

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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December 1, 2011

Ms. Suzan Benz
Environmental Project Manager
Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Project
6 Point Drive, 1st Floor
Brea, CA 92821-6320

RE: SCE Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 (DPV2) Transmission Line Project - Notice to Proceed (NTP #8)

Dear Ms. Benz:

On October 8, 2011, Southern California Edison (SCE) requested authorization from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for a construction of 31 miles of overhead 500 kV transmission line from Colorado River Substation (CRS) to Red Bluff Substation and the replacement of 5 miles of existing overhead ground wire (OHGW) with new optical ground wire (OPGW) on the existing Devers-Palo Verde No. 1 Transmission Line (DPV1), east of the CRS as part of the Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Line Project.

The CPUC voted on January 25, 2007 to approve the SCE DPV2 Transmission Line Project (Decision D.07-01-040). On May 14, 2008, SCE filed a Petition for Modification (PFM) of the existing Certificate for Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) approved per Decision D.07-01-040. SCE requested that the CPUC authorize SCE to construct DPV2 facilities in only the California portion of DPV2 and the Midpoint Substation (now called the Colorado River Substation) near Blythe, California. The CPUC approved SCE's PFM on November 20, 2009 in Decision D.09-11-007.

After the CPUC's 2009 Decision regarding the PFM, several large solar power projects were proposed in the Blythe and Desert Center areas. SCE filed Permit to Construct applications addressing expansion of the Colorado River Substation and construction of a new Red Bluff Substation. These components were not covered in the original DPV2 Final EIR/EIS, because the solar power projects had not yet been proposed, and supplemental environmental review has been conducted. The Colorado River Substation Expansion and the Red Bluff Substation were both approved by the CPUC on July 14, 2011 in Decisions D.11-07-011 and D.11-07-020, respectively.

The BLM issued a Record of Decision approving the Project on July 19, 2011. The BLM issued NTPs for construction of the Red Bluff and Colorado River Substations and the overhead transmission line on its lands in September 2011. The Project also crosses lands under jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service on the San Bernardino National Forest within an existing Forest Service-issued easement. The Forest Service will issue a revised easement signed by the Forest Supervisor. The area requested under this Notice to Proceed (NTP) does not fall under Forest Service or BLM jurisdiction.

The Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Project will be constructed in eight work packages, as defined on the CPUC's project website (<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/aspn/dpv2/dpv2.htm>). It is anticipated that, even within the eight work packages, SCE will submit multiple separate requests for NTPs during the construction process. This is a typical process for transmission line projects. Given that the DPV2 Project has been approved by the CPUC and BLM, as described above, this segmented

construction review process allows SCE to proceed with individual project components where compliance with all applicable mitigation measures and conditions can be documented.

This letter documents the CPUC's thorough evaluation of all activities covered in this NTP, including the mitigation compliance table provided with the subject NTPR. The evaluation process ensures that all mitigation measures and Biological Opinion Conditions applicable to the location and activities covered in the NTP are implemented, as required in the CPUC's Decision and in BLM's Record of Decision (where applicable).

NTP #8 for the CRS-Red Bluff 500 kV overhead transmission line is granted by CPUC based on the factors described below.

SCE NTP Request

The CPUC has carefully reviewed the NTP request (NTPR) submitted by SCE, and verified that it incorporates compliance with all applicable mitigation measures. Excerpts from the SCE NTP request dated October 8, 2011 are presented as follows (indented).

1.1 Colorado River Substation-Red Bluff Transmission Line

The CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line starts at tower construction RB2-5E (see Appendix A, page 20-168), located south of the new Red Bluff Substation, to tower construction 2648 (see Appendix A, page 20-230), located north of the new CRS. This section of the transmission line is within the existing right-of-way (ROW). The project work consists of the construction of stub roads, foundations, steel assembly, erection of 91 lattice steel towers (LSTs), and the installation of associated hardware assemblies and interconnecting wires.

The CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line construction features included in this NTPR are shown in Appendix A: Project Site and Access Maps, in Figures 20-168 to 20-230.

1.2 Overhead Ground Wire Replacement

The OHGW replacement consists of the replacement of existing OHGW with a single 96-fiber OPGW and installation of all associated hardware for approximately 5 miles, commencing at tower construction CR1-5E (see Appendix A, page 20-237) east to existing tower M123-T1 (see Appendix A, page 20-248)...

3.0 PROJECT COMPONENTS

This section describes the Project components, including site facilities, operations, and site work associated with construction of the CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line and the OHGW replacement with OPGW, including installation and required removal/demolition.

Construction equipment operating hours for the work on the ROW associated with the installation of the CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line are permitted from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. weekdays or in accordance with an alternative schedule in compliance with the local jurisdiction. Currently, SCE is in the process of obtaining variances from the local jurisdictions to extend these permitted hours. SCE has dedicated a DPV2 toll-free information line ([866] 602-3782) and website (www.sce.com/dpv2) for this Project. The information line is the designated public notification contact for DPV2, as described in the Project Wide Construction Notification Plan.

3.1 Construction Activities and Operation Components/Activities

3.1.1 Colorado River Substation-Red Bluff Transmission Line

Following is a list of elements and activities that will possibly be present or active throughout the construction of the CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line:

Project Elements

- New stub roads and maintenance of existing access roads
- Wire setup sites (that is, pull sites, wire splice sites, tensioning sites)
- Transmission tower foundations, structures, and wires
- Temporary guard structures
- Construction equipment and vehicles
- Helicopters
- Permit requirements (for example, best management practices)
- Watering for dust control

Construction Activities

- Grading and excavation; blasting as required
- Installation of foundations, tower/pole structures, and wires
- Operation of construction equipment and vehicles
- Operation of helicopters
- Installation, maintenance, and removal of guard structures
- Implementation, installation, maintenance, and removal of permit requirements (for example, Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan [SWPPP])
- Operation of water trucks

3.1.2 Overhead Groundwire Replacement with Optical Groundwire

Following is a list of elements and activities that will possibly be present or active throughout the construction of the OHGW replacement:

Project Elements

- OPGW

Construction Activities

- Removal of existing OHGW
- Installation of new OPGW
- Operation of construction equipment and vehicles
- Operation of helicopters
- Installation, maintenance, and removal of permit requirements
- Material salvage and disposal

3.2 Site Work and Activities

3.2.1 Colorado River Substation-Red Bluff Transmission Line

Site work for the installation of the transmission line will include grading for access roads and site preparation; installation of new transmission structures/foundations, wires and hardware assemblies. Specific information on these activities is provided in the following section.

3.2.2 Existing DPV1 Overhead Ground Wire Replacement with Optical Ground Wire

Due to the outage schedule constraint and to reduce the impact of ground disturbance from equipment, the majority of the construction activities for replacing the existing OHGW with OPGW will be performed by helicopters. No access road, site preparation, and belowground activities are required for this scope of work.

3.2.3 Access Roads

Constructing the CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line stub roads will involve clearing, grubbing, and grading. All new stub roads have been designed to be a 14-foot-wide roadway. Berms or swales that are approximately 2 to 3 feet wide will be created on each side of the stub road where necessary. Additionally, stub road widths will accommodate vehicle turning, vehicle turnouts, sidecasting, and backslope. Drainage improvements may be implemented in certain stub road locations to divert water away from stub roads to control erosion according to approved engineering designs. During construction, periodic maintenance of existing access roads may also be required.

3.2.4 Site Preparation

Construction activities associated with the construction of the CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line will require grading and other site preparation activities. Some of these activities would be temporary (for example, construction roads, land disturbance for pull site, construction staging areas, and crane pads associated with tower assembly and erection). Other construction activities would be permanent, and the land would remain in use after construction (for example, tower footings and access roads). Typically, the staging area for construction activities would require an area of approximately 200 by 200 feet at each tower; and in locations of relatively level terrain, only vegetation removal would occur to prepare the site for construction. In more rugged terrain or sloping site conditions, both vegetation removal and grading may be necessary to prepare the staging area for construction.

To support the equipment and vehicle traffic, the graded area will be compacted. Site preparation is necessary to accommodate, installation of new tower sites and to perform crane operation during the assembly and erection of tower structures.

Vehicles, equipment, and/or materials may be staged on the existing DPV1 access roads within the ROW.

Prior to stringing activities, temporary protective netting systems, guard structures, or temporary guard arms mounted on boom trucks will be used at crossings for roads, streets, railroads, highways, or other transmission, distribution, or communication facilities, as required. On roads where traffic is light, guard structures may not be necessary; however, the use of barriers, flagmen, and/or temporary stopping of traffic will be required.

There are approximately 51 pull sites, 12 splicing sites, and 22 guard structures for the CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line scope. Each pull/tension site, wire splice site, and wire setup will typically occupy a work area measuring approximately 300 by 150 feet.

All site preparation will be conducted in compliance with all permit requirements and will include installation of SWPPP best management practices.

3.2.5 Underground, Belowground, and Abovegrade Activities

3.2.5.1 Major Underground Activities

None applicable to this NTPR.

3.2.5.2 Major Belowgrade Activities

It is anticipated that belowgrade activities such as excavation, drilling, and foundation installation will be performed for construction of the CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line. Construction of the new LSTs will require construction of drilled concrete pier foundations. Planned belowgrade activities for construction of the CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line are summarized as follows:

Construction of Foundations for 91 Lattice Steel Towers

Each LST will require four excavated holes of approximately 3 to 7 feet in diameter and 20 to 40 feet deep.

3.2.5.3 Major Abovegrade Activities

CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line Construction of 91 Lattice Steel Towers

The CRS-Red Bluff Transmission Line consists of the construction of 91 LSTs, as well as wire installation. Construction will be completed before April 1, 2013, to support the substation in-service schedule. All tower structures will be assembled and erected by cranes, and helicopters will be utilized for installing sock line during wire pulling operations.

Existing DPV1 Overhead Ground Wire Replacement with Optical Ground Wire

The planned construction activities will be performed during the scheduled DPV1 outage in April to May of 2012. The intent is to use helicopters to perform the majority of this work to reduce the impact of ground disturbance from setting equipment, and to complete the scope within outage schedule constraints. The existing OHGW will be utilized to pull in the new OPGW. The existing OHGW will be unclipped, the shoes will be removed, and the OHGW will be placed in stringing sheaves. The existing OHGW sag tension will be maintained during the installation process, and the hardware assemblies will be installed during the final sagging process.

Major abovegrade activities will be removal of 5 miles of existing OHGW and associated hardware, and installation of 5 miles of new OPGW and associated hardware.

3.2.6 Parking/Staging

In order to support construction activities along the transmission ROW, where terrain and/or soil conditions within the 200-by-200-foot work area will not support parking of vehicles, parking and temporary staging is proposed along the existing DPV1 access route, along established disturbed routes. All parking and staging will occur outside of any Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA).

3.2.7 Other Activities

Water trucks will be used for dust control during the construction for compliance with South Coast Air Quality Management District requirements and Project mitigation requirements.

4.0 ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

The anticipated activity [start date] schedule for the CRS-Red Bluff construction activities are shown below:

CRS-Red Bluff

- Road Construction and Maintenance: December 2011
- Foundation Installation: April 2012
- Structure Assembly: May 2012
- Structure Erection: May 2012
- Conductor Installation: January 2013
- GW and OPGW Installation: January 2013

OHGW Replacement

- OHGW and OPGW Replacement: April 2012

CPUC Evaluation of Pre-Construction Mitigation Implementation

All applicable project mitigation measures, APMs, compliance plans, and permit conditions shall be implemented. Some measures have on-going/time-sensitive requirements and are required to be implemented prior to and during construction where applicable. For biological resources, those additional conditions are discussed and defined in this section. The Compliance Status Table in SCE's NTPR provides pre-construction compliance information for the other issue areas addressed by the DPV2 EIR/EIS.

Following the discussion of biological, cultural, paleontological land use, geologic and water resources, a list of bulleted conditions is presented to define additional information and clarifications regarding outstanding requirements. In some cases, these items exceed the requirements of the Mitigation Measures and Applicant Proposed Measures, and are based on specific site conditions. In these cases, the conditions will not also appear in the NTPR mitigation compliance table.

Biological Resources

This section presents a background for biological resources that occur, or could occur, along the approximately 31-mile length of the Colorado River Substation – Red Bluff Substation (CRS-Red Bluff) segment of new transmission line associated with the DPV2 Project. It also addresses potential biological resources along approximately five miles of the existing DPV1 transmission line east of CRS where the replacement of existing OHGW with new OPGW would occur. This summary of biological issues is based on information summarized in SCE's *Notice to Proceed Request for the Colorado River Substation to Red Bluff Substation Transmission Line and Replacement of Existing Devers-Palo Verde No. 1 Transmission Line Overhead Ground Wire* (NTPR) (October, 2011) and a field verification study conducted on October 18 and 19, 2011 by Aspen Environmental Group (Aspen).

Construction activities associated with the DPV2 components included in this NTP would primarily occur within SCE's existing right-of-way (ROW) from the new Red Bluff Substation, west of the Alligator Rock Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), to the new CRS near the City of Blythe. According to SCE's NTPR, these activities would occur in, or adjacent to, 16 native vegetation communities, five of which are considered sensitive habitats by CDFG. Sensitive habitats occurring in this NTP project area include big galleta shrub-steppe, blue palo verde-ironwood-smoke tree woodland, blue palo verde

woodland, creosote bush scrub-big galleta, and smoke tree woodland. Permanent and/or temporary impacts are anticipated in each of these, as well as a variety of other native and non-native, habitats as a result of activities associated with new transmission line construction, development of new spur roads, and set-up of wiring/pull sites and guard structures.

The USFWS Biological Opinion (BO), which includes all activities associated with the components of this NTP, was issued on January 11, 2011 for the DPV2 Project. Subsequently, the CDFG issued a 2080.1 Consistency Determination for the DPV2 Project on April 27, 2011. In accordance with the USFWS BO, the CDFG Consistency Determination, Mitigation Measures presented in the DPV2 Final EIR/EIS, and APMs included as part of project development, a Qualified Biologist(s) shall conduct the appropriate pre-construction clearance surveys for special-status species prior to any ground disturbing activities and shall be present throughout the duration of all construction activities associated with the components of the NTP. Additionally, SCE shall implement all other applicable conditions of the USFWS BO, CDFG Consistency Determination, Final EIR/EIS Mitigation Measures, and APMs for biological resources that occur, or could occur, in all areas subject to disturbance.

Special-status plants. To date, SCE has indicated that a total of three special-status plants have been detected in the CRS-Red Bluff project area during focused rare plant surveys, including Abram's spurge (*Chamaesyce abramsiana*), ribbed cryptantha (*Cryptantha costata*), and California barrel cactus (*Ferocactus cylindraceus* var. *cylindraceus*). None of these species are federally or State listed as threatened or endangered. Special-status plant species that meet specific criteria shall be flagged for avoidance and relocated in accordance with the project's CPUC approved Transplant Plan.

Special-status wildlife. According to SCE's NTPR, special-status wildlife species that have been observed or detected within the Red Bluff-CRS segment project area include desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), Mojave fringe-toed lizard (*Uma scoparia*), Colorado Desert fringe-toed lizard (*U. notata notata*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), desert kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis*), and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*).

Desert tortoise is listed as a threatened species under the federal and California Endangered Species Acts (ESA and CESA, respectively). Anticipated impacts to this species have been incorporated within formal Section 7 consultation between SCE and the USFWS and will be offset/mitigated through implementation of conditions of the USFWS BO, CDFG Consistency Determination, and Mitigation Measures presented in the Final EIR/EIS developed specifically for desert tortoise.

Of the remaining special-status wildlife species that have been identified during surveys, Mojave fringe-toed lizard is considered a Species of Special Concern (SSC) by CDFG and Cooper's hawk is a CDFG Watch List (WL) species. Red-tailed hawk is designated as a USFWS Bird of Conservation Concern and is protected, along with most other bird species in the region, by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Desert kit fox is not considered a special-status species; however, this species is protected under Title 14, California Code of Regulations (sections 670.2 and 670.5), and potential impacts to individuals of this species must be avoided. Finally, Colorado Desert fringe-toed lizard and mule deer are afforded jurisdictional protections by the BLM and U.S. Forest Service, respectively. The components of this NTP would occur on non-federal lands on which these species are not afforded similar protection. However, broadly based Mitigation Measures provided in the Final EIR/EIS, such as pre-construction clearance surveys and biological monitoring, along with species-specific Mitigation Measures for Mojave fringe-toed lizard, desert kit fox, and nesting birds will be implemented throughout the duration of all construction activities associated with this NTP.

Jurisdictional drainages. The SCE NTPR states that the CRS-Red Bluff segment of the DPV2 transmission line contains United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and CDFG jurisdictional wetland and non-wetland waters. SCE shall obtain the appropriate agency permits prior to any construction activities that result in impacts to federal or State jurisdictional waters. Additionally, SCE shall implement all applicable Final EIR/EIS Mitigation Measures, conditions of the USFWS BO and CDFG Consistency Determination, and APMs to avoid and/or minimize impacts to these areas. Any areas that would meet the criteria for federal and/or State jurisdiction that are disturbed during construction activities shall be mapped and the disturbance acreages shall be reported to the USFWS, CDFG, and CPUC to include in final mitigation/compensation requirements.

Vegetation management. According to SCE's NTPR, the CRS-Red Bluff segment of the DPV2 Project is expected to result in a total of 6.94 acres and 136.43 acres of permanent and temporary impacts, respectively. The majority of these impacts would occur in native vegetation communities and habitats and would primarily be associated with temporary work limits and wire setup sites, and permanent stub roads.

In order to ensure that ground disturbance is limited to overall acreages provided in the NTPR, SCE shall clearly flag, stake, or mark all permanent and temporary impact boundaries prior to any ground-disturbing activities associated with the components of this NTP. All work shall be strictly limited to defined boundaries. Vegetation clearing in defined temporary disturbance areas shall only occur where necessary to allow for equipment access and storm water management. Drive and crush methods shall be used in these temporary disturbance areas to minimize impacts and ensure root systems remain intact. All material and equipment to be used in connection with activities covered under this NTP will be stored and maintained at CPUC approved construction yards or an existing utility storage yard. Storage at any other location would likely require a Variance or Temporary Extra Work Space (TEWS) request and CPUC approval. Similarly, any water supply locations not previously approved by CPUC, would require CPUC approval.

SCE is currently developing a Habitat Compensation/Restoration Plan (HCRP) to address restoration and compensation of all areas disturbed by construction within the overall DPV2 Project. The restoration component of this plan is intended to target areas where onsite restoration is planned for temporary impacts to vegetation communities and jurisdictional waters whereas the compensation component relates to the purchasing and managing of offsite lands targeted for conservation in perpetuity. In compliance with Mitigation Measure B-1a, a Final HCRP shall be approved by the CPUC and BLM prior to any ground disturbing activities. A formal acquisition proposal for compensatory mitigation lands is currently being developed by Wildlands, Inc. (Wildlands) on behalf of SCE to meet mitigation requirements for permanent impacts to native vegetation communities and jurisdictional waters and coordination between SCE, Wildlands, and the regulatory agencies is ongoing. As such, SCE may commence construction activities associated with the components of this NTP prior to final agency approval of compensatory acquisition lands provided the Final HCRP has been approved by the CPUC and BLM. Prior to CPUC and BLM approval of the Final HCRP, construction activities shall be limited to developed areas or previously disturbed areas as identified on Project vegetation maps.

A Noxious Weed Control Plan has been approved by the CPUC for the overall DPV2 Project. The purpose of this plan is to control the introduction and spread of non-native and invasive plant species in the project area or into adjacent undisturbed habitats during the project activity period. SCE shall implement all the conditions of this plan during project construction.

Cultural Resources

The Final Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) for the Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 Project was accepted on October 20, 2011. Four cultural resources sites were identified on non-federal lands within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the CRS to Red Bluff Substation Transmission Line. Therefore, in accordance with the Final HPMP, cultural resources monitoring at the following four sites, is required during construction activities for the CRS to Red Bluff Transmission Line:

Cultural Resources Sites within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) to be Monitored (n=4)		
Site	NRHP* Eligibility Determinations	Proposed Mitigation
CA-RIV-893T	Not Evaluated; site was not relocated during surveys for DPV2	Monitor construction
CA-RIV-9313	Recommend ineligible; site was evaluated during testing for DPV2	Monitor construction
P-33-013593	Determined ineligible by the Office of Historic Preservation in February 2009	No Grading signs and monitor avoidance
P-33-013596	Determined ineligible by the Office of Historic Preservation in February 2009	Monitor construction

* NRHP = National Register of Historic Places

The Final HPMP states that areas identified as sensitive will be monitored during construction activities. While these areas do not contain known cultural resources, an Archaeological Field Monitor will spot check the following tower locations during ground disturbing construction activities to ensure there are no impacts to undiscovered resources:

- Towers 2640, 2641, 2645.

In the event that an unanticipated discovery of cultural materials is made during construction of the CRS to Red Bluff Substation Transmission Line, the find shall be managed in compliance with the following procedures provided in Section 4.4 - Plan of Discovery of Cultural Resources of the approved HPMP as itemized below:

- All work within 200 feet of the discovery will be halted and the onsite Archaeological Field Monitor will evaluate the discovery.
- The Environmental Monitor will notify the Lead Archaeological Monitor, Consultant Project Manager (CPM), Work Package Archaeologist(s) (WPA), or SCE Archaeologist (in that order) immediately.
- Activities within 200 feet of the discovery will not resume until the discovery has been assessed by a member of the Cultural Resources Team.

Paleontological Resources

Based on the Paleontological Monitoring and Treatment Plan (Plan), submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission on April 20, 2011, the potential to encounter paleontological resources along the Colorado River Substation to Red Bluff Substation Transmission Line is low. Therefore, in accordance with the Plan, low sensitivity units will be monitored intermittently, to verify the low sensitivity classification, as determined by the Paleontological Resource Specialist. Excavation for the lattice steel tower foundations will be monitored part-time at the following tower locations:

- Towers 2556, 2557, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2575, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2626, 2627, 2629, 2632, 2640, 2641, 2645.

In the event that a paleontological resource discovery is made during site development, all construction activities in the area of the discovery must cease, and the Discovery of Fossils protocol, as specified in the Plan will be followed (1-Notification, 2-Avoidance and Continued Construction Activities, and 3-Determining Significance of a Discovered Paleontological Resource).

Geologic Resources

The CPUC geotechnical specialist reviewed the NTPR and the Draft Geotechnical Investigation Report related to compliance with the following approved Geology and Soils mitigation measures that apply to the CRS-Red Bluff segment of the DPV2 Transmission Line Project: G-2a (Conduct geotechnical studies for soils to assess characteristics and aid in appropriate foundation design), G-3a (Conduct geotechnical surveys for landslides), G-5a (Design project facilities to avoid impact from ground failure), and G-7a (Minimize project structures within active fault zones). The geotechnical investigation conducted by Kleinfelder consisted of literature review, aerial photo and field reconnaissance geologic mapping, drilling of 147 rock and soil borings, and laboratory testing of samples obtained from the borings. Based on the information collected from their investigation, Kleinfelder provides seismic design parameters and recommendations for use by SCE and Powers Engineers for foundation design.

The NTPR and the geotechnical report adequately address requirements of mitigation measures G-2a, G-3a, and G-5a. No detailed fault study appears to have been conducted for this investigation per Mitigation Measure G-7a. However, based on the maps in the report, no towers appear to be within Alquist-Priolo fault rupture hazard zones.

Land Use and Sensitive Receptors

The construction activities for the CRS-Red Bluff portion of the transmission line will occur mainly within the existing SCE ROW from the new Red Bluff Substation, west of the Alligator Rock Area of Critical Concern (ACEC), to the new CRS near the City of Blythe. Helicopters would be used for construction of some of the 91 towers. The length of the transmission line is approximately 31 miles. Most of this segment of the route is undeveloped with scattered rural residences.

The construction activities for the existing DPV1 OHGW replacement with OPGW will extend from construction tower CR1-5E, located to the east of the CRS, east of existing tower M123-T1 near Blythe. The length of the OHGW replacement work is approximately 5 miles. This portion of the project was analyzed in the CRS Supplemental EIR.

According to the NTPR, in general, construction equipment operating hours for the work on the ROW associated with the installation of the transmission line are planned to be from approximately 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays or in accordance with an alternative schedule in compliance with the local jurisdiction.

Construction activities, including noise associated with helicopter usage, was addressed in the DPV2 Final EIR/EIS. Helicopter usage will be limited to the extent feasible in accordance with Mitigation Measure AQ 1g (reduce helicopter use during construction) and all residences will be notified of construction per the approved Construction Notification Plan as required in Mitigation Measure L-1a.

Water Resources

The CPUC hydrologist reviewed the NTPR and the Draft Geotechnical Investigation Report related to compliance with the following approved Hydrology and Water Quality mitigation measures that apply to the CRS-Red Bluff segment of the DPV2 Transmission Line Project: Mitigation Measure H-6a and

Applicant Proposed Measures W-1 through W-9. With regards to APM W-3, the NTPR notes that the project would not contain enough hazardous materials to warrant a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP). APM W-3 does not specifically require a HMBP or identify a quantity of hazardous materials that would be necessary in order to justify such a plan; rather, APM W-3 requires that “hazardous material plans” are incorporated into the construction bidding specifications. The Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan required per Mitigation Measure P-1a would meet the purpose of APM W-3, and would be implemented for this portion of the project, also as noted in the NTPR. No additional concerns or specific water resources conditions would be required under this NTP.

Transportation and Traffic

Section D.9.4 (Applicable Regulations, Plans, and Standards) of the DPV2 Final EIR/EIS discusses the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, including submittal of Form 7460-1 as required under Subpart B, Section 77.13 of the guidelines of the FAA. Furthermore, the DPV2 Final EIR/EIS addresses DPV2 aviation impacts and FAA regulations for this NTP segment under Section D.9.6.6 (Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area).

As part of the MMCRP process and to ensure that SCE is in accordance with all federal, State and local regulations, the CPUC sent SCE a data request on November 9, 2011 requesting information on FAA determinations of No Hazard to Navigable Airspace and requirements for lighting and marking of transmission facilities. SCE responded on November 30, 2011 that it filed Forms 7460-1 for 77 locations (66 towers & 11 catenaries) along the entire CRS-Devers line; however, the forms/determinations have not yet been received. Therefore, in order to ensure that the CPUC and its environmental monitors are informed about towers, spans, and other project components that may fall under FAA jurisdiction and have the potential for lighting or marker requirements, the following conditions have been included in this NTP:

- Prior to construction of any tower or span for which a Form 7460-1 is required to be submitted to the FAA, SCE shall provide the CPUC with a copy of the FAA’s obstruction evaluation determination.
- For any tower or span where lights or markers are required per the FAA, SCE shall submit to the CPUC a copy of FAA Form 7460-2 at the time when it is filed at (1) the start of construction and (2) within five days of when the structure is constructed to its maximum height.

Conditions of NTP Approval

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

1. All applicable project mitigation measures, APMs, compliance plans, and permit conditions shall be implemented. Some measures have on-going/time-sensitive requirements and shall be implemented prior to and during construction where applicable. Please see the table of pre-construction requirements in SCE’s NTPR. Bulleted items can be found below which provide additional information and clarifications to outstanding requirements.
2. Copies of all relevant permits, compliance plans, and this Notice to Proceed shall be available on site for the duration of construction activities.
3. Prior to construction of any tower or span for which a Form 7460-1 is required to be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), SCE shall provide the CPUC with a copy of the FAA’s obstruction evaluation determination.

4. For any tower or span where lights or markers are required per the FAA, SCE shall submit to the CPUC a copy of FAA Form 7460-2 at the time when it is filed at (1) the start of construction and (2) within five days of when the structure is constructed to its maximum height.
5. Verification of noticing mailings including address lists, postings and newspaper postings, as required under Mitigation Measures L-1a, WR-1a, and WR-1b shall be submitted to the CPUC prior to construction.
6. All crew members shall be trained through a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) prior to working on the project. A log shall be maintained onsite with the names of all crew personnel trained. For any crew members with limited English, a translator shall be onsite to ensure understanding of the training program. In place of a translator, the WEAP training brochure can be provided in Spanish or other languages as appropriate. All participants will receive a hard hat sticker for ease of compliance verification.
7. Prior to the initiation of any ground-disturbing activities, all work area boundaries associated with temporary and permanent disturbance shall be clearly staked, flagged, or marked. All workers shall strictly limit access and vehicles to the designated work limits. Removal of any perennial, native vegetation in work areas shall be avoided to the maximum extent practicable. Access to work areas in undisturbed habitat shall be achieved by crushing, instead of removal, to the maximum extent practicable.
8. In compliance with conditions of the USFWS BO, a field contact representative (FCR) shall be designated and will be onsite for all ground-disturbing activities in desert tortoise habitat. The FCR will have the authority to halt all work activities that are not in compliance with the Project's conservation measures and Incidental Take Statement requirements.
9. Prior to CPUC and BLM approval of the Final HCRP, construction activities shall be limited to developed areas or previously disturbed areas as identified on Project vegetation maps.
10. SCE shall implement the conditions of the approved Final HCRP to compensate for the permanent loss and temporary disturbance to native vegetation communities.
11. SCE shall maintain ongoing coordination with the CPUC, BLM, USFWS, and CDFG related to the acquisition of offsite compensatory mitigation lands.
12. SCE shall implement all conditions of the Final Noxious Weed Control Plan which specifies the locations of existing weed populations and provides appropriate measures to control the introduction and spread of noxious weeds into the Project area, worker training, specifications, and inspection procedures for construction materials and equipment used in the Project area.
13. All seeds, straw wattles, gravel and fill material used during construction shall be certified weed free by the local County Agricultural Commissioner's Office.
14. SCE shall conduct pre-construction surveys for special-status plants, cacti, and plant species covered under the California Desert Native Plant Act within fourteen (14) days prior to construction activities within 100 feet of ground disturbing activities. If listed and/or sensitive plants are identified and cannot be avoided, SCE shall be responsible for the translocation of plants and/or collection of seeds from existing populations that would be impacted and the planting/reseeding of these plants in adjacent suitable habitat that would not be affected by construction activities. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, the CPUC EM shall review and approve the survey results, and avoidance and disturbance flagging.

15. SCE shall implement all conditions of the BLM and CPUC approved Transplanting Plan that provides details on the plants being transplanted, including which species and how many of each individuals of each species; where the plants will be transplanted; how the plants will be transplanted; how the plants will be maintained during the transplanting efforts; and, if the plants will be used to re-vegetated disturbed areas of construction sites.
16. All plants that are subject to transplanting, including CNPS List 1 and 2 species, species that are State and/or federally listed, and BLM sensitive species, shall be clearly marked for avoidance (using bright colored flagging) prior to construction activities. For listed plants, SCE shall identify if the plants can be avoided. If avoidance is not possible, SCE shall purchase offsite mitigation in coordination with the USFWS and CDFG. If avoidance is not feasible for non-listed special-status plants, SCE shall implement measures outlined in the CPUC approved Final Special-Status Plant Impact Avoidance and Minimization Plan.
17. SCE shall conduct pre-construction surveys for sensitive wildlife in accordance with specific conditions provided in Final EIS/EIR Mitigation Measures and conditions of the USFWS BO. The location of sensitive species identified during the pre-construction surveys shall be provided to the BLM and CPUC on updated project maps.
18. Pre-construction surveys for breeding birds shall be conducted within 500 feet of disturbance limits by a CPUC-approved biologist at least fourteen (14) days prior to construction during the appropriate season. If federally or State listed birds with active nests are identified, a qualified biological monitor shall establish a 500-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. A 300-foot buffer shall be implemented in the event that raptors or other species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) are located. The biological monitor shall conduct regular monitoring of any identified nest to determine success/failure and to ensure that construction activities do not occur within established buffers until the nesting cycle is complete or the nest fails. There may be a reduction of these buffer zones depending on site-specific conditions or the existing ambient level of activity. SCE shall coordinate with CDFG and USFWS to determine the appropriate buffer zone.
19. Pre-construction desert tortoise clearance surveys shall be conducted by a CPUC, CDFG, and USFWS approved Authorized Biologist immediately prior to construction activities within a 100 percent coverage area of all desert tortoise habitat (modeled, critical, and/or occupied) that be subject to project disturbance. Surveys, tortoise handling protocols, burrow excavations, and relocation procedures shall follow conditions specified in the Final EIR/EIS Mitigation Measures and conditions of the USFWS BO.
20. The Authorized Biologist shall be present during all construction activities in tortoise habitat modeled, critical habitat, and/or occupied habitat) during the tortoise's more active season (April thru May and September thru October).
21. As part of the Project WEAP training defined under Condition #4 above, a qualified tortoise biologist shall present a class or briefing to construction workers that addresses, at a minimum, desert tortoise sensitivity to human disturbance, daily and seasonal activity patterns, and proper handling protocols.
22. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities within modeled/critical/occupied habitat for desert tortoise, SCE shall provide documentation that ensures funding to complete required mitigation, including acquisition of lands, monitoring, and reporting activities for impacts to desert tortoise and/or desert tortoise habitat. SCE shall provide to the CPUC, CDFG, and USFWS no later than thirty

- (30) days prior to commencing ground-disturbing activities at applicable locations, an irrevocable letter of credit or other form of security approved by CDFG's Office of the General Counsel.
23. SCE shall conduct pre-construction surveys for Mojave fringe-toed lizard and other special-status reptiles within 48 hours prior to initiation of construction activities. If Mojave fringe-toed lizard is identified in the Project area during construction, all activities adjacent to the identified location shall be halted and the animal will be allowed to move away from the construction site. If the individual is not moving, a qualified biologist will relocate it to nearby suitable habitat (in the shade of a shrub) outside of the construction area.
 24. Prior to ground-disturbing activities, SCE shall conduct pre-construction surveys for burrowing owl within all potential impact areas. Any burrowing owls occupying the Project area shall be evicted by passive relocation techniques as identified in Mitigation Measure B-9e.
 25. SCE shall conduct pre-construction surveys for American badger and desert kit fox prior to ground-disturbing activities in areas that support potential habitat for these species. If occupied dens are identified in the Project area, SCE shall consult with CDFG for further action. Unoccupied dens located in the Project area shall be excavated or covered to prevent animals from re-occupying the den prior to construction. Badger and kit fox dens located outside the Project area shall be flagged for avoidance.
 26. SCE shall conduct biological monitoring in all areas of disturbance during construction activities, including access roads. The biological monitor shall look for special-status wildlife that may be located within or immediately adjacent to construction areas. If special-status species are found, the biological monitor shall avoid or relocate in accordance to the appropriate Final EIR/EIS Mitigation Measures, APMs, and conditions of the USFWS BO.
 27. SCE shall install all overhead components utilizing the most current APLIC standards for collision-reducing techniques.
 28. SCE shall implement all conditions of the USFWS approved Raven Control Plan that includes procedures for conducting degradation surveys and outlines contributions to a range-wide management program. The approved Raven Control Plan provided by SCE to all transmission line companies that conduct operations within the ROW.
 29. All federal jurisdictional wetlands shall be avoided to the maximum extent feasible. In the event that federal jurisdictional wetlands cannot be avoided by project activities, SCE shall obtain the appropriate USACE, CDFG, and State Water Quality Control Board permits. Documentation of these permits must be provided to the CPUC prior to conducting any activities in these areas which may result in permanent or temporary impacts.
 30. Project speed limits shall be posted and strictly adhered to in compliance with Mitigation Measures and APMs provided in the Final EIR/EIS and conditions of the USFWS BO.
 31. During construction, parked vehicles will be inspected prior to being moved. If a tortoise is found beneath a vehicle, the Authorized Biologist will be contacted to move the animal out of harm's way, or the vehicle will not be moved until the tortoise leaves on its own accord. The Authorized Biologist will be responsible for taking appropriate measures to ensure that any tortoises moved in this manner is not exposed to temperature extremes which could be harmful to the animal.
 32. Removal of perennial, native vegetation in work areas will be avoided to the maximum extent practicable, particularly while accessing pulling and splicing stations and during pulling and splicing activities.

33. Road construction shall avoid blading to the extent possible and shall be implemented through vegetation crushing. Required vehicles shall enter on one pathway which is flagged and developed only by the passage of vehicles crushing vegetation.
34. Constructed road berms in modeled, critical, and occupied desert tortoise habitat shall be less than 30.48 cm (12 in) in height and have slopes less than 30 degrees.
35. All auger holes, trenches, pits, or other steep-sided excavations that pose a hazard to wildlife will be securely fenced or covered when unattended to prevent accidental death or injury. At the start and end of each workday, and just before backfilling, all excavations will be inspected for trapped animals. If found, trapped animals will be removed by the Authorized or Qualified Biologist.
36. Project personnel will not be allowed to bring pets into any work areas.
37. Road-killed animals or other carcasses detected within the Project area will be picked up and disposed of immediately (e.g. removal to a landfill or disposal at SCE facility). For any special-status species road-kill, the Qualified Biologist or FCR will contact CDFG and USFWS within 1 working day of receipt of the carcass for guidance on disposal or storage.
38. A trash collection system will be established to ensure that all food and other trash that could attract desert tortoise predators is properly disposed of in self-closing, sealable containers with lids that latch to prevent wind, common ravens, and mammals from opening containers. All trash containers will be regularly inspected and emptied to prevent spillage and maintain sanitary conditions, and removed from the Project footprint when construction activities are complete.
39. Immediately after completion of construction activities, the FCR or designated representative will record the perimeter of the post-construction project footprint, including all tower pads, spur roads, pulling and splicing stations and access routes, substation components, and other project-related infrastructure in a GIS-compatible format to verify the extent of project disturbance. The GIS coverage layer will be provided to the BLM, Service, and CDFG within 90 days of completing construction; the coverage will be compared to impact acreages estimated in this biological/conference opinion to determine final ground-disturbance associated with project construction.
40. Engineering and Conclusions Recommendations included in the Geotechnical Investigations Report (2011) shall be followed.
41. In accordance with the Final HPMP, cultural resources monitoring shall occur at the following four sites during construction activities for the CRS to Red Bluff Transmission Line: CA-RIV-893T, CA-RIV-9313, P-33-013593, and P-33-013596.
42. An Archaeological Field Monitor shall spot check the following tower locations during ground disturbing construction activities to ensure there are no impacts to undiscovered resources: Towers 2640, 2641, and 2645.
43. If additional cultural resources are discovered during work on the CRS-Red Bluff segment, all ground disturbing activities must cease in the area of discovery until all parties have consulted under the provisions provided in the HPMP.
44. Excavation for the lattice steel tower foundations shall be monitored part-time at the following tower locations: Towers 2556, 2557, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2575, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2626, 2627, 2629, 2632, 2640, 2641, 2645.

45. In accordance with the Paleontological Monitoring and Treatment Plan, work areas with low sensitivity shall be monitored intermittently, to verify the low sensitivity classification, as determined by the Paleontological Resource Specialist. In the unlikely event that a paleontological resource discovery is made during site development, all construction activities in the area of the discovery shall cease, and the Discovery of Fossils protocol, as specified in the Plan shall be followed (1-Notification, 2-Avoidance and Continued Construction Activities, and 3-Determining Significance of a Discovered Paleontological Resource).
46. The CPUC Environmental Monitor (EM) shall be notified immediately of any unanticipated cultural, paleontological, or biological resource discoveries.
47. If buried metal components are used for project facilities, the Corrosion Control Recommendations outlined by Schiff Associates in Appendix E of the Geotechnical Investigations Report (2011) shall be followed.
48. If the application of water is needed to abate dust in construction areas and on dirt roads, SCE shall use the least amount needed to meet safety and air quality standards and prevent the formation of puddles, which could attract wildlife to construction sites.
49. SCE shall obtain required haul and ingress/egress and permits for any temporary lane closures from the County of Riverside or other jurisdictions as necessary. Copies of permits shall be submitted to the CPUC. If temporary lane closures are needed, SCE shall coordinate in advance with emergency service providers and shall provide documentation to the CPUC.
50. In regard to the Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan, to fully satisfy the intent of Mitigation Measure P-1b, documentation of training for personnel who would be working near or handling hazardous materials shall be submitted to the CPUC for review after completion of these training activities. Only trained personnel shall be allowed to work near or to handle hazardous materials.
51. In accordance with Mitigation Measure P-1a, prior to project construction, documents prepared by the construction contractors should be submitted to the CPUC along with an acknowledgment that the SCE Certified Industrial Hygienist has reviewed and approved the documents to complete the submittals required for these measures. Documents that the construction contractor would be responsible for would include a hazardous materials inventory that will be used to prepare and/or modify the Hazardous Material Business Plan, documents providing SCE with the names and telephone numbers of persons responsible for the hazardous waste management, an Emergency Response Procedures document that follows SCE's emergency response procedures for the Project.
52. 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 in technique and mitigation implementation to a lesser level are required, a Variance Request, as defined in the Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance and Reporting Plan for this project shall be submitted for CPUC review.
53. No clearing or disturbance to vegetation shall occur outside of approved work areas.
54. If construction debris or spills enter into environmentally sensitive areas, appropriate jurisdictional agencies and the CPUC EM shall be notified immediately.

DPV2 Project Notice to Proceed #8

December 1, 2011

Page 17

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Billie Blanchard

Billie Blanchard

CPUC Environmental Project Manager

Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Project

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