ATTACHMENT A

Environmental Mitigation Measures Applicable to Approved Transmission Project

ATTACHMENT A

Mitigation Measures

All mitigation measures presented in the Final EIR/EIS are listed below.

Air Quality

A-1a **Implement Construction Fugitive Dust Control Plan.** SCE shall develop a Fugitive Dust Emission Control Plan (FDECP) for construction work. Measures to be incorporated into the plan include, but are not limited to the following:

- Water the disturbed areas of the active construction sites at least three times per day and more often if uncontrolled fugitive dust is noted.
- Enclose, cover, water twice daily, and/or apply non-toxic soil binders according to manufacturer's specifications to exposed piles with a five percent or greater silt content.
- CARB certified non-toxic soil binders shall be applied per manufacturer recommendations to active unpaved roadways, unpaved staging areas, and unpaved parking area(s) throughout construction to reduce fugitive dust emissions. Other non-toxic soil binder products, selected from lists available from EPA's Environmental Technology Verification program or the SCAQMD, may be applied per manufacturer recommendations in place of the CARB certified soil binders if such products can be reasonably demonstrated to be as effective as the CARB certified non-toxic soil binders.
- Maintain unpaved road vehicle travel to the lowest practical speeds, and no greater than 15 mph, to reduce fugitive dust emissions.
- All vehicle tires shall be inspected, are to be free or dirt, and washed as necessary prior to entering paved roadways.
- Install wheel washers or wash the wheels of trucks and other heavy equipment where vehicles exit the site.
- Cover all trucks hauling soil and other loose material, or require at least two feet of freeboard.
- Establish a vegetative ground cover (in compliance with biological resources impact mitigation measures) or otherwise create stabilized surfaces on all unpaved areas at each of the construction sites within 21 days after active construction operations have ceased.
- Increase the frequency of watering, or implement other additional fugitive dust mitigation measures, to all active disturbed fugitive dust emission sources when wind speeds (as instantaneous wind gusts) exceed 25 miles per hour (mph).
- Travel routes to each construction site shall be developed to minimize unpaved road travel.

A-1b **Properly Maintain Mechanical Equipment.** The construction contractor shall ensure that all mechanical equipment associated with project construction is properly tuned and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

A-1c **Use Ultra Low-sulfur Diesel Fuel.** CARB-certified ultra low-sulfur diesel (ULSD) fuel containing 15 ppm sulfur or less shall be used in all diesel-powered construction equipment.

A-1d **Restrict Engine Idling to 10 Minutes.** Diesel engine idle time shall be restricted to no more than 10 minutes.

A-1e **Schedule Deliveries Outside of Peak Traffic Hours.** All material deliveries to the marshalling yards and from the marshalling yards to the construction sites shall be scheduled outside of peak traffic hours (6:00 to 9:30 am and 3:30 to 6:30 pm) to the extent feasible, and other truck trips during peak traffic hours shall be minimized to the extent feasible.

A-1f **Offroad Diesel-fueled Equipment Standards.** All offroad construction diesel engines not registered under CARB's Statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program, which have a rating of 50 hp or more, shall meet, at a minimum, the Tier 2 California Emission Standards for Off-Road Compression-Ignition Engines as specified in California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Section 2423(b)(1) unless that such engine is not available for a particular item of equipment. In the event a Tier 2 engine is not available for any off-road engine larger than 100 hp, that engine shall be equipped with a Tier 1 engine. In the event a Tier 1 engine is not available for any off-road engine larger than 100 hp, that engine shall be equipped with a catalyzed diesel particulate filter (soot filter), unless certified by engine manufacturers that the use of such devices is not practical for specific engine types. Equipment properly registered under and in compliance with CARB's Statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program are in compliance with this mitigation measure.

A-1g **On-road Vehicles Standards.** All on-road construction vehicles shall meet all applicable California on-road emission standards. This does not apply to construction worker personal vehicles.

A-1h **Offroad Gasoline-fueled Equipment Standards.** All offroad stationary and portable gasoline powered equipment shall have EPA Phase 1/Phase 2 compliant engines, where the specific engine requirement shall be based on the new engine standard in affect two years prior to initiating project construction.

A-1i **Reduction of Helicopter Emissions.** Helicopter use will be limited to the extent feasible and helicopters with low emitting engines shall be used to the extent practical.

Biological Resources

B-3a **Avoid Desert Wash Habitat.** The Project shall be designed to avoid permanent impacts to desert wash habitats. If towers are to be located within desert washes then steps will be taken to relocate these facilities beyond the bed, bank and channel of these habitats. Similarly, access roads that need to cross desert washes will utilize half-arch culverts, steel plates, or any other method that leaves the bottom of the washes untouched and allows for continued conveyance of storm flows. Alternatively, access roads through the washes will be removed during the first season of construction to replace the pre-project topography in a manner that will not interrupt ephemeral surface flows. In areas where the desert wash habitat cannot be avoided, Mitigation B-3b shall be implemented.

B-3b **Preserve Off-site Desert Wash Habitat.** Following final project design, SCE, in cooperation with CDFG and the CPUC, shall assess the area of impact to desert wash resources within the project site. To mitigate impacts to this area, off-site desert wash habitat shall be preserved in perpetuity at a ratio determined by CDFG in a Streambed Alteration Agreement dependent on the nature of disturbance and the quality of the desert wash habitat to be impacted. For example, high quality desert wash habitat would be mitigated for in perpetuity at a ratio of 2:1 (two acres preserved for each acre impacted).

In the event of loss of desert wash habitat, SCE shall work with CDFG and CPUC to identify appropriate mitigation lands and ensure their permanent protection through an appropriate CDFG-approved mechanism, such as a conservation easement or fee title purchase. Mitigation

acquisition shall occur at a CDFG-approved location such as the Desert Tortoise Preserve in Kern County and shall be coordinated through a CDFG-approved entity. SCE shall enter into a binding legal agreement regarding the preservation of off-site lands describing the terms of the acquisition, enhancement, and management of those lands. Fee title to acquired habitat lands, or a conservation easement over these lands, shall be transferred to CDFG or to an entity approved by CDFG and CPUC, along with money for enhancement of the land and an endowment for permanent management of the lands.

B-4a **Avoid Joshua Tree and Juniper Woodland Habitat.** The Project activities (construction phase, and operations and maintenance phase) shall be designed to avoid Joshua tree woodland habitat and juniper woodland habitat to the maximum extent feasible. All efforts shall be made, in particular, to avoid individual trees of either species. Any trees that must be impacted shall be mitigated at a ratio of 2:1 through preservation of existing habitat so that all impacts to these habitats are mitigated on acreage and tree basis as provided below. SCE shall photo document the number of Joshua and juniper trees removed during project construction and provide a letter report to the CPUC and CDFG at the conclusion of construction.

B-4b **Preserve Off-site Joshua Tree Woodland and Juniper Woodland Habitat.** To mitigate impacts to either habitat, existing offsite Joshua tree woodland habitat and juniper woodland habitat shall be preserved in perpetuity at a 2:1 mitigation ratio (two acres preserved for each acre impacted). The minimum standard for preservation of, or mitigation of, Joshua trees is two Joshua trees per acre.

The SCE shall coordinate with CDFG and CPUC to identify appropriate mitigation lands and ensure their permanent protection through an appropriate CDFG-approved mechanism, such as a conservation easement or fee title purchase. A conservation easement could be held by CDFG or an approved land management entity and would be recorded within a time frame agreed upon by CDFG. SCE shall provide verification of the purchase of mitigation land to the CPUC within 60 days following the conclusion of construction.

B-5a **Obtain Technical Assistance from the USFWS for California Red-legged Frogs.** The applicants shall request technical assistance from the USFWS to review the potential for California red-legged frogs to occupy Amargosa Creek and obtain concurrence that the applicants proposed measures along with Mitigation Measure B-5b will avoid impacts to this federally threatened species.

B-5b **Conduct Focused Surveys for California Red-legged Frog.** SCE shall contract with a qualified biologist to conduct focused surveys for California Red-legged frog in all areas that may support this species. If detected in or adjacent to the proposed ROW no work will be authorized within 500 feet of occupied habitat until SCE provides concurrence from the USFWS to the CPUC. If present SCE shall develop and implement a monitoring plan that includes the following measures in consultation with the USFWS and CDFG.

- SCE shall retain a qualified biologist with demonstrated expertise with red-legged frogs to monitor all construction activities and assist SCE in the implementation of the monitoring program. This person will be approved by the USFWS prior to the onset of ground-disturbing activities. This biologist will be referred to as the authorized biologist hereafter. The authorized biologist will be present during all activities immediately adjacent to or within habitat that supports populations of red-legged frog.

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- Prior to the onset of construction activities, SCE shall provide all personnel who will be present on work areas within or adjacent to the project area the following information:
  a. A detailed description of the red-legged frog including color photographs;
  b. The protection the red-legged frog receives under the Endangered Species Act and possible legal action or that may be incurred for violation of the Act;
  c. The protective measures being implemented to conserve the red-legged frogs and other species during construction activities associated with the proposed project; and
  d. A point of contact if red-legged frogs are observed.

- All trash that may attract predators of the red-legged frogs will be removed from work sites or completely secured at the end of each work day.

- Prior to the onset of any construction activities, SCE shall meet on-site with staff from the USFWS and the authorized biologist. SCE shall provide information on the general location of construction activities within habitat of the red-legged frogs and the actions taken to reduce impacts to this species. Because red-legged frogs may occur in various locations during different seasons of the year, SCE, USFWS, and authorized biologists will, at this preliminary meeting, determine the seasons when specific construction activities would have the least adverse effect on red-legged frogs. For example construction during the time of year when red-legged frogs are dormant October through January (although frogs may remain active year round) would reduce impacts to this species. The goal of this effort is to reduce the level of mortality of red-legged frogs during construction.

- Where construction can occur in habitat where red-legged frogs are widely distributed, work areas will be fenced in a manner that prevents equipment and vehicles from straying from the designated work area into adjacent habitat. The authorized biologist will assist in determining the boundaries of the area to be fenced in consultation with the USFWS/CDFG/CPUC. All workers will be advised that equipment and vehicles must remain within the fenced work areas.

- The authorized biologist will direct the installation of the fence and conduct a minimum of three nocturnal surveys to move any red-legged frogs from within the fenced area to suitable habitat outside of the fence. If red-legged frogs are observed on the final survey or during subsequent checks, the authorized biologist will conduct additional nocturnal surveys if he or she determines that they are necessary in concurrence with e USFWS/CDFG/CPUC.

- Fencing to exclude red-legged frogs will be at least 24 inches in height.

- The type of fencing must be approved by the authorized biologist and the USFWS/CDFG/CPUC.

- Construction activities that may occur immediately adjacent to breeding pools or other areas where large numbers of red-legged frogs may congregate will be conducted during times of the year (winter) when individuals have dispersed from these areas or the species is dormant. The authorized biologist will assist SCE in scheduling its work activities accordingly.

- If red-legged frogs are found within an area that has been fenced to exclude red-legged frogs, activities will cease until the authorized biologist moves the red-legged frogs.

- If red-legged frogs are found in a construction area where fencing was deemed unnecessary, work will cease until the authorized biologist moves the red-legged frogs. The authorized biologist in consultation with USFWS/CDFG/CPUC will then determine whether additional surveys or fencing are needed. Work may resume while this determination is being made, if deemed appropriate by the authorized biologist.

- Any red-legged frogs found during clearance surveys or otherwise removed from work areas will be placed in nearby suitable, undisturbed habitat. The authorized biologist will determine the best location for their release, based on the condition of the vegetation, soil, and other habitat features and the proximity to human activities. Clearance surveys shall occur on a daily basis in the work area.

- The authorized biologist will have the authority to stop all activities until appropriate corrective measures have been completed.

- Staging areas for all construction activities will be located on previously disturbed upland areas designated for this purpose. All staging areas will be fenced.

- To ensure that diseases are not conveyed between work sites by the authorized biologist or his or her assistants, the fieldwork code of practice developed by the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force will be followed at all times.

- SCE shall restrict work to daylight hours, except during an emergency, in order to avoid nighttime activities when red-legged frogs may be present on the access road. Traffic speed should be maintained at 20 mph or less in the work area.

B-6a **Obtain Technical Assistance from the USFWS for Desert Tortoise.** The applicants shall request technical assistance from the USFWS and CDFG to review the potential for desert tortoise to occupy suitable habitat within the Project area and obtain concurrence that the applicants proposed measures along with mitigation measures listed below would avoid impacts to this listed species.

B-6b **Conduct Focused Clearance Surveys in Designated Areas.** SCE shall contract with a qualified biologist to conduct focused clearance surveys for desert tortoise prior to construction activities located within areas designated in the WMP as desert tortoise "Survey Areas." Clearance surveys shall follow the USFWS desert tortoise survey protocol, as modified within the WMP. If present SCE shall develop and implement mitigation and monitoring plan that includes the following measures in consultation with the USFWS and CDFG.

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- SCE shall retain a qualified biologist with demonstrated expertise with desert tortoise to monitor all construction activities and assist SCE in the implementation of the monitoring program. This person will be approved by the USFWS prior to the onset of ground-disturbing activities. This biologist will be referred to as the authorized biologist hereafter. The authorized biologist will be present during all activities immediately adjacent to or within habitat that supports desert tortoise.
- Prior to the onset of construction activities, SCE shall provide all personnel who will be present on work areas within or adjacent to the Project area the following information:
  a. A detailed description of the desert tortoise including color photographs;
  b. The protection the desert tortoise receives under the Endangered Species Act and possible legal action or that may be incurred for violation of the Act;
  c. The protective measures being implemented to conserve the desert tortoises and other species during construction activities associated with the proposed Project; and
  d. A point of contact if desert tortoises are observed.
- All trash that may attract predators of desert tortoises will be removed from work sites or completely secured at the end of each work day.
- Prior to the onset of any construction activities, SCE shall meet on-site with staff from the USFWS and the authorized biologist. SCE shall provide information on the general location of construction activities within habitat of the desert tortoises and the actions taken to reduce impacts to this species. Because desert tortoise may occur in various locations during different seasons of the year, SCE, USFWS, and authorized biologists will, at this preliminary meeting, determine the seasons when specific construction activities would have the least adverse effect on desert tortoise. For example construction during the time of year when desert tortoises are dormant would reduce impacts to this species. The goal of this effort is to reduce the level of mortality of desert tortoise during construction.
- Where construction can occur in habitat where desert tortoise are widely distributed, work areas will be fenced in a manner that prevents equipment and vehicles from straying from the designated work area into adjacent habitat. The authorized biologist will assist in determining the boundaries of the area to be fenced in consultation with the USFWS/CDFG/CPUC. All workers will be advised that equipment and vehicles must remain within the fenced work areas. Installation of the fencing and any necessary surveys will be directed and/or conducted by the authorized biologist in concurrence with the USFWS/CDFG/CPUC.
- If desert tortoises are found within an area that has been fenced to exclude the species, activities will cease until the authorized biologist moves the desert tortoises.
- If desert tortoises are found in a construction area where fencing was deemed unnecessary, work will cease until the authorized biologist moves the individual(s). The authorized biologist in consultation with USFWS/CDFG/CPUC will then determine whether additional surveys or fencing are needed. Work may resume while this determination is being made, if deemed appropriate by the authorized biologist.
- Any desert tortoises found during clearance surveys or otherwise removed from work areas will be placed in nearby suitable, undisturbed habitat. The authorized biologist will determine the best location for their release, based on the condition of the vegetation, soil, and other habitat features and the proximity to human activities. Clearance surveys shall occur on a daily basis in the work area.

- The authorized biologist will have the authority to stop all activities until appropriate corrective measures have been completed.
- Staging areas for all construction activities will be located on previously disturbed upland areas designated for this purpose. All staging areas will be fenced.
- SCE shall restrict work to daylight hours, except during an emergency, in order to avoid nighttime activities when desert tortoise may be present on the access road. Traffic speed should be maintained at 20 mph or less in the work area.

B-7a **Conduct Pre-construction Surveys for Swainson's Hawks.** To assure that nesting Swainson's Hawks are not disturbed by construction activities, a qualified ornithologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys within one mile of the Project area in regions with suitable nesting habitat for Swainson's Hawks. Survey Period I occurs from January 1 to March 20, Period II from March 20 to April 5, Period III from April 5 to April 20, Period IV from April 21 to June 10 (surveys not recommend during this period because identification is difficult as the adults tend to remain within the nest for longer periods of time), and Period V from June 10 to July 30. No fewer than three surveys shall be completed, in at least each of the two survey periods immediately prior to project initiation. If a nest site is found, consultation with CDFG shall be required to ensure project initiation will not result in nest disturbance (see Mitigation B-7b). CDFG recommends that no new disturbances or other project-related activities which may cause nest abandonment or forced fledging be initiated within ¼ mile (.40 km) of an active nest between March 1 and September 15 or until August 15 of a Management Authorization of Biological Opinion is obtained for the project (CDFG, 1994b).[1] CDFG recommends that the buffer zone be increased to ½ mile (.80 km) in nesting areas away from urban development (CDFG, 1994b).[2] These buffer zones may be adjusted as appropriate in consultation with a qualified ornithologist and CDFG.

B-7b **Remove Nest Trees.** Nest trees within the Project area(s) shall not be removed unless avoidance measures are determined to be infeasible. If a nest tree must be removed, a Management Authorization (including conditions to off-set the loss of the nest tree) must be obtained from CDFG. The Management Authorization will specify the tree removal period, generally between October 1 and February 1. If construction or other project related activities which may cause nest abandonment or forced fledging are necessary within the buffer zone, monitoring of the nest site (funded by the applicant) by a qualified biologist shall be required to determine if the nest is abandoned. If the nest is abandoned, and if the nestlings are still alive, the applicant shall fund the recovery and hacking (controlled release of captive reared young) of nestling(s).

B-9a **Avoid Construction During the Breeding Season.** In order to avoid disturbance to nesting Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, and Least Bell's Vireo construction activities at Amargosa Creek and Oak Creek shall be avoided during the breeding season (April 15 to August 31).

B-9b **Conduct Pre-construction Surveys at Amargosa Creek Crossing and Oak Creek.** If construction activities must occur during breeding season at the Amargosa Creek crossing and at Oak Creek, in order to assure that nesting special-status bird species will not be disturbed by construction activities, a qualified ornithologist shall conduct protocol-level surveys of the project site and adjacent areas within 500 ft of the Project area for Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern

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[1] CDFG (California Department of Fish and Game). 1994b. California Department of Fish and Game. Staff Report Regarding Mitigation of Impacts to Swainson's Hawks in the Central Valley. Unpublished report. 14 pp. Report dated November 1, 1994. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California.

[2] Ibid.

Willow Flycatcher, and Least Bell's Vireo. These surveys shall be conducted during the breeding season (April 15 to August 15). If nests are found during the survey, a disturbance-free buffer shall be established in coordination with CDFG. The Vermilion Flycatcher is a "species of concern". A standardized survey protocol for this species has not been developed. Surveys adequate to detect Vermilion Flycatchers could be conducted in conjunction with the protocol-level surveys for Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and Least Bell's Vireo.

B-10a **Conduct Focused Surveys for Mohave Ground Squirrels.** Surveys for Mohave ground squirrels shall be performed in the portion of the Project area containing potential Mohave ground squirrel habitat. These surveys shall be performed by a qualified biologist according to CDFG's *Mohave Ground Squirrel Survey Guidelines* (January 2003). Surveys for Mohave ground squirrel are performed between March 15 and July 15 using standard live trapping techniques. Three weeks of trapping are required during this time, although trapping will cease once a Mohave ground squirrel is captured or observed. The trapping girds each contain 100 traps arranged in 4 rows of 25 and spaced 35 meters apart, for a total grid length of one-half mile. The length of the Project area is sufficiently long to require approval of a site-specific survey layout by CDFG. The layout proscribed by CDFG shall determine the total number of grids required.

If these surveys obtain positive results for Mohave ground squirrel, or if Mohave ground squirrel presence is assumed within potential habitat, SCE shall obtain incidental take authorization from CDFG. This authorization will likely include mitigation measures B-10b and B-10c below.

B-10b **Implement Construction Monitoring and Worker Environmental Awareness Program.** To reduce the potential of take of Mohave ground squirrels, and prior to ground disturbing activity, a qualified biologist will deliver a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) on the ecology of the Mohave ground squirrel to the construction employees. A qualified biological monitor shall be on site during initial ground disturbing activities. The name and phone number of the biological monitor shall be provided to a CDFG regional representative at least fourteen (14) days before ground disturbing activities. If the biological monitor observes a living Mohave ground squirrel on the construction site and/or determines that a Mohave ground squirrel was killed by project related activities during construction or otherwise found dead, a written report will be sent to CDFG within five (5) calendar days. The report will include the date, time of the finding or incident (if known), location of the carcass and the circumstances (if known). Mohave ground squirrel remains shall be collected and frozen as soon as possible. CDFG shall be contacted as to the ultimate disposition of the remains.

B-10c **Preserve Off-site Habitat for Mohave Ground Squirrel.** To mitigate potential impacts from project construction, the SCE will acquire habitat occupied by Mohave ground squirrels based on the following ratios previously approved by the CDFG for projects in the region:

- Five acres of off-site habitat supporting Mohave ground squirrels will be preserved for each acre of native creosote bush scrub habitat and Joshua tree woodland habitat within the Kern County Study Area of the Habitat Conservation Area (HCA) delineated in the WMP (Rosamond Boulevard to Oak Creek Road – see habitat description in species account).
- Three acres of off-site habitat supporting Mohave ground squirrels will be preserved for each acre of native creosote bush scrub habitat and Joshua tree woodland habitat outside of the HCA delineated in the WMP (Rosamond Boulevard to Oak Creek Road– see habitat description in species account).
- One acre of off-site habitat supporting Mohave ground squirrels will be preserved for each acre of saltbrush scrub habitat (including inclusions of desert wash) impacted by the project

outside of the HCA delineated in the WMP (Rosamond Boulevard to Oak Creek Road– see habitat description in species account).

- One-half acre of off-site habitat supporting Mohave ground squirrels will be preserved for each acre of desert scrub habitat impacted by the project outside of the HCA delineated in the WMP (Rosamond Boulevard to Oak Creek Road– see habitat description in species account).
- No mitigation will occur for agricultural, non-native annual grassland, developed, or compacted barren ground within the Project area.

Mitigation acquisition shall occur at a CDFG-approved location such as the Desert Tortoise Preserve in Kern County and shall be coordinated through a CDFG-approved entity. SCE shall enter into a binding legal agreement regarding the preservation of off-site lands describing the terms of the acquisition, enhancement, and management of those lands. Fee title to acquired habitat lands, or a conservation easement over these lands, shall be transferred to CDFG or to an entity approved by CDFG and CPUC, along with money for enhancement of the land and an endowment for permanent management of the lands. If it is determined that Joshua tree woodland and/or Juniper woodland preserved through implementation of mitigation measure B-4b detailed above also supports Mojave ground squirrel populations, these off-site lands can be used to satisfy the requirements of this mitigation measure.

B-12a **Conduct Focused Surveys for Short-joint Beavertail.** Floristic surveys shall be conducted for short-joint beavertail. It is a perennial cactus and as such, is easily detected once tower and road positions are staked. These surveys will be limited to suitable habitat within proposed transmission line access roads and towers and in any temporary, associated staging areas. The surveys shall be initiated prior to any ground disturbance.

B-12b **Avoid Impacts to Short-joint Beavertail.** The proposed roadways, towers, and temporary construction staging areas shall be situated to avoid impacts to short-joint beavertail individuals, to the extent practicable. In some cases, individual plants could be transplanted to adjacent habitat, provided that SCE adheres to the monitoring plan listed in mitigation measure B-12c.

Short-joint beavertail occurrences located within temporary construction areas shall be fenced or flagged for avoidance prior to construction, and a biological monitor shall be present to ensure compliance with off-limits areas.

B-12c **Remove and Reintroduce Short-joint Beavertail.** Prior to grading, a qualified biologist shall develop a short-joint beavertail removal and reintroduction plan for any impacted plants. This plan shall include a map of impacted plants, a suitable method of removal of the species, detailed planting instructions for optimal survival of the transplanted individual, and a map of the transplant location within 200 feet of the impact area and within the same habitat type in which the plant was originally growing. This plan shall be approved by CDFG and CPUC prior to the issuance of grading permits.

B-13a **Conduct Focused Surveys for the San Gabriel Oak.** Floristic surveys shall be conducted for San Gabriel oak. It is a perennial tree and as such, is easily detected once tower and road positions are staked out. These surveys will be limited to suitable habitat within proposed transmission line access roads and towers and in any temporary, associated staging areas; the surveys shall be initiated prior to any ground disturbance.

B-13b **Avoid Impacts to the San Gabriel Oak.** The proposed roadways, towers, and temporary construction staging areas shall be situated to avoid impacts to the San Gabriel oak trees. In some

cases, individual plants could be transplanted to adjacent habitat, provided that SCE adheres to the monitoring plan listed in Mitigation Measure B-13d.

San Gabriel oak trees located within temporary construction areas shall be fenced or flagged for avoidance prior to construction, and a biological monitor shall be present to ensure compliance with off-limits areas.

B-13c **Minimize impacts to Montane Scrub and Juniper Woodland Habitats.** The proposed roadways, towers, and temporary construction staging areas shall be situated to minimize ground disturbance activities within the montane scrub, juniper woodland, and chaparral habitats.

B-13d **Preserve Off-site Montane Scrub and Juniper Woodland Habitats.** To mitigate impacts to these habitats, existing offsite montane scrub (including chaparral) and juniper woodland habitats shall be preserved in perpetuity at a 1:1 mitigation ratio (one acre preserved for each acre impacted).

The SCE shall work with CDFG to identify appropriate mitigation lands and ensure their permanent protection through an appropriate CDFG-approved mechanism, such as a conservation easement or fee title purchase. A conservation easement could be held by CDFG or an approved land management entity and shall be recorded within a time frame agreed upon by CDFG.

B-16 **Conduct Focused Surveys for Southwestern Pond Turtle and Two-Striped Garter Snake.** SCE shall contract with a qualified biologist to conduct focused surveys for southwestern pond turtles and two-striped garter snakes in all areas that may support these species. If detected in or adjacent to the proposed ROW no work will be authorized within 500 feet of occupied habitat until SCE provides concurrence from the CDFG to the CPUC. If present SCE shall develop and implement a monitoring plan in consultation with the CDFG which would include the following:

- SCE shall retain a qualified biologist with demonstrated expertise with southwestern pond turtles and two-striped garter snakes to monitor all construction activities in the vicinity of water crossings and assist SCE in the implementation of the monitoring program. This person will be approved by the CDFG prior to the onset of ground-disturbing activities. The authorized biologist will be present during all activities immediately adjacent to or within aquatic or terrestrial habitat that supports populations of southwestern pond turtles and two-striped garter snakes. If the species are detected during surveys, the authorized biologist will coordinate with CDFG to remove individuals from the construction zone to suitable habitat.

B-17 **Conduct Pre-construction Surveys and Monitoring for Breeding Birds.** SCE shall conduct pre-construction surveys for nesting birds if construction and removal activities are scheduled to occur during the breeding season for raptors and other migratory birds. Surveys shall be conducted in areas within 500 feet of tower sites, laydown/staging areas, substation sites, and access road/spur road locations. SCE shall be responsible for designating a qualified biologist who can conduct pre-construction surveys and monitoring for breeding birds. If nests are found during the survey, a disturbance-free buffer shall be established in coordination with CDFG. 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.

B-19a **Implement CDFG Protocol for Burrowing Owls.** In conformance with federal and state regulations regarding the protection of raptors, a habitat assessment in accordance with CDFG protocol for Burrowing Owls shall be completed prior to the start of construction. Burrowing Owl habitat within the Project area and within a 500-foot (150 m) buffer zone shall be assessed

("Assessment Area"). If the habitat assessment concludes that the Assessment Area lacks suitable Burrowing Owl habitat, no additional action would be warranted. However, if suitable habitat is located on the Assessment Area, all ground squirrel colonies, rabbit and badger dens, or other man-mad or natural cavities shall be mapped at an appropriate scale, and the following mitigation measures shall be implemented:

- In conformance with federal and state regulations regarding the protection of raptors, a pre-construction survey for Burrowing Owls, in conformance with CDFG protocol, shall be completed no more than 30 days prior to the start of construction within suitable habitat at the project site(s) and buffer zone(s). Three additional protocol-level surveys shall also be completed per CDFG protocol prior to construction.
- Occupied burrows shall not be disturbed during the nesting season (February 1 through August 31) unless a qualified biologist approved by CDFG verifies through non-invasive methods that either: 1) the birds have not begun egg–laying and incubation; or 2) that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and are capable of independent survival. Eviction outside the nesting season may be permitted pending evaluation of eviction plans and receipt of formal written approval from the CDFG authorizing the eviction.
- A 250-foot (76 m) buffer, within which no activity will be permissible, will be maintained between project activities and nesting Burrowing Owls during the nesting season. This protected area will remain in effect until August 31 or at the CDFG's discretion and based upon monitoring evidence, until the young owls are foraging independently.
- If accidental take (disturbance, injury, or death of owls) occurs, the CDFG/CPUC lead monitor will be notified immediately.

B-19b **Compensate for Loss of Burrowing Owl Habitat.** If surveys determine that Burrowing Owls occupy the site and avoiding development of occupied areas is not feasible, then habitat compensation on off-site mitigation lands shall be implemented. Habitat Management (HM) lands comprising existing Burrowing Owl foraging and breeding habitat shall be acquired and preserved if required by the CDFG. An area of 6.5 acres (2.6 ha) (the amount of land found to be necessary to sustain a pair or individual owl) shall be secured for each pair of owls, or individual in the case of an odd number of birds. As part of an agreement with the CDFG, the project applicant shall secure the performance of its mitigation duties by providing the CDFG with security in the form of funds that would**:**

- Allow for the acquisition and/or preservation of 6.5 acres (2.6 ha) of HM lands;
- Provide initial protection and enhancement activities on the HM lands, potentially including, but not limited to, such measures as fencing, trash clean-up, artificial burrow creation, grazing or mowing, and any habitat restoration deemed necessary by CDFG;
- Establish an endowment for the long-term management of the HM lands; and
- Reimburse the CDFG for reasonable expenses incurred as a result of the approval and implementation of this agreement.

B-20a **Avoid Nesting Season for Raptors.** To the extent practicable, construction shall be scheduled to avoid the nesting season for raptor species, which extends from January through August.

B-20b **Conduct Pre-construction Surveys for Nesting Raptors.** If it is not possible to schedule construction between August and January, then one of the following options shall be implemented:

- With the approval of the CDFG, trees containing known or potential raptor nest sites may be removed to discourage future nesting attempts on the condition that no raptor pair is currently utilizing the site; or,
- Pre-construction surveys for nesting raptors shall be conducted by a qualified ornithologist or wildlife biologist to ensure that no raptor nests will be disturbed during project implementation. A pre-construction survey shall be conducted no more than 14 days prior to the initiation of demolition/construction activities during the early part of the breeding season (January through April) and no more than 30 days prior to the initiation of these activities during the late part of the breeding season (May through August). During this survey, the qualified person shall inspect all trees in and immediately adjacent to the impact areas for raptor nests. If an active raptor nest is found close enough to the construction area to be disturbed by these activities, the ornithologist, in consultation with CDFG, shall determine the extent of a construction-free buffer zone to be established around the nest.

B-26 **Passively Relocate American Badgers During the Non-breeding Season.** SCE shall survey and identify any badger dens located within the project area and occupied dens shall be flagged for avoidance. Un-occupied dens located in the ROW shall be covered to prevent the animal from re-occupying the den prior to construction. Occupied dens in the ROW shall be hand-excavated if avoidance is not possible. Dens shall only be hand–excavated before or after the breeding season (February-May). Any relocation of badgers shall take place after consultation with the CDFG.

B-27a **Avoid Creating Barriers to Movements.** To avoid creating barriers to desert tortoise movements, within areas designated in the WMP as desert tortoise "Survey Areas," roadbeds shall not be lowered and berms shall not exceed 12 inches (30 cm) or a slope of 30 degrees.

B-27b **Invasive Weed Prevention.** Non-native or Invasive plants (*i.e.*, non-native species) shall not be used during any re-seeding or landscaping activities associated with site restoration within areas designated in the WMP as desert tortoise "Survey Areas."

Cumulative

Avoid Impacts to or Preserve Off-site Saltbush Scrub Habitat Containing Alkali Mariposa Lilies. All roadways, towers, and temporary construction staging areas shall be situated in order to avoid to the extent practicable ground disturbance activities within saltbush scrub habitat inhabited by alkali mariposa lilies. Protocol-level surveys for alkali mariposa lilies shall be conducted between April and June one to two years prior to construction, and conform to the California Department of Fish and Game *Guidelines of Assessing the Effects of Proposed Developments on Rare and Endangered Plants and Plant Communities* (CDFG**,** 2000).[3] If alkali mariposa lilies are not detected by protocol-level surveys conducted during an average, or above average, rainfall season, no further mitigation is warranted.

If survey results are inconclusive due to below average rainfall, or if alkali mariposa lilies are detected, or if no surveys were conducted and it is assumed alkali mariposa lilies are present, existing, occupied offsite saltbush scrub habitat shall be preserved in perpetuity at a 1:1 mitigation ratio (one acre preserved for each acre impacted). Prior to construction, the applicant shall work with CDFG to identify appropriate mitigation lands and ensure their permanent protection through

[3] California Department of Fish and Game. 2000. Guidelines of Assessing the Effects of Proposed Developments on Rare and Endangered Plants and Plant Communities. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. 2 pp.

an appropriate CDFG-approved mechanism, such as a conservation easement or fee title purchase. A conservation easement would be held by CDFG or an approved land management entity and would be recorded within a time frame agreed upon by CDFG.

Cultural Resources

C-1 **Avoid CA-KER-2434 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery.** CA-KER-2434 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) eligibility of CA-KER-2434 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of CA-KER-2434 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-2 **Avoid AP3-131 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery.** AP3-131 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-131 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-131 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). Investigations will also be carried out to evaluate whether the rock art is eligible under Criterion 4 or as a traditional cultural property (CRHR Criterion 1). If the CPUC determines the subsurface archaeological material is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. If the CPUC determines the rock art is eligible under Criterion 1 or 4 (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), the rock art will be documented through large format photography and scaled drawings. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery and/or rock art documentation report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-3 **Avoid AP3-132 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery.** AP3-132 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-132 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-132 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important

in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-4 Avoid AP3-133 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-133 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-133 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-133 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-5 Avoid AP3-134 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-134 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-134 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-134 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-6 Avoid AP3-110 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-110 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-110 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility of AP3-110 shall be evaluated by carrying out historical research and an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in history. If the CPUC determines the site is eligible (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of

Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-7 Avoid AP3-111 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-111 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-111 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-111 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-8 Avoid CA-KER-2821 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. CA-KER-2821 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of CA-KER-2821 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of CA-KER-2821 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-9 Avoid AP3-112 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-112 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-112 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-112 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

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C-10 Avoid AP3-113 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-113 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-113 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-113 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-11 Avoid AP3-114 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-114 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-114 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-114 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-12 Avoid AP2-101 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP2-101 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP2-101 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP2-101 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). Investigations will also be carried out to evaluate whether the rock art is eligible under Criterion 4 or as a traditional cultural property (CRHR Criterion 1). If the CPUC determines the subsurface archaeological material is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. If the CPUC determines the rock art is eligible under Criterion 1 or 4 (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), the rock art will be documented through large format photography and scaled drawings. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery and/or rock art documentation report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

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C-13 Avoid CA-LAN-806 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. CA-LAN-806 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of CA-LAN-806 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of CA-LAN-806 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-14 Avoid AP2-106 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP2-106 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP2-106 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP2-106 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-15 Avoid AP2-107 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP2-107 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP2-107 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the NRHP eligibility of AP2-107 shall be evaluated by carrying out historical research and an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in history. If the CPUC determines the site is eligible (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-16 Evaluate the CRHR Eligibility of CA-LAN-3477 and Perform Historical Documentation if Eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of CA-LAN-3477 shall be evaluated by carrying out historical research. If the CPUC determines that CA-LAN-3477 is eligible (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), effects will be assessed and a mitigation plan will be formulated and implemented if effects will be adverse. The mitigation plan will require HABS-

like historical documentation using HABS Level III documentation guidelines. The documentation will preserve information on all of the characteristics that made the resource eligible. Documentation will be achieved through historical research and high resolution photography with the results provided in a report to be filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), and the CPUC. The CPUC will ensure that the documentation is completed and filed.

C-18 Avoid AP3-116 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-116 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-116 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-116 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-19 Avoid AP3-117 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-117 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-117 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-117 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-20 Avoid AP3-119 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-119 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-119 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-119 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project

construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-21 **Avoid AP3-121 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery.** AP3-121 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-121 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-121 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

C-32 **Conduct Construction Monitoring in the Project Area Where High Potential for Prehistoric Archaeological Sites Occurs, Evaluate the Eligibility of Previously Undiscovered Resources, and Perform Archaeological Data Recovery if Eligible.** All ground-disturbing activities in Segment 2 and Option B and, in Segment 3, the portion of the route in Oak Creek Canyon, the portion of the route within one-half mile of Willow Springs and Bean Spring, and all of Substation Areas 1 and 1B shall be monitored by an archaeologist. If an archaeological site is discovered during monitoring, all work within 500 feet of the find shall be halted. The Project Archaeologist will evaluate the CRHR eligibility of the find if it cannot be avoided. If the CPUC determines that the site is eligible (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Geology, Soils, and Paleontology

G-1 **Protect Against Slope Instability.** Design-level geotechnical investigations performed by the Applicant shall be performed by a licensed geologist or engineer and shall include evaluation of slope stability issues in areas of planned grading and excavation, and provide recommendations for development of grading and excavation plans. Based on the results of the geotechnical investigations, appropriate support and protection measures shall be designed and implemented to maintain the stability of slopes adjacent to newly graded or re-graded access roads and work areas during and after construction. These measures shall include, but are not limited to, retaining walls, visqueen, removal of unstable materials, and avoidance of highly unstable areas. SCE shall document compliance with this measure prior to the start of construction by submitting a report to the CPUC for review and approval. The report shall document the investigations and detail the specific support and protection measures that will be implemented.

G-2 **Minimization of Soil Erosion.** The Construction SWPPP for the Project shall include Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to minimize soil erosion along access roads and at work areas. Appropriate BMPs may include construction of water bars, grading road surfaces to direct

flow away from natural slopes, use of soil stabilizers, and consistent maintenance of roads and culverts to maintain appropriate flow paths. Silt fences and straw bales installed during construction shall be removed to restore natural drainage during the cleanup and restoration phase of the project. Where access roads cross streams or drainages, they shall be built at or close to right angles to the streambeds and washes and culverts or rock crossings shall be used to cross streambeds and washes. Design of appropriate BMPs should be conducted by or under the direction of a qualified geologist or engineer.

G-3 **Minimize Project Structures within Active Fault Zones.** Perform a geologic/geotechnical study to confirm location of active and potentially mapped traces of the Garlock and San Andreas faults where crossed by the Project alignment. Tower locations shall be adjusted as necessary to avoid placing tower footings on or across mapped fault traces. Towers on either side of a fault shall be designed to provide a significant amount of slack to allow for potential fault movement and ground surface displacement.

G-4 **Geotechnical Investigations for Liquefaction and Slope Instability.** Because seismically induced ground failure has the potential to damage or destroy Project components, the Applicant shall perform design-level geotechnical investigations specifically to assess the potential for liquefaction, lateral spreading, seismic slope instability, and ground-cracking hazards to affect the approved Project and all associated facilities. Where these hazards are found to exist, appropriate engineering design and construction measures shall be incorporated into the Project designs. Such measures could include construction of pile foundations, ground improvement of liquefiable zones, installation of flexible bus connections, and incorporation of slack in cables to allow ground deformations without damage to structures.

G-5 **Reduce Effects of Groundshaking.** The design-level geotechnical investigations performed by the Applicant shall include site-specific seismic analyses to evaluate the peak ground accelerations for design of Project components. The Applicant shall follow the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) 693 "Recommended Practices for Seismic Design of Substations" which has specific requirements to mitigate the types of damage that equipment at substations have had in the past from such seismic activity. These design guidelines shall be implemented during construction of substation modifications. Substation control buildings shall be designed in accordance with the Uniform Building Code for sites in Seismic Zone 4 with near-field factors.

G-6 **Geotechnical Studies for Corrosive Soils.** In areas underlain by potentially corrosive soils, the design-level geotechnical studies performed by the Applicant shall identify the presence, if any, of potentially detrimental soil chemicals, such as chlorides and sulfates. Appropriate design measures for protection of reinforcement, concrete, and metal-structural components against corrosion shall be utilized, such as use of corrosion-resistant materials and coatings, increased thickness of Project components exposed to potentially corrosive conditions, and use of passive and/or active cathodic protection systems.

G-7 **Geotechnical Surveys for Landslides.** The design-level geotechnical investigation performed by the Applicant shall include detailed surveys to evaluate the potential for unstable slopes, landslides, earth flows, and debris flows along the approved transmission line route and in the vicinity of other Project facilities. Based on these surveys, approved Project facilities shall be located away from known landslides, very steep hillsides, debris-flow source areas, the mouths of steep sidehill drainages, and the mouths of canyons that drain steep terrain. Where these landslide hazard areas cannot be avoided, appropriate engineering design and construction measures shall be incorporated into the Project designs to minimize potential for damage to Project facilities.

G-8 **Protect Paleontological Resources.** The certified paleontological monitor retained by SCE to supervise monitoring of construction activities shall be responsible for the following:

- Monitoring shall be conducted where excavation is being conducted in geologic units of moderate to high sensitivity. Monitoring need not be conducted where excavation is being conducted in geologic units with zero sensitivity, such as the Pelona Schist and granitic and volcanic formations.
- If fossils are present in the construction area, then grading shall be temporarily diverted away from exposed fossils in order to recover the fossil specimens.
- If microfossils are present in the construction area, the monitor shall collect matrix for processing. In order to expedite removal of fossiliferous matrix, the monitor may request heavy machinery to assist in moving large quantities of matrix out of the path of construction to designated stockpile areas.
- Stockpiles shall be tested by screen washing small samples to determine if significant fossils are present. Productive tests shall result in screen washing of additional matrix from the stockpiles to a maximum of 6,000 pounds per locality to ensure recovery of a scientifically significant sample.
- Young Quaternary Alluvium, Colluvium, and Quaternary Landslide Deposits, which have a low paleontological sensitivity level, shall be spot-checked on a periodic basis to insure that older underlying sediments are not being penetrated.
- Recovered fossils shall be prepared to the point of curation, identified by qualified experts, listed in a database to allow analysis, and deposited in a designated repository.
- At each fossil locality, field data forms shall record the locality, stratigraphic columns shall be measured, and appropriate scientific samples submitted for analysis.
- A monthly progress report shall be prepared by the supervising paleontological monitor and filed with the client. A final mitigation report shall be filed with the client, the lead agency, and the repository.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

HAZ-1a **Implement an Environmental Training and Monitoring Program.** An environmental training program will be established to communicate environmental concerns and appropriate work practices, including spill prevention, emergency response measures, and proper Best Management Practice (BMP) implementation, to all construction and maintenance personnel. The training program will emphasize site-specific physical conditions to improve hazard prevention (e.g., identification of potentially hazardous substances) and will include a review of all site-specific plans, including but not limited to, the Project's SWPPP, Erosion Control and Sediment Transport Plan, Health and Safety Plan, Waste Characterization and Management Plan, and Hazardous Substances Control and Emergency Response Plan. Properly trained construction and maintenance staff would hopefully not cause hazardous materials spills, and in the event of a spill will be able to quickly ascertain the best way to stop and mitigate the spill, thus limiting potential soil contamination.

A monitoring program shall also be implemented to ensure that the plans are followed throughout the period of construction. BMPs, as identified in the Project SWPPP and Erosion Control and Sediment Transport Plan, shall also be implemented during the construction of the Project to minimize the risk of an accidental release and provide the necessary information for emergency response.

HAZ-1b Implement a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan. SCE shall prepare a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan, which shall include preparations for quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills. This plan shall be submitted with the grading permit applications to the appropriate oversight agency based on grading location. It shall prescribe hazardous-materials handling procedures for reducing the potential for a spill during construction, and include an emergency response program to ensure quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills. The plan shall identify areas where refueling and vehicle maintenance activities and storage of hazardous materials, if any, will be permitted. These directions and requirements will also be reiterated in the Project SWPPP. SCE shall document compliance with this measure prior to the start of construction by submitting the plan to the CPUC for review.

HAZ-1c Ensure Proper Disposal of Construction Waste. All construction and demolition waste determined to be potentially hazardous, including trash and litter, garbage, other solid waste, petroleum products and other potentially hazardous materials, shall be removed to a hazardous waste facility permitted or otherwise authorized to treat, store, or dispose of such materials. Waste materials shall be removed from the project staging areas in a manner consistent with California Integrated Waste Management Board standards for transportation and disposal of hazardous materials, based on Title 27, Environmental Protection Division 2, Solid Waste.

HAZ-1d Emergency Spill Supplies and Equipment for Construction Activities. Hazardous material spill kits shall be maintained on-site for small spills. These kits shall include oil-absorbent material, tarps, and storage drums to be used to contain and control any minor releases. Emergency spill supplies and equipment shall be kept adjacent to all areas of work and in staging areas, and shall be clearly marked. Detailed information for responding to accidental spills and for handling any resulting hazardous materials shall be provided in the Project's Hazardous Substances Control and Emergency Response Plan.

HAZ-2a Implement Spill Prevention, Countermeasure, and Control Plans. SCE shall document compliance with updating and preparing SPCCs for each substation facility by (a) submitting to the CPUC for review and approval an outline of the proposed Environmental Training and Monitoring Program, (b) providing a list of names of all operations personnel who have completed the training program, and (c) providing a copy of the SPCC plans to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days before the start of operation.

HAZ-2b Emergency Spill Supplies and Equipment for Operation and Maintenance Activities. Hazardous material spill kits shall be available in all maintenance vehicles for small spills. These kits shall include oil-absorbent material and tarps to contain and control any minor releases. During significant maintenance operations, emergency spill supplies and equipment shall be kept adjacent to all areas of work and in staging areas, and shall be clearly marked. Detailed information for responding to accidental spills and for handling any resulting hazardous materials shall be provided in the Project's Hazardous Substances Control and Emergency Response Plan.

Hydrology and Water Quality

H-1a Implementation of Best Management Practices for Erosion and Sediment Control. The following Best Management Practices (BMPs) shall be implemented in order to minimize potential hydrologic and wa**ter quality impacts of erosion and sedimentation created through project construction:**

- Mechanical and vegetative measures shall be implemented to provide surface soil stability where Project construction requires the exposure of cut slopes, fill slopes, or spoil disposal. The level of stabilization effort depends upon site-specific factors such as slope angle, soil type, climate, and proximity to waterways. Mechanical measures may include but are not limited to: wattles, erosion nets,

terraces, side drains, blankets, mats, riprapping, much, tackifiers, pavement, soil seals, and windrowing construction slash at the toe of fill slopes. Vegetative measures shall be used to supplement mechanical measures, as appropriate. The appropriate stabilization effort using mechanical and vegetative measures shall be determined by the supervising project or crew leader prior to the onset of construction, based on site-specific conditions.

- Road slope stabilization practices shall be implemented prior to the first winter rains. These practices shall include: verification of the correct slope steepness as dependent upon the dominant soil type/s present, implementation of methods to handle surface and subsurface runoff, and finalization of road surface compaction or application of appropriate surfacing material.

- Any temporary roadways which are built or used for the purpose of transporting construction equipment and materials to construction sites shall be situated to prevent undercutting of the designated final cut slope, avoid deposition of materials outside the designated roadway limits, and accommodate drainage with temporary culverts. Road sitting is dependent upon site-specific conditions and shall be determined by the supervising project or crew leader prior to the onset of construction activities

- Embankment methods shall be implemented to ensure adequate strength of the roadway and shoulder and to minimize potential failure of road embankments and fill areas. Acceptable stabilization methods include: sidecasting and end dumping, layer placement (roller compaction), controlled compaction, minimization of fill volumes, or strengthening of fills using retaining walls, confinement systems, plantings, or a combination of techniques. The appropriate stabilization effort shall be determined by the supervising project or crew leader prior to the onset of construction, based on site-specific conditions.
- Strictly control vehicular traffic to only that which is minimally necessary to transport materials, equipment, and construction personnel to the Project site. Roads that must be used during wet periods shall have a stable surface and sufficient drainage, as determined by the supervising project or crew leader, to prevent rutting and churning of the road surfaces.
- Re-vegetate all areas disturbed by grading or clearing following construction, unless operation and maintenance of the Project would require the area to remain clear (such as with an access road).

- Establish the use of concrete washout stations to capture and contain concrete washout material and wastewater to avoid direct release of washout to surface water.

H-1b **Maximum Road Gradient.** The maximum allowable road gradient applicable to all new roadways, including access roads and spur roads, which would be installed to provide temporary or permanent access during construction and/or operation and maintenance activities shall be no greater than ten percent, except where SCE can demonstrate that a steeper grade, such as twelve percent, results in fewer impacts.

H-1c **Road Surface Treatment.** Road surface treatments shall be implemented in order to minimize the erosion of road surface materials and reduce the likelihood of related sediment production. Treatments may include watering, dust oiling, penetration oiling, sealing, aggregate surfacing, chip sealing, or paving. The technique utilized at each site shall depend upon traffic, soils, geology, and road design specifications. Site-specific road surface treatments shall be specified by the supervising project or crew leader prior to the onset of construction activities.

H-1d **Timing of Construction Activities.** Construction activities, particularly regarding roadway installations and improvements, must occur during the dry season or when precipitation events are not expected.

H-1e **Control of Side-cast Material, Right-of-Way Debris and Roadway Debris.** Side-cast material includes any loose, unconsolidated materials that must be re-located to facilitate construction activities. This may include rocks and boulders as well as other organic materials. Prior to the

onset of any construction activities, waste areas must be designated where excess material can be deposited and stabilized. During road construction and maintenance, potential sidecast and other waste material will be utilized on the road surface. Any unused material shall be removed to designated disposal sites. Waste areas shall not be left exposed and must be transported to disposal facilities on a regular basis, which will be determined based on site-specific conditions.

H-4 **Develop and Implement a Groundwater Remediation Plan.** Prior to the onset of any construction activities, the Applicant shall determine the specific location and extent of any groundwater resources that may be encountered through project-related excavation activities such as the installation of underground infrastructure. The Applicant shall develop and implement a groundwater remediation plan if it is determined that known groundwater resources would be unavoidable during construction. In the event that unknown groundwater resources are encountered or an unplanned disturbance of known resources occurs, the Applicant shall immediately halt the disruptive excavation activity and develop and implement a site-specific remediation plan. This remediation plan may require activities such as bioremediation or other applicable technology, as determined appropriate under site-specific conditions.

H-7 **Protect Aboveground Structures Against Flood and Erosion Damage.** Aboveground project features such as transmission line towers and substation facilities shall be designed and engineered to withstand any mechanical stresses that may result from location, such as potential flooding or erosion of the surrounding area. Site-specific measures may include tower anchoring, installation of slope protection, or raising foundation levels. All Project-related facilities shall be placed outside the current and reasonably expected future flow path of watercourses. No Project-related facilities shall be positioned within a known watercourse.

Land Use and Public Recreation

L-1a **Coordinate Construction Schedule and Activities with the Authorized Officers for the Recreation Areas.** No less than 40 days prior to construction, SCE shall coordinate construction activities and the Project construction schedule with the authorized officers for the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, City of Palmdale, and Los Angeles County, Department of Parks and Recreation. SCE shall schedule construction activities to avoid heavy recreational use periods, including major holidays, in coordination with, and at the discretion of the authorized officers. SCE shall prepare a public notice of construction activities consistent with Mitigation Measure N-3a (Provide Advance Notification of Construction). SCE shall document its coordination efforts with the authorized officers, and provide this documentation to the CPUC 30 days prior to construction.

L-1b **Provide Access for Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and Other Hiking Trail Users.** No less than 40 days prior to construction, SCE shall coordinate with the authorized officer of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) and other City of Palmdale and Los Angeles County, Department of Parks and Recreation hiking trails to establish a temporary detour of the trail to avoid hazardous construction areas. SCE shall prepare a public notice of the temporary trail closure and information on the trail detour consistent with Mitigation Measure N-3a (Provide Advance Notification of Construction). SCE shall document its coordination efforts with the authorized officer and submit this documentation to the CPUC 30 days prior to construction.

During construction, SCE shall locate construction equipment and materials to allow for continual access to the PCT trailhead and parking area located southwest of the intersection of Tehachapi Willow Springs Road and Cameron Road, as well as other hiking trails.

L-1c **Identify Alternative Recreation Areas.** SCE shall coordinate with the authorized officer for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the City of Palmdale, and the Los Angeles County, Department of Parks and Recreation to identify alternative recreation sites that may be used by the public. SCE shall post a public notice at recreation facilities within Ritter Ranch and other areas to be closed or limited during construction, which shall provide information on alternative recreation facilities. SCE shall document its coordination with the authorized officer, and submit this documentation to the CPUC 30 days prior to construction.

L-5 **Site Towers to Avoid Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Trailhead.** SCE shall site transmission towers to avoid the parking area and trailhead for the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT), located southwest of the intersection of Tehachapi Willow Springs Road and Cameron Road. SCE shall ensure that the location of new transmission towers would not be sited in an area that is used to access the PCT.

Agricultural Resources

AG-3 **Establish Agreement and Coordinate Construction Activities with Agricultural Landowners.** Sixty (60) days prior to the start of Project construction, SCE shall secure a signed agreement with property owners of active farmland (i.e., currently being prepared or used for agricultural production, or developed with agricultural infrastructure) that will be used for construction and operation of the Project, access and spur roads, staging areas, and other Project-related activities. The purpose of this agreement will be to set forth the use of farmland during construction in order to: (1) schedule proposed construction activities at a location and time when damage to agricultural operations would be minimized, and (2) ensure that any areas damaged or disturbed by construction are restored to a condition mutually agreed upon by the landowner and SCE.

SCE shall coordinate with the agricultural landowners in the affected areas where active farmland will be temporarily disturbed to determine when and where construction should occur in order to minimize damage to agricultural operations. This includes avoiding construction during peak planting, growing, and harvest seasons. If damage or destruction does occur, SCE shall perform restoration activities on the disturbed area in order to return the area to a pre-determined condition or the pre-construction condition, whichever option is agreed upon by the landowner and SCE. This could include activities such as soil preparation, regrading, and reseeding. This measure applies to agricultural landowners with land that is impacted by the Project. SCE shall provide proof of the continued use of farmland through the submittal of a signed agreement between an individual property owner and SCE. The signed agreements shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to the start of construction.

AG-4 **Locate transmission towers and pulling/splicing stations to avoid agricultural operations.** Locate Transmission Towers and Pulling/Splicing Stations to Avoid Agricultural Operations. SCE shall site transmission towers and pulling/splicing stations in locations that minimize impacts to active agriculture (i.e., currently being prepared or used for agricultural production, or developed with agricultural infrastructure). Specifically, SCE shall comply with the following measures when siting transmission towers and splicing/pulling stations within areas where cultivated farmland would be removed through the presence of structures:

- SCE shall avoid orchards, vineyards, row crops, and furrow-irrigated crops where towers would interfere with irrigation and harvest activities.

- SCE shall avoid irrigation canals and ditches.

- SCE shall align towers adjacent to field boundaries and parallel to rows (if located in row crops), and shall avoid diagonal orientations and angular alignments within agricultural land.

SCE shall document and provide proof of compliance with the above listed items 90 days prior to the start of Project construction. This documentation shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to the start of construction, and reviewed with affected landowners during coordination presented in Mitigation Measure AG-3 (Establish Agreement and Coordinate Construction Activities with Agricultural Landowners).

Noise

N-1 **Provide Shields for Stationary Construction Equipment.** During construction, SCE or its construction contractor shall install temporary shields or curtains to reduce noise from construction equipment or obtain variances to operate equipment in a manner consistent with Los Angeles County goals for noise protection. In unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County when using equipment within 300 feet of single-family residences, within 350 feet of multi-family residences, and within approximately 200 feet of commercial uses, temporary shields shall be used to reduce noise levels from stationary construction equipment to within the Los Angeles County maximum allowable construction noise levels. The maximum allowable noise levels for single-family residences are 60 dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and 50 dBA between 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., for multi-family residences are 65 dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and 55 dBA between 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., and for semi-residential/commercial uses are 70 dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and 60 dBA between 8:00 pm and 7:00 a.m.

N-3a **Provide Advanced Notification of Construction. During construction,** SCE or its construction contractor shall provide advance notice, between two and four weeks prior to construction, by mail to all single-family residences that would be within 600 feet of project construction, multi-family residences within 300 feet of construction, and commercial uses within 170 feet of construction. The announcement shall state specifically where and when construction would occur in the area. If construction delays of more than seven days occur, an additional notice shall be made, either in person or by mail. Notices shall provide tips on reducing noise intrusion, for example, by closing windows facing the planned construction. SCE shall also publish a notice of impending construction in local newspapers, stating when and where construction would occur.

N-3b **Implement Best Management Practices for Construction Noise.** SCE shall employ the following noise-suppression techniques to minimize the impact of temporary construction noise and avoid possible violations of local rules, standards, and ordinances:

- Construction noise shall be confined to daytime, weekday hours (e.g., 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.) or an alternative schedule established by the local jurisdiction;
- Construction equipment shall use noise reduction features (e.g., mufflers and engine shrouds) that are no less effective than those originally installed by the manufacturer;
- Construction traffic shall be routed away from residences and schools, where feasible;
- Unnecessary construction vehicle use and idling time shall be minimized to the extent feasible. The ability to limit construction vehicle idling time is dependent upon the sequence of construction activities and when and where vehicles are needed or staged. A “common sense” approach to vehicle use shall be applied; if a vehicle is not required for use immediately or continuously for construction activities, its engine shall be shut off.

(Note: certain equipment, such as large diesel-powered vehicles, require extended idling for warm-up and repetitive construction tasks.)

Visual Resources

V-1a **Use Tubular Steel Poles.** In locations designated by the CPUC, SCE and its Contractors shall take measures to eliminate lattice steel towers from the Project and substitute tubular steel poles to reduce significant visual impacts as seen from designated sensitive receptor locations. SCE and its Contractors shall submit design calculations to demonstrate any locations where use of tubular steel poles is not feasible. SCE and its Contractors shall submit site plans, topographic screening studies, and visibility studies demonstrating where tubular steel poles are feasible and would lessen visual impacts, and conversely, where lattice steel towers would blend in with a landform backdrop. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE and its Contractors shall submit these plans and studies to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1b **Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads.** In locations designated by the CPUC, SCE shall construct the new transmission line using existing access roads and spur roads. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE and its Contractors shall submit plans and construction drawings for access roads and spur roads, demonstrating compliance with this measure, to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1c **Dispose of Cleared Vegetation.** For areas where cleared vegetation would be visible from sensitive viewing locations, SCE and its Contractors shall dispose of cleared vegetation and woody material in a manner that is not visually evident and does not create visual contrasts. SCE and its Contractors shall submit a vegetation removal plan demonstrating compliance with this measure to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1d **Slope-Round and Dispose of Excavated Materials.** For areas where cuts-and-fills and excavated materials would be visible from sensitive viewing locations, SCE and its Contractors shall employ slope-rounding techniques to blend earthwork with natural contours and shall dispose of excavated materials (soil, rocks, and concrete, and reinforcing steel) in a manner that is not visually evident and does not create visual contrasts. SCE and its Contractors shall submit an excavation plan demonstrating compliance with this measure to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1e **Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors,** Textures, and Finishes. For all structures that are visible from sensitive viewing locations, SCE and its Contractors shall apply surface coatings with appropriate colors, finishes, and textures to most effectively blend the structures with the visible backdrop landscape. For structures that are visible from more than one sensitive viewing location, if backdrops are substantially different when viewed from different vantage points, the darker color shall be selected, because dark colors tend to blend into landscape backdrops more effectively than lighter colors, which may contrast and produce glare. At locations where a lattice steel tower or a tubular steel pole would be silhouetted against the skyline, non-reflective, light-gray colors shall be selected to blend with the sky. The transmission line conductors shall be non-specular and non-reflective, and the insulators shall be non-reflective and non-refractive. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE and its Contractors shall submit a Structure Surface Treatment Plan for the lattice steel towers, tubular steel poles, and any other visible structures, demonstrating compliance with this measure to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

ATTACHMENT A

V-1f **Establish Vegetative Screen.** SCE and its Contractors shall establish a permanent vegetative screen of sufficient height for immediate visual screening around the substation(s), and shall provide permanent drip irrigation system for plant survival. Plant materials selected for screening shall be evergreen, wind-resistant, and acclimated to the desert environment. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE and its Contractors shall submit a Vegetative Screening Plan for the substation demonstrating compliance with this measure to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-5 **Match Structure Spacing and Spans.** In locations designated by the CPUC where there will be construction adjacent to existing towers, SCE and its Contractors shall match existing structure spacing and spans as closely as possible to avoid or reduce the number of off-setting tower placements to reduce visual complexity as seen from sensitive receptor locations. All new structures shall match the heights of the existing transmission line structures to the extent possible as dictated by variation in terrain. All new spans shall match existing conductor spans as closely as possible in order to avoid or reduce the occurrence of unnecessary visual complexity associated with asynchronous conductor spans. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved, and shall prepare construction drawings for structure locations. SCE and its Contractors shall submit these plans and studies to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-9 **Construct New Access and Spur Roads with Least Visual Disturbance.** SCE and its contractors shall design all new access and spur roads such that they are located in the least visually obtrusive locations, that they follow the lay of the land, that cut-and-fill slopes are minimized, that vegetative patterns are protected or enhanced, and that the least number of roads are created. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE and its contractors shall construct and maintain access and spur roads to minimize visual contrasts of form, line, color, texture, and scale. SCE and its contractors shall submit plans and construction drawings for access roads and spur roads demonstrating compliance with this measure to the CPUC and other affected agencies for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-15 **Local Agency Approvals (Miles S3-0.0 to S3-35.2 and S2-0.0 to S2-21.7).** SCE shall obtain all necessary and applicable approvals and permits from the Counties and affected local agencies, and shall submit said approvals and permits to the CPUC at least 60 days prior to construction.

V-16a **Use Only Non-Specular and Non-Reflective Conductors and Insulators.** SCE and its Contractors shall use only non-specular and non-reflective conductors, and the insulators shall be non-reflective and non-refractive. SCE and its Contractors shall submit samples of these materials to the CPUC for review and approval at least 120 days prior to the start of construction.

V-16b **Use Magnetic Coils at Entrance Gate.** Instead of motion-activated lighting, SCE and its Contractors shall install magnetic coils, or other technology, in the entrance road to each transition station to activate low-level, directional lighting at the locked entrance gate.

V-16c **Use Only Low-Level, Directional, Shielded Lighting.** In order to illuminate equipment areas within the transition stations, SCE and its Contractors shall install only low-level, directional, shielded lighting sufficient to limit spill-over glare and nighttime sky-lighting. The brightness of station lighting shall be kept relatively low.

V-16d **Only Perform Routine Maintenance Activities During Daylight Hours.** SCE and its Contractors shall perform routine maintenance and repair activities only during daylight hours, thus eliminating the need for nighttime lighting of the transition stations.

ATTACHMENT A

Traffic and Transportation

T-1a **Prepare Traffic Control Plans.** Prior to the start of construction, SCE shall submit Traffic Control Plans (TCPs) to all agencies with jurisdiction over public roads that would be affected by overhead construction activities as part of the required traffic encroachment permits. TCPs shall define the locations of all roads that would need to be temporarily closed due to construction activities, including aerial hauling by helicopter and conductor stringing activities. The TCPs shall define the use of flag persons, warning signs, lights, barricades, cones, etc. to provide safe work areas and to warn, control, protect, and expedite vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. The measures included in the TCP shall be consistent with the standard guidelines outlined in the Caltrans Traffic Manual, the Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction, and the Work Area Traffic Control Handbook (WATCH). Copies of the TCPs shall be sent to the responsible agencies for review. Tables C.12-1 through C.12-3 present the appropriate responsible jurisdictions for review of the TCPs.

TCPs shall also include measures to avoid disruptions or delays in access for emergency service vehicles and to keep emergency service agencies fully informed of road closures, detours, and delays. Police departments, fire departments, ambulance services, and paramedic services shall be notified at least one month in advance by SCE of the proposed locations, nature, timing, and duration of any construction activities and advised of any access restrictions that could impact their effectiveness. Provisions shall be ready at all times to accommodate emergency vehicles, such as immediately stopping work for emergency vehicle passage, short detours, and alternate routes developed in conjunction with local agencies. TCPs shall also identify all emergency service agencies, include contact information for those agencies, assign responsibility for notifying the service providers, and specify coordination procedures. Copies of the TCPs shall be provided to all affected police departments, fire departments, ambulance and paramedic services. Documentation of coordination with service providers shall be provided to the CPUC prior to the start of construction.

T-1b **Restrict Lane Closures.** To mitigate traffic congestion and delays during construction, SCE shall restrict all necessary lane closures or obstructions on major roadways, as designated by applicable County or City General Plans, associated with overhead construction activities to off-peak periods only. Lane closures must not occur between the peak hours of 6:00 and 9:30 a.m. and between the peak hours of 3:30 and 6:30 p.m., or as directed in writing by the affected public agency in the encroachment permit.

T-2 **Prepare Construction Transportation Plan.** To reduce the number of Project-related vehicles traveling on roads within the Project area, site construction workers shall be staged off site at marshalling yards or near paved intersections and workers will be shuttled to construction sites in groups in crew vehicles.

T-4 **Avoid Disruption of Transit Service.** SCE shall coordinate with Kern Regional Transit at least one month prior to construction to reduce potential interruption of dial-a-ride service in Kern County.

T-5 **Avoid Disruption of Rail Service.** SCE shall coordinate with UPRR and Metrolink at least one month prior to construction to reduce potential interruption of rail service.

T-7 **Avoid Conflicts with Planned Improvements to SR-14.** SCE shall coordinate project design with California Department of Transportation and the Los Angeles County MTA to ensure that Project structures are appropriately placed to avoid conflict with potential expansion of SR-14.

T-8 **Repair Damaged Road ROWs.** If damage to roads, sidewalks, and/or medians (including irrigation systems for landscaped medians) occurs as a result of construction activities for the Project, SCE will be responsible for ensuring repairs are implemented within two months of completion of construction activities at the affected location. Roads disturbed by construction activities or construction vehicles shall be properly restored to ensure long-term protection of road surfaces.

Population and Housing

The Project as adopted will result in no impacts to Population and Housing. No mitigation measures are required.

(END OF ATTACHMENT A)

ATTACHMENT B

CEQA Findings of Fact

ATTACHMENT B

CEQA Findings of Fact

Regarding the Final Environmental Impact Report for the
Antelope Transmission Project, Segments 2 and 3
State Clearinghouse No. 2006041160

I. Revisions to the Final EIR

I.1 Clarification of Cumulative Land Use Impacts

The discussion of cumulative impacts of the proposed Project resulting from what was previously identified as Impact L-2 in the Draft EIR, set forth below, is hereby deleted from the Final EIR as it was determined that no residences in the City of Lancaster would be removed as part of the Project:

E.5.7 Land Use

Operation of the proposed Project would require the removal of a residence in the City of Lancaster (Impact L-2). The siting of the proposed Project and Options A and B would create potentially significant impacts to a single-family residence located on Avenue L in the City of Lancaster. As proposed, the Project would require the removal of this residence during construction and operation. Mitigation Measure L-2 (Re-locate Project ROW to Avoid Residence) would be implemented to reduce potentially significant Project impacts to a less-than-significant level. No current or future projects have been proposed in the vicinity of the Project that would contribute to a cumulative impact to this residence. As such, cumulative impacts from operation of the proposed Project and Options A and B would remain significant but mitigable (Class II).

All other cumulative Land Use and Public Recreation impacts identified in the Final EIR are hereby renumbered to reflect this deletion.

I.2 Clarification of Mitigation Measure to Reduce Cumulative Impacts to Mariposa Lily Populations

The discussion of mitigation, to reduce the cumulative impact of the Project to Mariposa lily populations to a less-than-significant level in the Final EIR, is hereby expanded by the following specific mitigation measure, which is hereby incorporated into the Project.

E.5.2 Biological Resources

Avoid Impacts to or Preserve Off-site Saltbush Scrub Habitat Containing Alkali Mariposa Lilies. All roadways, towers, and temporary construction staging areas shall be situated in order to avoid to the extent practicable ground disturbance activities within saltbush scrub habitat inhabited by alkali mariposa lilies. Protocol-level surveys for alkali mariposa lilies shall be conducted between April and June one to two years prior to construction, and conform to the

ATTACHMENT B

California Department of Fish and Game *Guidelines of Assessing the Effects of Proposed Developments on Rare and Endangered Plants and Plant Communities* (CDFG**,** 2000).[1] If alkali mariposa lilies are not detected by protocol-level surveys conducted during an average, or above average, rainfall season, no further mitigation is warranted.

If survey results are inconclusive due to below average rainfall, or if alkali mariposa lilies are detected, or if no surveys were conducted and it is assumed alkali mariposa lilies are present, existing, occupied offsite saltbush scrub habitat shall be preserved in perpetuity at a 1:1 mitigation ratio (one acre preserved for each acre impacted). Prior to construction, the applicant shall work with CDFG to identify appropriate mitigation lands and ensure their permanent protection through an appropriate CDFG-approved mechanism, such as a conservation easement or fee title purchase. A conservation easement would be held by CDFG or an approved land management entity and would be recorded within a time frame agreed upon by CDFG.

II. Certification

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Commission) hereby certifies the Antelope Transmission Project, Segments 2 and 3, Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), State Clearinghouse No. 2006041160. In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines §15090, the CPUC, as California Lead Agency for the Project, certifies that

(1) The Final EIR has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);

(2) The Final EIR was presented to the Commission, and the Commission has received, reviewed, and considered the information contained in the Final EIR and hearing documents prior to approving the project;

(3) The Final EIR reflects the CPUC's independent judgment and analysis.

The CPUC has exercised independent judgment in accordance with Public Resources Code §21082.1(c) in retaining its own environmental consultant, directing the consultant in preparation of the EIR, as well as reviewing, analyzing, and revising material prepared by the consultant.

In accordance with Public Resources Code §21081 and State CEQA Guidelines §15091, the Commission has made one or more specific written findings regarding each significant impact associated with the Project. Those findings are presented below, along with a presentation of facts in support of the findings. Concurrent with the adoption of these findings, the Commission adopts the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program as presented in Table 1 at the end of this document and in the Final EIR (Appendix 9, Table 9-2).

The documents and other materials that constitute the record of proceedings on which the Project findings are based are located at the California Public Utilities Commission, 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco,

[1] California Department of Fish and Game. 2000. Guidelines of Assessing the Effects of Proposed Developments on Rare and Endangered Plants and Plant Communities. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. 2 pp.

CA 94102. The custodian for these documents is the Energy Division, CEQA Unit. This information is provided in compliance with Public Resources Code §21081.6(a)(2) and 14 California Code of Regulations §15091(e).

III. Project Background

III.1 Project Description Summary

Southern California Edison (SCE) filed an application (Application Number A.04-12-008) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) and a Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on December 9, 2004, for construction and operation of the Antelope-Vincent 500-kV Transmission Line, initially energized to 220 kV (referred to as Segment 2) and the Antelope-Tehachapi 500-kV Transmission Line, connecting Antelope to a new substation in Tehachapi and a 220-kV transmission line connecting two new substations within Tehachapi (collectively referred to as Segment 3). SCE submitted an amended application and PEA on September 30, 2005 refining the alignments of both Segment 2 and Segment 3.

Two different alignment re-routes, referred to as Options A and B, were considered in the EIR as part of the Project in addition to the route proposed by SCE. These route options were evaluated to the same level of detail as SCE's proposed, allowing the Commission, as the lead agency, the advantage of potentially choosing one of these routes, if it were found to offer substantial environmental benefits compared the route proposed by SCE. Based on the analysis in the EIR, the Commission has determined that the Option A re-route offers substantial environmental benefits. Namely, it will avoid the displacement of three single family residences located along Cherry Tree Lane, north of Lake Elizabeth Road. Accordingly, the Commission adopts the proposed Project and directs SCE to implement Option A.

The Project consists of two primary elements, the Antelope-Vincent 500-kV Transmission Line, or Segment 2 (initially energized to 220 kV), and the Antelope-Tehachapi 500-kV and 220-kV Transmission Line, or Segment 3. Segment 2 will involve construction of a 21.1-mile 500-kV transmission line, including implementation of the *Option A* re-route between approximately Project Mile S2-5.7 and Project Mile S2-7.8, and a 0.6-mile 220-kV transmission line between SCE's existing Antelope and Vincent Substations. The Antelope Substation is located in the City of Lancaster and the Vincent Substation is located near the community of Acton, both of which are located in northern Los Angeles County. Segment 3 will involve construction of two substation facilities in southern Kern County: Substation One and Substation Two. Segment 3B consists of a 9.6-mile 220-kV transmission line between Substation Two, located near Tehachapi Boulevard in the Monolith area, and Substation One, located on Oak Creek Road west of the Mojave area. Segment 3A consists of a 25.6-mile 500-kV transmission line from Substation One to the existing Antelope Substation in the City of Lancaster. The total Project alignment includes approximately 56.9 miles of new 500/220-kV transmission line, two new substations, and upgrades at the existing Antelope and Vincent Substations.

III.2 Project Objectives

In accordance with Decision 04-06-010, Ordering Paragraph No. 8, the CPUC ordered SCE to "…file an application seeking a certificate authorizing construction of the first phase of…transmission upgrades consistent with its 2002 [2003] conceptual study and the [Tehachapi Collaborative] study group's recommendation..." These transmission upgrades include the Antelope-Vincent (Segment 2) and

Antelope-Tehachapi (Segment 3) transmission lines. Through approval and implementation of the Project, SCE seeks to:

1) Provide transmission capacity from the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area to the Antelope Substation in order to interconnect and integrate wind power generation facilities into the electric system.
2) Prevent overloading of the existing Antelope-Mesa transmission line.
3) Increase reliability of the SCE transmission grid by increasing capacity to serve demand from planned development in the Antelope Valley.

IV. Environmental Review Process and the EIR

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was published in August 2006 by the CPUC in compliance with CEQA requirements. The Final EIR on the Project was published in December 2006. The Final EIR has been prepared for the CPUC in accordance with CEQA (Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR], §15000 et seq.), as amended. As allowed for in §15084(d)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the CPUC retained a consultant to assist with the preparation of the environmental documents. The CPUC, acting as State Lead Agency, has reviewed and edited as necessary the submitted drafts to reflect its own independent judgment. The key milestones associated with the preparation of the EIR are summarized below. In addition, an extensive public involvement and agency notification effort was conducted to solicit input on the scope and content of the EIR and to solicit comment on the results of the environmental analysis presented in the Draft EIR. In general, the preparation of the EIR included the following key steps and public notification efforts:

- **Notice of Preparation.** Thirty-day scoping process began with the CPUC's issuance of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR on April 27, 2006.
- The NOP was filed with the State Clearinghouse on April 27, 2006 and the review period for the NOP ended on May 26, 2006. Over 450 copies of the NOP were distributed to federal, State, regional, and local agencies, elected officials, and other interested parties. Approximately 130 copies of the NOP were distributed to federal, State, regional, and local agencies, Native American tribal representatives, and elected officials, while the reminder were mailed to local organizations and property owners in the vicinity of the Project. Five additional copies of the NOP were delivered to the local repositories.
- **Scoping Report.** In July 2006, a comprehensive Scoping Report was issued, summarizing issues and concerns received from the public and various agencies during the scoping period. A total of 24 written comments were submitted and ten individuals presented verbal comments during the public scoping meetings.
- **Draft EIR.** The CPUC issued the Draft EIR on August 24, 2006. Thirty-eight (38) copies of the bound Draft EIR were distributed to State and local agencies and elected officials, as well as organizations and other interested parties. In addition, the Notice of Availability (NOA) notifying the public of the availability of the Draft EIR was mailed and e-mailed to over 500 people. Informational workshops and Public Participation Hearings for the Draft EIR were held on October 11 and October 12, 2006. The review period began on August 24, 2006, and originally ended on October 9, 2006, and was extended seven days to October 16, 2006.
- **Notice of Completion.** The Notice of Completion for the Draft EIR was filed with the State Clearinghouse on August 24, 2006.
- **Notice of Availability.** A NOA of the Draft EIR was mailed to over 500 addresses, including community organizations, interested groups, and property owners in the vicinity of the Project, and

posted in the Los Angeles County Clerk's Office from September 1, 2006, through October 2, 2006, and in the Kern County Clerk's Office from September 5, 2006, through October 4, 2006. In addition, the NOA was published in the five local newspapers in August 2006.

- **Public Meetings.** Informal workshops and Public Participation Hearings for the Draft EIR were held on October 10 and 11, 2006. The hearings were lead by the CPUC Administrative Law Judge assigned to this proceeding.
- **Project Resources.** The Project e-mail address, telephone hotline, and a Project-specific Internet website were available to provide another avenue for public comment and inquiry. All meetings and document publications were also advertised in at least five local and regional newspapers.

V. Environmental Impacts and Findings

Public Resources Code §21081 states that no public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an EIR has been completed which identifies one or more significant effects on the environment unless the public agency makes one or more of the following findings:

1. Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

2. Those changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and have been, or can and should be, adopted by that other agency.

3. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or alternatives identified in the environmental impact report.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code §21081 and CEQA Guidelines §15091, the Commission has made one or more of these specific written findings regarding significant impacts associated with the Project. Such findings are made in Sections V.2 and V.3 below.

The EIR evaluation included a detailed analysis of impacts in 12 environmental disciplines, analyzing the Project and alternatives, including the No Project Alternative. The EIR discloses the environmental impacts expected to result from the construction and operation of the Antelope Transmission Project, Segments 2 and 3. Where possible, mitigation measures were identified to avoid or minimize significant environmental effects. In addition, SCE committed to implementing measures in order to reduce the direct and indirect impacts that will result from Project activities. These measures, referred to as Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs), were identified by SCE in its CPCN Application to the CPUC. APMs specific to each issue area are provided in Section C of the EIR. The issue area analyses of the EIR assumed the APMs to be part of the Project, and were applied to help reduce Project impacts. APMs are discussed below in the Findings for each applicable environmental impact.

V.1 Environmental Impacts Found to be Less Than Significant

Based on the issue area assessment in the Final EIR the Commission determines that the Project will have no impact or less-than-significant impacts for several issues as summarized in the table below. The rationale for the conclusion that no significant impact would occur in each of the issue areas in the table is based on the discussion of these impacts in the detailed issue area analyses in Sections C and E.6 (Effects Found Not

to be Significant) of the EIR. Cumulative impacts that were found to have no impact or less-than-significant impacts are included in the table below as well, which are discussed in detail in Section E.5 of the EIR.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
Air Quality	A-4: The Project would create objectionable odors.	Construction equipment and operations and maintenance/inspection equipment may create mildly objectionable odors. These odors will be temporary and will not affect a substantial number of people.
	Cumulative Air Quality Impacts	Construction equipment and operations, such as asphalt paving, may create temporary and mildly objectionable odors. Given the temporary nature and relative mildness of the Project's construction odors, odor impacts related to the Project would be adverse by not cumulatively significant.
Biological Resources	B-1: The Project would result in the permanent loss of non-native annual grassland habitat, and agricultural and developed areas.	Permanent loss of habitat and agricultural and developed lands will occur as a result of the Project. The quality of these habitats has been negatively affected by historic and ongoing disturbances, including the introduction of agricultural activities and road construction. These habitats are locally and regionally abundant in the Antelope Valley and provide marginal habitat for native plants and wildlife. APM BIO-2, which minimizes vegetation removal and permanent loss at construction sites, through implementation of a revegetation plan will minimize impacts. As such, impacts will be less than significant.
	B-2: The Project would result in the permanent loss of creosote scrub, montane scrub, desert scrub, and saltbrush scrub habitat.	Permanent loss of these habitats will occur as a result of the Project. However, these habitats are locally and regionally abundant. Much of this habitat is under federal ownership (BLM, NPS, USFS, or Department of Defense) and is protected from development. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.
	B-8: The Project could result in the loss of foraging habitat for Swainson's Hawk.	Project implementation would not restrict the range of the species, cause their regional populations to drop below self-sustaining levels, or substantially reduce habitat available for the two nesting pairs of Swainson's Hawk documented within ten miles of the project site. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.
	B-11: The Project could result in the mortality and/or disturbance to mariposa lily plant populations.	Four different mariposa lily species have the potential to occur within project boundaries. Impacts to these populations will be less-than-significant because of the relatively small disturbance zone in the preferred habitats of these plants, the abundance of these habitats in the Antelope Valley, the relatively sparse distribution of these plants at a population level, and their demonstrated tolerance of soil disturbance. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.
	B-14: The Project could result in San Emigdio Blue butterfly mortality from construction disturbance.	Construction activities may create dust that will impact nectar sources and may cause direct mortality to the butterfly and its larvae along Amargosa Creek and adjacent ridges. Impacts will be mitigated by avoidance (when feasible) of the bed and banks of Amargosa Creek and implementation of dust control measures, best management practices (BMPs) and APMs, such as pre-construction biological clearance surveys, biological monitoring during construction, and a Worker Environmental Awareness Program. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.
	B-15: The Project could result in the mortality of, and loss of habitat for, coast horned lizards and silvery legless lizards.	Construction activities could result in injury or mortality of a few individuals of these species. Any losses will be distributed over a relatively large area and will have little effect on local or regional population dynamics of these species. Similarly, habitat losses will be uniformly distributed over a large area and any habitat losses at any given site will be relatively low and will have little effect on either the local or regional species dynamics. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.
	B-18: The Project could result in disturbance to wintering Mountain Plovers.	Construction activities could temporarily disturb wintering flocks of Mountain plovers, causing them to use suboptimal foraging habitat. Because suitable foraging habitat is regionally abundant in the Antelope Valley and will not be affected by the Project, impacts are considered less than significant.
	B-21: The Project could result in the electrocution of State and/or federally protected birds.	Swainson's Hawks and other large aerial perching birds could be electrocuted, although the likelihood of electrocutions occurring at voltages greater than 69-kV is extremely low. Implementation of APM BIO-9, which requires that all transmission and subtransmission towers and poles be designed to be raptor-safe in accordance with the *Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines*, will reduce potential impact to less-than-significant levels.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
Biological Resources, cont.	B-22: The Project could result in the mortality of State and/or federally protected bird species from collisions with project improvements	The magnitude of bird collisions (and subsequent mortality) with the transmission line is difficult to predict but will be more likely near areas where species movements will be greatest (e.g., near wetlands and open water bodies such as Little Rock Reservoir, Lake Palmdale and Fairmont Reservoir). APM BIO-9, which requires that all transmission and subtransmission towers and poles be designed to be raptor-safe in accordance with the *Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines*, will reduce potential impacts to less-than-significant levels.
	B-23: The Project could result in the mortality of, and loss of habitat for, Tehachapi pocket mouse, Southern grasshopper mouse, and Tulare grasshopper mouse.	Loss of habitat and mortality of individuals could occur during construction or from permanent structures. Because the area of suitable habitat is small, and project implementation will not substantially reduce available habitat, restrict range, or affect regional populations, impacts are less than significant.
	B-24: The Project could result in the loss of habitat for ringtail.	Although ringtail could occur in the riparian areas of the project area, the home range size is very large relative to the area of impact and construction activities in riparian areas will be minimized per APMs. Potential impacts are therefore less than significant
	B-25: The Project could result in the mortality of special-status bat species due to electrocution and/or transmission line strikes.	Bat species mortality could result from strikes with transmission lines. Some species fly too low to be impacted, while others, such as the western mastiff bat, big free-tailed bat, and western red bat, do fly high enough to be potentially impacted. However, the number of fatal strikes is expected to be low and insufficient to substantially reduce the number of these species and impacts are considered less than significant.
	B-26: The Project could result in the loss of habitat for American badgers.	The very large home range size of the badger will limit impacts to the American badger populations to a less-than-significant level. Pre-construction surveys will be conducted to identify any occupied badger dens in the Project area (APM BIO-1). Dens will be flagged and ground-disturbing activities will be restricted within 300 feet of the dens resulting in less-than-significant impacts. However, if the Project cannot avoid removing a den, implementation of Mitigation Measure B-26 will reduce this significant impact to a less-than-significant level (see Section IV.2.2 below.
	B-28: The Project could result in the degradation of water quality.	Water quality within Amargosa Creek, Oak Creek, the unnamed northern creek, and the desert wash habitat could be degraded as a result of pollution, sedimentation, and litter stemming from transmission lime installation. Implementation of APMs BIO-2, BIO-3, and BIO-4, and compliance with the SWPPP will reduce the potential for indirect impacts to biological resources to less-than-significant levels.
	B-29: The Project could result in the mortality of desert tortoises as a result of increased predation by common ravens.	The Project is not expected to increase raven populations. Therefore, impact to juvenile desert tortoises from predation by ravens is expected to be less than significant.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
Biological Resources, cont.	Cumulative Biological Resources Impacts	No cumulative adverse effects on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means (Criterion BOI4) will occur because the Antelope Valley is an internally drained basin with no connection to navigable waters and no habitats subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of the USACE occur on the project site. No impact will occur. The Project will not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impeded the use of native wildlife nursery sites (Criterion BIO5). APM BIO-1 (Pre-construction surveys), APM BIO-5 (Conduct Biological Monitoring) , and Mitigation Measures B-27a and B-27b will reduce minimal impacts to the desert tortoise. Potential impacts are not expected to combine with impacts from other projects in the region and cumulative impacts are therefore not expected to occur. The Project will not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources (Criterion BIO6) and cumulative impacts will therefore not occur. The Project is not expected to conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP), or other approved local, regional, or state HCP (Criterion BIO7). The Project is not expected to conflict with the West Mohave Plan. The habitat conservation plan has not been completed for the Project area. Therefore, there is not an adopted HCP or NCCP within the Project area, and cumulative impacts will not occur.
Cultural Resources	C-17, C-22, C-23, C-24, C-25, C-26, C-27, C-28, C-29, C-30, C-31: Impacts to CA-LAN-1956, AP3-118, AP3-120, AP3-122, AP3-123, AP3-124, AP3-125, AP3-126, AP3-127, AP3-128, and AP3-129 would occur as a result of the Project.	Because the Project route as adopted will avoid CA-LAN-1956, AP3-118, AP3-120, AP3-122, AP3-123, AP3-124, AP3-125, AP3-126, AP3-127, AP3-128, and AP3-129, no impacts to these resources will occur as a result of the Project.
	Cumulative Cultural Resources Impacts	For the cultural resources affected by the Project, all impacts have been mitigated to avoid significant impacts (see Section V.2.3 below). Because these impacts have been fully mitigated, the Project will not combine with similar impacts caused by other projects. Less-than-significant cumulative impacts will occur.
Geology, Soils, and Paleontology	Cumulative Geology, Soils, and Paleontology Impacts	It is not expected that impacts of any other project could combine with potential impacts of the Project. No activities from other projects will both occur within the Project's cumulative area, and occur at the same time as Project. Therefore, the effects of these projects in conjunction with Project on the geologic environment are not cumulatively considerable. For example, because excavation and grading for multiple projects will not occur in the exact same location at the exact same time, excavation and grading activities resulting in slope instability (Impact G-1) will not be cumulatively significant. Furthermore, any project that could potentially introduce similar erosion events or erosion potential (Impact G-2) would minimize impacts through compliance with a construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP). Similarly, damage to the transmission line from surface fault ruptures (Impact G-3), landslides, liquefaction, settlement, lateral spreading, and/or surface cracking (Impact G-4), strong groundshaking (Impact G-5), corrosive soils (Impact G-6), landslides, earthflows, or debris slides (Impact G-7) would not be cumulatively considerable.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Cumulative Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impacts	Because Project impacts associated with release of hazardous materials during construction (Impact HAZ-1) and operation (Impact HAZ-2) will be less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a (Implement an Environmental Training and Monitoring Program), HAZ-1b (Implement a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan), HAZ-1c (Ensure Proper Disposal of Construction Waste), HAZ-1d (Emergency Spill Supplies and Equipment for Construction), HAZ-2a (Implement Spill Prevention, Countermeasure, and Control Plans), and HAZ-2b (Emergency Spill Supplies and Equipment for Operation and Maintenance Activities), the Project will not cumulatively contribute to these impacts.
[	The Project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. (See EIR Section E.6.1)	The proposed transmission line route would traverse a portion of a 110-acre property owned by the Antelope Valley Union High School District (AVUHSD). This site is currently planned for the establishment of a planned school currently designated as High School #10. As described in Section C.6 (Hazards and Hazardous Materials) of the EIR, any unexpected hazardous materials encountered during construction of the Project will be removed, treated, and disposed of off site, thus resulting in a positive impact. Any potential spills of hazardous materials during construction or operation of the Project will be related to mishandling or equipment leaks. With the implementation of the mitigation measures described in Section C.6 of the EIR, mishandling and leaking will be minimized, if not completely avoided. Any potential spill that would occur accidentally would be relatively small, as the primary hazardous materials associated with construction would fuels and lubricants used by construction equipment and vehicles, which would be present in limited quantities. In the case of an accidental spill, immediate clean up of the contaminated area would be required to restore existing environmental conditions. The Project is not situated within one-quarter mile of any other existing or proposed school sites. No significant impacts will occur.
	The Project would not be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, resulting in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area. (See EIR Section E.6.1)	The Project would not introduce or result in safety hazards related to aircraft operations at existing airports or airstrips. The Project is not located within the landing or approach zones of any airports or airstrips. Substations One and Two, which will be situated among existing wind energy developments, will be significantly smaller (in height as well as overall area) than the multiple existing wind turbine towers in the area. In addition, along the transmission line route, the majority of new towers will be adjacent to existing transmission line corridors, which do not currently represent an aviation hazard. The Project would not include changes to the size or character of the transmission infrastructure that will result in hazards to aircraft aviation. Therefore, although public and private airstrips and airports exist throughout the Antelope Valley and within the general vicinity of the Project, construction of the Project will not interfere with aircraft operations or conflict with any airport land use plans. As a result, no safety hazards will be introduced to people residing or working in the project area due to proximity to an airstrip or an airport.
	The Project would not be located within the vicinity of a private airstrip, resulting in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area. (See EIR Section E.6.1)	The Project would not introduce or result in safety hazards related to aircraft operations at existing airports or airstrips. The Project is not located within the landing or approach zones of any airports or airstrips. See discussion directly above.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
	The Project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. (See EIR Section E.6.1)	The Project is not expected to impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. As described in Section C.12 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR, the potential for construction activities to temporarily interfere with emergency response vehicle routes will be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. The Project willinclude installation of standard and commonly used transmission line infrastructure, which will be constructed in largely sparsely developed areas, or alongside existing transmission line infrastructure. The Project will be similar to and consistent with existing infrastructure and will not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an emergency response or evacuation plan.
	The Project would not result in significant impacts if it would expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands. (See EIR Section E.6.1)	The Project is not expected to expose people or structures to significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires during construction or operation. SCE is required to design the transmission line in accordance with safety requirements of the CPUC's General Order 95, Rules for Overhead Electric Line Construction, which includes fire safety. Construction crews will be required to work within the stipulations of documents governing compliance with regional environmental, storm water pollution prevention, and fire prevention criteria. During operation, electrical arcing from power lines can represent a fire hazard; however, this phenomenon is more prevalent for lower voltage distribution lines since these lines are typically on shorter structures and in much greater proximity to trees and vegetation. Fire hazards from high-voltage transmission lines are greatly reduced through the use of taller structures and wider ROWs. Furthermore, transmission line ROWs are cleared of trees to control this hazard. Fire hazards due to a fallen conductor from an overhead line are minimal due to system protection features. Overhead high voltage transmission lines include system protection designed to safeguard the public and line equipment. These protection systems consist of transmission line relays and circuit breakers that are designed to rapidly detect faults and cut-off power to avoid shock and fire hazards. This equipment is typically set to operate in 2 to 3 cycles, representing a time interval range from 2/60 of a second to 3/60 of a second. No significant impacts will occur. Aggressive aerial firefighting can sometimes be constrained in close proximity to transmission lines because firefighting aircraft may not be able to operate at as low of an altitude as they might if transmission lines are not present. This can reduce the effectiveness of aerial drops of water and fire retardant. This is primarily a concern in areas of hilly or mountainous terrain, such as portions of Segment 2. Because the Project is located adjacent to in very close proximity to existing transmission corridors (i.e., Midway-Vincent and Antelope-Vincent), potential constraints on aerial firefighting are not expected to change substantially from existing conditions. Therefore, this impact is not considered significant.
Hydrology and Water Quality	H-3: Degradation of water or quality would result from the accidental release of hazardous materials during operational activities.	Water quality could be impacted during operation and maintenance activities due to accidental spill or release of harmful materials. The likelihood of an accidental release of hazardous materials will be avoided or reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of APMs HYD-1 through HYD-4, which require implementation of environmental training and procedures to prevent and control the accidental spill or potentially hazardous materials.
	H-5: Increased surface water runoff would result through the introduction of new impermeable areas.	Construction or improvement of access roads and spur roads will introduce permanent impervious areas as will areas at Substations One and Two, transmission tower pads and any concrete-filled areas. These new impermeable areas will not significantly increase surface water runoff due to drainage control features included as part of the SWPPP required by APM HYD-1, and the impacts will be less than significant.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
	H-6: Runoff introduced as a result of permanent Project features would cause the overloading of a local stormwater drainage system.	The Project will create some new, permanent impervious areas, including the concrete areas of the new substation facilities and tower concrete footings. The substation sites will result in only small volumes of surface water runoff because they are located on a relatively flat alluvial fan and most of the substation sites will be covered with crushed rock, both of which allow for the infiltration of surface runoff. Surface runoff produced due to tower footings will be minimal due to inclusion of drainage features in the Project design.
	Cumulative Hydrologic Impacts	Cumulative impacts to local stormwater drainage systems will be less than significant (Impact H-6), as stormwater drainage systems are expected to be in place in existing communities within the Project area and it is reasonably assumed that any new residential and community developments, which comprise most of the related cumulative projects, will include stormwater drainage systems designed with sufficient capacity to accommodate runoff caused by the particular project. Because the Project will create less-than-significant impacts to local stormwater drainage systems, cumulative effects of Impact H-6 will be less than significant.
Land Use and Public Recreation	L-2: Operation of the Project would require the removal of residences in unincorporated Los Angeles County.	The Project will require an easement that will extend over privately owned parcels and will restrict future use of the property within the proposed easement. However, with implementation of Option A as part of the adopted Project, the alignment will avoid the condemnation of residences. No impacts will occur.
	L-3: Operation of the Project would preclude the development of a school property.	The Project will traverse property that is owned by the Antelope Valley Union High School District and has been proposed as a future school site. Because the required 350 foot setback from the transmission lines will not be an issue with the California Department of Education and will not preclude the school's development, impacts will be less than significant.
	L-4: Implementation would preclude planned development within Ritter Ranch and Anaverde Ranch.	The Project will not traverse planned residential development within Ritter Ranch or Anaverde Ranch. No impacts will occur.
	Cumulative Land use and Public Recreation Impacts	The adopted Project will avoid removing residences in unincorporated Los Angeles County (Impact L-2) and will not preclude the development of school properties (Impact L-3). As such, these impacts would not be cumulatively significant and no impacts will occur. Furthermore, the Project will not create impacts to planned residential development within Ritter Ranch and Anaverde Ranch (Impact L-4) and therefore, no cumulative impacts to these residential developments would be anticipated to occur.
Agricultural Resources	AG-1: Construction activities would temporarily convert Farmland to non-agricultural use.	The temporary conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use as a result of the Project will not exceed the threshold levels of significance for Prime Farmland (10 acres) and non-Prime Farmland (40 acres) and therefore, impacts will be less than significant.
	AG-2: Operation would permanently convert Farmland to non-agricultural use.	Permanent conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use as a result of footing holes and new access and spur roads will not exceed the threshold levels of significance of 10 acres for Prime Farmland or 40 acres for non-Prime Farmland and therefore impacts will be less than significant.
	AG-5: Construction activities would conflict with a Williamson Act contract.	The Project will be located across approximately 0.5 miles of land under Williamson Act contracts classified as Prime Agricultural Land, and approximately 0.1 mile of Williamson Act land classified as Mixed Acreage Parcels. The temporary disturbance to 0.9 acres of Prime Agricultural Land and 0.6 acres of Mixed Acreage Parcels will not exceed established thresholds and impacts will be less than significant.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
	Cumulative Agricultural Impacts	Temporary impacts to Williamson Act lands will not exceed threshold levels of significance. No current or future projects have been proposed in the vicinity of the Project that will contribute to a temporary displacement of Williamson Act lands. As such, cumulative impacts from construction of the Project would be less than significant.
Noise	N-5: Maintenance activities during transmission line operation would increase ambient noise levels.	Inspection of the proposed transmission lines will result in once-yearly visits by helicopter and truck. Maintenance of the facilities will be performed on an as-needed basis. Because inspection visits will be infrequent and maintenance activities will not involve heavy-duty equipment, noise impacts will be less than significant.
	N-6: Operation of modified and new substations would result in increased ambient noise levels.	Due to the lack of sensitive receptors immediately adjacent to project-related substations and the relatively low level noise sources, operational noise impacts will be adverse but less than significant.
	Cumulative Noise Impacts	Project noise impacts associated with inspection/maintenance will be adverse but not cumulatively considerable, as noise increases related to these activities will be intermittent and short term and any combination of these noise increases with other sources will be similarly intermittent and short term (Impact N-5). The proposed substations will generate low level ambient noise; this impact (Impact N-6) is not significant and there are no approved or pending projects located within approximately 600 feet of the Project substation sites. Therefore, operational cumulative noise impacts to the new substations would be adverse but not significant.
Visual Resources	V-4: Construction of the Project and introduction of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from KOP-4 – Techachapi Willow Springs Road.	The overall visual change seen from Tehachapi Willow springs Road will be low-to-moderate and in the context of the existing landscape's low-to-moderate visual sensitivity, the resulting visual impact will be adverse, but not significant. From Mile S3-9.9 to Mile S3-16.3, implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), and V-1e (Treat Surfaces with appropriate colors, Textures, and Finishes) (see Impact V-1 in Section V.2.10 below) will result in an improved visual environment, as compared to the Project without mitigation.
	V-5: Construction of the Project and introduction of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from KOP-5 – Avenue A at 110th Street West.	The overall visual change seen from Avenue A at 110th Street West will be moderate and in the context of the existing landscape's low-to-moderate visual sensitivity. The resulting visual impact will be adverse, but not significant. From Mile S3-16.3 to S3-31.5, implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), and V-1e (Treat Surfaces with appropriate colors, Textures, and Finishes) (see Impact V-1 in Section V.2.10 below) will further improve the visual environment of the new 500-kV transmission line as viewed from the intersection of Avenue A at 110th Street West. From approximately Mile S3-22.2 to S3-23.3, the new 500-kV transmission line will be construction adjacent to and parallel to the LADWP Sylmar-Celilo 1000-kV DC and Owens Gorge-Rinaldi 220-kV transmission lines. In these locations, implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1b, V-1c. V-1e and V-5 (Match Structure Spacing and Spans) (see Impacts V-1 and V-7 in Section V.2.10 below), will result in an improved visual environment, as compared to the Project without mitigation.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
Visual Resources, cont.	V-6: Construction of the Project and introduction of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from KOP-6 – Avenue G at 105th Street West.	The overall visual change seen from Avenue G at 105th Street West will be moderate-to-high and in the context of the existing landscape's low-to-moderate visual sensitivity, the resulting visual impact will be adverse, but not significant. From Mile S3-31.5 to S3-35.2, implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), and V-1e (Treat Surfaces with appropriate colors, Textures, and Finishes) (see Impact V-1 in Section V.2.10 below) will result in an improved visual environment, as compared to the Project without mitigation. .
	V-8: Construction of the Project and increase of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from KOP-8 – Avenue N at Agena Road.	The overall visual change seen from Avenue N at Agena Road will be low-to-moderate and in the context of the existing landscape's moderate visual sensitivity, the resulting visual impact will be adverse, but not significant. From Mile S2-4.4 to S2-6.4, implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a (Use Tubular Steel Poles), V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), V-1d (Slope-Round and Dispose of Excavated Materials), V-1e (Treat Surfaces with appropriate colors, Textures, and Finishes), and V-5 (Match Structure Placing and Spans) (see Impacts V-1 and V-7 in Section V.2.10 below) will result in an improved visual environment, as compared to the Project without mitigation..
	V-10: Construction of the Project and increase of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from KOP-10 – Elizabeth Lake Road.	With implementation of Option A, the adopted Project will be sited approximately 1,000 feet east of SCE's proposed alignment in this area, and therefore will be located away from the three existing residences located along Elizabeth Lake Road. The resulting visual effect will be that the three existing houses will remain in their existing pastoral setting. Because the transmission line will be completely screened by landforms and 1,000 feet farther away from KOP-10, it will not be visible from Elizabeth Lake Road or residences along both sides of Elizabeth Lake Road and no visual impacts will occur as viewed from KOP-10.
	V-13: Construction of the Project and increase of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from KOP-13 – Sierra Highway and Antelope Valley Freeway.	The overall visual change seen from KOP-13 will be moderate and in the context of the existing landscape's moderate visual sensitivity, the resulting visual impact will be adverse, but not significant. From Mile S2-20.2 to Mile S2-20.9, implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), V-1d (Slope-Round and Dispose of Excavated Materials), V-1e (Treat Surfaces with appropriate colors, Textures, and Finishes), and V-5 (Match Structure Placing and Spans) (see Impacts V-1 and V-7 in Section IV.2.10 below) will result in an improved visual environment, as compared to the Project without mitigation.
	V-15: The project would conflict with applicable visual resource policies, regulation, and standards contained in state and local plans.	Due to the scale of the Project, there is relatively little opportunity to mitigate visual impacts to a level of insignificance in the desert and on hillsides. The Project will be consistent with existing plans, objectives, and policies for visual resources and SCE will obtain all necessary permits from State and local agencies. Therefore, conflicts with visual resource policies will be less than significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure V-15, as listed below, will further ensure Project consistency with visual resource policies, regulations, and standards. V-15 Local Agency Approvals (Miles S3-0.0 to S3-35.2 and S2-0.0 to S2-21.7). SCE shall obtain all necessary and applicable approvals and permits from the Counties and affected local agencies, and shall submit said approvals and permits to the CPUC at least 60 days prior to construction.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
	Cumulative Visual Resources Impacts	The Project will not conflict with any applicable city, county, State, or federal plans, policies or standards for the protection of visual resources (CriterionVIS2), SCE will obtain all necessary permits from State and local agencies and implementation of Mitigation Measure V-16 is recommended. For these reasons, conflicts of the Project with applicable visual resource policies will be anticipated to be less than significant. The Project is not visible from any State scenic highways; therefore, there is no cumulative impact to visual resources of a State scenic highway (Criterion VIS4).
Traffic and Transportation	T-6: Construction activities would temporarily impede pedestrian movements and bike paths	The short term and temporary nature of land road closures and the low volume of pedestrian and bike traffic will result in less-than-significant impacts. In the event that pedestrian or bike traffic does occur, Mitigation Measures T-1a (Prepare Traffic Control Plans) and T-1b (Restrict Lane Closures) (see Impact T-1 in Section IV.2.11 below) include provisions to warn, control, protect, and expedite bicycle and pedestrian traffic.
	T-9: Transmission structures could present an aviation hazard.	There are no public airports in the immediate vicinity of the Project and Project operations will have no impact on aviation activities. The use of helicopters during construction could affect aviation activities; however adherence to Federal Aviation Administration guidelines will ensure that impacts will be less than significant.
Traffic and Transportation, cont.	Cumulative Traffic and Transportation Impacts	There will be no cumulative impacts from the Project as a result of the temporary disruption of transit bus routes (Impact T-4), rail traffic (Impact T-5), or the temporary interference with pedestrian/bicycle paths (Impact T-6) as Project-specific impacts will be short-term and temporary and limited to small localized areas. Because Mitigation Measures T-5 (Avoid Disruption of Rail Traffic) and T-1a (Prepare Traffic control Plans) and T-1b (Restrict Land Closures) (see Impacts T-1 and T-5 in Section IV.2.11 below) will reduce impacts and cumulative projects would also be required to be designed to avoid conflicts with transit bus routes, rail traffic and pedestrian movements and bike paths, there will be less-than-significant cumulative impacts. Any Project-specific conflicts with the project and plans for new travel lane to SR-14 (Impact T-7) will be eliminated with implementation of Mitigation Measure T-7 (Avoid Conflicts with Planned Improvements to SR-14) (see Impact T-7 in Section IV.2.11 below). Given that cumulative projects would also be required to be designed to avoid conflicts with the connector road, impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Damage to road ROWs (Impact T-8) will be repaired within two months of completion of Project construction and therefore are not cumulatively significant. Cumulative impacts resulting in aviation hazards (Impact T-9) will not be cumulatively significant as all projects are required to adhere to FAA Air Traffic Division guidelines. The Project is consistent with all applicable transportation plans (Impact T-10) and therefore does not contribute to a cumulative impact.
Population and Housing	P-1: The Project would require the removal of residential housing structures	With implementation of Option A, the adopted Project will avoid the removal of the existing homes along Cherry Tree Lane, which would have been removed to implement SCE's proposed route. The Project will result in no removals of residential housing structures.
	Cumulative Population and Housing Impacts	The adopted Project will avoid the need for removal of residential structures. Impacts associated with the removal of housing due to all of the cumulative projects in the area will not be cumulatively significant as new housing is built regularly to accommodate demand and projected population growth.
Mineral Resources	The Project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State. (See EIR Section E.6.2)	The Project is located within Kern County, Unincorporated Los Angeles County, the City of Palmdale, and the City of Lancaster along a generally undeveloped ROW with no identified nearby mineral resource areas. The Project will not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State. No impacts will occur.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
	The Project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site as delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan. (See EIR Section E.6.2)	The Project will not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site as delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. According to the Los Angeles County General Plan, Special Management Area Map, the Project is not located in an area designated as containing locally important mineral resources. No impacts will occur.
Public Services	The Project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or create the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services: (1) fire protection; (2) police protection; (3) schools; (4) parks; or (5) other public facilities.	Long-term impacts to public services are usually associated with population growth in an area, which increases the demand for a particular service and necessitates the expansion of existing facilities or construction of new facilities. However, the Project will not result in a population increase, as discussed in Section C.13 (Population and Housing) of the EIR. Therefore, the Project will not increase any demands on schools, parks, or other public facilities, or lower the level of service for fire protection or police protection. No impacts will occur.
Utilities and Service Systems	The Project would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board. (See EIR Section E.6.3)	Construction activities will require water and will generate solid waste and wastewater. As wastewater generated by construction will be limited to that generated by construction personnel and will be accommodated by portable toilets which will be emptied into municipal sewage systems or septic systems, wastewater generation will not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Less-than-significant impacts will occur.
	The Project would not require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. (See EIR Section E.6.3)	Construction activities will require water and will generate solid waste and wastewater. As wastewater generated by construction will be limited to that generated by construction personnel and will be accommodated by portable toilets which will be emptied into municipal sewage systems or septic systems, wastewater generation will not exceed wastewater treatment requirements, nor will it require the construction or expansion of wastewater treatment facilities. Less-than-significant impacts will occur.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
Utilities and Service Systems, cont.	The Project would not result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. (See EIR Section E.6.3)	The construction of new tower foundations and new footings will incrementally increase non-permeable surfaces along the Project route, but will not increase stormwater runoff such that it will require the construction or expansion of stormwater drainage facilities. Less-than-significant impacts will occur.
	The Project would not require new or expanded water supply entitlements.	Water will be required for dust control as well as for concrete and drinking water for construction personnel and is estimated to require 18.66 acre-feet of water, but this accounts for a minute fraction of the water supply for the area and will not require the acquisition or expansion of water supply entitlements. Less-than-significant impacts will occur.
	The Project would not exceed existing wastewater capacities supplied by the project area's wastewater treatment provider(s). (See EIR Section E.6.3)	Water will be required for dust control as well as for concrete and drinking water for construction personnel and is estimated to require 18.66 acre-feet of water, but this accounts for a minute fraction of the water supply for the area and will not require any new water treatment facilities. Less-than-significant impacts will occur.
	The Project would not exceed existing, permitted landfill capacity due to construction or operation. (See EIR Section E.6.4)	Solid waste generated by construction activities will consist largely of soil and vegetative material, along with wood from cribbing, sanitation waste, concrete waste, and other construction debris. The amount of waste generated represents a minute fraction of the capacities of the landfills serving the project area and would not exceed any landfill capacities. Less-than-significant impacts will occur.
	The Project would not conflict with federal, State, or local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. (See EIR Section E.6.4)	Solid waste generated by construction activities will consist largely of soil and vegetative material, along with wood from cribbing, sanitation waste, concrete waste, and other construction debris. The amount of waste generated represents a minute fraction of the capacities of the landfills serving the project area and would not conflict with any statutes or regulations associated with solid waste. Less-than-significant impacts will occur.

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V.2 Significant Environmental Impacts That Have Been Reduced to a Less-than-Significant Level

Based on the issue area assessment in the EIR, the Commission hereby finds, pursuant to Section 21081, that the following potential environmental impacts can and will be mitigated to below a level of significance based upon the implementation of the mitigation measures in the EIR. These findings are based on the discussion of impacts in the detailed issue area analyses in Section C of the EIR, located in the Final EIR.

V.2.1 Air Quality

As discussed in Section C.2 (Air Quality) of the EIR, the analysis of impacts to air quality as a result of Project construction and operation was based on federal, State, and local regulations. Local agencies have regulations for visible emissions, nuisances, and fugitive dust with which all project activities would need to comply, including the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD), Kern County Air Pollution Control District (KCAPCD), and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), California Air Resources Board (CARB), and the local air districts classify an area as attainment, unclassified, or nonattainment depending on whether or not the monitored ambient air quality data shows compliance, insufficient data available, or non-compliance with the ambient air quality standards, respectively. Impacts were determined based on activities associated with the Project to generate emissions of air pollutants that would exceed those thresholds. In addition, a land use survey was conducted to identify air quality sensitive receptors (e.g., local residences, schools, hospitals, churches, recreational facilities) in the general vicinity of the Project alignment. Project-generated emissions on these receptors were also analyzed.

Impact A-2: The Project emissions would exceed the KCAPCD regional emission thresholds.

As discussed in Section C.2 (Air Quality) of the EIR, the Project will result in significant impacts if the Project were to exceed the KCAPCD regional emissions thresholds.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the EIR for Impact A-2. Specifically, the Project's emission estimate (see EIR Table C.2-16 supplemented by Appendix 3), which considers the implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i (listed below), will help ensure that the NOx and PM10 emissions potential would remain below the KCAPCD emission significance criteria threshold.

A-1a **Implement Construction Fugitive Dust Control Plan.** SCE shall develop a Fugitive Dust Emission Control Plan (FDECP) for construction work. Measures to be incorporated into the plan include, but are not limited to the following:

- Water the disturbed areas of the active construction sites at least three times per day and more often if uncontrolled fugitive dust is noted.
- Enclose, cover, water twice daily, and/or apply non-toxic soil binders according to manufacturer's specifications to exposed piles with a five percent or greater silt content.
- CARB certified non-toxic soil binders shall be applied per manufacturer recommendations to active unpaved roadways, unpaved staging areas, and unpaved parking area(s) throughout construction to reduce fugitive dust emissions. Other non-toxic soil binder products, selected from lists available from EPA's Environmental Technology Verification program or the

SCAQMD, may be applied per manufacturer recommendations in place of the CARB certified soil binders if such products can be reasonably demonstrated to be as effective as the CARB certified non-toxic soil binders.

- Maintain unpaved road vehicle travel to the lowest practical speeds, and no greater than 15 mph, to reduce fugitive dust emissions.
- All vehicle tires shall be inspected, are to be free or dirt, and washed as necessary prior to entering paved roadways.
- Install wheel washers or wash the wheels of trucks and other heavy equipment where vehicles exit the site.
- Cover all trucks hauling soil and other loose material, or require at least two feet of freeboard.
- Establish a vegetative ground cover (in compliance with biological resources impact mitigation measures) or otherwise create stabilized surfaces on all unpaved areas at each of the construction sites within 21 days after active construction operations have ceased.
- Increase the frequency of watering, or implement other additional fugitive dust mitigation measures, to all active disturbed fugitive dust emission sources when wind speeds (as instantaneous wind gusts) exceed 25 miles per hour (mph).
- Travel routes to each construction site shall be developed to minimize unpaved road travel.

A-1b **Properly Maintain Mechanical Equipment.** The construction contractor shall ensure that all mechanical equipment associated with project construction is properly tuned and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

A-1c **Use Ultra Low-sulfur Diesel Fuel.** CARB-certified ultra low-sulfur diesel (ULSD) fuel containing 15 ppm sulfur or less shall be used in all diesel-powered construction equipment.

A-1d **Restrict Engine Idling to 10 Minutes.** Diesel engine idle time shall be restricted to no more than 10 minutes.

A-1e **Schedule Deliveries Outside of Peak Traffic Hours.** All material deliveries to the marshalling yards and from the marshalling yards to the construction sites shall be scheduled outside of peak traffic hours (6:00 to 9:30 am and 3:30 to 6:30 pm) to the extent feasible, and other truck trips during peak traffic hours shall be minimized to the extent feasible.

A-1f **Offroad Diesel-fueled Equipment Standards.** All offroad construction diesel engines not registered under CARB's Statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program, which have a rating of 50 hp or more, shall meet, at a minimum, the Tier 2 California Emission Standards for Off-Road Compression-Ignition Engines as specified in California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Section 2423(b)(1) unless that such engine is not available for a particular item of equipment. In the event a Tier 2 engine is not available for any off-road engine larger than 100 hp, that engine shall be equipped with a Tier 1 engine. In the event a Tier 1 engine is not available for any off-road engine larger than 100 hp, that engine shall be equipped with a catalyzed diesel particulate filter (soot filter), unless certified by engine manufacturers that the use of such devices is not practical for specific engine types. Equipment properly registered under and in compliance with CARB's Statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program are in compliance with this mitigation measure.

A-1g **On-road Vehicles Standards.** All on-road construction vehicles shall meet all applicable California on-road emission standards. This does not apply to construction worker personal vehicles.

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A-1h **Offroad Gasoline-fueled Equipment Standards.** All offroad stationary and portable gasoline powered equipment shall have EPA Phase 1/Phase 2 compliant engines, where the specific engine requirement shall be based on the new engine standard in affect two years prior to initiating project construction.

A-1i **Reduction of Helicopter Emissions.** Helicopter use will be limited to the extent feasible and helicopters with low emitting engines shall be used to the extent practical.

Rationale for Finding. The Project's estimated emissions have been determined to be below the KCAPCD regional emission thresholds with implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i.

Reference. Section C.2 (Air Quality) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the air quality impacts of the Project as they relate to the regional emission thresholds.

Impact A-3: Construction of the Project would expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

As discussed in Section C.2 (Air Quality) of the EIR, the construction route of the Project traverses through remote mountainous, agricultural, or desert areas that do not have substantial numbers of sensitive receptors. It has been determined that residences are located more than 500 feet from any of the substation construction sites, that tower construction emissions will be of very short duration and relatively low intensity at any given time at any of the tower/pole sites, and that the Project's limited operating inspection emissions will be negligible in any given location. As such, the Project will result in less-than-significant impacts to sensitive receptors with the implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i (see Impact A-2, above).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact A-3 to a less-than-significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i, presented above, will reduce emissions from construction activities at sensitive receptor locations to a less-than-significant level.

Rationale for Finding. Most of the construction route through the project is in remote areas that would not affect sensitive receptors. Due to the lack of sensitive receptors along the majority of the alignment, their distance from each construction site, the relatively low amount of emissions that would occur at each tower construction site, as well as the implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i, the impacts to sensitive receptors will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.2 (Air Quality) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the air quality impacts of the Project on sensitive receptors.

Cumulative emissions would exceed the KCAPCD regional emission thresholds.

As discussed in Section E.5.1 (Air Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, Project emissions are 90 percent of the PM10 significance criteria and 70 percent of the NOx significance criteria. Therefore, any relatively large cumulative project could cause cumulatively significant emissions of PM10 and NOx. One tentative cumulative project was identified within one mile of the Project route within KCAPCD jurisdiction. This one tentative cumulative project is a fairly large residential development that could have reasonably high annual construction emissions resulting in the potential for a cumulatively significant impact; however, this tentative project is not yet approved and should not overlap with the construction period of the Project.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the EIR. Specifically, Project-related construction emission will be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i (see Impact A-2, above), such that the Project will not be cumulatively significant during construction and the KCAPCD regional significance criteria will not be exceeded.

Rationale for Finding. The cumulative project list (Tables E.3 and E.4 and Figures E.1-1a and E.1-1b of the Final EIR) shows only one tentative cumulative project within one mile of the Project route within KCAPCD jurisdiction. This one tentative cumulative project is a fairly large residential development that could have reasonably high annual construction emissions; however, this tentative project is not yet approved and should not overlap with the construction period of the Project. Therefore, there do not appear to be any cumulative projects within one mile of the Project that will have concurrent emissions. The Project's estimated emissions have been determined to be below the KCAPCD regional emission thresholds with implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i, and no cumulative projects have been identified within one mile of the Project alignment, resulting in less-than-significant cumulative impacts.

Reference. Section E.5.1 (Air Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative air quality impacts of the Project.

Cumulative construction emissions would expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

As discussed in Section E.5.1 (Air Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, for the emissions of any two projects to have the potential for substantial cumulative downwind pollutant concentrations impacts to any single sensitive receptor, they must be in very close proximity to limit the downwind dispersion from one site to the other, and generally one of the projects must be able to cause a significant impact on its own (conservation of mass principles dictate that two exhaust plumes of stable criteria pollutants do not add concentration, they mix concentration with the plume of highest concentration being diluted by the plume with the lower concentration).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant cumulative effects on the environment to a less-than-significant level. Cumulative impacts to sensitive receptors will be less than significant after implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i (see Impact A-2, above).

Rationale for Finding. The air toxic emissions impacts from the Project will be very low at any one location and will not be of a magnitude to significantly contribute to cumulative impacts. Furthermore, the vast majority of the cumulative projects listed in Tables E.1-3 and E.1-4 of the Final EIR are not within a few hundred feet of the Project alignment, and these cumulative projects will generally be similar in nature in terms of the type and magnitude of pollutant impacts (primarily small construction projects). Therefore, it can be assumed that the potential for cumulative impacts to sensitive receptors is the same as the Project impacts to sensitive receptors, which is less than significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i, reduce Project-related impacts to sensitive receptors to a less-than-significant level by controlling PM10 and NOx emissions through control of fugitive dust, fuels used in equipment, restricting the hours for deliveries, properly maintaining mechanical equipment, vehicle standards, and limiting helicopter use to the extent feasible.

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Reference. Section E.5.1 (Air Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative air quality impacts of the Project.

V.2.2 Biological Resources

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, extensive literature searches were conducted including review of relevant databases, maps, technical reports, and jurisdictional plans and polices, as well as relevant environmental documents to determine the federal and State listed endangered, threatened, proposed endangered or threatened, rare, and special-status plant and wildlife species that may occur within the vicinity of the project area.

Impact B-3: The Project would result in the loss of riparian or sensitive desert wash resources.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, the Project will result in both temporary and permanent impacts to riparian or sensitive desert wash resources. Riparian areas occur in several of the project areas including Amargosa Creek in the south and Oak Creek in the north. In addition, the transmission line will cross a variety of small, unnamed drainages that support small populations of riparian habitat throughout the southern foothill region of the project area. SCE has indicated that these drainages will be spanned by the high voltage lines and disturbance or removal of riparian communities will not occur. Riparian habitat could be impacted, however, at Amargosa Creek and other drainages if the expansion of the existing access roads is required.

Activities associated with the construction and on-going maintenance and operation of the Project have the potential to substantially degrade and remove desert wash habitat within the Project boundaries and could result in the direct loss of up to 0.4 acres (0.16 ha) of desert wash habitat, a limited resource in the Antelope Valley. Desert wash habitats can support unique assemblages of plants and wildlife species and it is well documented that they play an important contribution in conveying surface flows during the rainfall season to other habitats located down slope supporting special-status plants. It is because of these factors that loss of desert wash habitat is considered a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-3 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-3a and B-3b, below.

B-3a **Avoid Desert Wash Habitat.** The Project shall be designed to avoid permanent impacts to desert wash habitats. If towers are to be located within desert washes then steps will be taken to relocate these facilities beyond the bed, bank and channel of these habitats. Similarly, access roads that need to cross desert washes will utilize half-arch culverts, steel plates, or any other method that leaves the bottom of the washes untouched and allows for continued conveyance of storm flows. Alternatively, access roads through the washes will be removed during the first season of construction to replace the pre-project topography in a manner that will not interrupt ephemeral surface flows. In areas where the desert wash habitat cannot be avoided, Mitigation B-3b shall be implemented.

B-3b **Preserve Off-site Desert Wash Habitat.** Following final project design, SCE, in cooperation with CDFG and the CPUC, shall assess the area of impact to desert wash resources within the project site. To mitigate impacts to this area, off-site desert wash habitat shall be preserved in perpetuity at a ratio determined by CDFG in a Streambed Alteration Agreement dependent on the nature of disturbance and the quality of the desert wash habitat to be impacted. For example, high quality desert wash habitat would be mitigated for in perpetuity at a ratio of 2:1 (two acres preserved for each acre impacted).

In the event of loss of desert wash habitat, SCE shall work with CDFG and CPUC to identify appropriate mitigation lands and ensure their permanent protection through an appropriate CDFG-approved mechanism, such as a conservation easement or fee title purchase. Mitigation acquisition shall occur at a CDFG-approved location such as the Desert Tortoise Preserve in Kern County and shall be coordinated through a CDFG-approved entity. SCE shall enter into a binding legal agreement regarding the preservation of off-site lands describing the terms of the acquisition, enhancement, and management of those lands. Fee title to acquired habitat lands, or a conservation easement over these lands, shall be transferred to CDFG or to an entity approved by CDFG and CPUC, along with money for enhancement of the land and an endowment for permanent management of the lands.

Rationale for Finding. Given the relatively difficult nature of re-creating desert washes, the overall approach to mitigation was to avoid the loss of these resources through redesign to the extent practicable (Mitigation Measure B-3a) and, where impacts are not avoidable, to mitigate the impact through preservation of existing desert wash habitat (Mitigation Measure B-3b). Implementation of APM BIO-3, which states that a Streambed Alteration Agreement will be obtained from the California Department of Fish and Game as necessary, along with Mitigation Measures B-3a and B-3b, which will avoid or preserve desert wash habitat, will reduce impacts to desert wash resources to less-than-significant levels.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the impacts to riparian or sensitive desert wash resources resulting from the Project.

Impact B-4: The Project would result in the loss of sensitive Joshua tree woodland and juniper woodland habitat and removal of Joshua trees and juniper trees.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, the Project ROW crosses approximately 3.4 acres (1.1 ha) of Joshua tree woodland habitat and 13.8 acres (5.6 ha) of juniper woodland habitat. Such impacts include those associated with ground disturbance from road and tower construction. Due to the unique floristic composition of these communities and due to historic and on-going losses, the California Desert Native Plant Act has designated Joshua tree woodland and juniper woodland habitats as sensitive. Any direct loss of these habitats within the project area will be considered a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-4 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-4a and B-4b, as identified below.

B-4a **Avoid Joshua Tree and Juniper Woodland Habitat.** The Project activities (construction phase, and operations and maintenance phase) shall be designed to avoid Joshua tree woodland habitat and juniper woodland habitat to the maximum extent feasible. All efforts shall be made, in particular, to avoid individual trees of either species. Any trees that must be impacted shall be mitigated at a ratio of 2:1 through preservation of existing habitat so that all impacts to these habitats are mitigated on acreage and tree basis as provided below. SCE shall photo document the number of Joshua and juniper trees removed during project construction and provide a letter report to the CPUC and CDFG at the conclusion of construction.

B-4b **Preserve Off-site Joshua Tree Woodland and Juniper Woodland Habitat.** To mitigate impacts to either habitat, existing offsite Joshua tree woodland habitat and juniper woodland habitat shall be preserved in perpetuity at a 2:1 mitigation ratio (two acres preserved for each acre impacted). The minimum standard for preservation of, or mitigation of, Joshua trees is two Joshua trees per acre.

The SCE shall coordinate with CDFG and CPUC to identify appropriate mitigation lands and ensure their permanent protection through an appropriate CDFG-approved mechanism, such as a conservation easement or fee title purchase. A conservation easement could be held by CDFG or an approved land management entity and would be recorded within a time frame agreed upon by CDFG. SCE shall provide verification of the purchase of mitigation land to the CPUC within 60 days following the conclusion of construction.

Rationale for Finding. Given the relatively difficult nature of re-creating Joshua tree and juniper woodland habitat and moving these species, the overall approach to mitigation is to avoid impacts to these plant communities through redesign of tower locations and spur roads (Mitigation Measure B-4a). Where avoidance of impacts is not feasible, SCE shall mitigate through the preservation of existing Joshua tree and juniper woodland habitats (Mitigation Measure B-4b). Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-4a and B-4b will minimize the loss of, or damage to, Joshua and Juniper trees during construction by avoiding or preserving Joshua tree and juniper woodland habitat. Therefore, impacts to these Joshua and Juniper tree species will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts to sensitive Joshua Tree Woodland and Juniper Woodland Habitat.

Impact B-5: The Project could result in the take of California red-legged frogs.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, the California red-legged frog is known to occur in San Francisquito Creek and Amargosa Creek in the Leona Valley, and has the potential to occur in the project area at the Amargosa Creek alignment crossing. Although only marginally suitable habitat for California red-legged frogs exists at this location this species may also be present in the headwaters of drainages that occur throughout the region. Although the California red-legged frog was not identified during reconnaissance surveys, there is a high potential for this species to occur in or adjacent to the Project ROW.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-5 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-5a and B-5b, as identified below.

B-5a **Obtain Technical Assistance from the USFWS for California Red-legged Frogs.** The applicants shall request technical assistance from the USFWS to review the potential for California red-legged frogs to occupy Amargosa Creek and obtain concurrence that the applicants proposed measures along with Mitigation Measure B-5b will avoid impacts to this federally threatened species.

B-5b **Conduct Focused Surveys for California Red-legged Frog.** SCE shall contract with a qualified biologist to conduct focused surveys for California Red-legged frog in all areas that may support this species. If detected in or adjacent to the proposed ROW no work will be authorized within 500 feet of occupied habitat until SCE provides concurrence from the USFWS to the CPUC. If present SCE shall develop and implement a monitoring plan that includes the following measures in consultation with the USFWS and CDFG.

- SCE shall retain a qualified biologist with demonstrated expertise with red-legged frogs to monitor all construction activities and assist SCE in the implementation of the monitoring program. This person will be approved by the USFWS prior to the onset of ground-disturbing activities. This biologist will be referred to as the authorized biologist hereafter. The

authorized biologist will be present during all activities immediately adjacent to or within habitat that supports populations of red-legged frog.

- Prior to the onset of construction activities, SCE shall provide all personnel who will be present on work areas within or adjacent to the project area the following information:

  a. A detailed description of the red-legged frog including color photographs;

  b. The protection the red-legged frog receives under the Endangered Species Act and possible legal action or that may be incurred for violation of the Act;

  c. The protective measures being implemented to conserve the red-legged frogs and other species during construction activities associated with the proposed project; and

  d. A point of contact if red-legged frogs are observed.

- All trash that may attract predators of the red-legged frogs will be removed from work sites or completely secured at the end of each work day.

- Prior to the onset of any construction activities, SCE shall meet on-site with staff from the USFWS and the authorized biologist. SCE shall provide information on the general location of construction activities within habitat of the red-legged frogs and the actions taken to reduce impacts to this species. Because red-legged frogs may occur in various locations during different seasons of the year, SCE, USFWS, and authorized biologists will, at this preliminary meeting, determine the seasons when specific construction activities would have the least adverse effect on red-legged frogs. For example construction during the time of year when red-legged frogs are dormant October through January (although frogs may remain active year round) would reduce impacts to this species. The goal of this effort is to reduce the level of mortality of red-legged frogs during construction.

- Where construction can occur in habitat where red-legged frogs are widely distributed, work areas will be fenced in a manner that prevents equipment and vehicles from straying from the designated work area into adjacent habitat. The authorized biologist will assist in determining the boundaries of the area to be fenced in consultation with the USFWS/CDFG/CPUC. All workers will be advised that equipment and vehicles must remain within the fenced work areas.

- The authorized biologist will direct the installation of the fence and conduct a minimum of three nocturnal surveys to move any red-legged frogs from within the fenced area to suitable habitat outside of the fence. If red-legged frogs are observed on the final survey or during subsequent checks, the authorized biologist will conduct additional nocturnal surveys if he or she determines that they are necessary in concurrence with e USFWS/CDFG/CPUC.

- Fencing to exclude red-legged frogs will be at least 24 inches in height.

- The type of fencing must be approved by the authorized biologist and the USFWS/CDFG/CPUC.

- Construction activities that may occur immediately adjacent to breeding pools or other areas where large numbers of red-legged frogs may congregate will be conducted during times of

the year (winter) when individuals have dispersed from these areas or the species is dormant. The authorized biologist will assist SCE in scheduling its work activities accordingly.

- If red-legged frogs are found within an area that has been fenced to exclude red-legged frogs, activities will cease until the authorized biologist moves the red-legged frogs.

- If red-legged frogs are found in a construction area where fencing was deemed unnecessary, work will cease until the authorized biologist moves the red-legged frogs. The authorized biologist in consultation with USFWS/CDFG/CPUC will then determine whether additional surveys or fencing are needed. Work may resume while this determination is being made, if deemed appropriate by the authorized biologist.

- Any red-legged frogs found during clearance surveys or otherwise removed from work areas will be placed in nearby suitable, undisturbed habitat. The authorized biologist will determine the best location for their release, based on the condition of the vegetation, soil, and other habitat features and the proximity to human activities. Clearance surveys shall occur on a daily basis in the work area.

- The authorized biologist will have the authority to stop all activities until appropriate corrective measures have been completed.

- Staging areas for all construction activities will be located on previously disturbed upland areas designated for this purpose. All staging areas will be fenced.

- To ensure that diseases are not conveyed between work sites by the authorized biologist or his or her assistants, the fieldwork code of practice developed by the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force will be followed at all times.

- SCE shall restrict work to daylight hours, except during an emergency, in order to avoid nighttime activities when red-legged frogs may be present on the access road. Traffic speed should be maintained at 20 mph or less in the work area.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-5a and B-5b will require pre-construction agency coordination, pre-construction clearance surveys by a qualified biologist, construction-phase monitoring by a qualified biologist, completion of a worker education program for all on-site personnel, pre-construction placement of agency-approved avoidance fencing which is to be maintained for the duration of construction-related activities, construction-phase removal and relocation of the species that are found within work areas by a qualified biologist, authorization of the monitoring biologist to stop construction activities if any red-legged frogs are considered to be in harms way, restrictions on construction to daylight hours, and a maximum vehicle or mobile equipment speed of 20 mph in the work areas. The activities and requirements prescribed by these measures, in conjunction with the requirements of APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-5 and BIO 6, will reduce impacts to California red-legged frog a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on California red-legged frogs.

ATTACHMENT B

Impact B-6: The Project could result in the take of Desert Tortoises.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, habitat along portions of the Project alignment appeared to be suitable for desert tortoise. Although the habitat within the area surveyed, dominated by Joshua trees and creosote bush, appeared to be suitable for desert tortoises, no sign of desert tortoises was detected during any focused survey. While no records for desert tortoises exist within the project area and no sign of their presence was detected during focused surveys, desert tortoises could be present in some Joshua tree woodland- creosote bush scrub habitats within the project area. Construction activities may result in "take" (*i.e.*, mortality or injury) of individual desert tortoises during ground disturbance or other activities resulting in a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-6 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-6a and B-6b, as identified below.

B-6a **Obtain Technical Assistance from the USFWS for Desert Tortoise.** The applicants shall request technical assistance from the USFWS and CDFG to review the potential for desert tortoise to occupy suitable habitat within the Project area and obtain concurrence that the applicants proposed measures along with mitigation measures listed below would avoid impacts to this listed species.

B-6b **Conduct Focused Clearance Surveys in Designated Areas.** SCE shall contract with a qualified biologist to conduct focused clearance surveys for desert tortoise prior to construction activities located within areas designated in the WMP as desert tortoise "Survey Areas." Clearance surveys shall follow the USFWS desert tortoise survey protocol, as modified within the WMP. If present SCE shall develop and implement mitigation and monitoring plan that includes the following measures in consultation with the USFWS and CDFG.

- SCE shall retain a qualified biologist with demonstrated expertise with desert tortoise to monitor all construction activities and assist SCE in the implementation of the monitoring program. This person will be approved by the USFWS prior to the onset of ground-disturbing activities. This biologist will be referred to as the authorized biologist hereafter. The authorized biologist will be present during all activities immediately adjacent to or within habitat that supports desert tortoise.
- Prior to the onset of construction activities, SCE shall provide all personnel who will be present on work areas within or adjacent to the Project area the following information:
  a. A detailed description of the desert tortoise including color photographs;
  b. The protection the desert tortoise receives under the Endangered Species Act and possible legal action or that may be incurred for violation of the Act;
  c. The protective measures being implemented to conserve the desert tortoises and other species during construction activities associated with the proposed Project; and
  d. A point of contact if desert tortoises are observed.
- All trash that may attract predators of desert tortoises will be removed from work sites or completely secured at the end of each work day.
- Prior to the onset of any construction activities, SCE shall meet on-site with staff from the USFWS and the authorized biologist. SCE shall provide information on the general location of construction activities within habitat of the desert tortoises and the actions taken to reduce impacts to this species. Because desert tortoise may occur in various locations during

different seasons of the year, SCE, USFWS, and authorized biologists will, at this preliminary meeting, determine the seasons when specific construction activities would have the least adverse effect on desert tortoise. For example construction during the time of year when desert tortoises are dormant would reduce impacts to this species. The goal of this effort is to reduce the level of mortality of desert tortoise during construction.

- Where construction can occur in habitat where desert tortoise are widely distributed, work areas will be fenced in a manner that prevents equipment and vehicles from straying from the designated work area into adjacent habitat. The authorized biologist will assist in determining the boundaries of the area to be fenced in consultation with the USFWS/CDFG/CPUC. All workers will be advised that equipment and vehicles must remain within the fenced work areas. Installation of the fencing and any necessary surveys will be directed and/or conducted by the authorized biologist in concurrence with the USFWS/CDFG/CPUC.
- If desert tortoises are found within an area that has been fenced to exclude the species, activities will cease until the authorized biologist moves the desert tortoises.
- If desert tortoises are found in a construction area where fencing was deemed unnecessary, work will cease until the authorized biologist moves the individual(s). The authorized biologist in consultation with USFWS/CDFG/CPUC will then determine whether additional surveys or fencing are needed. Work may resume while this determination is being made, if deemed appropriate by the authorized biologist.
- Any desert tortoises found during clearance surveys or otherwise removed from work areas will be placed in nearby suitable, undisturbed habitat. The authorized biologist will determine the best location for their release, based on the condition of the vegetation, soil, and other habitat features and the proximity to human activities. Clearance surveys shall occur on a daily basis in the work area.
- The authorized biologist will have the authority to stop all activities until appropriate corrective measures have been completed.
- Staging areas for all construction activities will be located on previously disturbed upland areas designated for this purpose. All staging areas will be fenced.
- SCE shall restrict work to daylight hours, except during an emergency, in order to avoid nighttime activities when desert tortoise may be present on the access road. Traffic speed should be maintained at 20 mph or less in the work area.

Rationale for Finding. While SCE will implement measures BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-5, and BIO–6 as part of the Project, if present, take of this state and federally endangered species will constitute a significant impact and will be authorized only through the context of a Biological Opinion issued from the USFWS and an Incidental Take Authorization from the CDFG. Implementation of the Mitigation Measures B-6a will require SCE to work with the USFWS and CDFG to determine the potential for desert tortoise to occupy habitat within the project area. If present, Mitigation Measure B-6b will require SCE to conduct focused clearance surveys, and if present develop and implement a mitigation monitoring plan to minimize impacts to desert tortoises. As such, impacts will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts to desert tortoises.

ATTACHMENT B

Impact B-7: The Project could result in the disturbance of nesting Swainson's Hawks.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, Swainson's Hawk nests were observed in the project area during the reconnaissance-level survey and several CNDDB records document past use within or in the vicinity of the project area. Construction disturbance during the breeding season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment. Disturbance that causes Swainson's Hawks to abandon their nest and/or results in the loss of reproductive effort comprises a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-7 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-7a and B-7b, as identified below.

B-7a **Conduct Pre-construction Surveys for Swainson's Hawks.** To assure that nesting Swainson's Hawks are not disturbed by construction activities, a qualified ornithologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys within one mile of the Project area in regions with suitable nesting habitat for Swainson's Hawks. Survey Period I occurs from January 1 to March 20, Period II from March 20 to April 5, Period III from April 5 to April 20, Period IV from April 21 to June 10 (surveys not recommend during this period because identification is difficult as the adults tend to remain within the nest for longer periods of time), and Period V from June 10 to July 30. No fewer than three surveys shall be completed, in at least each of the two survey periods immediately prior to project initiation. If a nest site is found, consultation with CDFG shall be required to ensure project initiation will not result in nest disturbance (see Mitigation B-7b). CDFG recommends that no new disturbances or other project-related activities which may cause nest abandonment or forced fledging be initiated within ¼ mile (.40 km) of an active nest between March 1 and September 15 or until August 15 of a Management Authorization of Biological Opinion is obtained for the project (CDFG, 1994b).[2] CDFG recommends that the buffer zone be increased to ½ mile (.80 km) in nesting areas away from urban development (CDFG, 1994b).[3] These buffer zones may be adjusted as appropriate in consultation with a qualified ornithologist and CDFG.

B-7b **Remove Nest Trees.** Nest trees within the Project area(s) shall not be removed unless avoidance measures are determined to be infeasible. If a nest tree must be removed, a Management Authorization (including conditions to off-set the loss of the nest tree) must be obtained from CDFG. The Management Authorization will specify the tree removal period, generally between October 1 and February 1. If construction or other project related activities which may cause nest abandonment or forced fledging are necessary within the buffer zone, monitoring of the nest site (funded by the applicant) by a qualified biologist shall be required to determine if the nest is abandoned. If the nest is abandoned, and if the nestlings are still alive, the applicant shall fund the recovery and hacking (controlled release of captive reared young) of nestling(s).

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-7a and B-7b minimizes the potential to disturb nesting of Swainson's Hawks in the project area by conducting pre-construction surveys and procedures and authorizations to remove nests where avoidance measures are determined to be infeasible.

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[2] CDFG (California Department of Fish and Game). 1994b. California Department of Fish and Game. Staff Report Regarding Mitigation of Impacts to Swainson's Hawks in the Central Valley. Unpublished report. 14 pp. Report dated November 1, 1994. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California.

[3] Ibid.

ATTACHMENT B

Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-7a and B-7b will ensure that impacts to nesting Swainson's Hawks will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts associated with the disturbance of nesting Swainson's Hawks.

Impact B-9: The Project could result in the disturbance to nesting riparian birds.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, and Least Bell's Vireo may potentially nest in the riparian areas along Amargosa Creek and Oak Creek within, or adjacent to, the project area. However, SCE has indicated that these drainages will be spanned by the high voltage lines and disturbance or removal of riparian communities will not occur. Riparian habitat could be impacted, however, at Amargosa Creek and other drainages if the expansion of the existing access roads is required resulting in a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-9 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-9a and B-9b below.

B-9a **Avoid Construction During the Breeding Season.** In order to avoid disturbance to nesting Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, and Least Bell's Vireo construction activities at Amargosa Creek and Oak Creek shall be avoided during the breeding season (April 15 to August 31).

B-9b **Conduct Pre-construction Surveys at Amargosa Creek Crossing and Oak Creek.** If construction activities must occur during breeding season at the Amargosa Creek crossing and at Oak Creek, in order to assure that nesting special-status bird species will not be disturbed by construction activities, a qualified ornithologist shall conduct protocol-level surveys of the project site and adjacent areas within 500 ft of the Project area for Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, and Least Bell's Vireo. These surveys shall be conducted during the breeding season (April 15 to August 15). If nests are found during the survey, a disturbance-free buffer shall be established in coordination with CDFG. The Vermilion Flycatcher is a "species of concern". A standardized survey protocol for this species has not been developed. Surveys adequate to detect Vermilion Flycatchers could be conducted in conjunction with the protocol-level surveys for Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and Least Bell's Vireo.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-9a and B-9b will reduce potential impacts to nesting birds during the breeding season by avoiding construction at Amargosa Creek and Oak Creek during the breeding season, as well as by conducting pre-construction surveys, establishing buffer zones surrounding active nests prior to and during construction, and conducting construction-phase monitoring for nesting birds during the breeding season by a qualified biologist. Therefore, potential effects on nesting birds during the breeding season will be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on nesting riparian birds.

ATTACHMENT B

Impact B-10: The Project could result in the potential take of, and habitat loss for the Mohave ground squirrel.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, construction activities may result in "take" (*i.e.*, mortality or injury) of individual Mohave ground squirrels within suitable habitat in the project area. Furthermore, project implementation may result in loss of habitat due to permanent structures and/ or roads, and disturbance from construction activities. Take of this state listed species or loss of habitat would constitute a significant impact without mitigation.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-10 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-10a, B-10b, and B-10c, as identified below.

B-10a **Conduct Focused Surveys for Mohave Ground Squirrels.** Surveys for Mohave ground squirrels shall be performed in the portion of the Project area containing potential Mohave ground squirrel habitat. These surveys shall be performed by a qualified biologist according to CDFG's *Mohave Ground Squirrel Survey Guidelines* (January 2003). Surveys for Mohave ground squirrel are performed between March 15 and July 15 using standard live trapping techniques. Three weeks of trapping are required during this time, although trapping will cease once a Mohave ground squirrel is captured or observed. The trapping girds each contain 100 traps arranged in 4 rows of 25 and spaced 35 meters apart, for a total grid length of one-half mile. The length of the Project area is sufficiently long to require approval of a site-specific survey layout by CDFG. The layout proscribed by CDFG shall determine the total number of grids required.

If these surveys obtain positive results for Mohave ground squirrel, or if Mohave ground squirrel presence is assumed within potential habitat, SCE shall obtain incidental take authorization from CDFG. This authorization will likely include mitigation measures B-10b and B-10c below.

B-10b **Implement Construction Monitoring and Worker Environmental Awareness Program.** To reduce the potential of take of Mohave ground squirrels, and prior to ground disturbing activity, a qualified biologist will deliver a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) on the ecology of the Mohave ground squirrel to the construction employees. A qualified biological monitor shall be on site during initial ground disturbing activities. The name and phone number of the biological monitor shall be provided to a CDFG regional representative at least fourteen (14) days before ground disturbing activities. If the biological monitor observes a living Mohave ground squirrel on the construction site and/or determines that a Mohave ground squirrel was killed by project related activities during construction or otherwise found dead, a written report will be sent to CDFG within five (5) calendar days. The report will include the date, time of the finding or incident (if known), location of the carcass and the circumstances (if known). Mohave ground squirrel remains shall be collected and frozen as soon as possible. CDFG shall be contacted as to the ultimate disposition of the remains.

B-10c **Preserve Off-site Habitat for Mohave Ground Squirrel.** To mitigate potential impacts from project construction, the SCE will acquire habitat occupied by Mohave ground squirrels based on the following ratios previously approved by the CDFG for projects in the region:

- Five acres of off-site habitat supporting Mohave ground squirrels will be preserved for each acre of native creosote bush scrub habitat and Joshua tree woodland habitat within the Kern County Study Area of the Habitat Conservation Area (HCA) delineated in the WMP (Rosamond Boulevard to Oak Creek Road – see habitat description in species account).
- Three acres of off-site habitat supporting Mohave ground squirrels will be preserved for each acre of native creosote bush scrub habitat and Joshua tree woodland habitat outside of

the HCA delineated in the WMP (Rosamond Boulevard to Oak Creek Road– see habitat description in species account).

- One acre of off-site habitat supporting Mohave ground squirrels will be preserved for each acre of saltbrush scrub habitat (including inclusions of desert wash) impacted by the project outside of the HCA delineated in the WMP (Rosamond Boulevard to Oak Creek Road– see habitat description in species account).
- One-half acre of off-site habitat supporting Mohave ground squirrels will be preserved for each acre of desert scrub habitat impacted by the project outside of the HCA delineated in the WMP (Rosamond Boulevard to Oak Creek Road– see habitat description in species account).
- No mitigation will occur for agricultural, non-native annual grassland, developed, or compacted barren ground within the Project area.

Mitigation acquisition shall occur at a CDFG-approved location such as the Desert Tortoise Preserve in Kern County and shall be coordinated through a CDFG-approved entity. SCE shall enter into a binding legal agreement regarding the preservation of off-site lands describing the terms of the acquisition, enhancement, and management of those lands. Fee title to acquired habitat lands, or a conservation easement over these lands, shall be transferred to CDFG or to an entity approved by CDFG and CPUC, along with money for enhancement of the land and an endowment for permanent management of the lands. If it is determined that Joshua tree woodland and/or Juniper woodland preserved through implementation of mitigation measure B-4b detailed above also supports Mojave ground squirrel populations, these off-site lands can be used to satisfy the requirements of this mitigation measure.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-10a will require pre-construction surveys for Mohave ground squirrels to determine the presence or absence of this species. If present, Mitigation Measures B-10b and B-10c will require implementation of a construction monitoring and worker environmental awareness program to identify and avoid Mohave ground squirrels during construction activities, and in the event impacts to this species occur, SCE will be required to obtain and preserve off-site habitat occupied by Mohave ground squirrels. Therefore, impacts to the Mohave ground squirrel will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on the Mohave ground squirrel.

Impact B-12: The Project could result in the loss of and/or disturbance to short-joint beavertail.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, short-joint beavertail has the potential to occur within portions of the project area. Several individual plants were observed distributed in the southern portion of the project area (Segment 2). Thus, the plant could be affected by ground disturbance activities associated with construction of the new roads and transmission line towers and associated staging areas. Any impacts to this species resulting from project activities are considered significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-12 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-12a, B-12b and B-12c, as identified below.

B-12a Conduct Focused Surveys for Short-joint Beavertail. Floristic surveys shall be conducted for short-joint beavertail. It is a perennial cactus and as such, is easily detected once tower and road

positions are staked. These surveys will be limited to suitable habitat within proposed transmission line access roads and towers and in any temporary, associated staging areas. The surveys shall be initiated prior to any ground disturbance.

B-12b **Avoid Impacts to Short-joint Beavertail.** The proposed roadways, towers, and temporary construction staging areas shall be situated to avoid impacts to short-joint beavertail individuals, to the extent practicable. In some cases, individual plants could be transplanted to adjacent habitat, provided that SCE adheres to the monitoring plan listed in mitigation measure B-12c.

Short-joint beavertail occurrences located within temporary construction areas shall be fenced or flagged for avoidance prior to construction, and a biological monitor shall be present to ensure compliance with off-limits areas.

B-12c **Remove and Reintroduce Short-joint Beavertail.** Prior to grading, a qualified biologist shall develop a short-joint beavertail removal and reintroduction plan for any impacted plants. This plan shall include a map of impacted plants, a suitable method of removal of the species, detailed planting instructions for optimal survival of the transplanted individual, and a map of the transplant location within 200 feet of the impact area and within the same habitat type in which the plant was originally growing**.** This plan shall be approved by CDFG and CPUC prior to the issuance of grading permits.

Rationale for Finding. The overall mitigation approach is to conduct future surveys for the short-joint beavertail (Mitigation Measure B-12a), to avoid impacts through redesign (Mitigation Measure B-12b), and where such avoidance is not feasible, to salvage and relocate individual plants in suitable habitat within approximately 200 feet of the impact area (Mitigation Measure B-12c). Impacts to short-joint beavertail will be reduced to a less-than-significant level by confirming presence or absence of this species, and if present, avoiding or transplanting the plants to an area within 200 feet of the impact area and within the same habitat type in which the plan was originally growing.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on short-joint beavertail.

Impact B-13: The Project could result in loss of montane scrub/juniper woodland habitats as habitat for special-status plants.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, it was determined that four special-status plant species have the potential to occur within the project area; including San Gabriel bedstraw, golden violet, San Gabriel oak, Pierson's morning glory, and white-bracted spineflower. The preferred habitats and most likely location of these plants is within the montane scrub, juniper woodland, and chaparral habitats located in the southern portion of Segment 2 in the vicinity of Ritter Ranch and the Vincent Substation. For each of these species, Project activities including construction of proposed new roads and transmission line towers, and associated staging areas in suitable habitat will constitute a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-13 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-13a through B-13d, as identified below.

B-13a **Conduct Focused Surveys for the San Gabriel Oak.** Floristic surveys shall be conducted for San Gabriel oak. It is a perennial tree and as such, is easily detected once tower and road positions are staked out. These surveys will be limited to suitable habitat within proposed transmission line

access roads and towers and in any temporary, associated staging areas; the surveys shall be initiated prior to any ground disturbance.

B-13b **Avoid Impacts to the San Gabriel Oak.** The proposed roadways, towers, and temporary construction staging areas shall be situated to avoid impacts to the San Gabriel oak trees. In some cases, individual plants could be transplanted to adjacent habitat, provided that SCE adheres to the monitoring plan listed in Mitigation Measure B-13d.

San Gabriel oak trees located within temporary construction areas shall be fenced or flagged for avoidance prior to construction, and a biological monitor shall be present to ensure compliance with off-limits areas.

B-13c **Minimize impacts to Montane Scrub and Juniper Woodland Habitats.** The proposed roadways, towers, and temporary construction staging areas shall be situated to minimize ground disturbance activities within the montane scrub, juniper woodland, and chaparral habitats.

B-13d **Preserve Off-site Montane Scrub and Juniper Woodland Habitats.** To mitigate impacts to these habitats, existing offsite montane scrub (including chaparral) and juniper woodland habitats shall be preserved in perpetuity at a 1:1 mitigation ratio (one acre preserved for each acre impacted).

The SCE shall work with CDFG to identify appropriate mitigation lands and ensure their permanent protection through an appropriate CDFG-approved mechanism, such as a conservation easement or fee title purchase. A conservation easement could be held by CDFG or an approved land management entity and shall be recorded within a time frame agreed upon by CDFG.

Rationale for Finding. For each of four special-status plant species that have the potential to occur within the project area, project activities including construction of proposed new roads and transmission line towers, and associated staging areas in suitable habitat will constitute a significant impact. Given that the work activities associated with construction of the Project will span several months and most of these species, with the exception of the San Gabriel Oak, occur only once every several years and generally for only a few months, a mitigation measure involving pre-construction surveys and avoidance is only feasible for the oak species. Also, given the relatively difficult nature of growing and/or relocating San Gabriel oak trees, the mitigation approach for this species is to perform focused surveys prior to ground disturbance activities to locate this species (Mitigation Measure B-13a). If present, SCE will avoid impacts through redesign to the extent practicable (Mitigation Measure B-13b) and, where avoidance of impacts is not feasible, to mitigate through minimization of impacts to this species' preferred habitat (montane scrub, juniper woodland and chaparral habitats) by situating roadways, towers, and construction staging areas away from these habitats (Mitigation Measure B-13c). To mitigate impacts on a habitat basis, SCE will be required to preserve an equal acreage of the habitats listed above (Mitigation Measure B-13d). Impacts to these species would, therefore, be reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measures B-13a through B-13d.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on montane scrub/juniper woodland habitats as habitat for special-status plants.

Impact B-16: The Project could result in southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake mortality.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, the southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake, both state species of special concern, are likely to occur only within, or in the vicinity of, permanent aquatic habitat. Within the project area, southwestern pond turtles are only likely

to be present where the Project alignment crosses Amargosa Creek. The Amargosa Creek location may also be occupied by two-striped garter snakes, and, though less likely, this species could also occur where the Project alignment cross Anaverde Creek. Impacts to these species associated with Project implementation are considered significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-16 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure B-16, as identified below.

B-16 **Conduct Focused Surveys for Southwestern Pond Turtle and Two-Striped Garter Snake.** SCE shall contract with a qualified biologist to conduct focused surveys for southwestern pond turtles and two-striped garter snakes in all areas that may support these species. If detected in or adjacent to the proposed ROW no work will be authorized within 500 feet of occupied habitat until SCE provides concurrence from the CDFG to the CPUC. If present SCE shall develop and implement a monitoring plan in consultation with the CDFG which would include the following:

- SCE shall retain a qualified biologist with demonstrated expertise with southwestern pond turtles and two-striped garter snakes to monitor all construction activities in the vicinity of water crossings and assist SCE in the implementation of the monitoring program. This person will be approved by the CDFG prior to the onset of ground-disturbing activities. The authorized biologist will be present during all activities immediately adjacent to or within aquatic or terrestrial habitat that supports populations of southwestern pond turtles and two-striped garter snakes. If the species are detected during surveys, the authorized biologist will coordinate with CDFG to remove individuals from the construction zone to suitable habitat.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-16 will ensure that surveys for southwestern pond turtles and two-striped garter snakes are conducted and that if detected no work will be conducted within 500 feet until SCE provides concurrence from the CDFG to the CPUC. With implementation of Mitigation Measure B-16, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-5, and BIO-6, impacts to the southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on the southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake survival.

Impact B-17: The Project could result in the loss of nesting and foraging habitat for Loggerhead Shrikes, Bendire's Thrashers, LeConte's Thrashers, and Summer Tanagers.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, Loggerhead Shrikes and LeConte's Thrashers were observed during the reconnaissance-level survey and could nest within the project area. Although Bendire's Thrashers have not been documented in the project area, suitable habitat is present within desert scrub and Joshua tree woodland habitat in the project area. Breeding and foraging habitat for these species within desert scrub and Joshua tree woodlands is regionally abundant. Construction disturbance during the breeding season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment. Disturbance that causes nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort would constitute a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-17 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure B-17, as identified below.

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B-17 **Conduct Pre-construction Surveys and Monitoring for Breeding Birds.** SCE shall conduct pre-construction surveys for nesting birds if construction and removal activities are scheduled to occur during the breeding season for raptors and other migratory birds. Surveys shall be conducted in areas within 500 feet of tower sites, laydown/staging areas, substation sites, and access road/spur road locations. SCE shall be responsible for designating a qualified biologist who can conduct pre-construction surveys and monitoring for breeding birds. If nests are found during the survey, a disturbance-free buffer shall be established in coordination with CDFG. 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.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-17 requires surveys for Loggerhead Shrikes, Bendire's Thrashers, LeConte's Thrashers, and Summer Tanagers. If nests are found during the survey, a disturbance-free buffer will be established in coordination with CDFG to avoid construction-phase impacts to the species during the breeding season. Therefore, impacts will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on Loggerhead Shrikes, Bendire's Thrashers, LeConte's Thrashers, and Summer Tanagers.

Impact B-19: The Project could result in the loss of occupied Burrowing Owl habitat.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, Burrowing Owls were observed in the project area during the reconnaissance-level survey and there are several CNDDB records within, or in the vicinity of, the project area. Suitable Burrowing Owl habitat occurs in much of the project area on the valley floor. If Burrowing Owls are present within a construction zone, or adjacent to such an area, disturbance could destroy occupied burrows or cause owls to abandon burrows. Construction during the breeding season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment. Furthermore, owls and their nests are protected under both federal and state laws and regulations, including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code section 3503.5 (see "Disturbance of Nesting Raptors" below).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-19 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-19a and B-19b, as identified below.

B-19a **Implement CDFG Protocol for Burrowing Owls.** In conformance with federal and state regulations regarding the protection of raptors, a habitat assessment in accordance with CDFG protocol for Burrowing Owls shall be completed prior to the start of construction. Burrowing Owl habitat within the Project area and within a 500-foot (150 m) buffer zone shall be assessed ("Assessment Area"). If the habitat assessment concludes that the Assessment Area lacks suitable Burrowing Owl habitat, no additional action would be warranted. However, if suitable habitat is located on the Assessment Area, all ground squirrel colonies, rabbit and badger dens, or other man-mad or natural cavities shall be mapped at an appropriate scale, and the following mitigation measures shall be implemented:

- In conformance with federal and state regulations regarding the protection of raptors, a pre-construction survey for Burrowing Owls, in conformance with CDFG protocol, shall be completed no more than 30 days prior to the start of construction within suitable habitat at the project site(s) and buffer zone(s). Three additional protocol-level surveys shall also be completed per CDFG protocol prior to construction.

- Occupied burrows shall not be disturbed during the nesting season (February 1 through August 31) unless a qualified biologist approved by CDFG verifies through non-invasive methods that either: 1) the birds have not begun egg–laying and incubation; or 2) that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and are capable of independent survival. Eviction outside the nesting season may be permitted pending evaluation of eviction plans and receipt of formal written approval from the CDFG authorizing the eviction.
- A 250-foot (76 m) buffer, within which no activity will be permissible, will be maintained between project activities and nesting Burrowing Owls during the nesting season. This protected area will remain in effect until August 31 or at the CDFG's discretion and based upon monitoring evidence, until the young owls are foraging independently.
- If accidental take (disturbance, injury, or death of owls) occurs, the CDFG/CPUC lead monitor will be notified immediately.

B-19b **Compensate for Loss of Burrowing Owl Habitat.** If surveys determine that Burrowing Owls occupy the site and avoiding development of occupied areas is not feasible, then habitat compensation on off-site mitigation lands shall be implemented. Habitat Management (HM) lands comprising existing Burrowing Owl foraging and breeding habitat shall be acquired and preserved if required by the CDFG. An area of 6.5 acres (2.6 ha) (the amount of land found to be necessary to sustain a pair or individual owl) shall be secured for each pair of owls, or individual in the case of an odd number of birds. As part of an agreement with the CDFG, the project applicant shall secure the performance of its mitigation duties by providing the CDFG with security in the form of funds that would**:**

- Allow for the acquisition and/or preservation of 6.5 acres (2.6 ha) of HM lands;
- Provide initial protection and enhancement activities on the HM lands, potentially including, but not limited to, such measures as fencing, trash clean-up, artificial burrow creation, grazing or mowing, and any habitat restoration deemed necessary by CDFG;
- Establish an endowment for the long-term management of the HM lands; and
- Reimburse the CDFG for reasonable expenses incurred as a result of the approval and implementation of this agreement.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure B-19a requires SCE to perform a habitat assessment in accordance with CDFG protocol for Burrowing Owls and, if suitable habitat is present, perform pre-construction surveys for Burrowing Owls and map all potential nest sites, including all ground squirrel colonies, rabbit and badger dens, or other man-made or other natural cavities. Disturbance limitations and buffer zones where no activities will be permissible are also established to minimize disturbance to Burrowing Owls. If development of occupied areas cannot be avoided, Mitigation Measure B-19b requires any loss of habitat occupied by Burrowing Owls to be compensated for with off-site mitigation lands, which will be preserved for use by Burrowing Owls. Therefore, impacts to occupied Burrowing Owl habitat will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on Burrowing Owl habitat.

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Impact B-20: The Project could result in the disturbance of nesting raptors.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, Swainson's Hawks, Burrowing Owls, White-tailed kites, and several other raptor species are known, or are expected, to nest in the vicinity of the project area. Raptors (*e.g*., eagles, hawks, and owls) and their nests are protected under both federal and State law. Construction disturbance during the breeding season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment. Disturbance that causes nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort is considered a "taking" by the CDFG, and would constitute a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-20 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-20a and B-20b, as identified below.

B-20a **Avoid Nesting Season for Raptors.** To the extent practicable, construction shall be scheduled to avoid the nesting season for raptor species, which extends from January through August.

B-20b **Conduct Pre-construction Surveys for Nesting Raptors.** If it is not possible to schedule construction between August and January, then one of the following options shall be implemented:

- With the approval of the CDFG, trees containing known or potential raptor nest sites may be removed to discourage future nesting attempts on the condition that no raptor pair is currently utilizing the site; or,
- Pre-construction surveys for nesting raptors shall be conducted by a qualified ornithologist or wildlife biologist to ensure that no raptor nests will be disturbed during project implementation. A pre-construction survey shall be conducted no more than 14 days prior to the initiation of demolition/construction activities during the early part of the breeding season (January through April) and no more than 30 days prior to the initiation of these activities during the late part of the breeding season (May through August). During this survey, the qualified person shall inspect all trees in and immediately adjacent to the impact areas for raptor nests. If an active raptor nest is found close enough to the construction area to be disturbed by these activities, the ornithologist, in consultation with CDFG, shall determine the extent of a construction-free buffer zone to be established around the nest.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure B-20a requires SCE to schedule construction activities to avoid the nesting season for raptor species to the extent practicable. If it is not possible to schedule construction between August and January (i.e. outside the nesting season), Mitigation Measure B-20b requires SCE to remove trees containing known or potential raptor nest sites, with approval from CDFG, to discourage future nesting attempts; or to complete pre-construction surveys for nesting raptors at appropriate times of year. If an active raptor nest is found close enough to the construction area to be disturbed by construction activities, the ornithologist, in consultation with CDFG, will define a construction-free buffer zone around the nest to avoid impacting nesting raptors. Therefore, impacts to nesting raptors will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on nesting raptors.

Impact B-26: The Project could result in loss of American badger dens.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, the American badger has a potential to occur in the project area. Construction-related activities, including the clearing and grading of tower sites, increased noise levels, human presence, and increased dust could result in direct and indirect impacts to this species resulting in a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-26 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure B-26, as identified below.

B-26 Passively Relocate American Badgers During the Non-breeding Season. SCE shall survey and identify any badger dens located within the project area and occupied dens shall be flagged for avoidance. Un-occupied dens located in the ROW shall be covered to prevent the animal from re-occupying the den prior to construction. Occupied dens in the ROW shall be hand-excavated if avoidance is not possible. Dens shall only be hand–excavated before or after the breeding season (February-May). Any relocation of badgers shall take place after consultation with the CDFG.

Rationale for Finding. As part of the Project, SCE will implement APM BIO-1, which requires pre-construction surveys for all special-status mammal species with potential to occur along the Project alignment. Avoidance flagging of badger dens found adjacent to construction zones, the closure of dens located within active construction zones, and agency-approved passive relocation of badgers that are found in active construction zones during the non-breeding season, as required by Mitigation Measure B-26, will minimize impacts to this species and its habitat. With implementation of APM BIO-1 and Mitigation Measure B-26, impacts to American badgers will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impact on the American badger.

Impact B-27: The Project could result in the disturbance to desert tortoise movement as a result of habitat modification.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR, desert tortoise movement, if present, could be impeded through habitat modification associated with the Project such as road grading and the creation of berms. Exotic weeds can also occur after construction which competes with native flora consumed by desert tortoises. If present, these impacts would result in significant impacts to Desert tortoise.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-27 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-27a and B-27b, as identified below.

B-27a Avoid Creating Barriers to Movements. To avoid creating barriers to desert tortoise movements, within areas designated in the WMP as desert tortoise "Survey Areas," roadbeds shall not be lowered and berms shall not exceed 12 inches (30 cm) or a slope of 30 degrees.

B-27b Invasive Weed Prevention. Non-native or Invasive plants (*i.e.*, non-native species) shall not be used during any re-seeding or landscaping activities associated with site restoration within areas designated in the WMP as desert tortoise "Survey Areas."

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Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure B-27a requires that roadbeds not be lowered or berms exceed 12 inches so as not to create barriers to desert tortoise movement. Furthermore, Mitigation Measure B-27b will prevent invasive weeds by not allowing SCE to use non-native or invasive plants during re-seeding or landscaping activities, which would limit the amount of habitat that would be modified as a result of the Project. Therefore, disturbance to desert tortoise as a result of habitat modification will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on desert tortoise movement.

Cumulative Effects on Species Listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Proposed or Critical Habitat for These Species.

As discussed in Section E.5.2 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, the Project could result in the disturbance of nesting Swainson's Hawks (Impact B-7), the loss of foraging habitat for Swainson's Hawks (Impact B-8), and the disturbance of nesting riparian birds (Impact B-9).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impacts B-7, B-8, and B-9 to a less-than-significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-7a, B-7b, B-9a, and B-9b (see Impact B-7 and B-9, above) will reduce direct and cumulative impacts to nesting Swainson's Hawks and riparian birds to less-than-significant levels.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-7a (Conduct Pre-construction Surveys for Swainson's Hawks) requires SCE to conduct pre-construction surveys for Swainson's Hawks, and if nest sites are found, consult with CDFG to ensure project construction will not result in nest disturbance. A buffer zone of 1/2 mile in non-urban areas (1/4 mile in urban areas) will be implemented, where feasible, to reduce nest disturbance. If avoidance is infeasible, Mitigation Measure B-7b (Remove Nest Trees) provides options for removing nest trees and monitoring nest sites located in the buffer zone, thereby reducing disturbance to nesting Swainson's Hawks to a less-than-significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-9a and B-9b will reduce potential impacts to nesting birds during the breeding season by avoiding construction at Amargosa Creek and Oak Creek during the breeding season, as well as by conducting pre-construction surveys, establishing buffer zones surrounding active nests prior to and during construction, and conducting construction-phase monitoring for nesting birds during the breeding season by a qualified biologist. Therefore, potential effects on nesting birds during the breeding season will be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.2 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's cumulative impacts on biological resources.

Cumulative project activities could have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications on Mariposa lily populations.

As discussed in Section E.5.2 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, the cumulative projects discussed in Section C.3.9.2 of the EIR include large community and industrial developments. Some of these cumulative projects may be situated in areas which provide habitat relevant to species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFG or USFWS. As discussed below in Section V.3.2, the impacts to biological resources from Project activities on a number of species identified as candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFG or USFWS have the potential to combine with similar impacts of other projects to create cumulatively significant and

unavoidable impacts. However, with respect to cumulative impacts to the Mariposa lily population (Impact B-11), such impacts will be reduced to less-than-significant levels through implementation of the mitigation measure described below.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant cumulative effects on Mariposa lily populations, specifically alkali mariposa lilies, to a less-than-significant level, as identified below and in Section I, above. The CPUC also finds that no new significant environmental impacts would result from the implementation of the mitigation measure identified below.

- **Avoid Impacts to or Preserve Off-site Saltbush Scrub Habitat Containing Alkali Mariposa Lilies.** All roadways, towers, and temporary construction staging areas shall be situated in order to avoid to the extent practicable ground disturbance activities within saltbush scrub habitat inhabited by alkali mariposa lilies. Protocol-level surveys for alkali mariposa lilies shall be conducted between April and June one to two years prior to construction, and conform to the California Department of Fish and Game *Guidelines of Assessing the Effects of Proposed Developments on Rare and Endangered Plants and Plant Communities* (CDFG**,** 2000).[4] If alkali mariposa lilies are not detected by protocol-level surveys conducted during an average, or above average, rainfall season, no further mitigation is warranted.

  If survey results are inconclusive due to below average rainfall, or if alkali mariposa lilies are detected, or if no surveys were conducted and it is assumed alkali mariposa lilies are present, existing, occupied offsite saltbush scrub habitat shall be preserved in perpetuity at a 1:1 mitigation ratio (one acre preserved for each acre impacted). Prior to construction, the applicant shall work with CDFG to identify appropriate mitigation lands and ensure their permanent protection through an appropriate CDFG-approved mechanism, such as a conservation easement or fee title purchase. A conservation easement would be held by CDFG or an approved land management entity and would be recorded within a time frame agreed upon by CDFG.

Rationale for Finding. Four different mariposa lily species have the potential to occur within Project boundaries. Impacts to these populations will be less-than-significant because of the relatively small disturbance zone in the preferred habitats of these plants, the abundance of these habitats in the Antelope Valley, the relatively sparse distribution of these plants at a population level, and their demonstrated tolerance of soil disturbance. However, these impacts have the potential to combine with similar impacts of other projects resulting in cumulatively significant impacts. Potential cumulative impacts to Mariposa lily populations could be reduced to less-than-significant levels through the implementation of the mitigation measure described above. Therefore, cumulative impacts to Mariposa lily populations will be less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.2 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the Project's cumulative impacts on biological resources.

[4] California Department of Fish and Game. 2000. Guidelines of Assessing the Effects of Proposed Developments on Rare and Endangered Plants and Plant Communities. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. 2 pp.

ATTACHMENT B

V.2.3 Cultural Resources

As discussed in Section C.4 (Cultural Resources) of the EIR, cultural resources record searches were conducted, and consisted of a review of relevant historic maps, excavation and survey reports, and paleontological data. Abundant cultural and paleontological resources data for the Project were available in archival facilities. Supplemental field surveys were conducted in order to verify the location of any previously identified cultural resources and to cover previously unsurveyed lands within the Areas of Potential Effect (APE), which are defined as all acreage that will be permanently affected by Project development, as well as areas of temporary construction activity. Cultural resources are defined as places or objects that are important for historical, scientific, and religious reasons, and places and objects that are of concern to either cultures, communities, groups, or individuals. These resources may include buildings and architectural remains, archaeological sites and other artifacts that provide evidence of past human activity, human remains, or a traditional cultural property. Paleontological resources are a limited, nonrenewable, very sensitive scientific and educational resource and, in California, are afforded protection under federal and State of California environmental legislation.

Along the Project alignment various cultural resources have been identified, and the associated impacts assessed in Section C.4.4.2 of the EIR. However, those cultural resources discussed in Section C.4.4.2 associated with Option B (Impact C-17) and alternative Substation 1B (Impacts C-22 through C-31) do not apply to the adopted Project. Therefore, the CPUC has not made findings with respect to these impacts.

Impacts, including destruction, modification, or disturbance of known cultural resources.

As discussed in Section C.4 (Cultural Resources) of the EIR, any ground-disturbing activity, including tower pad preparation and construction, grading of new access or spur roads, conductoring, transportation, storage, and maintenance of construction equipment and supplies, staging area and material yard preparation and use, and use or improvement of existing access roads has the potential to disturb known cultural resources. The following list identifies the known historic resources that will likely be impacted by the Project:

- Impact C-1: Impacts to CA-KER-2434 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-2: Impacts to AP3-131 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-3: Impacts to AP3-132 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-4: Impacts to AP3-133 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-5: Impacts to AP3-134 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-6: Impacts to AP3-110 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-7: Impacts to AP3-111 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-8: Impacts to CA-KER-2821 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-9: Impacts to AP3-112 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-10: Impacts to AP3-113 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-11: Impacts to AP3-114 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-12: Impacts to AP2-101 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-13: Impacts to CA-LAN-806 would occur as a result of the Project.

- Impact C-14: Impacts to AP2-106 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-15: Impacts to AP2-107 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-16: Modification of CA-LAN-3477 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-18: Impacts to AP3-116 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-19: Impacts to AP3-117 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-20: Impacts to AP3-119 would occur as a result of the Project.
- Impact C-21: Impacts to AP3-121 would occur as a result of the Project.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impacts C-1 through C-16 and C-18 through C-21 to a less-than-significant level. These measures identified with a number corresponding to the impact number, are included below.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-1

C-1 **Avoid CA-KER-2434 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery.** CA-KER-2434 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) eligibility of CA-KER-2434 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of CA-KER-2434 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-2

C-2 **Avoid AP3-131 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery.** AP3-131 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-131 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-131 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). Investigations will also be carried out to evaluate whether the rock art is eligible under Criterion 4 or as a traditional cultural property (CRHR Criterion 1). If the CPUC determines the subsurface archaeological material is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. If the CPUC determines the rock art is eligible under Criterion 1 or 4 (and therefore

also a CEQA Historical Resource), the rock art will be documented through large format photography and scaled drawings. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery and/or rock art documentation report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-3

C-3 Avoid AP3-132 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-132 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-132 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-132 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-4

C-4 Avoid AP3-133 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-133 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-133 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-133 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-5

C-5 Avoid AP3-134 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-134 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-134 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-134 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4

(and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-6

C-6 Avoid AP3-110 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-110 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-110 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility of AP3-110 shall be evaluated by carrying out historical research and an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in history. If the CPUC determines the site is eligible (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-7

C-7 Avoid AP3-111 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-111 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-111 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-111 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-8

C-8 Avoid CA-KER-2821 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. CA-KER-2821 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of CA-KER-2821 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of CA-KER-2821 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4

(and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-9

C-9 Avoid AP3-112 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-112 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-112 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-112 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-10

C-10 Avoid AP3-113 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-113 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-113 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-113 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-11

C-11 Avoid AP3-114 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-114 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-114 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-114

shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-12

C-12 Avoid AP2-101 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP2-101 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP2-101 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP2-101 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). Investigations will also be carried out to evaluate whether the rock art is eligible under Criterion 4 or as a traditional cultural property (CRHR Criterion 1). If the CPUC determines the subsurface archaeological material is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. If the CPUC determines the rock art is eligible under Criterion 1 or 4 (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), the rock art will be documented through large format photography and scaled drawings. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery and/or rock art documentation report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-13

C-13 Avoid CA-LAN-806 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. CA-LAN-806 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of CA-LAN-806 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of CA-LAN-806 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-14

C-14 Avoid AP2-106 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP2-106 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP2-106 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP2-106 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-15

C-15 Avoid AP2-107 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP2-107 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP2-107 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the NRHP eligibility of AP2-107 shall be evaluated by carrying out historical research and an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in history. If the CPUC determines the site is eligible (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-16

C-16 Evaluate the CRHR Eligibility of CA-LAN-3477 and Perform Historical Documentation if Eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of CA-LAN-3477 shall be evaluated by carrying out historical research. If the CPUC determines that CA-LAN-3477 is eligible (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), effects will be assessed and a mitigation plan will be formulated and implemented if effects will be adverse. The mitigation plan will require HABS-like historical documentation using HABS Level III documentation guidelines. The documentation will preserve information on all of the characteristics that made the resource eligible. Documentation will be achieved through historical research and high resolution photography with the results provided in a report to be filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), and the CPUC. The CPUC will ensure that the documentation is completed and filed.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-18

C-18 Avoid AP3-116 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-116 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-116 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-116 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-19

C-19 Avoid AP3-117 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-117 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-117 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-117 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-20

C-20 Avoid AP3-119 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-119 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-119 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-119 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-21

C-21 Avoid AP3-121 or Evaluate Eligibility and Perform Data Recovery. AP3-121 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

If avoidance is not feasible, evaluate the CRHR eligibility of AP3-121 and perform archaeological data recovery if eligible. Prior to construction, the CRHR eligibility of AP3-121 shall be evaluated by carrying out an archaeological test program to determine whether subsurface archaeological material is present that has the potential to yield information important in prehistory (CRHR Criterion 4). If the CPUC determines the site is eligible under Criterion 4 (and therefore is a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Rationale for Finding. Direct impacts to cultural resources may be avoided through minor design modifications. Project effects will be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the avoidance and protection activities listed in the mitigation measures above; this is the preferred treatment for all cultural resources. APM CR-1 also requires a full-scale archaeological reconnaissance of the Project alignment prior to construction and archaeological monitoring during construction. If the cultural resources identified in Impacts C-1 through C-16, and C-18 through C-21 cannot be avoided by design, historical research and/or an archaeological test program will be completed to evaluate its eligibility for the NRHP. If determined to be eligible, an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that will be impacted by the Project. The adverse effect will be mitigated by formulating and implementing a mitigation plan which will require historical documentation that will preserve information on all of the characteristics that made the resource eligible. Documentation will be achieved through historical research and high resolution photography and the results will be provided in a report to be filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), the CPUC, and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP).

Reference. Section C.4 (Cultural Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the construction-related impacts of the Project on cultural resources.

Impact C-32: Undiscovered cultural resources would be disturbed through Project activities.

As discussed in Section C.4. (Cultural Resources) of the EIR, buried or otherwise obscured cultural resources may be present in the project area. If such resources are encountered, impacts will be significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects of the Project to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measure C-32, identified below.

C-32 Conduct Construction Monitoring in the Project Area Where High Potential for Prehistoric Archaeological Sites Occurs, Evaluate the Eligibility of Previously Undiscovered Resources, and Perform Archaeological Data Recovery if Eligible. All ground-disturbing activities in Segment 2 and Option B and, in Segment 3, the portion of the route in Oak Creek Canyon, the portion of the route within one-half mile of Willow Springs and Bean Spring, and all of Substation Areas 1 and 1B shall be monitored by an archaeologist. If an archaeological site is discovered during monitoring, all work within 500 feet of the find shall be halted. The Project Archaeologist will evaluate the CRHR eligibility of the find if it cannot be avoided. If the CPUC determines that the site is eligible (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), an archaeological data recovery program, consisting of hand excavated units, identification and cataloging of recovered material, and a report, will be completed for the portion of the site that

will be impacted as a result of Project construction activities. The CPUC will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) and the CPUC.

Rationale for Finding. When discovered, cultural resources will be treated in accordance with applicable federal and State laws and regulations as well as the mitigation measures and permit requirements applicable to the Project. As they are discovered, cultural sites will be evaluated for NRHP eligibility. If eligible, an archaeological data recovery program will be implemented and a data recovery report completed and filed with the CHRIS, CPUC, and OHP preserving information on all of the characteristics that made the resource eligible. Therefore, impacts will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.4 (Cultural Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the construction-related impacts of the Project on cultural resources.

V.2.4 Geology, Soils, and Paleontology

As discussed in Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR, the CPUC examined the regional topography, geology, seismicity, soils, and mineral resources in the project area, by collecting baseline geologic information from published and unpublished geologic, seismic, and geotechnical literature. The literature review was supplemented by a field reconnaissance of the routes studied in the EIR. The literature review and field reconnaissance focused on the identification of specific geologic hazards, mineral resources, and soil conditions.

Impact G-1: Excavation and grading during construction activities could cause slope instability.

As discussed in Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR, excavation operations associated with tower foundation construction and grading operations for temporary and permanent access roads and work areas could result in slope instability, resulting in landslides, slumps, soil creep, or debris flows. Slope failures are more likely to occur in areas with steep slopes in poorly cemented or highly fractured rocks, areas underlain by loose, weak soils, and areas on or adjacent to existing landslide deposits. Many of the hills and slopes crossed by Segment 2 are underlain by geologic units prone to landslides, including the Pelona Schist, and several areas of the Segment 2 alignment cross mapped landslides, between Mile S2-8.0 and Mile S2-14.0. Unmapped landslides and areas of localized slope instability may be encountered along other portions of Segment 2, and where Segment 3 crosses the hills and slopes of the Tehachapi Mountains. Instances of triggered slope failure could cause damage to nearby properties and roads, Project facilities and construction equipment, and could potentially result in injury to workers or the public resulting in a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact G-1 to a less-than-significant level. This measure, identified as Mitigation Measure G-1, is included below.

G-1 **Protect Against Slope Instability.** Design-level geotechnical investigations performed by the Applicant shall be performed by a licensed geologist or engineer and shall include evaluation of slope stability issues in areas of planned grading and excavation, and provide recommendations for development of grading and excavation plans. Based on the results of the geotechnical investigations, appropriate support and protection measures shall be designed and implemented to maintain the stability of slopes adjacent to newly graded or re-graded access roads and work areas during and after construction. These measures shall include, but are not limited to, retaining walls, visqueen, removal of unstable materials, and avoidance of highly unstable areas. SCE shall

document compliance with this measure prior to the start of construction by submitting a report to the CPUC for review and approval. The report shall document the investigations and detail the specific support and protection measures that will be implemented.

Rationale for Finding. SCE has proposed APM GEO-2, which requires SCE to perform geotechnical studies to identify site-specific geologic conditions prior to final design of substation facilities and transmission line tower foundations, to reduce impacts related to slope instability. The APM proposed by SCE, however, does not provide sufficient detail to ensure that it will adequately reduce the impacts of the Project. Implementation of Mitigation Measure G-1, which requires SCE to submit geotechnical surveys and design measures to the CPUC, will ensure that impacts will be limited to the extent authorized by the CPUC resulting in a less-than-significant impact.

Reference. Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the slope instability impacts of the Project.

Impact G-2: Erosion could be triggered or accelerated by construction or disturbance of landforms.

As discussed in Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR, excavation and grading for tower and substation foundations, work areas, access roads, and spur roads could loosen soil and accelerate erosion. Portions of Segment 3 and most of Segment 2 are underlain by soils classified as having moderate to severe potential for erosion, which could result in excessive wind and water erosion.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact G-2 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-2 is included below.

G-2 **Minimization of Soil Erosion.** The Construction SWPPP for the Project shall include Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to minimize soil erosion along access roads and at work areas. Appropriate BMPs may include construction of water bars, grading road surfaces to direct flow away from natural slopes, use of soil stabilizers, and consistent maintenance of roads and culverts to maintain appropriate flow paths. Silt fences and straw bales installed during construction shall be removed to restore natural drainage during the cleanup and restoration phase of the project. Where access roads cross streams or drainages, they shall be built at or close to right angles to the streambeds and washes and culverts or rock crossings shall be used to cross streambeds and washes. Design of appropriate BMPs should be conducted by or under the direction of a qualified geologist or engineer.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of SCE's APM GEO-3, will assure compliance with the BMPs defined in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Furthermore, implementation of Mitigation Measure G-2 will ensure that SCE will implement site-specific procedures to prevent potentially erosive soils from substantial wind and water erosions and reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the erosion impacts of the Project**.**

Impact G-3: Transmission line could be damaged by surface fault ruptures at crossings of active faults.

As discussed in Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR, project facilities will be subject to hazards of surface fault rupture at crossings of active traces of the Garlock fault at

approximately Mile S3-3.5 and of the San Andreas Fault between Mile S2-7.6 and Mile S2-8.2. Both of these faults are significant active faults with mapped Alquist-Priolo zones.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact G-3 to a less-than-significant level. The measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-3 is included below.

G-3 **Minimize Project Structures within Active Fault Zones.** Perform a geologic/geotechnical study to confirm location of active and potentially mapped traces of the Garlock and San Andreas faults where crossed by the Project alignment. Tower locations shall be adjusted as necessary to avoid placing tower footings on or across mapped fault traces. Towers on either side of a fault shall be designed to provide a significant amount of slack to allow for potential fault movement and ground surface displacement.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of APM GEO-2, which requires a geotechnical study to be performed, as well as Mitigation Measure G-3, which requires SCE to locate towers as far outside of fault areas as possible, will minimize the length of transmission line within fault zones and distribute fault displacements over a comparatively long span. Therefore, impacts will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the seismic impacts of the Project.

Impact G-4: Project structures could be damaged by landslides, liquefaction, settlement, lateral spreading, and/or surface cracking resulting from seismic events.

As discussed in Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR, there is a high potential for seismically induced landslides, liquefaction, settlement, lateral spreading and/or surface cracking at the substations or along the transmission line route to cause damage to Project structures. The northern end of Segment 3 (where it crosses the Tehachapi Mountains) and the southern half of Segment 2 (crossing Portal Ridge, Ritter Ridge, and the Sierra Pelona) are located along hillsides or ridgelines in geologic units of moderate to steep slopes. Areas underlain by the landslide-prone Pelona Schist have a high possibility of seismically-induced ground failure in the form of landslides and ground-cracking. Portions of Segment 2 are located in areas underlain by potentially liquefiable alluvial deposits and may be subject to liquefaction-related phenomena during a seismic event, resulting in a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact G-4 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-4 is included below.

G-4 **Geotechnical Investigations for Liquefaction and Slope Instability.** Because seismically induced ground failure has the potential to damage or destroy Project components, the Applicant shall perform design-level geotechnical investigations specifically to assess the potential for liquefaction, lateral spreading, seismic slope instability, and ground-cracking hazards to affect the approved Project and all associated facilities. Where these hazards are found to exist, appropriate engineering design and construction measures shall be incorporated into the Project designs. Such measures could include construction of pile foundations, ground improvement of liquefiable zones, installation of flexible bus connections, and incorporation of slack in cables to allow ground deformations without damage to structures.

ATTACHMENT B

Rationale for Finding. While APM GEO-2 states that SCE will perform a geotechnical study to identify site-specific geologic conditions, Mitigation Measure G-4 formalizes the process to ensure geotechnical investigations for liquefaction and seismic slope instability are performed and appropriate protection measures are implemented into the final engineering design.

Reference. Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the seismic impacts of the Project.

Impact G-5: Project structures could be damaged by strong groundshaking.

As discussed in Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR, moderate to severe groundshaking should be expected in the event of an earthquake on the faults in the project area. The alignment will also be subject to groundshaking from any of the major faults in the region. While the shaking would be less severe from an earthquake that originates farther from the alignment, the effects could be damaging to Project structures.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact G-5 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-5 is included below.

G-5 **Reduce Effects of Groundshaking.** The design-level geotechnical investigations performed by the Applicant shall include site-specific seismic analyses to evaluate the peak ground accelerations for design of Project components. The Applicant shall follow the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) 693 "Recommended Practices for Seismic Design of Substations" which has specific requirements to mitigate the types of damage that equipment at substations have had in the past from such seismic activity. These design guidelines shall be implemented during construction of substation modifications. Substation control buildings shall be designed in accordance with the Uniform Building Code for sites in Seismic Zone 4 with near-field factors.

Rationale for Finding. While APM GEO-2 states that SCE will perform a geotechnical study to identify site-specific geologic conditions, Mitigation Measure G-5 will ensure that people or structures are not exposed to hazards associated with strong seismic groundshaking by adding specific requirements to the geotechnical investigations planned in APM GEO-2 and design requirements, thereby reducing impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the seismic impacts of the Project.

Impact G-6: Buried tower and substation foundations could be damaged by corrosive soils.

As discussed in Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR, soils with moderate to high potential for corrosion exist along the Project route. Corrosive subsurface soils could have a detrimental effect on concrete and metals. Expansive soils, such as those found along the Project route, can also cause problems to structures. These soils could result in damage and/or distress of structures, eventually leading to structural failures. Loose sands and other compressible soils could also result in excessive settlement, low foundation-bearing capacity, and limitation of year-round access to Project facilities.

ATTACHMENT B

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact G-6 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-6 is included below.

G-6 Geotechnical Studies for Corrosive Soils. In areas underlain by potentially corrosive soils, the design-level geotechnical studies performed by the Applicant shall identify the presence, if any, of potentially detrimental soil chemicals, such as chlorides and sulfates. Appropriate design measures for protection of reinforcement, concrete, and metal-structural components against corrosion shall be utilized, such as use of corrosion-resistant materials and coatings, increased thickness of Project components exposed to potentially corrosive conditions, and use of passive and/or active cathodic protection systems.

Rationale for Finding. SCE's application of standard design and construction practices and implementation of APM GEO-2, which requires a geotechnical study to be performed, will reduce the adverse effects of problematic soils. In addition, Mitigation Measure G-6 formalizes the specific procedures necessary to protect Project structures from being damaged by corrosive soils.

Reference. Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the corrosive soil impacts of the Project.

Impact G-7: Transmission line structures could be damaged by landslides, earth flows, or debris slides.

As discussed in Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR, portions of the Project alignment cross hillside areas that are underlain by landslide prone geologic units (Pelona Schist) and near to existing landslides. Slope instability including landslides, earth flows, and debris flows has the potential to undermine foundations, cause distortion and distress to overlying structures, and displace or destroy Project components.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact G-7 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-7 is included below.

G-7 Geotechnical Surveys for Landslides. The design-level geotechnical investigation performed by the Applicant shall include detailed surveys to evaluate the potential for unstable slopes, landslides, earth flows, and debris flows along the approved transmission line route and in the vicinity of other Project facilities. Based on these surveys, approved Project facilities shall be located away from known landslides, very steep hillsides, debris-flow source areas, the mouths of steep sidehill drainages, and the mouths of canyons that drain steep terrain. Where these landslide hazard areas cannot be avoided, appropriate engineering design and construction measures shall be incorporated into the Project designs to minimize potential for damage to Project facilities.

Rationale for Finding. SCE's application of standard design and construction practices and implementation of APM GEO-2, which requires a geotechnical study to be performed, will reduce the potential for damage to the transmission line as a result of landslides, earth flows, or debris slides. In addition, Mitigation Measure G-7 formalizes the site-specific procedures, such as structure location and design, necessary to ensure the protection of the Project structures.

Reference. Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the landslide and debris flow impacts of the Project.

ATTACHMENT B

Impact G-8: Excavation for transmission line structures could damage unique or significant fossils.

As discussed in Section C.5.1.4 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology - Paleontology) of the EIR, several fossil-bearing geologic formations with high sensitivity are located in the Project area. Excavation for transmission line structures could damage unique or significant fossils contained in these fossil-bearing geologic formations.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact G-8 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-8 is included below.

G-8 Protect Paleontological Resources. The certified paleontological monitor retained by SCE to supervise monitoring of construction activities shall be responsible for the following:

- Monitoring shall be conducted where excavation is being conducted in geologic units of moderate to high sensitivity. Monitoring need not be conducted where excavation is being conducted in geologic units with zero sensitivity, such as the Pelona Schist and granitic and volcanic formations.
- If fossils are present in the construction area, then grading shall be temporarily diverted away from exposed fossils in order to recover the fossil specimens.
- If microfossils are present in the construction area, the monitor shall collect matrix for processing. In order to expedite removal of fossiliferous matrix, the monitor may request heavy machinery to assist in moving large quantities of matrix out of the path of construction to designated stockpile areas.
- Stockpiles shall be tested by screen washing small samples to determine if significant fossils are present. Productive tests shall result in screen washing of additional matrix from the stockpiles to a maximum of 6,000 pounds per locality to ensure recovery of a scientifically significant sample.
- Young Quaternary Alluvium, Colluvium, and Quaternary Landslide Deposits, which have a low paleontological sensitivity level, shall be spot-checked on a periodic basis to insure that older underlying sediments are not being penetrated.
- Recovered fossils shall be prepared to the point of curation, identified by qualified experts, listed in a database to allow analysis, and deposited in a designated repository.
- At each fossil locality, field data forms shall record the locality, stratigraphic columns shall be measured, and appropriate scientific samples submitted for analysis.
- A monthly progress report shall be prepared by the supervising paleontological monitor and filed with the client. A final mitigation report shall be filed with the client, the lead agency, and the repository.

Rationale for Finding. SCE has proposed APM's GEO-4 through GEO-10 to avoid impacts to paleontological resources, which will require that certified paleontologist will be retained by SCE to supervise monitoring of construction excavations in areas of moderate to high paleontological sensitivity and to produce a mitigation plan for the Project. Mitigation Measure G-8 includes specific procedures for monitoring, handling, and documenting significant paleontological resources to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the paleontological impacts of the Project.

ATTACHMENT B

V.2.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Section C.6 (Hazards and Hazardous Materials) of the EIR examined the potential for environmental contamination and hazardous materials as a result of the Project.

Impact HAZ-1: The release of hazardous materials during construction activities.

As discussed in Section C.6 (Hazards and Hazardous Materials) of the EIR, hazardous materials such as vehicle fuels, oils, and other vehicle maintenance fluids will be used and stored in staging areas during construction. There is potential for incidents involving release of gasoline, diesel fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, and lubricants from vehicles or other equipment or the release of solvents, adhesives, or cleaning chemicals from construction activities. Additionally, helicopters may be used for certain construction activities. Helicopter fueling will occur at staging areas or at local airports using the helicopter contractor's fuel truck, and will be supervised by the helicopter fuel service provider. Spills and leaks of hazardous materials during construction activities from construction vehicles and helicopters could result in soil or groundwater contamination, which is considered a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact HAZ-1 to a less-than-significant level. These measures are identified as Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a through HAZ-1d and are included below.

HAZ-1a Implement an Environmental Training and Monitoring Program. An environmental training program will be established to communicate environmental concerns and appropriate work practices, including spill prevention, emergency response measures, and proper Best Management Practice (BMP) implementation, to all construction and maintenance personnel. The training program will emphasize site-specific physical conditions to improve hazard prevention (e.g., identification of potentially hazardous substances) and will include a review of all site-specific plans, including but not limited to, the Project's SWPPP, Erosion Control and Sediment Transport Plan, Health and Safety Plan, Waste Characterization and Management Plan, and Hazardous Substances Control and Emergency Response Plan. Properly trained construction and maintenance staff would hopefully not cause hazardous materials spills, and in the event of a spill will be able to quickly ascertain the best way to stop and mitigate the spill, thus limiting potential soil contamination.

A monitoring program shall also be implemented to ensure that the plans are followed throughout the period of construction. BMPs, as identified in the Project SWPPP and Erosion Control and Sediment Transport Plan, shall also be implemented during the construction of the Project to minimize the risk of an accidental release and provide the necessary information for emergency response.

HAZ-1b Implement a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan. SCE shall prepare a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan, which shall include preparations for quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills. This plan shall be submitted with the grading permit applications to the appropriate oversight agency based on grading location. It shall prescribe hazardous-materials handling procedures for reducing the potential for a spill during construction, and include an emergency response program to ensure quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills. The plan shall identify areas where refueling and vehicle maintenance activities and storage of hazardous materials, if any, will be permitted. These directions and requirements will also be reiterated in the Project SWPPP. SCE shall document

compliance with this measure prior to the start of construction by submitting the plan to the CPUC for review.

HAZ-1c Ensure Proper Disposal of Construction Waste. All construction and demolition waste determined to be potentially hazardous, including trash and litter, garbage, other solid waste, petroleum products and other potentially hazardous materials, shall be removed to a hazardous waste facility permitted or otherwise authorized to treat, store, or dispose of such materials. Waste materials shall be removed from the project staging areas in a manner consistent with California Integrated Waste Management Board standards for transportation and disposal of hazardous materials, based on Title 27, Environmental Protection Division 2, Solid Waste.

HAZ-1d Emergency Spill Supplies and Equipment for Construction Activities. Hazardous material spill kits shall be maintained on-site for small spills. These kits shall include oil-absorbent material, tarps, and storage drums to be used to contain and control any minor releases. Emergency spill supplies and equipment shall be kept adjacent to all areas of work and in staging areas, and shall be clearly marked. Detailed information for responding to accidental spills and for handling any resulting hazardous materials shall be provided in the Project's Hazardous Substances Control and Emergency Response Plan.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure HAZ-1a ensures that all field personnel are aware and trained in the implementation of the plans and procedures detailed in Mitigation Measures HAZ-1b through HAZ-1d, which require implementation of a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan, proper disposal of construction waste, and provisions for emergency spill supplies and equipment at construction sites. Accordingly, implementation of these measures will reduce construction impacts related to the release of hazardous materials to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.6 (Hazards and Hazardous Materials) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of hazardous materials impacts of the Project during construction.

Impact HAZ-2: The release of hazardous materials occurs during operation and maintenance activities.

As discussed in Section C.6 (Hazards and Hazardous Materials) of the EIR, there is potential for incidents involving release of gasoline, diesel fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, and lubricants from vehicles or other equipment or the release of solvents, adhesives, or cleaning chemicals from construction activities. Spills and leaks of hazardous materials during construction activities from construction vehicles could result in soil or groundwater contamination, which is considered a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact HAZ-2 to a less-than-significant level. These measures are identified as Mitigation Measures HAZ-2a and HAZ-2b, included below.

HAZ-2a Implement Spill Prevention, Countermeasure, and Control Plans. SCE shall document compliance with updating and preparing SPCCs for each substation facility by (a) submitting to the CPUC for review and approval an outline of the proposed Environmental Training and Monitoring Program, (b) providing a list of names of all operations personnel who have completed the training program, and (c) providing a copy of the SPCC plans to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days before the start of operation.

HAZ-2b Emergency Spill Supplies and Equipment for Operation and Maintenance Activities. Hazardous material spill kits shall be available in all maintenance vehicles for small spills. These kits shall include oil-absorbent material and tarps to contain and control any minor releases. During significant maintenance operations, emergency spill supplies and equipment shall be kept adjacent to all areas of work and in staging areas, and shall be clearly marked. Detailed information for responding to accidental spills and for handling any resulting hazardous materials shall be provided in the Project's Hazardous Substances Control and Emergency Response Plan.

Rationale for Finding. While SCE plans to minimize and/or avoid unforeseen spills of hazardous materials during operation at the substations by updating and utilizing the SPCC plan for the Antelope and Vincent Substations and by preparing and utilizing SPCC plans for Substation One and Two, Mitigation Measure HAZ-2a formalizes this process. In addition, Mitigation Measure HAZ-2b will minimize impacts from potential spills or leaks of hazardous materials during transmission line operation and maintenance. Accordingly, implementation of Mitigation Measures HAZ-2a and HAZ-2b will reduce impacts from Impact HAZ-2 to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.6 (Hazards and Hazardous Materials) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the impacts from hazardous materials during construction and operation of the Project.

V.2.6 Hydrology and Water Quality

As discussed in Section C.7 (Hydrology and Water Quality), the hydrologic and water resources analysis prepared for the Project was based on data collected from FEMA, U.S. Geologic Survey, and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), as well as from field visits to the Project route, review of aerial photographs, and review of topographic maps. Surface water crossings were identified using aerial photographs and available topographic maps. Water crossings identified are those that are readily identifiable by these means.

Impact H-1: Water quality degradation would result from soil erosion and sedimentation caused by construction activities.

As discussed in Section C.7 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR, disturbance of soil during construction activities could result in soil erosion and sedimentation. Construction activities, including grading and excavation, may also cause slope instability along the Project route. If slope stability and erosion were to occur in connection with Project-related construction activities, sediment deposition and subsequent elevated turbidity could cause a decrease in water quality of waterways in the area of the Project.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact H-1 to a less-than-significant level. These measures are identified as Mitigation Measures H-1a through H-1e which are described below.

H-1a Implementation of Best Management Practices for Erosion and Sediment Control. The following Best Management Practices (BMPs) shall be implemented in order to minimize potential hydrologic and water quality impacts of erosion and sedimentation created through project construction:

- Mechanical and vegetative measures shall be implemented to provide surface soil stability where Project construction requires the exposure of cut slopes, fill slopes, or spoil disposal. The level of stabilization effort depends upon site-specific factors such as slope angle, soil type, climate, and proximity to waterways. Mechanical measures may include but are not limited to: wattles, erosion nets,

terraces, side drains, blankets, mats, riprapping, much, tackifiers, pavement, soil seals, and windrowing construction slash at the toe of fill slopes. Vegetative measures shall be used to supplement mechanical measures, as appropriate. The appropriate stabilization effort using mechanical and vegetative measures shall be determined by the supervising project or crew leader prior to the onset of construction, based on site-specific conditions.

- Road slope stabilization practices shall be implemented prior to the first winter rains. These practices shall include: verification of the correct slope steepness as dependent upon the dominant soil type/s present, implementation of methods to handle surface and subsurface runoff, and finalization of road surface compaction or application of appropriate surfacing material.

- Any temporary roadways which are built or used for the purpose of transporting construction equipment and materials to construction sites shall be situated to prevent undercutting of the designated final cut slope, avoid deposition of materials outside the designated roadway limits, and accommodate drainage with temporary culverts. Road sitting is dependent upon site-specific conditions and shall be determined by the supervising project or crew leader prior to the onset of construction activities

- Embankment methods shall be implemented to ensure adequate strength of the roadway and shoulder and to minimize potential failure of road embankments and fill areas. Acceptable stabilization methods include: sidecasting and end dumping, layer placement (roller compaction), controlled compaction, minimization of fill volumes, or strengthening of fills using retaining walls, confinement systems, plantings, or a combination of techniques. The appropriate stabilization effort shall be determined by the supervising project or crew leader prior to the onset of construction, based on site-specific conditions.
- Strictly control vehicular traffic to only that which is minimally necessary to transport materials, equipment, and construction personnel to the Project site. Roads that must be used during wet periods shall have a stable surface and sufficient drainage, as determined by the supervising project or crew leader, to prevent rutting and churning of the road surfaces.
- Re-vegetate all areas disturbed by grading or clearing following construction, unless operation and maintenance of the Project would require the area to remain clear (such as with an access road).

- Establish the use of concrete washout stations to capture and contain concrete washout material and wastewater to avoid direct release of washout to surface water.

H-1b **Maximum Road Gradient.** The maximum allowable road gradient applicable to all new roadways, including access roads and spur roads, which would be installed to provide temporary or permanent access during construction and/or operation and maintenance activities shall be no greater than ten percent.

H-1c **Road Surface Treatment.** Road surface treatments shall be implemented in order to minimize the erosion of road surface materials and reduce the likelihood of related sediment production. Treatments may include watering, dust oiling, penetration oiling, sealing, aggregate surfacing, chip sealing, or paving. The technique utilized at each site shall depend upon traffic, soils, geology, and road design specifications. Site-specific road surface treatments shall be specified by the supervising project or crew leader prior to the onset of construction activities.

H-1d **Timing of Construction Activities.** Construction activities, particularly regarding roadway installations and improvements, must occur during the dry season or when precipitation events are not expected.

H-1e **Control of Side-cast Material, Right-of-Way Debris and Roadway Debris.** Side-cast material includes any loose, unconsolidated materials that must be re-located to facilitate construction

activities. This may include rocks and boulders as well as other organic materials. Prior to the onset of any construction activities, waste areas must be designated where excess material can be deposited and stabilized. During road construction and maintenance, potential sidecast and other waste material will be utilized on the road surface. Any unused material shall be removed to designated disposal sites. Waste areas shall not be left exposed and must be transported to disposal facilities on a regular basis, which will be determined based on site-specific conditions.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of SCE's APM HYD-1, which requires preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) as required by the SWRCB will reduce the potential for water quality degradation from erosion during construction. Furthermore, Mitigation Measures H-1a through H-1e formalize the preparation of specific procedures to reduce the potential water quality degradation due to soil erosion and sedimentation. The implementation of these measures reduces the environmental effect from Impact H-1 to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.7 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the potential impacts of Project construction on water quality due to soil erosion and sedimentation.

Impact H-2: Degradation of water quality would result from the accidental release of hazardous materials during construction activities.

As discussed in Section C.7 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR, accidental spills or disposal of potentially hazardous materials used during construction could occur during refueling or due to equipment damage. Spilled liquids could wash into and pollute surface waters or groundwater resulting in a degradation of water quality.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact H-2 to a less-than-significant level. These measures are identified as HAZ-1a through HAZ-1c (see Impact HAZ-1, above).

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of SCE's APMs HYD-1 through HYD-4, which require preparation of a SWPPP, a training program to address hazardous material safety, as well as materials and measures for quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills, will reduce the potential for water quality degradation from spills and leaks during construction. Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a through HAZ-1c formalize the preparation of a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan and specify procedures that will reduce the potential for soil contamination. Additionally, the environmental training and monitoring program described in Mitigation Measure HAZ-1a ensures that all field personnel are aware of and trained in the implementation of these procedures. Consequently, if a spill or leak of harmful materials were to occur, personnel will be able to respond in a manner that will limit degradation of water quality. The implementation of these mitigation measures reduces the environmental effect from Impact H-2 to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.7 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the potential impacts of Project construction on water quality due to the spill of harmful materials.

Impact H-4: Existing groundwater resources would be disturbed through project-related excavation activities.

As discussed in Section C.7.1.2 (Hydrology and Water Quality - Groundwater) of the EIR, the Project alignment traverses two separate groundwater basins: the Tehachapi Valley East Groundwater Basin (Mile S3-0.0 – Mile S3-3.0) and the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin (Mile S3-3.2 – Mile S3-35.2

and Mile S2-0.0 – S2-21.6). As such, excavation and grading activities associated with the Project may unexpectedly encounter groundwater resources.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact H-4 to a less-than-significant level. This measure is identified as Mitigation Measure H-4 and is included below.

H-4 **Develop and Implement a Groundwater Remediation Plan.** Prior to the onset of any construction activities, the Applicant shall determine the specific location and extent of any groundwater resources that may be encountered through project-related excavation activities such as the installation of underground infrastructure. The Applicant shall develop and implement a groundwater remediation plan if it is determined that known groundwater resources would be unavoidable during construction. In the event that unknown groundwater resources are encountered or an unplanned disturbance of known resources occurs, the Applicant shall immediately halt the disruptive excavation activity and develop and implement a site-specific remediation plan. This remediation plan may require activities such as bioremediation or other applicable technology, as determined appropriate under site-specific conditions.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of SCE's APMs HYD-1 and HYD-6 would help to minimize the potential for Project-related excavation to disturb groundwater. In addition, Mitigation Measure H-4 provides specific measures to remediate disturbed groundwater in order to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.7 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the potential impacts of Project construction on groundwater quality.

Impact H-7: Flood hazards would be created through the placement of permanent aboveground structures in a flood hazard area, a floodplain, or a watercourse.

As discussed in Section C.7.1 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Environmental Setting) of the EIR, the Project route will cross through seven individual Flood Hazard Areas, including those associated with the following waterways: Cache Creek, Oak Creek, Los Angeles Aqueduct, Amargosa Wash, Anaverde Creek, California Aqueduct, and the Santa Clara River. None of the infrastructure associated with the Project will be situated in a watercourse.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact H-7 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure H-7 is included below.

H-7 **Protect Aboveground Structures Against Flood and Erosion Damage.** Aboveground project features such as transmission line towers and substation facilities shall be designed and engineered to withstand any mechanical stresses that may result from location, such as potential flooding or erosion of the surrounding area. Site-specific measures may include tower anchoring, installation of slope protection, or raising foundation levels. All Project-related facilities shall be placed outside the current and reasonably expected future flow path of watercourses. No Project-related facilities shall be positioned within a known watercourse.

Rationale for Finding. Placement of towers in Flood Hazard Areas is not expected to cause diversion of flows or increased flood risk for adjacent property. Implementation of the construction standards required

by Mitigation Measure H-7 will ensure that any potential impacts of the placement of transmission towers in Flood Hazard Areas will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.7 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the potential flood hazard impacts of the Project.

V.2.7 Land Use and Public Recreation

As discussed in Section C.8 (Land Use and Public Recreation), Project-related facilities will be placed within the jurisdictional boundaries of Kern and Los Angeles County, City of Lancaster, and City of Palmdale. To gather information regarding the effects of the Project on local and regional land uses, including recreation, extensive reviews of applicable land use plans, ordinances and regulations were completed, representatives from each of the affected jurisdictions were contacted, and field surveys were conducted to assess existing conditions. The field surveys, in conjunction with review of published maps and other applicable documents were also used to identify sensitive land uses along the Project route.

Land uses and recreational opportunities and facilities affected by the Project include those that are located in areas directly affected by Project construction and operation, as well as those having national, regional, or local significance within one mile of the Project ROW. Unlike the alignment originally proposed by SCE, the adopted Project will avoid the 3 existing residences along Cherry Tree Lane and will therefore not result in condemnation of residences (see Impact L-2 in Section V.1 above).

Impact L-1: Construction of the Project would temporarily disrupt land uses that are traversed by or adjacent to the Project.

As discussed in Section C.8 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR, construction of the Project will temporarily disrupt existing residential and recreational uses due to increased traffic, noise levels and air quality emissions. Construction activities will be located within 1,000 feet of more than 80 residential communities within the City of Lancaster, City of Palmdale and unincorporated Kern County and Los Angeles County. In addition to residential uses, construction of the Project will cross recreational resources in Kern and Los Angeles Counties.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact L-1 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures L-1a, L-1b, L-1c, as identified below, as well as N-3a, and N-3b (see Impact N-3 in Section V.2.9 below).

L-1a **Coordinate Construction Schedule and Activities with the Authorized Officers for the Recreation Areas.** No less than 40 days prior to construction, SCE shall coordinate construction activities and the Project construction schedule with the authorized officers for the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, City of Palmdale, and Los Angeles County, Department of Parks and Recreation. SCE shall schedule construction activities to avoid heavy recreational use periods, including major holidays, in coordination with, and at the discretion of the authorized officers. SCE shall prepare a public notice of construction activities consistent with Mitigation Measure N-3a (Provide Advance Notification of Construction). SCE shall document its coordination efforts with the authorized officers, and provide this documentation to the CPUC 30 days prior to construction.

L-1b **Provide Access for Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and Other Hiking Trail Users.** No less than 40 days prior to construction, SCE shall coordinate with the authorized officer of the

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) and other City of Palmdale and Los Angeles County, Department of Parks and Recreation hiking trails to establish a temporary detour of the trail to avoid hazardous construction areas. SCE shall prepare a public notice of the temporary trail closure and information on the trail detour consistent with Mitigation Measure N-3a (Provide Advance Notification of Construction). SCE shall document its coordination efforts with the authorized officer and submit this documentation to the CPUC 30 days prior to construction.

During construction, SCE shall locate construction equipment and materials to allow for continual access to the PCT trailhead and parking area located southwest of the intersection of Tehachapi Willow Springs Road and Cameron Road, as well as other hiking trails.

L-1c **Identify Alternative Recreation Areas.** SCE shall coordinate with the authorized officer for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the City of Palmdale, and the Los Angeles County, Department of Parks and Recreation to identify alternative recreation sites that may be used by the public. SCE shall post a public notice at recreation facilities within Ritter Ranch and other areas to be closed or limited during construction, which shall provide information on alternative recreation facilities. SCE shall document its coordination with the authorized officer, and submit this documentation to the CPUC 30 days prior to construction.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures L-1a, L-1b, L-1c, requires SCE to coordinate with the officers for the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT), the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, City of Palmdale, and Los Angeles County, and the Department of Parks and Recreation. SCE shall schedule construction activities to avoid heavy recreational use periods, including major holidays, in coordination with, and at the discretion of the authorized officers, establish a temporary detour of the Pacific Crest trail to avoid hazardous construction areas, and locate construction equipment and materials to allow for continual access to the PCT trailhead and parking area located southwest of the intersection of Tehachapi Willow Springs Road and Cameron Road, as well as other hiking trails, and identify alternative recreation sites that may be used by the public. Additionally, Mitigation Measures N-3a and N-3b serve to limit the hours of construction, minimize noise levels, and provide advance notice of potentially disruptive activities to nearby residences. See Impact N-3, below, for a complete description of Mitigation Measures N-3a and N-3b. With implementation of these measures, temporary disruptions to existing residential and recreational land uses due to construction will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.8 (Land Use and Public Recreation) provides a complete assessment of the impacts related to land use and recreation due to construction and operation of the Project.

Impact L-5: Operation of the Project would change the character of a recreational resource, diminishing its recreational value.

As discussed in Section C.8 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR, a portion of the parking area for the PCT (Mile S3-4.4) is currently occupied by an existing H-frame transmission tower, and as such, the parking area can accommodate no more than 20 vehicles. The erection of a new lattice steel tower within this limited parking area will significantly impact recreational access to the PCT.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact L-5 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure L-5 is included below.

L-5 Site Towers to Avoid Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Trailhead. SCE shall site transmission towers to avoid the parking area and trailhead for the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT), located southwest of the intersection of Tehachapi Willow Springs Road and Cameron Road. SCE shall ensure that the location of new transmission towers would not be sited in an area that is used to access the PCT.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure L-5 will avoid precluding access to the PCT by placing towers to avoid the PCT trailhead and will therefore not diminish the recreational value of the trail reducing the impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.8 (Land Use and Public Recreation) provides a complete assessment of the impacts related to land use and recreation due to construction and operation of the Project.

V.2.8 Agricultural Resources

As discussed in Section C.9 (Agricultural Resources), the CPUC analyzed effects of the Project on agricultural resources using data collected from California Department of Conservation (DOC) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Agricultural resources that exist along the Project route include land designated as important farmland, other agricultural operations, and lands under Williamson Act contracts. For the purposes of the analysis in the EIR, important farmland is classified as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland, which are collectively referred to as "Farmland", as well as Farmland of Local Importance, and Grazing Land. Additionally, other agricultural operations include active agricultural lands along the Project route that have not been classified as Farmland. Williamson Act lands are important agricultural lands that are voluntarily enrolled in the Williamson Act program, which restricts land use in exchange for preferential property taxes.

Impact AG-3: Construction activities would interfere with agricultural operations.

As discussed in Section C.9 (Agricultural Resources) of the EIR, construction activities and the presence of construction equipment will interfere with agricultural operations by damaging crops or soil, impeding access to certain fields or plots of land, obstructing farm vehicles, or disrupting drainage and irrigation systems. These events will further result in the temporary reduction of agricultural productivity.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact AG-3 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure AG-3 is included below.

AG-3 Establish Agreement and Coordinate Construction Activities with Agricultural Landowners. Sixty (60) days prior to the start of Project construction, SCE shall secure a signed agreement with property owners of active farmland (i.e., currently being prepared or used for agricultural production, or developed with agricultural infrastructure) that will be used for construction and operation of the Project, access and spur roads, staging areas, and other Project-related activities. The purpose of this agreement will be to set forth the use of farmland during construction in order to: (1) schedule proposed construction activities at a location and time when damage to agricultural operations would be minimized, and (2) ensure that any areas damaged or disturbed by construction are restored to a condition mutually agreed upon by the landowner and SCE.

SCE shall coordinate with the agricultural landowners in the affected areas where active farmland will be temporarily disturbed to determine when and where construction should occur in order to

minimize damage to agricultural operations. This includes avoiding construction during peak planting, growing, and harvest seasons. If damage or destruction does occur, SCE shall perform restoration activities on the disturbed area in order to return the area to a pre-determined condition or the pre-construction condition, whichever option is agreed upon by the landowner and SCE. This could include activities such as soil preparation, regrading, and reseeding. This measure applies to agricultural landowners with land that is impacted by the Project. SCE shall provide proof of the continued use of farmland through the submittal of a signed agreement between an individual property owner and SCE. The signed agreements shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to the start of construction.

Rationale for Finding. Most construction impacts to agricultural operations on Farmland will be addressed through Mitigation Measure N-3a (see Impact N-3 in Section V.2.9 below), which provides for advance notification of construction, and AG-3, which requires SEC to establish agreements and coordinate construction activities with agricultural landowners. These measures will schedule proposed construction activities at a location and time when damage to agricultural operations will be minimized, and ensure that any areas damaged or disturbed by construction are restored to a condition mutually agreed upon by the landowner and SCE. These mitigation measures would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.9 (Agricultural Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the impacts to agricultural operations caused by construction of the Project.

Impact AG-4: Operation would interfere with agricultural operations.

Although the Project will be located across less than three miles of designated Farmland, there may be other areas of active agricultural operations that are traversed by the Project. As partially discussed under Impact AG-3 above, the Project will site transmission towers and construct new access and spur roads, which may interfere with agricultural operations. The presence of new access roads across agricultural areas could divide farm properties, which will create an obstacle to farming that impedes access to certain fields or plots, and creates irregularly shaped fields in which it would be difficult to maneuver farm equipment. A new roadway could also disrupt drainage and irrigation systems, affect the efficacy of windbreaks, fragment farms, and allow for the introduction of invasive weeds within disturbed areas. Similar to the presence of a new access road, the existence of new tower structures could also interfere with agricultural operations. These interferences will result in the permanent preclusion of agricultural productivity in the project area, creating significant impacts

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact AG-4 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure AG-4 is included below.

AG-4 Locate transmission towers and pulling/splicing stations to avoid agricultural operations. Locate Transmission Towers and Pulling/Splicing Stations to Avoid Agricultural Operations. SCE shall site transmission towers and pulling/splicing stations in locations that minimize impacts to active agriculture (i.e., currently being prepared or used for agricultural production, or developed with agricultural infrastructure). Specifically, SCE shall comply with the following measures when siting transmission towers and splicing/pulling stations within areas where cultivated farmland would be removed through the presence of structures:

- SCE shall avoid orchards, vineyards, row crops, and furrow-irrigated crops where towers would interfere with irrigation and harvest activities.

- SCE shall avoid irrigation canals and ditches.

- SCE shall align towers adjacent to field boundaries and parallel to rows (if located in row crops), and shall avoid diagonal orientations and angular alignments within agricultural land.

SCE shall document and provide proof of compliance with the above listed items 90 days prior to the start of Project construction. This documentation shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to the start of construction, and reviewed with affected landowners during coordination presented in Mitigation Measure AG-3 (Establish Agreement and Coordinate Construction Activities with Agricultural Landowners).

Rationale for Finding. Most operational impacts to agricultural operations from the Project will be caused by the placement of structures in locations that will not allow existing farming practices, including the use of specialized equipment, to continue in their current manner. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-4 will reduce Impact AG-4 to a less-than-significant level by requiring SCE to adhere to certain factors when determining the final location of Project structures within agricultural areas. Some of these factors include avoiding orchards, vineyards, row crops, and furrow-irrigated crops due to the density of crops and use of special maintenance equipment. Other factors require SCE to consider existing agriculture-related practices, such as field boundaries, crop alignments, and aerial applicators; and structures, such as irrigation facilities, canals, and ditches, in their final tower locations.

Reference. Section C.9 (Agricultural Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the impacts to agricultural operations caused by operation of the Project.

V.2.9 Noise

As discussed in Section C.10 (Noise) of the EIR, to gather information regarding the noise effects of the Project, applicable noise regulations were collected for each affected jurisdiction. In addition, field surveys were done to identify noise-sensitive receptors along the Project route. Noise-sensitive land uses are defined as land uses that are susceptible to noise disturbances resulting from either construction or operation of the Project. In general, residential, educational institutions, recreational facilities, and public facilities (e.g., religious facilities, health care facilities) are considered to be noise-sensitive receptor uses. Sensitive receptors identified in the analysis include those that are located immediately adjacent to the Project route that will be affected by construction and operation activities. Noise impacts are those that exceed local noise regulations for construction noise and any area where operational noise would increase ambient noise conditions more than 3 dBA.

Impact N-1: Construction Noise levels would violate local standards.

Maximum stationary equipment noise levels are defined by Los Angeles County as 60 dBA at single-family residences, 65 dBA at multi-family residences, and 70 dBA at commercial uses. Stationary construction equipment operations within 600 feet of single-family residences, 350 feet of multi-family residences, and approximately 200 feet of commercial uses may, depending on the equipment in use, generate noise levels in excess of the maximum levels defined by Los Angeles County.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the EIR for Impact N-1. Specifically, the use of noise shields during construction incorporated into the Project, as required by Mitigation Measure N-1, identified below, will mitigate significant effects regarding the non-compliance of local noise regulations to a less-than-significant level.

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N-1 **Provide Shields for Stationary Construction Equipment.** During construction, SCE or its construction contractor shall install temporary shields or curtains to reduce noise from construction equipment or obtain variances to operate equipment in a manner consistent with Los Angeles County goals for noise protection. In unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County when using equipment within 600 feet of single-family residences, within 350 feet of multi-family residences, and within approximately 200 feet of commercial uses, temporary shields shall be used to reduce noise levels from stationary construction equipment to within the Los Angeles County maximum allowable construction noise levels. The maximum allowable noise levels for single-family residences are 60 dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and 50 dBA between 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., for multi-family residences are 65 dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and 55 dBA between 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., and for semi-residential/commercial uses are 70 dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and 60 dBA between 8:00 pm and 7:00 a.m.

Rationale for Finding. SCE will implement APMs NOI-1 through NOI-3, which will require the Project to comply with the City of Lancaster, City of Palmdale, and County of Los Angeles construction restrictions. Therefore, the Project will not violate construction time standards established by the local jurisdictions affected by the Project. To reduce noise levels from stationary construction equipment, Mitigation Measure N-1 will require the use of temporary shields or curtains or obtain variances to operate equipment in a manner consistent with Los Angeles County goals for noise protection. This measure will therefore reduce the noise impacts associated with construction of the Project to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.10 (Noise) provides a complete assessment of the construction noise impacts associated with the Project.

Impact N-3: Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors.

Construction of the Project will involve the short-term use of heavy equipment such as cranes, drill rigs, dozers, excavators, compressors, generators, and trucks. Helicopters will also be needed to transport construction materials and to string the conductors for the overhead line. Focused locations of construction noise will occur along the Project route, at substation sites, at staging areas, and along transport access routes resulting in noise levels that will potentially disturb sensitive receptors.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact N-3 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measures N-3a and N-3b, as identified below.

N-3a Provide Advanced Notification of Construction. During construction, SCE or its construction contractor shall provide advance notice, between two and four weeks prior to construction, by mail to all single-family residences that would be within 600 feet of project construction, multi-family residences within 300 feet of construction, and commercial uses within 170 feet of construction. The announcement shall state specifically where and when construction would occur in the area. If construction delays of more than seven days occur, an additional notice shall be made, either in person or by mail. Notices shall provide tips on reducing noise intrusion, for example, by closing windows facing the planned construction. SCE shall also publish a notice of impending construction in local newspapers, stating when and where construction would occur.

N-3b Implement Best Management Practices for Construction Noise. SCE shall employ the following noise-suppression techniques to minimize the impact of temporary construction noise and avoid possible violations of local rules, standards, and ordinances:

- Construction noise shall be confined to daytime, weekday hours (e.g., 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.) or an alternative schedule established by the local jurisdiction;
- Construction equipment shall use noise reduction features (e.g., mufflers and engine shrouds) that are no less effective than those originally installed by the manufacturer;
- Construction traffic shall be routed away from residences and schools, where feasible;
- Unnecessary construction vehicle use and idling time shall be minimized to the extent feasible. The ability to limit construction vehicle idling time is dependent upon the sequence of construction activities and when and where vehicles are needed or staged. A "common sense" approach to vehicle use shall be applied; if a vehicle is not required for use immediately or continuously for construction activities, its engine shall be shut off. (Note: certain equipment, such as large diesel-powered vehicles, require extended idling for warm-up and repetitive construction tasks.)

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measures N-3a and N-3b implemented as part of the Project will result in the reduction of construction noise on nearby receptors. Mitigation Measure N-3a requires SCE to post notices along the Project alignment and at work sites two to four weeks prior to construction to ensure that all nearby residences are provided sufficient notice of construction. Mitigation Measure N-3b will reduce construction noise by implementing noise-suppression techniques, such as installing mufflers and engine shrouds on equipment, routing construction traffic away from residences and schools, and reducing unnecessary idling of construction vehicles to the maximum extent feasible. These measures will reduce the noise impacts associated with construction of the Project to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.10 (Noise) provides a complete assessment of the construction noise impacts of the Project.

Cumulative construction noise levels would violate local standards.

As discussed in Section E.5.9 (Noise – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, construction activities associated with the Project will result in intermittent temporary violations of the County of Los Angeles noise ordinances as a result of mobile construction equipment, which will produce noise levels up to 95 dBA at 50 feet. Similarly, construction activities associated with other projects in close proximity to the Project, such as the Ritter Ranch or Anaverde Ranch community development projects could potentially occur at the same time as Project activities and could also violate local standards. The combined effect of construction noise will be cumulatively significant at various times during construction.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the EIR. The use of noise shields during construction, providing advanced notice to nearby receptors of construction scheduling, and the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) during construction, as required by Mitigation Measures N-1 (see Impact N-1 above), and N-3a and N-3b (see Impact N-3 above) have been incorporated into the Project to reduce the potential to violate the local noise standards to a less-than-significant level.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measures N-1 (Provide Shields for Stationary Construction Equipment), N-3a (Provide Advanced Notification of Construction), and N-3b (Implement Best Management Practices for Construction Noise) will reduce the potential to violate the local noise standards to the extent feasible. Therefore, the potential for noise impacts associated with construction of the Project to violate local noise regulations will be less than significant.

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Reference. Section E.5.9 (Noise – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative construction noise impacts of the Project.

V.2.10 Visual Resources

The Project will cross private lands under the jurisdiction of Kern County, Los Angeles County, and the Cities of Lancaster and Palmdale. Because no federal lands will be traversed by the Project, the visual analysis in the EIR used the *Visual Sensitivity/Visual Change (VS/VC)* method to assess the visual effects of the Project on existing landscapes. The study area for the visual resource analysis was defined by numerous viewpoints, such as travel routes, use areas, and water bodies, from which sensitive receptors may see the Project. The visual resource analysis included a combination of information review, agency consultation, field reconnaissance, analysis of aerial photographs and topographic maps, on-site photography, data mapping, computerized visual simulation, and data evaluation. Observer positions were analyzed for their potential to display typical or worst-case visual effects of the Project to the scenic and aesthetic landscape.

Impacts V-1 and V-3: Construction of the Project and introduction of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from Highway 58 and Jameson Street (KOP-1) and Oak Creek Road (KOP-3).

As discussed in Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR, starting at the north end of Segment 3, as seen from KOP-1, the Project will create a new substation and new 220-kV transmission line that will be visible from Highway 58, Jameson Road, and Monolith. The 220-kV transmission line will terminate at Substation One south of Oak Creek Road and across the road from existing wind turbine generators in the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area. The new 500-kV transmission line will exit Substation One and head south to Antelope Substation. The new structures will also be visible from Oak Creek Road (KOP-3).

Substation Two as viewed from KOP-1 will create new vertical lines in the landscape, similar to those on the skyline, but closer to the viewer and situated on the valley floor and will create moderate contrast with the natural environment, be a co-dominant feature in the landscape, and create moderate view blockage of the lower hillside. At build-out, it will be very visually evident from Highway 58, Jameson Road, and other local roads near Monolith. Nearby farm and ranch buildings are effectively screened by windbreaks, and the new substation could be completely screened by windbreak-type vegetation. The new 220-kV transmission line will be less visually evident, and will blend in with existing wind turbine generators that flank the hillside and occupy the skyline. The transmission line will create low contrast, be subordinate to the existing vertical lines of the wind turbine generators on the skyline, and will not create any view blockage. The overall visual change at and near Substation Two will be moderate, and in the context of the existing landscape's moderate-to-high visual sensitivity, the resulting visual impact would be adverse. The visual change for the transmission line will be low and in the context of the existing landscape's moderate visual sensitivity, the resulting visual impact would not be significant.

Substation One, as viewed from KOP-3, will create visual contrasts in this landscape: new vertical lines, geometric forms, and light-gray or silver colors against the darker, desert landscape. At build-out it will create high visual contrast against the darker mountains in the background, be a co-dominant feature in the landscape, and create moderate view blockage of the background mountains. At build-out, it will be very visually evident from Oak Creek Road. Because of the desert terrain and vegetation types in the vicinity (predominantly creosote bush scrub and Joshua trees), Substation One can not be completely screened by windbreak-type vegetation; however, dense planting of Joshua trees, creosote bush scrub, sagebrush, and other desert plants will dramatically improve the visual quality of the substation surroundings. The new 220-kV and 500-kV transmission lines will be less visually evident than the

substation, but their light-gray to silver colors will stand out against the darker color landscape backdrop. The transmission line will create moderate color contrasts, be subordinate to the existing vertical lines of the wind turbine generators on the north side of the road, and will not create any view blockage. The visual change for the transmission line at and near Substation One will be high and in the context of the existing landscape's low-to-moderate visual sensitivity, the resulting visual impacts will be adverse and significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impacts V-1 and V-3 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a through V-1f, as identified below.

V-1a **Use Tubular Steel Poles.** In locations designated by the CPUC, SCE and its Contractors shall take measures to eliminate lattice steel towers from the Project and substitute tubular steel poles to reduce significant visual impacts as seen from designated sensitive receptor locations. SCE and its Contractors shall submit design calculations to demonstrate any locations where use of tubular steel poles is not feasible. SCE and its Contractors shall submit site plans, topographic screening studies, and visibility studies demonstrating where tubular steel poles are feasible and would lessen visual impacts, and conversely, where lattice steel towers would blend in with a landform backdrop. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE and its Contractors shall submit these plans and studies to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1b **Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads.** In locations designated by the CPUC, SCE shall construct the new transmission line using existing access roads and spur roads. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE and its Contractors shall submit plans and construction drawings for access roads and spur roads, demonstrating compliance with this measure, to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1c **Dispose of Cleared Vegetation.** For areas where cleared vegetation would be visible from sensitive viewing locations, SCE and its Contractors shall dispose of cleared vegetation and woody material in a manner that is not visually evident and does not create visual contrasts. SCE and its Contractors shall submit a vegetation removal plan demonstrating compliance with this measure to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1d **Slope-Round and Dispose of Excavated Materials.** For areas where cuts-and-fills and excavated materials would be visible from sensitive viewing locations, SCE and its Contractors shall employ slope-rounding techniques to blend earthwork with natural contours and shall dispose of excavated materials (soil, rocks, and concrete, and reinforcing steel) in a manner that is not visually evident and does not create visual contrasts. SCE and its Contractors shall submit an excavation plan demonstrating compliance with this measure to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1e **Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors, Textures, and Finishes.** For all structures that are visible from sensitive viewing locations, SCE and its Contractors shall apply surface coatings with appropriate colors, finishes, and textures to most effectively blend the structures with the visible backdrop landscape. For structures that are visible from more than one sensitive viewing location, if backdrops are substantially different when viewed from different vantage points, the darker color shall be selected, because dark colors tend to blend into landscape backdrops more effectively than lighter colors, which may contrast and produce glare. At locations where a lattice steel tower or a tubular steel pole would be silhouetted against the skyline, non-reflective, light-

gray colors shall be selected to blend with the sky. The transmission line conductors shall be non-specular and non-reflective, and the insulators shall be non-reflective and non-refractive. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE and its Contractors shall submit a Structure Surface Treatment Plan for the lattice steel towers, tubular steel poles, and any other visible structures, demonstrating compliance with this measure to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1f **Establish Evergreen Vegetative Screen.** SCE and its Contractors shall establish a permanent evergreen vegetative screen of sufficient height for immediate visual screening around the substation(s), and shall provide permanent drip irrigation system for plant survival. Plant materials selected for screening shall be evergreen, wind-resistant, and acclimated to the desert environment. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE and its Contractors shall submit a Vegetative Screening Plan for the substation demonstrating compliance with this measure to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a (Use Tubular Steel Poles), V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), V-1d (Slope-Round and Dispose of Excavated Materials), and V-1e (Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors, Textures, and Finishes) will improve the visual environment of the new 220-kV transmission line by reducing the use of lattice steel towers, which substantially impact foreground views; creating fewer new access roads; treating the structures to blend them in with the visible backdrop landscape; and minimizing views of construction materials and debris from public roadways. Implementation of Mitigation Measure V-1f (Establish Evergreen Vegetative Screen) will improve the visual environment of Substations One and Two by planting vegetation surrounding the substations to block views. These measures will therefore reduce the visual impacts associated with construction and operation of the Project to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of visual quality alteration impacts of the Project.

Impacts V-2: Construction of the Project and introduction of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and Trailhead (KOP-2).

As discussed in Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR, there is an existing sub-transmission line crossing the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) and trailhead located at the intersection of Tehachapi Willow Springs Road and Cameron Road (KOP-2). The new 220-kV line will cross over the PCT in two locations near the trailhead. The new LSTs, with their geometric forms, will create strong contrast in this industrial and recreational landscape.

The new 220-kV transmission line will be visually evident, and will have high contrast with existing wind turbine generators on the skyline. The transmission line will be co-dominant with the existing vertical lines of the wind turbine generators on the skyline, and will create moderate view blockage of the skyline and hillside. The overall visual change at the PCT and nearby roads will be moderate-to-high, and in the context of the existing landscape's moderate-to-high visual sensitivity as seen from the PCT, the resulting visual impact would be adverse and significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact V-2 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a through V-1e, as identified above for Impacts V-1 and V-3.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a (Use Tubular Steel Poles), V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), V-1d (Slope-Round and Dispose of Excavated Materials), and V-1e (Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors, Textures, and Finishes) will improve the visual environment of the new 220-kV transmission line by reducing the use of lattice steel towers, which substantially impact foreground views; creating fewer new access roads; treating the structures to blend them in with the visible backdrop landscape; and minimizing views of construction materials and debris from public roadways. Where the 220 kV T/L crosses the PCT north of Oak Creek Road, the transmission towers will be placed with a minimum setback of 300 feet from the trail per APM VIS-3. These measures will therefore reduce the visual impacts associated with construction and operation of the Project to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of visual quality alteration impacts of the Project.

Impact V-7: Construction of the Project and increase of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from Avenue L Near Olive Grove (KOP-7).

As discussed in Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR, KOP-7 was established on Avenue L near an existing homestead with an olive grove. The 500-kV line will be constructed west of the existing homestead and the existing wooden 66-kV subtransmission poles will be replaced with LSTs. After completion of the Project, transmission lines will be located on both west and east sides of the existing homestead, which will be situated inside the corridor. The existing olive trees are approximately 20-feet tall, and will not visually screen the transmission line towers. From the perspective of the one residence that will be surrounded by the new 500-kV line and relocated 66-kV lines to the west, and the existing transmission lines to the east, the visual impacts will be high because the house will be completely inside the newly widened Antelope-Vincent Corridor.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact V-7 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1b, V-1c, and V-1e (see Impact V-1 above) and V-5, as identified below.

V-5 **Match Structure Spacing and Spans.** In locations designated by the CPUC, SCE and its Contractors shall match existing structure spacing and spans as closely as possible to avoid or reduce the number of off-setting tower placements to reduce visual complexity as seen from sensitive receptor locations. All new structures shall match the heights of the existing transmission line structures to the extent possible as dictated by variation in terrain. All new spans shall match existing conductor spans as closely as possible in order to avoid or reduce the occurrence of unnecessary visual complexity associated with asynchronous conductor spans. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved, and shall prepare construction drawings for structure locations. SCE and its Contractors shall submit these plans and studies to the CPUC for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

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Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), V-1e (Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors, Textures, and Finishes), and V-5 (Match Structure Spacing and Spans) will improve the visual environment of the new 500-kV transmission line as seen from Avenue L by creating fewer new access roads, treating the structures to blend them in with the visible backdrop landscape, matching the spacing between towers with existing structures to reduce the visual complexity, and minimizing views of construction materials and debris from public roadways. These measures will therefore reduce the visual impacts associated with construction and operation of the Project to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of visual quality alteration impacts of the Project.

Impact V-9: Construction of the Project and increase of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from Godde Hill Road (KOP-9).

As discussed in Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR, KOP-9 was established on Godde Hill Road at the center of the existing Midway-Vincent utility corridor, looking toward Vincent Substation from a turnout along the twisting, two-lane paved road over Godde Hill. At this location Option A will be implemented, placing the alignment of the 500-kV transmission line approximately 1,000 feet to the northeast (left and downhill) of SCE's originally proposed route. The Project will be located on the far right side of the existing corridor, and new towers will be aligned with existing clusters of towers and TSPs. Spacing of towers will approximate the spacing of existing structures. Existing towers and conductors have created a dominant industrial character in this landscape, and new towers and conductors of the Project will augment these dominant features, creating high dominance. New LSTs will not have a landform backdrop and will be seen against the skyline, thereby creating high skyline and view blockage similar to the existing transmission lines, resulting in a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact V-9 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a through V-1e (see Impact V-1 above) and V-9, as identified below.

V-9 Construct New Access and Spur Roads with Least Visual Disturbance. SCE and its contractors shall design all new access and spur roads such that they are located in the least visually obtrusive locations, that they follow the lay of the land, that cut-and-fill slopes are minimized, that vegetative patterns are protected or enhanced, and that the least number of roads are created. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE and its contractors shall construct and maintain access and spur roads to minimize visual contrasts of form, line, color, texture, and scale. SCE and its contractors shall submit plans and construction drawings for access roads and spur roads demonstrating compliance with this measure to the CPUC and other affected agencies for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a (Use Tubular Steel Poles), V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), V-1d (Slope-Round and Dispose of Excavated Materials), V-1e (Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors, Textures, and Finishes), and V-9 (Construct New Access and Spur Roads with Least Visual Disturbance) will reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. [Please explain how. This must bridge the analytical gap between the evidence in the record and the finding, not just conclude that the impact would be reduced]

Reference. Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of visual quality alteration impacts of the Project.

Impacts V-11: Construction of the Project and increase of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from Godde Hill Road towards Ritter Ranch (KOP-11).

As discussed in Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR, the Project will cross Elizabeth Lake Road, turn south for 0.1 miles, then turn west and make a large "C" shape around the planned residential development of Ritter Ranch in the City of Palmdale and rejoin the Antelope-Vincent Corridor. New LSTs and conductors will be visible in the middleground from Godde Hill Road and Elizabeth Lake Road. New access roads will be required from approximately Mile S2-8.1 to approximately Mile S2-10.5, which is the portion of new ROW with no existing access roads. The overall visual change seen from KOP-11 will be moderate-to-high and in the context of the existing landscape's moderate-to-high visual sensitivity, the resulting visual impact will be adverse and significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact V-11 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1b through V-1e (see Impact V-1 above), and V-9 (see Impact V-9 above).

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), V-1d (Slope-Round and Dispose of Excavated Materials), V-1e (Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors, Textures, and Finishes), and V-9 (Construct New Access and Spur Roads with Least Visual Disturbance) will improve the visual environment of the new 500-kV transmission line by creating fewer new access roads, and when a road is created finding a path that is the least visually obtrusive; treating the structures to blend them in with the visible backdrop landscape, and minimizing views of construction materials and debris from public roadways. This will result in an improved visual environment, and will reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of visual quality alteration impacts of the Project.

Impacts V-12 and V-14: Construction of the Project and increase of industrial character structures would result in a permanent change in landscape character and scenic vistas as seen from Avenue S towards the Sierra Pelona Ridge (KOP-12) and the Acton/Vincent Grade Metrolink Park and Ride (KOP-14).

As discussed in Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR, KOP-12 was established just east of the new Anaverde Ranch development, on Avenue S looking southwest at the Sierra Pelona Ridge. In this location, new LSTs and conductors will be visible against the skyline on the right and left sides of this view, and will be seen against a landscape backdrop in the middle of this view. Color contrasts of new, dulled galvanized steel towers will attract visual attention to the Project. The new structures will cause a noticeable increase in structure prominence and industrial character within this view, adding to the existing industrial character in the existing utility corridor. Some view blockage of middleground mountains will occur, distracting from their natural-appearing landscape character. Additional visual contrast will be caused by the highlighting of the towers and conductors by the afternoon sun.

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KOP-14 was established at the Acton/Vincent Grade Metrolink Park and Ride access road, looking south to the Vincent Substation. The Project will be located west of the Acton/Vincent Grade Metrolink Park and Ride and looking south from this facility, the Vincent Substation and a multitude of transmission lines are visible. The new towers and conductors of the Project will add to the visual clutter of this industrial landscape character, with high view blockage of the skyline and background mountains, high contrast of discordant lines and discordant geometric forms overlaying one-another, and dominance of industrial character infrastructure resulting in an adverse and significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impacts V-12 and V-14 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1b through V-1e (see Impact V-1 above), and V-5 (see Impact V-5 in Section IV.1 above).

Rationale for Finding. *I*mplementation of Mitigation Measures V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), V-1d (Slope-Round and Dispose of Excavated Materials), V-1e (Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors, Textures, and Finishes), and V-5 (Match Structure Spacing and Spans) will improve the visual environment of the new 500-kV transmission line by creating fewer new access roads, treating the structures to blend them in with the visible backdrop landscape, matching the spacing between towers with existing structures to reduce the visual complexity, and minimizing views of construction materials and debris from public roadways. These measures will therefore reduce the visual impacts associated with construction and operation of the Project to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of visual quality alteration impacts of the Project.

Impact V-16: The Project would create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

As discussed in Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR, new sources of light will adversely affect nighttime views at the two new substations (Substation Two and Substation One) as seen from sensitive receptor locations, specifically KOP-1 (Highway 58 and Jameson Street), KOP-3 (Oak Creek Road), and KOP-4 (Tehachapi Willow Springs Road). Each substation will require outdoor and indoor lighting at certain times. Lighting will be switched on when SCE employees or contractors are working in the station. At the entrance gate, SCE may illuminate the locked gate at night with motion-activated lighting. Motion-activated lighting can be triggered by animals as well as maintenance vehicles, and therefore, will create adverse lighting effects in the nighttime landscape even when no maintenance vehicle is present. Presence of nighttime lights at the two new substations will be unusual and visually incongruous with the dark, unlit landscape at each site, as no other sources of light are present. SCE may illuminate the entire substation in case of nighttime emergency repair, maintenance, or other reasons. Standard illumination of the entire substation and motion-activated-lighting will create strong visual impacts. The overall visual change to the nighttime landscape will be high, and in the context of the existing landscape's visual sensitivity at KOPs 1, 3, and 4, the resulting visual impacts will be adverse and significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact V-16 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1e (see Impact V-1 above), and V-16a through V-16d, as identified below.

V-16a **Use Only Non-Specular and Non-Reflective Conductors and Insulators.** SCE and its Contractors shall use only non-specular and non-reflective conductors, and the insulators shall be non-reflective and non-refractive. SCE and its Contractors shall submit samples of these materials to the CPUC for review and approval at least 120 days prior to the start of construction.

V-16b **Use Magnetic Coils at Entrance Gate.** Instead of motion-activated lighting, SCE and its Contractors shall install magnetic coils, or other technology, in the entrance road to each transition station to activate low-level, directional lighting at the locked entrance gate.

V-16c **Use Only Low-Level, Directional, Shielded Lighting.** In order to illuminate equipment areas within the transition stations, SCE and its Contractors shall install only low-level, directional, shielded lighting sufficient to limit spill-over glare and nighttime sky-lighting. The brightness of station lighting shall be kept relatively low.

V-16d **Only Perform Routine Maintenance Activities During Daylight Hours.** SCE and its Contractors shall perform routine maintenance and repair activities only during daylight hours, thus eliminating the need for nighttime lighting of the transition stations.

Rationale for Finding. New LSTs, TSPs, switch racks, and chain link fences will be constructed of dulled galvanized angle steel. During certain times of day and from certain viewing angles and distances, the new towers and conductors will reflect sunlight, create glare, and draw attention of viewers. New steel structures that have not weathered or rusted will create more glare than existing structures that have weathered and rusted. In order to minimize reflected light that would cause glare, it is important to create structures with colored, non-reflective, textured surfaces. Implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1e (Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors, Textures, and Finishes) V-16a (Use Only Non-Specular and Non-Reflective Conductors and Insulators), V-16b (Use Magnetic Coils at Entrance Gate), V-16c (Use Only Low-Level, Directional, Shielded Lighting), and V-16d (Only Perform Maintenance Activities During Daylight Hours) will reduce the visual impacts associated with light and glare by treating the structures to blend them in with the visible backdrop landscape and reduce glare, reducing the reflective and refractive characteristics of the towers, minimizing accidental lighting of the substations by using magnetic coils at entrance gates instead of motion-activated lighting, minimizing illumination of areas surrounding the substations, and minimizing nighttime maintenance activities thereby minimizing the need to use nighttime lighting at the substations. These measures will therefore reduce the visual impacts associated with construction and operation of the Project to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.11 (Visual Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of visual quality alteration impacts of the Project.

V.2.11 Traffic and Transportation

To gather information regarding the traffic and transportation effects of the Project, applicable traffic regulations were collected for each affected jurisdiction, including those identified in jurisdictional General Plans and those outlined by the applicable Department of Transportations. In addition, data for the transportation network were collected and analyzed from the following sources: highway maps, route alignment maps obtained from SCE, and other maps from various reports and websites from the affected State and local agencies. Traffic volume data were obtained from agency websites and reports. Lane information was obtained from aerial photographs and field reconnaissance. A complete list of these sources is available in Section C.12, Traffic and Transportation, of the EIR.

For the purposes of the analysis in the EIR and based on CEQA requirements, transmission line project impacts to the ground transportation system (roads and railroads) during construction will occur during

installation of towers and the stringing of conductors, as these activities will interface with the public roadway system at numerous locations along the Project route.

Impact T-1: Closure of roads to through traffic or reduction of travel lanes would result in substantial congestion.

Construction of the Project will result in temporary road closures during transmission line stringing activities. Temporary and intermittent traffic detours or implementation of controlled continuous traffic breaks will be required at road crossing locations. Required temporary road closures will substantially disrupt traffic flow and substantially increase traffic congestion.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact T-1 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures T-1a and T-1b, as identified below.

T-1a **Prepare Traffic Control Plans.** Prior to the start of construction, SCE shall submit Traffic Control Plans (TCPs) to all agencies with jurisdiction over public roads that would be affected by overhead construction activities as part of the required traffic encroachment permits. TCPs shall define the locations of all roads that would need to be temporarily closed due to construction activities, including aerial hauling by helicopter and conductor stringing activities. The TCPs shall define the use of flag persons, warning signs, lights, barricades, cones, etc. to provide safe work areas and to warn, control, protect, and expedite vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. The measures included in the TCP shall be consistent with the standard guidelines outlined in the Caltrans Traffic Manual, the Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction, and the Work Area Traffic Control Handbook (WATCH). Copies of the TCPs shall be sent to the responsible agencies for review. Tables C.12-1 through C.12-3 present the appropriate responsible jurisdictions for review of the TCPs.

TCPs shall also include measures to avoid disruptions or delays in access for emergency service vehicles and to keep emergency service agencies fully informed of road closures, detours, and delays. Police departments, fire departments, ambulance services, and paramedic services shall be notified at least one month in advance by SCE of the proposed locations, nature, timing, and duration of any construction activities and advised of any access restrictions that could impact their effectiveness. Provisions shall be ready at all times to accommodate emergency vehicles, such as immediately stopping work for emergency vehicle passage, short detours, and alternate routes developed in conjunction with local agencies. TCPs shall also identify all emergency service agencies, include contact information for those agencies, assign responsibility for notifying the service providers, and specify coordination procedures. Copies of the TCPs shall be provided to all affected police departments, fire departments, ambulance and paramedic services. Documentation of coordination with service providers shall be provided to the CPUC prior to the start of construction.

T-1b **Restrict Lane Closures.** To mitigate traffic congestion and delays during construction, SCE shall restrict all necessary lane closures or obstructions on major roadways, as designated by applicable County or City General Plans, associated with overhead construction activities to off-peak periods only. Lane closures must not occur between the peak hours of 6:00 and 9:30 a.m. and between the peak hours of 3:30 and 6:30 p.m., or as directed in writing by the affected public agency in the encroachment permit.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure T-1a will ensure that the Traffic Control Plans are prepared to address temporary road and lane closures during construction of the Project. Furthermore, Mitigation

Measure T-1b will restrict lane closures to off-peak periods only. These measures will therefore reduce the impacts related to closure of roads and reductions in travel lanes during construction of the Project to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.12 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the construction and operational transportation and traffic impacts of the Project.

Impact T-2: Construction traffic would result in substantial congestion on area roadways.

Construction of the Project will generate additional traffic on regional and local roadways. Construction worker commute trips, equipment deliveries, and hauling materials such as support towers, concrete, conductor, and excavation spoils will temporarily increase existing traffic volumes in the project area. In addition, workers commuting to construction sites will increase traffic in the project area.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact T-2 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measure T-2, as identified below.

T-2 **Prepare Construction Transportation Plan.** To reduce the number of Project-related vehicles traveling on roads within the Project area, site construction workers shall be staged off site at marshalling yards or near paved intersections and workers will be shuttled to construction sites in groups in crew vehicles.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure T-2 will result in the dispersion of construction traffic on nearby roadways to avoid congestion. Preparation of a construction transportation plan will ensure that project-related construction traffic will not contribute to unacceptable levels of service on area roadways, reducing impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.12 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the construction and operational transportation and traffic impacts of the Project.

Impact T-3: Construction activities would temporarily interfere with emergency response.

Construction activities will potentially interfere with emergency response by ambulance, fire, paramedic, and police vehicles. The temporary road closures that will be required during stringing activities and during helicopter transport activities could lengthen the response time required for emergency vehicles passing through the construction zones.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact T-3 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measures T-1a (Prepare Traffic Control Plans) and T-1b (Restrict Lane Closures), identified above for Impact T-1.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure T-1a will ensure that the Traffic Control Plans are prepared to address temporary road and lane closures during construction of the Project. Furthermore, Mitigation Measure T-1b will restrict lane closures to off-peak periods only. These measures will therefore reduce the potential to interfere with emergency response to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.12 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the construction and operational transportation and traffic impacts of the Project.

ATTACHMENT B

Impact T-4: Construction activities would temporarily disrupt transit bus routes.

The Project route will not interrupt Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) local transit routes serving the Lancaster and Palmdale areas. However, AVTA operates three commuter service routes, Routes 785, 786, and 787, to the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area that utilize SR-14, as operated by Kern Regional Transit. The Project ROW will cross SR-14 south of Palmdale in Vincent. Overhead stringing activities that will require short-term road closures associated with construction of the Project could result in temporary delays of any or all three of the AVTA commuter routes.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact T-4 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measure T-4, as identified below.

T-4 **Avoid Disruption of Transit Service.** SCE shall coordinate with Kern Regional Transit at least one month prior to construction to reduce potential interruption of dial-a-ride service in Kern County.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure T-4 requires coordination with Kern Regional Transit to avoid impacts to pubic transit service.

Reference. Section C.12 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the construction and operational transportation and traffic impacts of the Project.

Impact T-5: Construction activities would temporarily disrupt rail traffic.

The Project route will cross a Union Pacific Rail Road (UPRR) railroad spur that serves the Cal Cement plant southeast of Tehachapi. The Project will also cross the UPRR main line in Vincent near the Vincent Grade/Acton Metrolink Station, which is utilized by both freight and Metrolink passenger trains. Overhead stringing activities that will require short-term closures of these lines will disrupt rail traffic.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact T-5 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measure T-5, as identified below.

T-5 **Avoid Disruption of Rail Service.** SCE shall coordinate with UPRR and Metrolink at least one month prior to construction to reduce potential interruption of rail service.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure T-5 requires coordination with UPRR and Metrolink to avoid impacts to rail service.

Reference. Section C.12 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the construction and operational transportation and traffic impacts of the Project.

Impact T-7: Construction activities would conflict with planned improvements to SR-14.

The Project route will cross SR-14 in the Vincent/Acton area. In its North County Combined Highway Corridors Study, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) presents a long range plan including several alternatives to improve SR-14. One alternative under consideration is to construct a new travel lane within the SR-14 ROW. The Project will conflict with the new travel lane and cause a significant impact if SCE were to place structures within the existing or planned SR-14 ROW.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact T-7 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measure T-7, as identified below.

T-7 **Avoid Conflicts with Planned Improvements to SR-14.** SCE shall coordinate project design with California Department of Transportation and the Los Angeles County MTA to ensure that Project structures are appropriately placed to avoid conflict with potential expansion of SR-14.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure T-7 requires coordination with the California Department of Transportation and the LACMTA to avoid Project conflicts with future planned improvements to SR-14.

Reference. Section C.12 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the construction and operational transportation and traffic impacts of the Project.

Impact T-8: Construction vehicles and equipment would damage road ROWs.

The Project has the potential for unexpected damage to occur on features in road ROWs due to the operation of construction vehicles and equipment.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact T-8 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measure T-8, as identified below.

T-8 **Repair Damaged Road ROWs.** If damage to roads, sidewalks, and/or medians (including irrigation systems for landscaped medians) occurs as a result of construction activities for the Project, SCE will be responsible for ensuring repairs are implemented within two months of completion of construction activities at the affected location. Roads disturbed by construction activities or construction vehicles shall be properly restored to ensure long-term protection of road surfaces.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure T-8 requires that SCE repair of any damage to public roads, sidewalks, and/or medians (including irrigation systems for landscaped medians) to avoid long-term damage caused to these facilities during Project construction.

Reference. Section C.12 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the construction and operational transportation and traffic impacts of the Project.

Impact T-10: Construction activities would be inconsistent with transportation plans.

The Project ROW will cross SR-14 in Vincent. In its North County Combined Highway Corridors Study, LACMTA presents a long range plan including several alternatives to improve SR-14. One alternative under consideration is to construct a new travel lane within the SR-14 ROW. As a result, North County cities' General Plans are being amended to incorporate corridor improvements as part of their Official Map, and require developers to dedicate ROW along the alignment. The Project will be inconsistent with the LACMTA plan if it were to place structures within the existing or planned SR-14 ROW.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact T-10 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measure T-7 (Avoid Conflicts with Planned Improvements to SR-14), identified above for Impact T-7.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure T-7 requires coordination with California Department of Transportation and the LACMTA to avoid Project conflicts with future planned improvements to SR-14.

ATTACHMENT B

Reference. Section C.12 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the construction and operational transportation and traffic impacts of the Project.

Cumulative construction traffic would result in congestion on area roadways.

Residential development in the area has contributed to congestion on area roadways that will likely be traveled by construction-related vehicles associated with Project activities. There are currently approximately 40 development projects scheduled within one-half mile of the Project route, approximately 10 of which are currently under construction and will likely be at least partially occupied when construction of the Project occurs. If one or more of the future projects planned in the area within one-half mile of the Project were to require road or land closures, cumulatively significant impacts will occur.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant cumulative effects on the environment related to congestion on area roadways to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure T-2 (Prepare Construction Transportation Plan), identified above for Impact T-2.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure T-2 will reduce the number of construction-related vehicles required for Project activities, therefore reducing the potential for Project-related construction traffic to substantially contribute to a cumulative impact. As such, impacts will be less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.10 (Traffic and Transportation – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative construction and operational transportation and traffic impacts of the Project.

Cumulative construction activities would temporarily interfere with emergency response.

Road and lane closures resulting from the Project will interfere with emergency response vehicles by lengthening the response time required for emergency vehicles passing through the construction zone. Congestion on area roadways from past, present, and future development could also lengthen the response time required for emergency vehicles in the area. If one or more of the future projects planned in the area within one-half mile of the Project were to require road or lane closures on the same days that the Project will require road and/or lane closures, cumulatively significant impacts would occur.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant cumulative effects on the environment related to emergency response to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measures T-1a (Prepare Traffic Control Plans) and T-1b (Restrict Lane Closures), identified above for Impact T-1.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure T-1a will ensure that the Traffic Control Plans are prepared to address temporary road and lane closures during construction of the Project. Furthermore, Mitigation Measure T-1b will restrict lane closures to off-peak periods only. These measures will therefore reduce the impacts from construction activities on emergency response to less-than-significant levels.

Reference. Section E.5.10 (Traffic and Transportation – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative construction and operational transportation and traffic impacts of the Project.

V.2.12 Population and Housing

With implementation of Option A as part of the adopted Project, as described in Section II.1 above, there will be no impacts to Population and Housing associated with the Project.

V.3 Significant Environmental Impacts That Cannot Be Avoided or Reduced to a Less than Significant Level

Based on the issue area assessment in the EIR, the Commission hereby finds, pursuant to Section 21081, that the Project will have significant impacts in the issue areas discussed below, and that these impacts cannot be avoided or reduced. These findings are based on the discussion of impacts in the detailed issue area analyses in Section C of the EIR, located in Volume 1 of the Final EIR.

V.3.1 Air Quality

Impact A-1: Construction emissions would exceed the AVAQMD regional emission thresholds

As discussed in Section C.2 (Air Quality) of the EIR, dust and exhaust generated during construction of the Project will create significant impacts to the segments of the Project route located within air basins managed by the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD). Construction emissions will exceed the AVAQMD regional emission thresholds for daily NOx and PM10, as well as total Project PM10 emissions.

Finding. The CPUC finds that Mitigation Measures A-1a to A-1i (see Impact A-2 above) have been incorporated in the Project to address significant air quality emission increases on the environment during construction and will reduce construction impacts to air quality to the maximum degree feasible; however, construction emissions will continue to exceed AVAQMD regional emission thresholds resulting in significant and unavoidable impacts. As such, the CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. During construction of the Project within the AVAQMD, construction emissions will create a short-term, but significant, air quality impact by exceeding the daily NOx and PM10 thresholds, as well as the total project PM10 threshold. This impact will remain unavoidable. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant air quality impact to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.2 (Air Quality) provides a complete assessment of the regional air quality impacts of the Project.

Cumulative construction emissions would exceed the AVAQMD regional emission thresholds.

As discussed in Section E.5.1 (Air Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, there is the possibility that a variety of projects will occur at the same time as Project construction in the AVAQMD jurisdiction. In the areas where Project construction may occur simultaneously with future and proposed construction projects within one mile of the Project, the combined effects of air quality pollutants generated by the Project and other development will result in cumulative impacts. Mitigation Measures A-1a to A-1i (see Impact A-2 above) have been incorporated in the Project to address significant air quality emission increases on the environment during construction and will reduce construction impacts to air quality to the maximum

degree feasible; however cumulative construction emissions will nevertheless exceed the AVAQMD regional emission thresholds and will be significant and unavoidable.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. Pollutants generated from construction of related projects identified in the Final EIR could result in an impact on ambient air quality that will overlap with those of the Project, if the construction work occurs in close proximity as well as at the same time. Construction of the cumulative projects could further exacerbate the significant project-related construction impacts. Other cumulative projects will be required to comply with local ordinances prohibiting nuisances or requiring dust control. With implementation of SCE's APMs for air quality and the air quality mitigation measures (A-1a through A-1i provided under Impact A-2 above) impacts from the Project will remain significant within the AVAQMD jurisdiction. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant air quality impact to a level that will be less than significant. When combined with cumulative projects in the area, the Project's regionally significant air quality impacts will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable.

Reference. Section E.5.1 (Air Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative air quality impacts of the Project.

V.3.2 Biological Resources

Cumulative project activities could have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by CDFG or USFWS.

As discussed in Section E.5.2 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, the Project will result in the loss of desert wash habitat. Three blue-line creeks and numerous natural washes and channels occur within the Project study area. Surface interruption of these flows due to construction activities dewater downstream habitats, thus indirectly degrading and destroying habitat for special-status plants and wildlife. Planned improvements in the Amargosa Creek area associated with new development include the construction of a detention basin at the mouth of the creek and the construction of 12.5 miles (20 km) of earthen channels, 1.5 miles (2.4 km) of concrete channels, and 10 miles (16.1 km) of storm drains (City of Lancaster, 1997).[5] Furthermore, ongoing land development in the Leona Valley including the Ritter Ranch residential development would also likely result in adverse impacts to biological resources including the potential loss of annual grasslands and riparian communities. The loss of habitats including coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and riparian areas can be reasonably foreseen as ongoing development continues in the region.

Joshua tree woodland habitat occurs on approximately 28,826 acres (11,665 ha) according to the West Mojave HCP (2003). The CDFG considers Joshua tree woodland to be a sensitive habitat (CNDDB) because of its scarcity and its support of a number of State and federally listed endangered, threatened, and rare species. Joshua trees are slow growing and sensitive to disturbance and as such, are a member of

[5] City of Lancaster. 1997. *City of Lancaster General Plan Policy Document and Master Environmental Assessment*. October 1997.

stable, climax plant communities. Increasing development in the Antelope Valley, along with the limited regeneration of new plants and the very slow growth of the species, has had a cumulative negative effect on Joshua tree woodland habitat.

Therefore, the impacts to biological resources associated with Criterion BIO1, when combined with impacts from past, present, or reasonable future projects, as discussed in Section C.3.9.2 of the EIR, will be considered cumulatively significant and unavoidable.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project to address significant effects on the environment. Specifically, implementation of Mitigation Measures B-3a, B-3b, B-4a, B-4b, and B-13a through B13-d (see Impacts B-3, B-4, and B-13 above) would reduce the effect on the environment from this impact. However, even with implementation of these Mitigation Measures, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts related to biological resources will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR.

Rationale for Finding. Any additional projects that may directly or indirectly affect sensitive habitat communities in the project area will further reduce natural habitats and communities. Although implementation of Mitigation Measures B-3a (Avoid Desert Wash Habitat), B-3b (Preserve Off-site Desert Wash Habitat), B-4a (Avoid Joshua Tree and Juniper Woodland Habitat), B-4b (Preserve Off-site Joshua Tree Woodland and Juniper Woodland), B-13a (Conduct Focused Surveys for the San Gabriel Oak), B-13b (Avoid Impacts to the San Gabriel Oak), B-13c (Minimize Impacts to Montane Scrub and Juniper Woodland Habitats), and B-13d (Preserve Off-site Montane Scrub and Juniper Woodland Habitats) will reduce Project-specific impacts to riparian or other sensitive habitat communities to a level of less than significant, the overall loss of habitat at a regional scale, including several large-scale residential and community developments, will result in cumulatively significant and unavoidable impacts. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce cumulatively significant impacts to riparian or other sensitive habitat communities to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.2 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts associated with biological resources.

Cumulative project activities could have an adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species listed as endangered, threatened, or proposed or critical habitat for these species.

As discussed in Section E.5.2 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, construction and operation of the Project will have the potential to result in the take of California red-legged frogs and desert tortoises and may also result in the take of, and habitat loss for, Mojave ground squirrels.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project to address significant effects on the environment. However, even with implementation of Mitigation Measures B-5a, B-5b, B-6a, B-6b, B-10a, B-10b, and B-10c, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts related to biological resources will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR.

Rationale for Finding. Planned developments in the Project area, including ongoing development in the Antelope and Leona Valleys, will continue to contribute to the decline of listed species or their habitat

throughout the region. The increased construction related to the Project, including grading of spur roads, development of substations, and installation, on-going maintenance, and operation of transmission lines may further increase the potential for impacts to listed species. Some of the cumulative projects discussed in Section C.3.9.2 of the EIR, particularly the large community developments, may be situated in areas which provide habitat relevant to listed species. For example, the Ritter Ranch development would occur in or adjacent to habitat that may support populations of California red-legged frogs. Continued degradation of native plant communities and riparian habitat in the Antelope and Leona Valleys from ongoing development will continue to contribute to the decline of listed species or their habitat throughout the region. Therefore, the impacts to biological resources, as described above, have the potential to combine with similar impacts of other projects and will be considered cumulatively significant and unavoidable.

Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-5a (Obtain Technical Assistance from the USFWS for California Red-Legged Frog), B-5b (Conduct Focused Surveys for California Red-Legged Frog), B-6a (Obtain Technical Assistance from the USFWS for Desert Tortoise), B-6b (Conduct Focused Clearance Surveys in Designated Areas), B-10a (Conduct Focused Surveys for Mojave Ground Squirrel), B-10b (Implement Construction Monitoring and Worker Environmental Awareness Program), and B-10c (Preserve Off-site Habitat for Mojave Ground Squirrel) will reduce Project-specific impacts to a level of less than significant. However, unavoidable cumulative impacts related to species listed as endangered or threatened, or proposed or critical habitat for these species, will still occur. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant impacts to endangered, threatened, or proposed critical habitat to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section E.5.2 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts related to biological resources.

Cumulative project activities could have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFG or USFWS.

As discussed in Section E.5.2 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, the cumulative projects discussed in Section C.3.9.2 of the EIR include large community and industrial developments. Some of these cumulative projects may be situated in areas which provide habitat relevant to species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFG or USFWS. The Project will have the potential to result in loss of and/or disturbance to: Short-joint beavertail, montane scrub/juniper woodland habitats and habitat for special-status plants, San Emigdio blue butterfly, coast horned lizards and silvery legless lizards, southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake, nesting and foraging habitat for Loggerhead Shrikes, Bendire's Thrashers, and LeConte's Thrashers, wintering Mountain Plover, occupied Burrowing Owl habitat, nesting raptors, Tehachapi pocket mouse, southern grasshopper mouse and Tulare grasshopper mouse, and loss of habitat for American badgers (Impacts B-12 to B-20, B-23, B-24, and B-26). Additionally, it is likely that the Project will result in the electrocution of or mortality of special-status bird and bat species due to transmission line collisions (Impacts B-21, B-22, and B-25).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project to address significant effects on the environment. However, even with implementation of Mitigation Measures B-12a through B-12c, B-13a through B-13d, B-16, B-17, B-19a and B-19b, B-20a and B-20b, and B-26, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts to biological resources will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR.

Rationale for Finding. The construction of new housing and infrastructure projects will result in further loss to wild lands and riparian areas that support sensitive plants and/or animals. Large scale housing projects can also contribute to the fragmentation of habitat and the loss of genetic variability between populations by severing linkages and movement corridors. The continued encroachment of residential communities on undisturbed open space also reduces the buffers that may minimize impacts to important edge communities and transition zones. The direct and indirect impacts to species (and their habitat) identified as candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFG or USFWS have the potential to combine with similar impacts for other projects. Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-12a (Conduct Focused Surveys for Short-joint Beavertail), B-12b (Avoid Impacts to Short-joint Beavertail), B-12c (Remove and Reintroduce Short-joint Beavertail), B-13a (Conduct Focused Surveys for the San Gabriel Oak), B-13b (Avoid Impacts to the San Gabriel Oak), B-13c (Minimize impacts to Montane Scrub and Juniper Woodland Habitats), B-13d (Preserve Off-site Montane Scrub and Juniper Woodland Habitats), B-16 (Conduct Focused Surveys for Southwestern Pond Turtle and Two-Striped Garter Snake), B-17 (Conduct Pre-construction Surveys and Monitoring for Breeding Birds), B-19a (Implement CDFG Protocol for Burrowing Owls) B-19b (Compensate for Loss of Burrowing Owl Habitat), B-20a (Avoid Nesting Season for Raptors) B-20b (Conduct Pre-construction Surveys for Nesting Raptors), and B-26 (Passively Relocate American Badgers During the Non-breeding Season), will reduce Project-specific impacts to a less-than-significant level. However, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts to biological resources are expected to occur as the result of implementation of other planned and ongoing projects, and they are considered significant and unavoidable.

Reference. Section E.5.2 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts related to biological resources.

V.3.3 Cultural Resources

There are no significant and unavoidable impacts to Cultural Resources associated with the Project.

V.3.4 Geology, Soils, and Paleontology

There are no significant and unavoidable impacts to Geology, Soils, or Paleontology associated with the Project.

V.3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

There are no significant and unavoidable impacts associated with Hazards and Hazardous Materials for the Project.

V.3.6 Hydrology and Water Quality

Water quality degradation would result from soil erosion and sedimentation caused by cumulative project construction activities.

As discussed in Section E.5.6 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, land-disturbing activities such as grading, excavation, and trenching have the potential to degrade water quality through soil erosion and sedimentation. Although Mitigation Measures H-1a through H-1e will help to minimize Impact H-1 for the Project, the cumulative degradation of water quality from construction-related soil erosion and sedimentation will be cumulatively significant when combined with the same impact from other projects.

ATTACHMENT B

Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures H-1a through H-1e will reduce project-specific impacts; however it is not feasible to implement such mitigation measures on other cumulative projects. As such, water quality degradation and soils erosion and sedimentation will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR.

Rationale for Finding. The Project is expected to cause soil erosion and sedimentation that will degrade water quality. Implementation of Mitigation Measures H-1a (Implementation of Best Management Practices for Erosion and Sediment Control), H-1b (Maximum Road Gradient), H-1c (Road Surface Treatment), H-1d (Timing of Construction Activities), and H-1e (Control of Side-cast Material, Right-of-Way Debris and Roadway Debris) will reduce project-specific impacts to a less-than-significant level by formalizing the preparation of specific procedures to reduce the potential water quality degradation due to soil erosion and sedimentation. However, when considered cumulatively with other proposed or ongoing projects, such as those described in Tables E-3 and E-4 of the EIR, it is possible that incremental effects of the Project will combine with similar impacts of multiple other projects in the area. Considering the rapid community development ongoing in the Project area, as demonstrated by the projects listed in Tables E-3 and E-4 of the EIR, it is reasonably assumed that at least one construction project in the project area would include land-disturbing activities, such as grading, which would potentially degrade water quality through soil erosion and sedimentation. The application of Mitigation Measures H-1a through H-1e to other projects, including those on the cumulative project list, which may contribute to the cumulative significance of Impact H-1, would help to minimize the significance of this impact. However, it is not feasible to implement such mitigation measures on other projects. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce this significant cumulative impact to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.6 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts of the Project.

Degradation of water quality would result from the accidental release of hazardous materials during cumulative project construction activities.

As discussed in Section E.5.6 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, any construction activities that involve the use of hazardous materials have the potential to cause the accidental release of those materials through a spill, improper handling or storage, or equipment malfunction, among other circumstances. Potentially hazardous materials include diesel fuel, gasoline, lubricant oils, hydraulic fluid, antifreeze, transmission fluid, lubricant grease, and other fluids, all of which are commonly used during basic construction activities. If accidentally released, hazardous substances could contaminate surface water through direct runoff and groundwater through infiltration. Although Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a through HAZ-1d and HAZ-2b will help to minimize Impact H-2 for the Project, the degradation of water quality from hazardous materials accidentally released during construction would be cumulatively significant and unavoidable when combined with the same impact from other projects.

Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a through HAZ-1d and HAZ-2b will reduce project-specific impacts; however, it is not feasible to implement such mitigation measures on other cumulative projects. As such, water quality degradation from the accidental release of hazardous materials during Project construction activities will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR.

Rationale for Finding. The Project will involve construction activities that may result in degradation of water quality due to the accidental release of hazardous materials. Implementation of Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a (Implement an Environmental Training and Monitoring Program), HAZ-1b (Implement a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan), and HAZ-1c (Ensure Proper Disposal of Construction Waste) formalize the preparation of a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan and specify procedures that will reduce the potential for soil contamination. Mitigation Measures HAZ-1d (Emergency Spill Supplies and Equipment for Construction Activities) and HAZ-2b (Emergency Spill Supplies and Equipment for Operation and Maintenance Activities) provide for materials to respond to an accidental spill during construction and maintenance activities. Therefore, project-specific impact will be reduced to a less-than-significant level. However, this impact would be considered cumulatively significant if at least one other ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future project that would require the use of potentially hazardous substances could affect one of the same waterways as the Project, in the case of an accidental spill during construction. With the rapid spread of community developments in the Project area, it is reasonably assumed that at least one construction project located in the Project vicinity would require the use of hazardous materials and could result in the accidental spill of such a material. In addition, because the construction of a residential development would include the use of heavy machinery that would require the use of potentially hazardous materials, there is a possibility that any one of the projects listed in Tables E-3 and E-4 of the EIR could cause the accidental spill of potentially hazardous materials during construction, which would subsequently degrade water quality in the same waterways that are affected by the Project. Due to the currently compromised condition of water quality in the project area, as described in Section C.7.1.3 (Water Quality) of the EIR, any action that further degrades water quality should be considered significant. The application of Mitigation Measures H-1a through H-1e to other projects, including those on the cumulative project list, which may contribute to the cumulative significance of Impact H-2, would help to minimize the significance of this impact. However, it is not feasible to implement such mitigation measures on other projects. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce this impact to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.6 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts of the Project.

Degradation of water quality would result from the accidental release of hazardous materials during cumulative project operational activities.

As discussed in Section E.5.6 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, this impact is essentially the same as the preceding, with the exception that this impact addresses accidental spills that occur during operations rather than construction activities. In general, operation and maintenance activities are less disruptive than construction activities because they require less land disturbance and little or no use of heavy machinery. An accidental release of hazardous materials during operations and maintenance activities will be considered cumulatively significant if at least one other ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future project that would require use of any potentially hazardous substances could affect one of the same waterways as the Project. Multiple proposed and ongoing residential projects are clustered along the Project route. It is reasonably foreseeable that some maintenance activities could require the use of heavy machinery, for instance in re-paving roadways or driveways, digging a swimming pool, or grading a yard, among others. In addition, any action that further degrades water quality in areas where it is already compromised (see Section C.7.1.3 of the EIR) should be considered significant. Therefore, when combined with the same impact from other projects, impacts to water quality will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable.

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Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a and HAZ-1b and HAZ-2b, will reduce project-specific impacts; however it is not feasible to implement such mitigation measures on other cumulative projects. Water quality degradation from the accidental release of hazardous materials during Project operational and maintenance activities will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR.

Rationale for Finding. While project-specific operational impacts to water quality (Impact H-3) will be less-than-significant, when considered in conjunction with other projects, impacts would be cumulatively significant if at least one other ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future project requiring use of potentially hazardous substances could affect one of the same waterways as the Project. The application of Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a (Implement an Environmental Training and Monitoring Program), HAZ-1b (Implement a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan), and HAZ-2b (Emergency Spill Supplies and Equipment for Operation and Maintenance Activities) to other projects would help to minimize the significance of this impact. However, it is not feasible to implement such mitigation measures on other projects. Therefore, impacts to water quality from an accidental release of hazardous materials will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce this impact to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.6 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts of the Project.

Existing groundwater resources would be disturbed through cumulative project-related excavation activities.

As discussed in Section E.5.6 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, the Project overlays two separate groundwater basins: the Tehachapi Valley East Groundwater Basin and the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin. As discussed in Section C.7.1.3 (Water Quality) and shown in Tables C.7-5 (Water Quality in Public Supply Wells – Tehachapi Valley East Groundwater Basin) and C.7-6 (Water Quality in Public Supply Wells – Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin) of the EIR, groundwater quality in the project area exceeds multiple maximum contaminant levels (MCLs), particularly in the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin. As discussed in Section C.7.4 of the EIR, excavation activities such as drilling and grading for tower installation have the potential to disturb existing groundwater resources; although the potential to interfere with overall groundwater supply and recharge is not likely. This impact is considered cumulatively significant if at least one other ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future project is located over the Tehachapi Valley East Groundwater Basin and/or the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin and will require excavation activities which could disturb the underlying groundwater resources.

Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure H-4 will reduce project-specific impacts (Impact H-4); however it is not feasible to implement such mitigation measures on other cumulative projects. As such, disturbance to existing groundwater resources will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR.

Rationale for Finding. Although Mitigation Measure H-4 (Develop and Implement a Groundwater Remediation Plan) will be implemented to minimize the potential impacts to existing groundwater resources (Impact H-4) for the Project to a less-than-significant level, cumulative impacts to groundwater resources from excavation activities will be significant when combined with the same impact from other

projects. Because the quality of groundwater in this area is already compromised, any action that would further disturb the groundwater resource should be considered significant. Tables E-3 and E-4 of the EIR show numerous ongoing and proposed projects located over the Tehachapi Valley East and/or the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basins, most of which are residential developments. Therefore, it is reasonably foreseeable that at least one ongoing or future project will involve some sort of excavation activity that will result in the disturbance of existing groundwater resources in the project area. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce this significant cumulative impact to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.6 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts of the Project.

Increased surface water runoff would result through the introduction of new impermeable areas from cumulative projects.

As described in Section C.7 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR, while substation facilities will be constructed on concrete pads and foundations as needed, thus introducing new impermeable areas that could increase surface water runoff, each substation site will be graded, fenced, and covered with a four-inch layer of crushed rock in all areas where other materials such as concrete are not required (see EIR Section B.3.2 – Substation Facility Construction). Additionally, any new transmission tower sites that would require grading or clearing will be graded so that surface water runoff would continue in the direction of the natural drainage. For the new substation sites, site-specific drainage features will be developed during final engineering design, ensuring consistency with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and the SWPPP prepared for the Project, as well as local ordinances. Drainage improvements at the substation sites may include concrete swales, ditches, and culverts. All Project-related drainage features and improvements will be maintained as needed during regular facility operations and maintenance activities. Therefore, although construction of the Project will introduce some new impermeable areas, these areas will not significantly increase surface water runoff due to the drainage features associated with the Project. Therefore, Impact H-5 for the Project will be less than significant with no mitigation recommended. However, this impact will be considered cumulatively significant if at least one other ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future project would introduce new impervious areas that could increase runoff into the same waterways affected by the Project. Tables E-3 and E-4 of the EIR indicate that approximately 341 new projects are planned or ongoing within five miles of the Project route. The vast majority of these projects are residential developments, which will require the introduction of new impervious areas. Therefore, impacts would be cumulatively significant.

Finding. Project-specific introduction of new impermeable areas, resulting in increased surface water runoff, will be less than significant (Impact H-5). However, when combined with similar impacts from ongoing and reasonably foreseeable projects, impacts will be considered cumulatively significant and unavoidable. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR.

Rationale for Finding. Although no mitigation was recommended for the Project (Impact H-5), cumulative impacts to surface water runoff through the creation of new impermeable areas will be significant when combined with the same impact from other projects. Because of the large number of ongoing and proposed projects, especially residential developments, in close proximity to the Project, it is reasonably foreseeable that one or more of these projects will result in the creation of new impermeable areas and will result in an increase in surface runoff into the same waterways affected by the Project. Implementation of mitigation measures to these other projects, similar to the surface construction and drainage features associated with the Project, may help to minimize the cumulative significance of this impact. However, it would not be feasible to implement mitigation measures or design standards on other

projects, given development standards and practices. Therefore, cumulative impacts will be considered significant and unavoidable. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce these significant impacts to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.6 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts of the Project.

Cumulatively significant flood hazards would be created through the placement of permanent aboveground structures in a flood hazard area, a floodplain, or a watercourse.

As discussed in Section E.5.6 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, the Project will not place any permanent infrastructure within a known watercourse. However, infrastructure will be situated within known existing floodplains and FEMA-designated flood hazard areas, which are shown on Figure C.7-3 (FEMA-Designated Flood Hazard Areas) of the EIR. This figure indicates that the Project will cross through Flood Hazard Areas in multiple locations. Infrastructure required for the Project will be engineered to withstand mechanical stresses from potential flooding in these areas, thus mitigating this impact to a less-than-significant level. However, this impact will be considered cumulatively significant if at least one other ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future project would introduce permanent, aboveground infrastructure in a floodplain, a flood hazard area, or a watercourse which is already affected by the Project. Tables E-3 and E-4 of the EIR indicate that multiple planned and ongoing projects are situated within five miles of the proposed route. Many of these projects will introduce permanent, aboveground structures in the same Flood Hazard Areas as the Project. Therefore, the cumulative effect will be significant and unavoidable.

Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure H-7 will reduce project-specific impacts (Impact H-7); however it is not feasible to implement such a mitigation measure on other cumulative projects. As such, creation of flood hazards will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure H-7 (Protect Aboveground Structures Against Flood and Erosion Damage) will be implemented to minimize the potential for flood hazards for the Project. The application of Mitigation Measure H-7 to other projects including those on the cumulative projects list, which may contribute to the cumulative significance of flood hazards, would help to minimize the significance of this impact. However, it is not feasible to implement such mitigation measures on other projects. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce these significant cumulative impacts to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.6 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts of the Project.

V.3.7 Land Use and Public Recreation

Cumulative project activities would temporarily disturb land uses that are traversed by or adjacent to the Project.

As discussed in Section E.5.7 (Land Use and Public Recreation – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, construction of the Project will temporarily disturb existing residential and recreational land uses (Impact L-1), primarily due to construction-related increases in traffic volumes, noise levels, and air quality emissions. While mitigation is required to reduce significant construction impacts resulting from the

Project, construction activities associated with other projects in close proximity, if they occur at the same time as the Project, will also disturb residential and recreational uses. These projects include the following planned residential developments: Pre-App 12-05-4, TTM 061894, and the Joshua Ranch Residential Development. The combined construction effects of multiple projects would be cumulatively significant at various times during construction.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project to address significant effects on the environment, including Mitigation Measures L-1a (Coordinate Construction Schedule and Activities with the Authorized Officers for the Recreation Areas), L-1b (Provide Access for Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Users), L-1c (Identify Alternative Recreation Areas), N-3a (Provide Advance Notification of Construction), and N-3b (Implement Best Management Practices for Construction Noise). However, even with implementation of these mitigation measures for the Project, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts related to the temporary disturbance of land uses will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. As identified in the discussion for Impact L-1, above, Mitigation Measures L-1a, L-1b, L-1c, N-3a, and N-3b will reduce short-term, Project-related impacts associated with construction to a level of less than significant. However, construction-related activities associated with other projects listed in Table E.4 of the EIR, if they occur at the same time as the Project, will also disturb residential uses. These projects include the following planned residential developments: Pre-App 12-05-4, TTM 061894, and the Joshua Ranch Residential Development. The combined construction effects of multiple projects will likely be cumulatively significant and unavoidable at various times during construction.

Reference. Section E.5.7 (Land Use and Public Recreation – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts related to land use and recreation.

Cumulative project operational activities would change the character of a recreational resource, diminishing its recreational value.

As discussed in Section E.5.7 (Land Use and Public Recreation – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, the Project will cross recreational resources, such as the PCT and trails within Ritter Ranch. No other current or future projects have been identified in the vicinity of the Project that would contribute to the long-term loss or degradation of recreational facilities. However, existing development has occurred across and in the area surrounding the PCT that will be traversed by the Project (e.g., transmission lines, wind turbines). The Ritter Ranch trails are also currently traversed by transmission lines in the same area that will be traversed by the Project. As such, the operation of the Project in conjunction with past projects will be cumulatively significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project to address significant effects on the environment, including Mitigation Measure L-5 (Site Towers to Avoid Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Trailhead) (see Impact L-5 in Section V.2.7 above). However, cumulative impacts resulting from past projects would remain significant and unavoidable. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. Existing development has occurred across and in the area surrounding the PCT that would be traversed by the Project (e.g., transmission lines, wind turbines). The Ritter Ranch trails are also currently traversed by transmission lines in the same area that would be traversed by the Project. As such, the operation of the Project in conjunction with past projects will be cumulatively significant.

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Although Mitigation Measure L-5 (Site Towers to Avoid Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Trailhead) will minimize the impacts of the Project, cumulative impacts resulting from past projects will remain significant and unavoidable.

Reference. Section E.5.7 (Land Use and Public Recreation – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts related to land use and recreation.

V.3.8 Agricultural Resources

Impact AG-6: Operation would conflict with a Williamson Act contract.

As discussed in Section C.9 (Agricultural Resources), the Project will construct lattice steel towers (LSTs) and new access and spur roads across Williamson Act contracts classified as Prime Agricultural Land and Mixed Acreage Parcels. Segment 3 of the Project will also involve the siting of the 20.2-acre Substation Two on Mixed Acreage Parcels. In total, operation of the Project (i.e., tower footings, access and spur roads, substation pad) will permanently remove approximately 1.0 acre of Prime Agricultural Land and 28.6 acres of Mixed Acreage Parcels. Given that Mixed Acreage Parcels include Prime Agricultural Land in addition to Non-Prime Williamson Act lands, the total amount of Prime Agricultural Land that will be permanently disturbed may exceed the 10 acres for Prime Farmland that has been established as the threshold level of significance, resulting in significant and unavoidable impacts.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. Given that Mixed Acreage Parcels include Prime Agricultural Land in addition to Non-Prime Williamson Act lands, the total amount of Prime Agricultural Land that will be permanently disturbed may exceed the 10 acres for Prime Farmland that has been established as the threshold level of significance, resulting in significant and unavoidable impacts. There are no known feasible mitigations or alternatives to reduce the effects of to a level of less than significant. Impacts will be significant and unavoidable.

Reference. Section C.9 (Agricultural Resources) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the impacts to Williamson Act contracts caused by operation of the Project.

The Project in conjunction with past, existing, and future projects would convert a cumulatively significant amount of Farmland to non-agricultural uses.

The Project will encroach upon Farmland during construction and operation. Temporary and permanent Farmland conversion would not be anticipated to exceed 10 acres for Prime Farmland and 40 acres for non-Prime Farmland; however, the construction of other project such as the Del Sur Ranch residential development (TTM 046250) will also create a temporary and permanent conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. The combined effects to Farmland from the construction of multiple projects would be cumulatively significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project to address significant effects on the environment. Although mitigation measures described in Section C.9 (Agricultural Resources) of the EIR will reduce agricultural impacts of the Project, the residual effects of other cumulative projects remains cumulatively significant.

The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. While the Project would not be anticipated to exceed 10 acres for Prime Farmland and 40 acres for non-Prime Farmland (Impacts AG-1 and AG-2), the construction of other projects such as the Del Sur Ranch residential development (TTM 046250) will also create a temporary and permanent conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. The combined effects to Farmland from the construction of multiple projects will be cumulatively significant. Although mitigation measures described in Section C.9 (Agricultural Resources) of the EIR will reduce agricultural impacts of the Project, the residual effects of other projects remains cumulatively significant.

Reference. Section E.5.8 (Agricultural Resources – Cumulative Impacts Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts caused by construction of the Project.

The Project in conjunction with past, existing, and future projects would interfere with agricultural operations.

Construction and operation of the Project will introduce transmission structures and create new access and spur roads across agricultural land. These activities will temporarily or permanently disrupt agricultural operations, which when combined with past, existing, and future projects will result in significant cumulative impacts.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project to address significant effects on the environment. Although mitigation measures described in Section C.9 (Agricultural Resources) of the EIR will reduce agricultural impacts of the Project, the residual effects of other cumulative projects remains cumulatively significant.

The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. Construction and operation of the Project will also introduce transmission structures and create new access and spur roads across agricultural land. These activities will temporarily or permanently disrupt agricultural operations (Impacts AG-3 and AG-4), and as such, Mitigation Measures N-3a (Provide Advance Notification of Construction), AG-3 (Establish Agreement and Coordinate Construction Activities with Agricultural Landowners), and AG-4 (Locate Transmission Towers and Pulling/Splicing Stations to Avoid Agricultural Operations) will be implemented to reduce agricultural impacts of the Project. However, the siting of other proposed projects (e.g., Del Sur Ranch residential development [TTM 046250]) will be located across farmland, and will similarly disrupt agricultural operations. The combined effects to agricultural operations from the construction and operation of multiple projects will be cumulatively significant.

Reference. Section E.5.8 (Agricultural Resources – Cumulative Impacts Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts caused by construction of the Project.

The Project in conjunction with past, existing, and future projects would conflict with Williamson Act contracts.

The Project will permanently remove 1.0 acre of Prime Agricultural Land and 28.6 acres of Mixed Acreage Parcels. Depending on the amount of Prime Agricultural Land that is included in the Mixed Acreage Parcels, permanent disturbance of Williamson Act lands may exceed the 10-acre threshold for

Prime Farmland, resulting in significant impacts. When combined with past, existing, and future projects, conflicts with Williamson Act contracts would be cumulatively significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project to address significant effects on the environment. Although mitigation measures described in Section C.9 (Agricultural Resources) of the EIR will reduce agricultural impacts of the Project, the residual effects of other cumulative projects remains cumulatively significant.

The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. The Project will permanently disturb Williamson Act lands and may exceed the 10-acre threshold for Prime Farmland, resulting in significant impacts (Impact AG-6). While no current or future projects have been proposed in the vicinity of the Project that would contribute to a permanent disruption of Williamson Act lands, impacts resulting from the Project alone would remain significant and unavoidable. No additional mitigation measures have been identified that would reduce cumulative impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section E.5.8 (Agricultural Resources – Cumulative Impacts Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts caused by construction of the Project.

V.3.9 Noise

Impact N-2: Operational noise levels would violate local standards.

The most stringent land use noise standards of all the local jurisdictions in the project area are included within the Los Angeles County noise ordinances, which contain a noise standard of 45 dBA for noise-sensitive areas such as residential land uses along the route within Los Angeles County. The level of worst-case wet weather and heavy load noise will likely be between 55 and 65 dBA along the corridor, which will exceed the Los Angeles County Ordinance Standards, resulting in a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. No feasible mitigation can be incorporated in the Project to address significant operational noise increases on the environment. The permanent increase in noise as a result of corona noise discharge will impact nearby receptors to the ROW in Los Angeles County resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact. However, audible noise from the corona effect above 50 dBA for the 500-kV line will not exceed exterior noise standards for sensitive receptors as established by the Cities of Lancaster and Palmdale, as well as Kern County. No mitigation measures have been identified to reduce operational corona noise levels below the Los Angeles County noise ordinance standards. Impacts are considered significant and unavoidable.

Impact N-4: Permanent noise levels along the ROW would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines.

Corona noise will occur along the entire corridor of the Project, which is in close proximity to sensitive receptors, and it will create ambient noise levels greater than the noise occurring under existing conditions. This will cause significant operational noise impacts to adjacent sensitive uses. The level of worst-case wet weather and heavy load noise would likely be between 55 and 65 dBA along the corridor, meaning that

introduction of new corona noise will result in a substantial (more than 5 dBA) increase to the ambient noise levels of nearby receptors, resulting in a significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. The permanent increase in noise as a result of corona noise discharge will impact nearby receptors to the ROW resulting in significant and unavoidable impacts. The precise location of highest possible corona noise is not known and may not be known until after commencing operation. This is because conductor surface defects, damage, and inconsistencies can influence the corona effect. Practicable measures for eliminating or reducing the wet weather audible noise levels are generally limited to carefully handling the conductor during construction to avoid damaging the surface and altering the conductor size and bundling configuration. SCE can be expected to treat the conductor with care during construction to avoid creating irregularities (e.g., nicks, scrapes, and burrs) on the conductor surface, which can cause localized increases in corona and audible noise. SCE takes precautions to avoid damaging the line in this way as a regular course of business in order to preserve the physical strength of the line and its ability to transmit power. Operational noise impacts will remain unavoidable. There are no feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant operational noise impact to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.10 (Noise) provides a complete assessment of the operational noise impacts of the Project

Cumulative construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors.

Construction activities associated with the Project will result in intermittent temporary violations of the County of Los Angeles noise ordinances as a result of mobile construction equipment. Similarly, construction activities associated with other projects in close proximity to the Project alignment that potentially occur at the same time as Project construction activities could also violate local standards. The combined effect of construction noise will be cumulatively significant at various times during construction.

Finding. CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. For the Project, Mitigation Measures N-1 (Provide Shields for Stationary Construction Equipment), N-3a (Provide Advanced Notification of Construction), and N-3b (Implement Best Management Practices for Construction Noise) (see Impacts N-1 and N-3 above) will reduce the Project's potential to violate the local noise standards to the extent feasible; however noise impacts from mobile construction equipment would remain cumulatively significant. Mitigation to reduce project-specific construction noise impacts to sensitive receptors will reduce the overall cumulative construction noise generated by all construction projects in the area, but to mitigate cumulative construction noise would require the staggering of construction timing and dismissal of construction projects, which is infeasible.

Reference. Section E.5.9 (Noise – Cumulative Impact Analysis) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative construction and operational noise impacts of the Project.

Permanent increases in noise levels along the ROW from operation of the transmission lines and other projects in the project area would result in cumulative impacts.

Sensitive receptors located directly adjacent to the Project ROW will be impacted by operational noise from the transmission lines. Because the operational noise generated by the Project alone will result in a

substantial increase to the ambient noise levels at sensitive receptor locations along the lines, additional further development within 600 feet of these receptors could combine with this impact to further increase ambient noise levels.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. The effect of operational corona noise combined with other noise sources located within close proximity to the Project ROW and residences will be cumulatively significant. Mitigation to reduce project specific operational noise impacts to sensitive receptors will reduce the overall cumulative operational noise generated by all construction projects in the area, but to mitigate cumulative operational noise would require the dismissal of development projects, which is infeasible.

Reference. Section E.5.9 (Noise – Cumulative Impact Analysis) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative construction and operational noise impacts of the Project.

V.3.10 Visual Resources

Cumulative Project activities would substantially degrade scenic vistas, existing visual character, or quality of the site and its surroundings.

As discussed in Section E.5.11 (Visual Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, implementation of the Project and projects described in Tables E-3 and E-4 will result in significant, unavoidable cumulative visual impacts to scenic vistas and substantial cumulative degradation of existing scenic vistas, landscape character, or quality of the site and its surroundings (Impacts V-7 and V-10). Implementation of this Project will also combine with the visual effects of existing 66-kV, 220-kV, 500-kV, and 1000-kV transmission lines in affected viewsheds, and will cumulatively result in increased structure sizes and additional transmission lines that will cause a significant increase in structure prominence and industrial character (Impacts V-1 and V-7 through V-15). The Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project, for example, will cause an additional cumulative, significant increase in structure prominence and industrial character. Transmission lines in existing utility corridors have created structure prominence and industrial character in previously natural-appearing landscapes, resulting in significant cumulative visual impacts. Introduction of the Project will add to these visual impacts. All of these increases in visual impacts will be cumulatively considerable.

Regarding short-term visual impacts associated with the Project, construction activities would combine with similar impacts of the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project and other on-going projects in the same field of view, resulting in the following short-term, significant, unavoidable cumulative visual impacts: Construction activities will result in the temporary presence of equipment, materials, and workforce at work sites along the transmission line routes and at the substations. Vehicles, heavy equipment, helicopters, facility components, and workers will be visible during construction and operation of laydown areas, creation of new access/spur roads, construction of new towers, and installation of conductors. Most of this construction activity will be visible from public roadways and nearby private properties.

Regarding long-term visual impacts, those associated with the Project will combine with similar impacts of the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project and other on-going projects in the geographic extent, and will result in the following long-term, significant and unavoidable visual impacts: new transmission line facilities would add new, contrasting visual elements to the existing landscape and degrade views from numerous vantage points, including key observation positions analyzed in this study.

The combined effect of the Project with other planned developments (see Tables E-3 and E-4) would result in permanent changes to the landscape, all of which would be cumulatively significant, unavoidable visual impacts.

Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a through V-1f, V-5, V-9, and V-15 will reduce project-specific impacts; however it is not feasible to implement such mitigation measures on other cumulative projects. As such, visual impacts will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measures V-1a (Use Tubular Steel Poles), V-1b (Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access Roads), V-1c (Dispose of Cleared Vegetation), V-1d (Slope-Round and Dispose of Excavated Materials), V-1e (Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors, Textures, and Finishes), V-1f (Establish Evergreen Vegetative Screen), V-5 (Match Structure Spacing and Spans), V-9 (Construct New Access and Spur Roads with Least Visual Disturbance), and V-15 (Local Agency Approvals [Miles S3-0.0 to S3-35.2 and S2-0.0 to S2-21.6]) will be implemented to minimize the potential significance of visual impacts associated with the adopted Project. However, multiple ongoing and proposed projects in the Project vicinity (See Tables E-3 and E-4 of the EIR) will contribute similar visual impacts to the environment. The resulting cumulative visual impacts will be substantially greater than those that will occur with the Project alone, resulting in significant, unavoidable cumulative visual impacts. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant visual impact to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.11 (Visual Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts on visual resources.

Cumulative Project activities would create new sources of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

As discussed in Section E.5.11 (Visual Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR, the only new sources of light potentially affecting nighttime views will be area-lighting at the two new substations. With implementation of Mitigation Measures V-16b, V-16c, and V-16d, project-specific visual impacts of new sources of light will be reduced to a level of less than significant. However, other planned developments described in Tables E.3 and E.4 of the EIR will contribute new sources of light that will adversely affect nighttime views, including new street lighting at all subdivisions, planned developments, commercial developments, and civic developments, including Ritter Ranch and Anaverde Ranch. The resulting visual effects will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable.

Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1e and V-16a through V-16e will reduce project-specific impacts; however it is not feasible to implement such mitigation measures on other cumulative projects. As such, creation of new sources of substantial light and glare will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measures V-1e (Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors, Textures, and Finishes), V-16a (Use Only Non-Specular and Non-Reflective Conductors and Insulators), V-16b (Use Magnetic Coils at Entrance Gate), V-16c (Use Only Low-Level, Directional, Shielded Lighting), and V-16d (Only Perform Routine Maintenance Activities During Daylight Hours) will be implemented to minimize project-specific cumulative impacts to light and glare. However, these Project-specific impacts will combine with similar impacts of other identified projects in a substantial way, resulting in

significant, unavoidable cumulative visual impacts. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant visual impact to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section E.5.11 (Visual Resources – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts on visual resources.

V.3.11 Traffic and Transportation

Cumulative closure of roads to through traffic or reduction of travel lanes would result in substantial congestion.

The residential development in the Palmdale area has contributed to congestion on area roadways that will be crossed by the Project. There are currently approximately 10 development projects scheduled within one-half mile of the Project route, all of which are currently under construction and would likely be at least partially occupied when construction of the Project begins. Traffic associated with future residential developments will contribute to congestion on area roadways. Temporary roadway congestion resulting from lane closures associated with construction of the Project will combine with congestion resulting from past, present and future residential development to create temporary cumulative congestion on area roadways.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale for Finding. While Mitigation Measures T-1a (Prepare Traffic Control Plans) and T-1b (Restrict Lane Closures), identified above for Impact T-1, will reduce project-specific construction-related congestion impacts to a less-than-significant level, when combined with congestion resulting from past, present, and future residential development cumulatively significant and unavoidable impacts will occur.

Reference. Section E.5.10 (Traffic and Transportation – Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the EIR provides a complete assessment of the cumulative construction and operational transportation and traffic impacts of the Project.

V.3.12 Population and Housing

With implementation of Option A as part of the adopted Project, as described in Section III.1 above, there will be no impacts to Population and Housing associated with the Project.

VI. Findings Regarding Option A and Option B

As explained above, two different alignment re-routes, referred to as Options A and B, were considered as part of the Project in addition to the route proposed by SCE. These route options were evaluated in the same level as SCE's proposed route in the EIR, allowing the Commission as the lead agency the advantage of potentially choosing one of these routes, if it were found to offer substantial environmental benefits compared the route proposed by SCE.

VI.1 Implementation of Option A

Based on the analysis in the EIR, the Commission has determined that the Option A re-route offers substantial environmental benefits. Namely, it will avoid the displacement of three single family

residences located along Cherry Tree Lane, north of Lake Elizabeth Road. Accordingly, the Commission adopts the proposed Project and directs SCE to implement Option A.

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds that the portion of the proposed alignment located between approximately Project Mile S2-5.7 and Project Mile S2-7.8 is infeasible and less desirable than the Project being adopted by the CPUC. The CPUC rejects this portion of SCE's proposed route in favor of the Option A re-route because it would result in greater environmental impacts related to land use, population and housing, and visual resources. Specifically, SCE's proposed route would displace three single family residences located along Cherry Tree Lane, north of Lake Elizabeth Road. Additionally, in comparison to the Project, SCE's proposed alignment would result in significantly greater adverse impacts to the landscape and scenic vistas associated with Elizabeth Lake Road (see Impact V-10 in Table V.1 above). Specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make the portion of SCE's proposed alignment located between approximately Project Mile S2-5.7 and Project Mile S2-7.8 infeasible and less desirable than Option A as incorporated into the adopted Project.

VI.2 Option B of Segment 2

Option B of Segment 2 was the proposed Segment 2 route presented in SCE's December 2004 CPCN filing, and is included in SCE's Amended PEA as Antelope-Vincent 2. Option B is identical to the SCE's proposed Project except between approximately Mile S2-8.1 and Mile S2-14.9. At Mile S2-8.1, Option B deviates from SCE's proposed alignment by continuing in a southeasterly direction parallel to the existing Antelope-Vincent corridor through the Ritter Ranch and Anaverde Ranch community development areas, and rejoins the Project route at approximately Mile S2-14.9. At Option B Mile S2-10.0, Option B would connect to the existing Midway-Vincent No. 3 transmission line and use the existing Midway-Vincent No. 3 infrastructure that travels towards Vincent Substation, then cut east on new infrastructure, travel underneath the existing transmission lines in the existing Midway-Vincent ROW, and run parallel and east of its former alignment to the Vincent Substation. The Option B re-route is 3.1 miles in length, and would decrease the Segment 2 alignment by approximately 3.7 miles. Option B would require 17.9 miles of widened ROW adjacent to the existing Antelope-Vincent transmission corridor within Segment 2. Due to the reduced length of Option B in comparison to the Project, approximately 19 fewer single-circuit 500-kV LSTs would be required (87 in total). In other regards, Option B is identical to SCE's proposed route. Section B.2.1 of the EIR provides a full description of Option B.

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds that this option is infeasible and less desirable than the Project being adopted by the CPUC, and rejects Option B because it would have greater environmental impacts related to cultural resources, land use, noise, traffic and transportation, and population and housing. Option B would impact one additional cultural resources site (CA-LAN-1956), a prehistoric archaeological site with rock art and a rock feature. It would also prevent planned residential development and educational facilities within Ritter Ranch and the Anaverde Ranch community development areas. Furthermore, construction and operation of Option B would affect a greater number of sensitive receptors between approximately Mile S2-8.1 and Project Mile S2-14.9, and would result in at least one additional road crossing in the Ritter Ranch and Anaverde Ranch community developments areas. Option B would also require the removal of residential homes along Cherry Tree Lane, which will be avoided through implementation of Option A as part of the adopted Project. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make this Option B infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project.

ATTACHMENT B

VII. Alternatives to the Project

Through the alternatives screening process for the EIR, ten potential alternatives to the Antelope Transmission Project, Segments 2 and 3, were developed and subjected to a screening process to determine whether they should be analyzed in detail in the EIR. This collaborative process was completed with input from SCE, the Tehachapi Collaborative Study Group (TCSG), the EIR team, and comments from the public. The ten potential alternatives are described in Section D.2.3 of the EIR; they included alternative features that ranged from minor routing adjustments to SCE's originally proposed transmission line route to entirely different transmission line alignments, as well as alternate system designs. Six of these alternatives were eliminated at the outset because they did not meet project objectives, meet legal, regulatory, and technical feasibility criteria, and/or avoid or reduce environmental effects of the Project.

A total of four alternatives were developed and analyzed in the EIR. Additionally, the No Project Alternative was analyzed in the EIR. The findings and rationale for rejecting the four alternatives analyzed in the EIR, and the No Project Alternative are discussed below.

VII.1 Substation 2C to Substation One via Cameron Canyon Road (Segment 3B) (Alternative 1)

This alternative begins at alternative Substation 2C, and continues south and east to Substation One paralleling the existing Cal Cement-Goldtown-Monolith-Windlands 66-kV transmission line, which runs through hills within an existing wind farm, and then along Cameron Canyon Road. Alternative 1 heads south from alternative Substation 2C (Project Mile S3-0.0) for approximately 0.2 miles, then east-southeast for 1.5 miles, and then generally south for 3.7 miles. It rejoins the Project route at Mile S3-5.2. This alternative re-route is 5.3 miles in length, and increases Segment 3B by 0.1 miles (9.7 miles total). This alternative would result in the need for one additional 500-kV single-circuit transmission tower. From Substation One to the Vincent Substation, Alternative 1 is identical to SCE's proposed Project. Section D.3.1 of the EIR provides a full description of this alternative.

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds that this alternative is infeasible and less desirable than the Project being adopted by the CPUC, and rejects this Alternative 1 because it would have greater environmental impacts associated with biological resources, hydrology and water quality, noise, visual resources, land use, and population and housing. This alternative would result in greater impacts to Mojave riparian forest habitat due to additional drainage crossings, greater disturbances to nesting special-status riparian birds and raptors, and a slightly greater potential to permanently lose or temporarily disturb short-joint beavertail cactus. The Alternative 1 transmission line alignment would also have the potential to cross a greater number of ephemeral waterways and valley washes, thereby resulting in an increased potential to impact surface water resources and water quality. This alternative would affect a greater number of sensitive receptors along Cameron Canyon Road during both construction and operation, thereby resulting in increased noise-related impacts, and would also require the removal of several single-family residences along both Cameron Canyon Road and Cherry Tree Lane, thus increasing impacts related to land use and population and housing. Alternative 1 would additionally result in increased visual impacts in the vicinity of Highway 58 and Jameson Street, as well as Cameron Canyon and Elizabeth Lake Roads. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make this alternative infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project.

VII.2 Substation 1B to Antelope via 100th Street (Segments 3A/3B) (Alternative 2)

As described in Section D.3.2, Alternative 2 would utilize alternative Substation 1B and would be routed south of Truman Road to avoid homes. Alternative 2 is identical to SCE's proposed Project, except between Mile S3-9.5 and S3-22.1 and Mile S3-25.3 and S3-30.6. From alternative Substation 1B, Alternative 2 would run south approximately 0.9 miles, and then turn southwest for approximately 2.8 miles, crossing the private Sagebrush 220-kV transmission line at approximately Mile S3-12.4. At Mile S3-13.8, the ROW would turn south, paralleling 100th Street West for approximately 8.5 miles. Between Mile S3-13.8 and S3-16.9, the ROW would be placed adjacent to an existing 66-kV transmission line. Between Mile S3-22.1 and S3-22.3, near Truman Road, the alignment would turn southwest and run parallel and east of an LADWP Easement for 0.5 miles before rejoining the SCE's proposed alignment at Mile S3-22.1.

At Project Mile S3-25.3, Alternative 2 again would deviate from SCE's proposed alignment by turning to the east and following Hawk Avenue for approximately 0.7 miles. It would then turn south to realign itself with 100th Street West. The ROW would then travel south along 100th Street for 5.3 miles, and then turn west along West Avenue F for 0.6 miles, where it would again rejoin SCE's proposed route at Mile 30.6. Under this alternative, Segment 3A would increase by 1.5 miles, and the total Project ROW would increase by 1.9 miles (56.9 miles in comparison to 58.8 miles).

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds that this alternative is infeasible and less desirable than the Project being adopted by CPUC, and rejects Alternative 2 because it would have greater environmental impacts related to biological resources, hydrology and water quality, land use and recreation, agricultural resources, noise, traffic and transportation, visual resources, and population and housing. Alternative 2 would increase disturbances to: Joshua tree woodland and Joshua tree woodland-creosote scrub habitats; riparian forest habitat and the nesting habitat of special-status riparian birds; and, Mohave Ground Squirrel and its habitat. This alternative would additionally increase potential disturbances to, or the loss of the nesting and foraging habitat for Loggerhead Shrikes, Bendire's Thrashers, and LeConte's Thrashers, occupied Burrowing Owl habitat, and nesting raptors. It would also increase the potential to take desert tortoise, impede desert tortoise movement, and disturb the foraging habitat of Swainson's Hawks. Due to the increased length and number of towers associated with Alternative 2, there would be a slight increase in the potential to impact water quality. This alternative would also preclude development of planned educational facilities in the Ritter Ranch and Anaverde Ranch community development areas, require the relocation of more than two dozen residences, and could permanently affect recreational access to the PCT by restricting parking, depending on final siting of the towers. Due to its proximity to residential areas, Alternative 2 would increase noise-related impacts to sensitive receptors during both construction and operation, and would additionally prolong construction-related traffic and transportation impacts due to a longer construction schedule. In comparison to the adopted Project, this alternative would result in greater temporary disturbances to, and permanent conversions of, Prime Farmland, and slightly increase permanent disturbances to Williamson Act lands. In addition, Alternative 2 would result in significant adverse impacts to visual resources, particularly in the vicinity of 100th Street West for several miles. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make this alternative infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project.

VII.3 Antelope-Vincent Re-route 1 (Segment 2) (Alternative 3)

Alternative 3 is identical to SCE's proposed Project, except between Mile S2-7.8 and S2-14.8. At Mile S2-7.8, Alternative 3 would remain east and parallel to the existing Antelope-Vincent corridor through the Ritter Ranch and Anaverde Ranch community development areas, rejoining SCE's proposed route at Mile S2-14.8. This re-route is approximately 3.4 miles in length, and decreases the Segment 2 alignment by that

distance, for a total distance of approximately 18 miles. Section D.3.3 of the EIR provides a full description of this alternative.

Finding/Rationale. As discussed in Section D.5.2 of the EIR, Alternative 3 is considered the environmentally superior alternative. Although Alternative 3 is the environmentally superior alternative, the CPUC finds that it is infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project, and rejects this alternative because it would have greater long-term significant impacts related to land use and recreation, noise, traffic and transportation, and population and housing, and would also increase some significant impacts related to biological resources and geology and soils. Alternative 3 would preclude planned residential development in the Ritter Ranch and Anaverde Ranch community development areas, and permanently affect recreational access to the PCT due to parking constraints. Construction and operational noise impacts would increase for residences along Godde Hill Road, Hacienda Ranch Road, Cherry Tree Lane, in addition to which nearby sensitive receptors in the Ritter Ranch and Anaverde Ranch community development areas would be affected. Alternative 3's transmission line route through a portion of the Ritter Ranch development area would also affect traffic on area roadways, and construction could impede pedestrian movements and bike paths within this area. In addition to the above, Alternative 3 would have greater impacts to aquatic habitat for the southwest pond turtle and two-striped garter snake, as well as the severity of impacts from liquefaction. In addition, implementation of Alternative 3 would be extremely disruptive to approved plans to develop Ritter Ranch. Specifically, associated plans within Ritter Ranch for housing development, an elementary school, community parks, and associated facilities would be disrupted. Implementation of Alternative 3 would also require major re-configuration of plans for all components of Phase I of Ritter Ranch. Ritter Ranch's Project Manager Jora Sarkissian testified to the Commission on September 20, 2006 that Alternative 3 could cost Ritter Ranch more than $80 million and that the hard cost of losing the 117 lots and 89 detached condo units that would necessarily not be able to be developed if Alternative 3 were selected would be close to $19 million. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make this alternative infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project.

VII.4 Antelope-Vincent Re-route 2 (Segment 2) (Alternative 4)

Alternative 4 would deviate from SCE's proposed alignment at Mile S2-3.4, and head south for approximately 1.9 miles, crossing the California Aqueduct and the Portal Ridge mountain range. It would then continue southwest for 0.6 miles, crossing Elizabeth Lake Road in Leona Valley. From this point, the alignment would then continue south 0.5 miles, remaining west of Bouquet Canyon Road and east of 86th Street West, then run southwest for 0.6 miles, and then south again for 1.2 miles, crossing Bouquet Canyon Road. The alignment would then turn east paralleling the Midway-Vincent No. 1 transmission line corridor for 2.0 miles, and rejoin the Project ROW at Mile S2-10.7. This alternative route would be 6.8 miles in length, and would decrease Segment 2 by approximately 0.5 miles (21.1 miles total). In other regards, Alternative 4 is identical to SCE's proposed route. Details of Alternative 4 are provided in Section D.3.4 of the EIR.

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds that Alternative 4 is infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project, and rejects this alternative because it would have greater environmental impacts related to geology and soils and visual resources, biological resources, agricultural resources, fires, air quality, water quality and land use. Alternative 4 would cross a substantially greater number of mapped landslide areas and a longer section of landslide prone Pelona Schist. Alternate 4 increases the potential for liquefaction and erosion. Additionally, this alternative would traverse a greater expanse of potentially liquefiable young Alluvium in the Leona Valley. Consequently, this alternative would increase impacts related to geology. Alternative 4 would also traverse more erosion prone soils than the adopted Project, thus increasing impacts associated with soils. Along Bouquet Canyon Road, Alternative 4 would result in

greater visual impacts to foreground and middleground views that are greater than either the Project or any other alternative. In addition, Alternative 4 would have the greatest distance of new ROW in comparison to Alternatives 1 though 3 and SCE's proposed route (29.7 miles), thereby increasing potential disturbances to biological resources. Alternative 4 would also slightly increase temporary disturbances to, and permanent conversions of, Prime Farmland in comparison to the adopted Project, SCE's propsed alignment, and Alternatives 1 and 3. Alternative 4 increases the potential for wildfire dangers to human life and property within existing communities. Alternative 4 has greater potential for adverse air quality impacts affecting more sensitive receptors. Alternative 4 impacts more waterways than the Transmission Project. Alternative 4 has the potential to cause significant water quality degradation. Alternative 4 is inconsistent with the Los Angeles County designated CSD for Leona Valley. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make this alternative infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project.

VII.5 No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, construction and operation of the Antelope Transmission Project, Segments 2 and 3, would not occur. As such, none of the Project's environmental impacts due to construction and operation would occur. However, under the No Project Alternative, the objectives of the Project, as addressed in Section A.2 of the EIR, would not be realized. For example, the improved system reliability and operating flexibility of the existing transmission grid of the project area would not occur, and the potential for future overload conditions of the existing Antelope-Mesa 220-kV Transmission Line would not be corrected.

In the absence of the Project, SCE still would be required to interconnect and integrate power generation facilities into its electric system, as required under Sections 210 and 212 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. Section 824 [i] and [k]), and Sections 3.2 and 5.7 of the CAISO's Tariff. According to SCE, several wind energy projects either have applications pending before Kern County, or are in advanced planning stages and expected to submit applications in the near future. Due to their locations, these upcoming wind energy projects will need to interconnect to the SCE transmission system via the Antelope Substation or some other new substation located in the Project vicinity to allow power to be delivered to load in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. However, these wind energy projects cannot be interconnected to the SCE transmission system without additional transmission infrastructure north of the Antelope Substation, and an increase in transmission capacity south of Antelope Substation. Therefore, without upgrades and additions to the existing system, as new power generation facilities are added to meet the power needs of southern California, SCE's system will likely experience system-wide power flow and reliability problems due to overloading of the existing system. Although connection to the transmission systems of other power utilities (such as PG&E or LADWP) is possible, these connections would not meet SCE's objectives for the Project, and would not fulfill the goals of the TCSG, as addressed in Section A.2.5 of the EIR.

Under the No Project Alternative, the following events or actions (scenarios) related to electricity generation and transmission are reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future:

- Initial wind projects in the Antelope Valley and Tehachapi areas would be postponed or cancelled, as additional transmission infrastructure and capacity would either not be available, or these proposed wind projects would have to find alternate means to connect to SCE's transmission system without compromising system reliability.
- The requirement of the Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS), which requires retail sellers of electricity such as SCE and PG&E to increase their sale of electricity produced by renewable energy sources to 20 percent by 2010 (updated from 2017 to 2010 per the Energy Action Plan), may not be

achieved as access to renewable energy from the Antelope Valley-Tehachapi region would either not be provided, or would be delayed.

- Other renewable energy resources would need to be identified and transmission studies would need to be conducted to connect these newly identified sources to the transmission grid, which would likely further limit achievement of the RPS goal by the 2010 deadline.
- The conceptual plan recommended by the TCSG would not be fully implemented. This plan is intended to collect power from Tehachapi area wind projects, interconnect facilities into the State's backbone grid, and upgrade the network to reliably deliver that power to load centers. The conceptual plan, which would allow for the transmission of over 4,000 MW of wind power, would be not be fully achieved because the transmission infrastructure provided by the Project would not be available to interconnect future wind projects.

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds that the No Project Alternative is infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project, and rejects this alternative. The environmental impacts of the No Project Alternative would primarily result from transmission upgrades or new transmission facilities along different alignments. Because the No Project Alternative may also require the construction of transmission lines with impacts similar to those described for the Project, the CPUC finds that the No Project Alternative would preclude realization of the substantial environmental benefits of the adopted Project derived from the generation and use of renewable wind energy. The No Project Alternative would not help achieve the CPUC's objective for meeting the State's RPS goal by 2010, or the project objective of preventing overloading of existing transmission facilities in the SCE grid, specifically the Antelope-Mesa 220-kV transmission line. The No Project Alternative would not enable the interconnection of various wind generation projects in the Antelope Valley-Tehachapi region to the SCE transmission system nor would it eliminate existing constraints to the transmission of renewable energy from the Tehachapi and Antelope Valley areas to Southern California. Therefore, the CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations, including those identified in Section VIII.C. of the Decision (Statement of Overriding Considerations) that make the No Project Alternative infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project.

VIII. Findings Regarding Other CEQA Considerations

VIII.1 Growth-Inducing Impacts

The growth-inducing potential of a project is significant if it fosters growth or a concentration of population above what is assumed in local and regional land use plans, or in projections made by regional planning authorities. Significant growth impacts also occur if a project provides infrastructure or service capacity to accommodate growth levels beyond those permitted by local or regional plans and policies.

Finding/Rationale. As discussed in Section E.3.2 (Growth-Inducing Effects) of the EIR, both locally and regionally, the project area is experiencing substantial population growth, which is reflected in a large number of proposed and planned future residential development projects. This growth is expected to occur with or without the Project. The Project is not intended to supply power related to growth for any particular development, either directly or indirectly. The transmission line will be built so that as power loads increase, future overloading of transmission facilities is avoided. By increasing capacity and reducing generation outages, the Project will increase power reliability. Since the Project will increase capacity, it is indirectly growth-inducing. The Project will initially be operated at 220 kV in order to meet current transmission needs associated with ongoing wind development. However, the majority of the line will be built

to 500-kV standards so that as renewable power loads increase, future overloading of transmission facilities will be avoided. The CAISO maintains that the use of 500-kV standards for the Project will avoid the future need to construct and/or tear down and replace multiple 220-kV facilities with 500-kV facilities to meet growing power generation and transmission needs. Although the Project will not directly result in growth in the area, its implementation will remove future obstacles to population growth by facilitating the transmission of future projected power generation in the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area. Therefore, the additional available capacity is considered growth inducing. Accordingly, the CPUC finds that the Project will have growth-inducing impacts.

VIII.2 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes

Irreversible and irretrievable environmental changes caused by a project include uses of nonrenewable resources during construction and operation, long-term or permanent access to previously inaccessible areas, and irreversible damage that may result from project-related accidents.

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds that the Project will result in a number of irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources. Implementation of the Project will result in the consumption of energy as it relates to the fuel needed for construction-related activities. Construction will require the manufacture of new materials, some of which will not be recyclable at the end of the Project's lifetime, and the energy required for the production of these materials, which will also result in an irretrievable commitment of natural resources. The Project will result in total land disturbance of approximately 312 acres; of this approximately 165 acres will be permanently disturbed. During the operation of the Project, the transport of electrical power generated from nonrenewable resources (e.g., natural gas, nuclear) will continue. However, these resources are available and will be available in the reasonably foreseeable future.

The Project will result in irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

VIII.3 Responses to Comments on the Draft EIR and Revisions to the Final EIR

Volume 2 of the EIR includes the comments received on the Draft EIR and responses to those comments. The focus of the responses to comments is on the disposition of significant environmental issues as raised in the comments, as specified by §15088(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

As noted above, the CPUC has deleted the discussion from Section E.5.7 in the Final EIR of cumulative impacts that would result from the proposed Project from what was previously called Impact L-2 in the Draft EIR.

Finding/Rationale. Responses to comments made on the Draft EIR and the above-referenced revision to the Final EIR merely clarify and amplify the analysis presented in the document and do not trigger the need to recirculate per State CEQA Guidelines §15088.5(b).

ATTACHMENT B

IX. Adoption of a Monitoring and Reporting Program for the CEQA Mitigation Measures

Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code requires the Commission to adopt a mitigation monitoring and reporting program regarding the changes in the Project and mitigation measures imposed to lessen or avoid significant effects on the environment. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), shown in Table 1, fulfills the CEQA mitigation monitoring requirements identified below. The MMRP is hereby adopted by the CPUC.

- The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program is designed to ensure compliance with the changes in the Project and mitigation measures imposed on the Project during Project implementation.
- Measures to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other measures.

The CPUC's MMRP, including impacts, mitigation measures, monitoring requirements, effectiveness criteria, and timing of actions for the Project, is set forth in Appendix 9 to the Final EIR. The discussion below provides the recommended framework for the implementation of the MMRP by the CPUC as the CEQA Lead Agency, and describes the roles and responsibilities of government agencies in implementing and enforcing adopted mitigation measures.

IX.1 Authority for the Mitigation Monitoring Program

California Public Utilities Commission

The California Public Utilities Code in numerous places confers authority upon the CPUC to regulate the terms of service and the safety, practices and equipment of utilities subject to its jurisdiction. It is the standard practice of the CPUC, pursuant to its statutory responsibility to protect the environment, to require that mitigation measures stipulated as conditions of approval be implemented properly, monitored, and reported on. In 1989, this requirement was codified statewide as Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code. Section 21081.6 requires a public agency to adopt a Mitigation Monitoring Program when it approves a project that is subject to preparation of an EIR and where the EIR for the project identifies significant adverse environmental effects. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15097 was added in 1999 to further clarify agency requirements for mitigation monitoring or reporting.

The purpose of a MMRP is to ensure that measures adopted to mitigate or avoid significant impacts of a project are implemented. The CPUC views the MMRP as a working guide to facilitate not only the implementation of mitigation measures by the project proponent, but also the monitoring, compliance, and reporting activities of the CPUC and any monitors it may designate.

X.2 Organization of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program Implementation Plan

Following Project approval, the CPUC will create a MMRP Implementation Plan to coordinate implementation of the adopted mitigation measures. The elements of the MMRP Implementation Plan are as follows:

ATTACHMENT B

MMRP Implementation Plan Introduction

- Authority and Purpose of the Program
- Program Adoption Process
- Organization of the MMRP

Roles and Responsibilities

- Monitoring Responsibility
- Enforcement Responsibility
- Mitigation Compliance Responsibility
- Dispute Resolution

General Monitoring Procedures

- Environmental Monitor
- Construction Personnel
- General Reporting Requirements
- Public Access to Records

The Final MMRP Implementation Plan will contain a concise overview and reference description of the approved Project that clearly outlines its physical locations and timetable, including construction spreads. The Final MMRP Implementation Plan specifies the "master" reference(s) which the monitors and the applicant will use in carrying out the MMRP, as well as more detailed working maps and plans. The Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs), to which SCE has committed to reduce potential impacts, will also be included in the Final MMRP Implementation Plan.

The Final MMRP Implementation Plan will include the list of agencies with jurisdiction over the Project (i.e., required permits and approvals), and a description of their respective jurisdictions.

IX.3 Roles and Responsibilities

As the lead agency under CEQA, the CPUC is required to monitor the Project to ensure that the adopted and required mitigation measures and APMs are implemented. The CPUC will be responsible for ensuring full compliance with the provisions of the MMRP and have primary responsibility for its implementation. The purpose of the MMRP is to document that the mitigation measures required by the CPUC are implemented and that mitigated environmental impacts are reduced to the level identified in the Program.

The CPUC may delegate duties and responsibilities for monitoring to other environmental monitors or consultants as deemed necessary, and some monitoring responsibilities may be assumed by responsible agencies, such as affected jurisdictions and cities. The number of construction monitors assigned to the project will depend on the number of concurrent construction activities and their locations. The CPUC, however, will ensure that any person to whom duties or responsibilities are delegated is qualified to monitor compliance.

Any mitigation measure study or plan that requires the approval of the CPUC must allow at least 60 days for adequate review time. When a mitigation measure requires the development of a plan during the design phase of the Project, the applicant must submit that plan to the CPUC for review and approval. It is

the responsibility of the environmental monitor assigned to each spread to ensure that appropriate agency reviews and approvals are obtained.

The CPUC along with their environmental monitors will also ensure that any variance process or deviation from the procedures identified under the MMRP is consistent with CEQA requirements; no Project variance will be approved by the CPUC if it creates new significant impacts. As defined in this section, a variance should be strictly limited to minor project changes that do not trigger other permit requirements, do not increase the severity of an impact or create a new impact, and that clearly and strictly comply with the intent of the mitigation measure. A proposed change to the Project that has the potential for creating significant environmental effects will be evaluated to determine whether supplemental CEQA review and documentation is required. Any proposed deviation from the approved Project, adopted mitigation measures, and APMs, and correction of such deviation, shall be reported immediately to the CPUC and the environmental monitor assigned to the construction spread for their review and approval. In some cases, a variance may also require approval by a CEQA responsible agency.

IX.4 Enforcement Responsibility

The CPUC is responsible for enforcing the procedures adopted for monitoring through the environmental monitor assigned to each construction spread. The environmental monitor shall note problems with monitoring, notify appropriate agencies or individuals about any problems, and report the problems to the CPUC.

The CPUC has the authority to halt any construction, operation, or maintenance activity associated with the Project if the activity is determined to be a deviation from the approved Project or adopted mitigation measures. The CPUC may assign this authority to the environmental monitor for each construction spread.

IX.5 Mitigation Compliance Responsibility

The applicant, SCE, is responsible for successfully implementing all of the adopted mitigation measures in the MMRP. The MMRP contains criteria that define whether mitigation is successful. Standards for successful mitigation also are implicit in many mitigation measures that include such requirements as obtaining permits or avoiding a specific impact entirely. Other mitigation measures include success criteria. Additional mitigation success thresholds will be established by applicable agencies with jurisdiction through the permit process and through the review and approval of specific plans for the implementation of mitigation measures.

The applicant shall inform the CPUC and their monitors in writing of any mitigation measures that are not or cannot be successfully implemented. The CPUC in coordination with their monitors will assess whether alternative mitigation is appropriate and specify to SCE the subsequent actions required.

IX.6 Dispute Resolution

The MMRP Implementation Plan is designed to reduce or eliminate many potential disputes. However, even with the best preparation efforts, disputes may occur. In such event, the following procedure will be observed:

- **Step 1.** Disputes and complaints (including those of the public) should be directed first to the CPUC's designated Project Manager, as appropriate, for resolution. The Project Manager will attempt to resolve the dispute.

- **Step 2.** Should this informal process fail, the CPUC Project Manager may initiate enforcement or compliance action to address deviations from the Project or adopted Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
- **Step 3.** If a dispute or complaint regarding the implementation or evaluation of the Program or the mitigation measures cannot be resolved informally or through enforcement or compliance action by the CPUC, any affected participant in the dispute or complaint may file a written "notice of dispute" with the CPUC's Executive Director. This notice should be filed in order to resolve the dispute in a timely manner, with copies concurrently served on other affected participants. Within 10 days of receipt, the Executive Director or designee(s) shall meet or confer with the filer and other affected participants for purposes of resolving the dispute. The Executive Director shall issue an Executive Resolution describing his/her decision, and serve it on the filer and other affected participants.
- **Step 4.** If one or more of the affected parties is not satisfied with the decision as described in the Resolution, such party(ies) may appeal it to the Commission via a procedure to be specified by the Commission.

Parties may also seek review by the Commission through existing procedures specified in the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure for formal and expedited dispute resolution, although a good faith effort should first be made to use the foregoing procedure.

IX.7 General Monitoring Procedures

Environmental Monitor

Many of the monitoring procedures will be conducted during the construction phase of the Project. The CPUC and the environmental monitor(s) are responsible for integrating the mitigation monitoring procedures into the construction process in coordination with SCE. To oversee the monitoring procedures and to ensure success, the environmental monitor assigned to each construction spread must be onsite during that portion of construction that has the potential to create a significant environmental impact or other impact for which mitigation is required. The environmental monitor is responsible for ensuring that all procedures specified in the monitoring program are followed.

Construction Personnel

A key feature contributing to the success of mitigation monitoring will be obtaining the full cooperation of construction personnel and supervisors. Many of the mitigation measures require action on the part of the construction supervisors or crews for successful implementation. To ensure success, the following actions, detailed in specific mitigation measures included in the Final MMRP Implementation Plan, will be taken:

- Procedures to be followed by construction companies hired to do the work will be written into contracts between SCE and any construction contractors. Procedures to be followed by construction crews will be written into a separate agreement that all construction personnel will be asked to sign, denoting consent to the procedures.
- One or more pre-construction meetings will be held to inform all and train construction personnel about the requirements of the monitoring program (as detailed in the Final MMRP Implementation Plan).

- A written summary of mitigation monitoring procedures will be provided to construction supervisors for all mitigation measures requiring their attention.

General Reporting Procedures

Site visits and specified monitoring procedures performed by other individuals will be reported to the environmental monitor assigned to the relevant construction spread. A monitoring record form will be submitted to the environmental monitor by the individual conducting the visit or procedure so that details of the visit can be recorded and progress tracked by the environmental monitor. A checklist will be developed and maintained by the environmental monitor to track all procedures required for each mitigation measure and to ensure adherence to the timing specified for the procedures. The environmental monitor will note any problems that may occur and take appropriate action to rectify the problems. The Applicant shall provide the CPUC with written quarterly reports of the project, which shall include progress of construction, resulting impacts, mitigation implemented, and all other noteworthy elements of the project. Quarterly reports shall be required as long as mitigation measures are applicable.

Public Access to Records

The public is allowed access to records and reports used to track the monitoring program. Monitoring records and reports will be made available for public inspection by the CPUC on request. The CPUC and the Applicant will develop a filing and tracking system. For additional information on mitigation monitoring and reporting for the Project, the Energy Division of the CPUC will maintain an Internet website, accessible at the CPUC website at:

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

In order to facilitate the public's awareness, the CPUC will make weekly reports available on the website.

IX.8 Condition Effectiveness Review

As required by CEQA, the CPUC must evaluate the effectiveness of the mitigation measures that are implemented. In order to fulfill its statutory mandates to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment and to design a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program to ensure compliance during Project implementation (CEQA §§15091(d) and 15097):

- The CPUC may conduct a comprehensive review of conditions which are not effectively mitigating impacts at any time it deems appropriate, including as a result of the Dispute Resolution procedure outlined in X.6; and
- If in either review, the Commission determines that any conditions are not adequately mitigating significant environmental impacts caused by the Project, or that recent proven technological advances could provide more effective mitigation, then the Commission may impose additional reasonable conditions to effectively mitigate these impacts.

These reviews will be conducted in a manner consistent with the Commission's rules and practices.

ATTACHMENT B

IX.9 Mitigation Monitoring Program Tables

The Mitigation Monitoring Program tables presented in Appendix 9 of the Final EIR, together with the full text of the mitigation measures themselves, as set forth at the end of each issue area section (Sections C.1 through C.13) of the Final EIR, as well as in Attachment A of this decision, will form the basis for the implementation of the Mitigation Monitoring Program.

(END OF ATTACHMENT B)

ATTACHMENT C

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