction technique or mitigation implementation to a lesser level are required, a Variance Request shall be submitted for CPUC review and approval.

- All fueling for equipment shall be conducted in approved refueling locations.

- If construction debris or spills enter into environmentally sensitive areas, the jurisdictional agencies and CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.

- In the case of a hazardous materials spill, the CPUC EMs shall be immediately notified and an incident report shall be submitted to the CPUC within five (5) working days of the spill incident and shall include spill volumes and any resource damage that may have occurred.

Sincerely,

John Boccio
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen