

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

April 8, 2009

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

RE: SCE Antelope Transmission Project, Segment 2 – Variance Request #38

Dear Mr. Johnson,

On April 6, 2009, Southern Californian Edison (SCE) submitted a variance requesting to perform wire removal from existing structure 27-1 to existing structure 18-3 on the Eagle Rock-Vincent Transmission Line near the Vincent Substation on Segment 2 of the Antelope Transmission Project in unincorporated Los Angeles County, California. **This Variance Request is approved by CPUC for the proposed activities based on the following factors:**

- SCE submitted the following information:

SCE requests a variance to perform wire removal from existing structure 27-1 to existing structure 18-3 on the Eagle Rock-Vincent Transmission Line near the Vincent Substation. The wire must be removed from structure 27-1 in order to make room for the new 220-kV circuit.

Currently, an outage is anticipated on the Antelope-Mesa Transmission Line on April 13<sup>th</sup>. SCE would like to utilize this outage to complete the wire removal on the Eagle Rock to Vincent span. A 100-foot radius disturbance area around the existing tower 18-3 will be needed, along with the use of existing roads to this tower. The wire will be lowered to the ground and then wound up through the right-of-way span between existing tower 27-1 and existing tower 18-3. No ground disturbance is anticipated with this work, although some minor grading to portions of the existing road may be needed.

- **Biological Resources:** On March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009 a biological survey was performed by Kim Briones from Bio Resources Consultants and Rosina Gallego from Burns and McDonnell for the wire removal from existing structure 27-1 to existing structure 18-3 on the Eagle Rock-Vincent Transmission Line, including the area where the wire will be dropped (in between structures). Surveys were also conducted previously to fulfill SCE Mitigation Measures from the EIR (Aspen 2006) for construction of the Antelope Transmission Project. The tower disturbance areas were surveyed using a 500 foot buffer; the roads were surveyed using a 50 foot buffer on each side, and the wire span was surveyed using a 30 foot buffer on each side.

The habitat in the area is sagebrush scrub dominated by big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), and water jacket (*Lycium andersonii*), with a few California junipers and interspersed common non-native plants and annual grasses. The survey identified 24 California juniper trees within the proposed disturbance area, 53 juniper trees alongside the access road, and no juniper or Joshua trees along the span width between existing towers. Impacts to juniper trees will be minimal. There were 22 woodrat (*Neotoma* sp.) nests, 13 *Opuntia basilaris* var. *basilaris*, two unknown bird nests (inactive), and four cactus wren nests (inactive) found in various locations that have been recorded and mapped.

There are two drainages located between the spans which discharge to the Soledad Canyon watershed. These drainages are potentially regulated waters under the jurisdiction of CDFG, LARWB, and USACE. The existing road crossings at these drainages will be accessed only when conditions are dry. In addition, road improvements will be restricted at these drainage crossings. The lowering of the wire span is not expected to substantially alter the drainage bed and banks. Drainage crossings will be clearly marked in the field and biological resource maps with "No Grading" signs. No significant impacts to biological resources are anticipated with the implementation of the measures noted below.

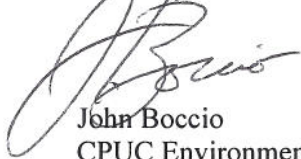
- **Cultural & Paleontological Resources:** A record search for cultural resources (Ahment and Mason 2005) resulted in no known cultural resources that would be impacted by the proposed wire removal between 27-1 and existing structure 18-3 on the Eagle Rock-Vincent Transmission Line. As proposed, no ground disturbance is anticipated with this work, although some minor grading to portions of the existing road may be needed. Therefore, no significant impacts to cultural resources and paleontological resources are anticipated.

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

- 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.
- SCE has assigned Biological Monitors to the Project. They are responsible for ensuring that impacts to special-status species, native vegetation, wildlife habitat, or unique resources are minimized to the fullest extent possible. The Biological Monitor shall be on-site to monitor all work and shall conduct sweeps of the approved areas which will be impacted. 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 only with the approval of the CDFG and/or USFWS (Please note that the CPUC must be notified prior to the onset of construction). 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. If nesting birds move into the work area SCE will monitor the nest to ensure that their activities do not result in the loss or failure of the nest. A preliminary 300-foot buffer area around the nest will be established and SCE shall coordinate with the CPUC, CDFG and/or USFWS.
- If avoidance of a woodrat midden is not feasible, it can be raked out by the monitoring biologist to minimize impacts to woodrats, following consultation with California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).
- As proposed, the existing road crossings at the subsequent drainages will be accessed only when conditions are dry. In addition, road improvements will be restricted at these drainage crossings. In addition, a Biological Monitor shall be present at the drainages during the lowering and pulling of the wire span through the drainages.

- If unanticipated cultural discoveries occur, work must halt in the immediate vicinity until the find can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist to determine if it meets significance criteria under CEQA.
- All project mitigation measures, compliance plans, and permit conditions shall be implemented during construction activities. Some measures are on-going/time-sensitive requirements and shall be implemented prior to and during construction where applicable.
- 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. In addition, all approved access roads, spur roads and overland travel routes to be used shall be flagged prior to construction.
- If construction debris or spills enter into environmentally sensitive areas, the jurisdictional agencies and CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.
- Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, and this Variance shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities where applicable, *including the variance request and maps.*

Sincerely,



John Boccio  
CPUC Environmental Project Manager

cc: V. Strong, Aspen