

ATTACHMENT A

ATTACHMENT #2

CEQA FINDINGS
SDG&E Master Special Use Permit and Permit to Construct
Cleveland National Forest Power Line Replacement Projects
State Clearinghouse No. 2013091070
Application No. 12-10-009

CEQA Findings
SDG&E Master Special Use Permit and Permit to Construct Cleveland
National Forest Power Line Replacement Projects

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Note: Findings are presented for the project as defined in the CPUC's Decision (No. 16-05-038).

1.1 Project Description Summary

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) granted a Permit to Construct (PTC) for San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E)'s Cleveland National Forest (CNF) Power Line Replacement Project (Project), as defined in the CPUC's Decision (No. 16-05-038). The goal of the Project is to increase safety and reliability of SDG&E's electric system by replacing the existing electric infrastructure that currently serves the United States Forest Service (USFS), emergency service facilities, campgrounds, homes, businesses and other customers within the CNF and surrounding areas.

The Project includes replacement of several existing 12-kilovolt (kV) and 69 kV electric facilities spread throughout an approximately 880-square-mile area in eastern San Diego County. Six (6) 69 kV lines and up to seven (7) 12 kV lines will be rebuilt and approximately 1,800 existing wood poles will be replaced with fire-resistant weatherized steel poles. The majority of the existing electric lines are within the boundary of the USFS CNF; however, there are lines that extend outside the boundaries of the CNF and traverse public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), tribal lands administered in part by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and governed by local tribes, lands within the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park administered by California State Parks (CSP), and private lands. Additionally, as ordered in CPUC's decision, the approved project includes relocation of distribution line C157 out of wilderness (City of San Diego Modified Alignment); additional undergrounding of C440 and TL682; the removal of TL626 and its replacement with reconstruction of TL6931 and conversion of 13.3 miles of TL626 to 12 kilovolt and partial removal of overland access roads.

1.2 Project Objectives

- Reduce fire risk by fire hardening electric facilities in and around the CNF.
- Improve the reliability of power delivery to surrounding communities.

1.3 Procedural Compliance with CEQA

The CPUC published a Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) on September 5, 2014 and a Final EIR/EIS on July 2, 2015 in compliance with CEQA requirements. The Final EIR/EIS has been prepared for the CPUC in accordance with CEQA and

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the CEQA Guidelines, as amended. As allowed for in CEQA Guidelines § 15084(d)(2), the CPUC retained a consultant to assist with the preparation of the environmental documents. The CPUC, acting as State Lead Agency, has directed, reviewed and edited as necessary all material prepared by the consultant, and such material reflects the CPUC's independent judgment. The key milestones associated with the preparation of the EIR/EIS 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/EIS and to solicit comment on the results of the environmental analysis presented in the Draft EIR/EIS. In general, the preparation of the EIR/EIS included the following key steps and public notification efforts:

1.3.1 Public Scoping Process – Draft EIR/EIS

The Draft EIR/EIS scoping process consisted of the following seven elements:

1. Publication of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Notice of Intent (NOI) of a joint EIR/EIS, which included a joint CPUC and Forest Service Notice of Public Scoping Meeting seeking comments from the public and affected public agencies, as required by CEQA and NEPA.
2. Public scoping meetings and meetings with agencies (October 22 and 23, 2013)
3. Summary of scoping comments in a comprehensive Scoping Report (January 16, 2014)
4. Publication of a public notice of supplemental scoping to provide the public and affected public agencies with an additional opportunity to comment on the topics and alternatives that should be addressed in the environmental document (January 21, 2014)
5. Supplemental scoping meeting and meeting with cooperating and responsible agencies (February 19, 2014)
6. Agency consultation
7. Tribal Consultation

1.3.2 Public Review Draft EIR/EIS

The Draft EIR/EIS was released for a 60 day public review and comment period on September 5, 2014. The public review and comment period ended November 4, 2014. The Draft EIR/EIS was made available via the Internet and was also distributed to responsible agencies and interested parties who requested to be included on the mailing list during and after the public scoping period. A public information meeting on the Draft EIR/EIS was held at the Alpine Community Center on October 1, 2014. The CPUC and Forest Service reviewed all comments and made

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changes to the EIR/EIS, as appropriate. The Final EIR/EIS was released on July 10, 2015. An initial errata to the EIR/EIS was issued on August 31, 2015, and a second errata was issued on January 7, 2016. The Final EIR/EIS documents and responds to all written and oral comments made on the Draft EIR/EIS, as required by CEQA.

1.4 Certification

(See CPUC Decision No. 16-05-038, Section 10 Certification of the EIR)

1.5 Environmental Impacts and Findings

Pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21081 and CEQA Guidelines §15091, no public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an EIR has been certified which identifies one or more significant effects on the environment that would occur if the project is approved or carried out unless the public agency makes one or more of the following findings with respect to each significant impact:

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.

The Commission has made one or more of these 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. In accordance with CEQA, a Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance and Reporting Program (MMCRP) has been prepared for the project and attached to CPUC's Decision.

The EIR/EIS evaluation included a detailed analysis of impacts in 13 environmental disciplines, analyzing the Project, 11 alternatives along with the No Project and No Action Alternatives. The EIR/EIS discloses the environmental impacts expected to result from the construction and operation of the Project. Where possible, mitigation measures were identified to avoid or minimize significant environmental effects. In addition, the applicant committed to implementing measures in order to reduce the direct and indirect impacts that will result from

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Project activities. These measures, referred to as Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs), were identified by the applicant in its PTC Application to the CPUC. Table B-12 (Applicant Proposed Measures) in Section B of the EIR/EIS provides a detailed list of the APMs. The analysis in the EIR/EIS assumed the APMs to be part of the Project. The mitigation measures identified in the EIR/EIS are measures proposed by the lead agencies, responsible or trustee agencies or other persons that were not included in the Project but could reasonably be expected to reduce adverse impacts if required as conditions of approving the Project, as required by CEQA Guidelines § 15126.4(a)(1)(A).

1.5.1 Findings on Less than Significant Impacts

As described in the Final EIR/EIS, the Project will have no impact or less than significant impacts for the following areas:

Greenhouse Gases: The highest total project construction emissions in any one year would equal approximately 9,017 MT CO₂E/year (unmitigated) or 8,116 MT CO₂E/year following implementation of APM-AIR-01. The maximum annual construction-related GHG emissions would be below the GHG threshold of 10,000 MT CO₂/year. Therefore, the impact of the project's GHG emissions during construction would be less than significant.

Reference: Final EIR/EIS Section D.6 Greenhouse Gases

Transportation and Traffic: Implementation of APM TRANS-01, APM TRANS-04, and APM TRANS-05 would ensure that short-term construction transportation and traffic impacts would be less than significant by coordinating with local jurisdictional agencies, avoiding peak traffic hours and by implementing a construction Traffic Control Plan.

Reference: Final EIR/EIS Section D.14 Transportation and Traffic

Agriculture and Forestry Resources: The proposed project and alternatives considered would not have a significant effect upon agriculture and forestry resources, as no land use changes are proposed with the replacement and fire hardening of the existing transmission and distribution lines. The proposed project would not convert existing agriculture or forestry lands to non-agricultural or non-forest uses.

Reference: Final EIR/EIS Section G.5 Effects Found Not To Be Significant

Population and Housing: The proposed project and alternatives considered would not result in population growth in the area because no new homes or businesses are proposed, and no new

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infrastructure related to population growth is proposed. In addition, no new housing is needed because non-local construction workers would use available temporary housing throughout San Diego County. Further, the workers would be in the area only during construction and are not expected to become permanent residents.

Reference: Final EIR/EIS Section G.5 Effects Found Not To Be Significant

Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice: No people or housing would be displaced as a part of the proposed project or alternatives considered. After the completion of construction, the electric lines would be operated and maintained by SDG&E at existing staffing levels. No additional staff would be necessary to maintain the electric lines. Due to the reasons mentioned above, there would be no change to population or significant impacts on local employment, property values, and tax revenues benefiting public agencies. Additionally the project would not create disproportionately high or adverse effects on minority or low-income populations as the construction footprint is minimal and replaces existing facilities, while operations and maintenance would remain status quo.

Reference: Final EIR/EIS Section G.5 Effects Found Not To Be Significant

1.5.2 Findings on Significant Environmental Impacts That Can Be Reduced to a Less than Significant Level

The CPUC finds that the following environmental impacts can be mitigated to below a level of significance based upon the implementation of the mitigation measures in the EIR/EIS. The facts listed herein in support of the findings are set forth more fully in Sections D.2 through D.14 of the EIR/EIS and the cumulative impacts discussed in Section F of the EIR/EIS. The full text of each mitigation measure is contained in the MMRP attached to CPUC Decision No.16-05-038.

Visual Resources

Potential Effects. Degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and surroundings (Impact VIS-3)

While the proposed project would essentially replicate existing forms, line, colors, textures, and patterns currently visible in the project area landscape, moderate visual contrasts were identified at a limited number of foreground viewing locations which are considered a potentially significant impact.

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Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact VIS-3. Specifically, the removal of TL626 and relocation of C157 out of wilderness as ordered in CPUC's decision along with the following feasible mitigation measure is adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact VIS-3:

- **MM VIS-1:** Prepare and Implement a Scenery Conservation Plan.

Rationale for Finding. Identified significant and unavoidable impacts (Impact VIS-3) resulting from TL626 to the Inaja Memorial National Recreational Trail Look-out would be avoided by removing TL626. Identified significant impact (Impact VIS-3) resulting from C157 would be avoided by relocating C157 out of wilderness as ordered in the CPUC's decision.

Because power line and distribution circuit poles and lines are existing features in the landscape, the introduction of replacement poles with adherence to APM VIS-01 through APM VIS-05 would in general not substantially affect the existing visual character or quality of the site and surroundings. Views would continue to include power line and distribution circuit infrastructure juxtaposed against rural and mountainous landscapes and partially screened (or backscreened) by vegetation and terrain. In locations where noticeable visual contrast between replacement and existing poles would occur, implementation of Mitigation Measure MM VIS-1 would mitigate the visual prominence and contrast of potentially problematic replacement poles to less than significant through pole design consideration including location, shape and scale.

Potential Effects. Result in an inconsistency with applicable scenic integrity objective or visual resource management system objective (Impact VIS-5).

The ongoing inconsistency with the high scenic integrity objective as designated on CNF lands would continue under 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 VIS-5. Specifically, the removal of TL626 and relocation of C157 out of wilderness as ordered in CPUC's decision along with the following feasible mitigation measure is adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact VIS-5:

- **MM VIS-2:** Project-specific CNF Land Management Plan Amendment.

Rationale for Finding. With implementation of Mitigation Measure MM VIS-2, inconsistencies with the High scenic integrity objective along the TL629, C449, and TL6923 alignments would

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be allowed and therefore conflicts with the CNF LMP would be addressed as required by the National Forest Management Act. While Mitigation Measure MM VIS-2 would provide an exception for the project and allow authorization of the project, it does not reduce the project's physical effects that caused the conflicts with the plan. Those effects to the existing visual character and quality are analyzed under (Impact VIS-3).

Reference. Final EIR/EIS Section D.2

Biological Resources

Potential Effects. Result in temporary and permanent loss to native vegetation (Impact BIO-1). Result in temporary and permanent loss to preserve areas (Impact BIO-2). Result in effects to jurisdictional waters and wetlands (impact BIO-4). Result in the introduction of invasive, non-native, or noxious plant species (Impact BIO 5).

Construction activities would temporarily impact 66.9 acres and permanently impact 0.5 acre of sensitive vegetation communities and would also temporarily impact approximately 1.81 acres and permanently impact less than 0.01 acre to ACOE jurisdictional waters and wetland resources.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impacts BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-4 and BIO-5. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impacts BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-4 and BIO-5 to a less than significant level:

- **MM BIO-1:** Confine all construction and construction-related activities to the minimum necessary area
- **MM BIO-2:** Conduct contractor training for all construction staff
- **MM BIO-3:** Conduct biological construction monitoring
- **MM BIO-4:** Restore all temporary construction areas pursuant to a Habitat Restoration Plan (HRP).
- **MM BIO-5:** Provide habitat compensation or restoration for permanent impacts to native vegetation communities
- **MM BIO-6:** Implement fire prevention best management practices during construction and operation activities
- **MM BIO-7:** Prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- **MM BIO-8:** Procedural requirements for herbicide applications

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- **MM BIO-9:** SDG&E shall identify all proposed replacement pole locations within the vicinity of resource conservation areas
- **MM BIO-10:** Limit temporary and permanent impacts to jurisdictional features to the minimum necessary
- **MM BIO-11:** Implement habitat creation, enhancement, preservation, and/or restoration pursuant to a wetland mitigation plan to ensure no net loss of jurisdictional waters and wetlands
- **MM BIO-12:** Where drainage crossings are unavoidable, construct access roads at right angles to drainages

Rationale for Finding. As described in Section D.4 of the Final EIR/EIS, SDG&E is involved in a project-specific mitigation and subregional mitigation program through its subregional NCCP that implements the regional biological conservation goals of the NCCP Act of 1991. Continued participation by SDG&E in its subregional NCCP (specifically implementation of Section 7.1 Operation Protocols, 7.2 Habitat Enhancement Measures and 7.4 Mitigation credits) along with implementation of APM BIO-01 through APM BIO-10 and Mitigation Measures MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-12, would ensure that the project's impact to sensitive native and non-native vegetation communities and land cover types would be mitigated to less than significant through avoidance and minimization measures as well as habitat creation and restoration.

Potential Effects. Result in effects, either directly or through habitat modifications, to species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS (Impact BIO-6)

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact BIO-6. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact BIO-6 to a less than significant level:

- MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-7, MM BIO-10 through MM BIO-12 (see above).

Plants

- **MM BIO-13:** Conduct preconstruction surveys for special status plants in areas not accessible during previous rare plant surveys
- **MM BIO-14:** Install fencing or flagging around identified special-status plant species populations in the construction areas

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- **MM BIO-15:** Implement special-status plant species compensation

Invertebrates

- **MM BIO-16:** Install fencing or flagging around identified special-status butterfly host species populations in the construction areas and road maintenance
- **MM BIO-17:** Conduct protocol surveys for Quino checkerspot, Hermes copper, and Laguna Mountains skipper butterflies within 1 year prior to project construction activities in occupied habitat
- **MM BIO-18:** Provide compensation for temporary and permanent impacts to Occupied or Critical Habitat for Quino checkerspot, Hermes copper, and Laguna Mountains skipper butterfly habitat through conservation and/or restoration
- **MM BIO-19:** Final design of power and distribution line and access roads through Quino checkerspot and Laguna Mountains skipper critical habitat and Hermes copper occupied habitat shall maximally avoid host plants for these species
- **MM BIO-20:** Obtain and implement the terms of agency permit(s) with jurisdiction federal or state-listed species
- **MM BIO-21:** If construction occurs in occupied and/or suitable habitat for sensitive butterfly species, SDG&E will implement listed avoidance and minimization measures

Reptiles and Amphibians

- **MM BIO-22:** Biologists will monitor construction activities
- **MM BIO-23:** Biologists will inspect open holes at the end of each workday
- **MM BIO-24:** Enforce speed limits in and around all construction areas
- **MM BIO-25:** Minimize night construction lighting adjacent to native habitats
- **MM BIO-26:** Prohibit littering and remove trash from construction areas daily
- **MM BIO-27:** Prohibit the harm, harassment, collection of, or feeding of wildlife

Birds

- **MM BIO-28:** Implement Bird Protection Measures
- **MM BIO-29:** Rock blasting calculation and plan requirements, if blasting occurs

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Mammals

- **MM BIO-30:** Prior to work being conducted, measures will be employed to protect (a) Townsend's bat and (b) bats in general
- **MM BIO-31:** Biologists will conduct surveys for Stephens' kangaroo rat

Operations

- **MM BIO-32:** Procedural requirements for pesticide applications
- **MM BIO-33:** Focused surveys for arroyo toad shall be conducted

Rationale for Finding. As described in Section D.4 of the Final EIR/EIS, SDG&E is involved in a project-specific mitigation and subregional mitigation program through its subregional NCCP that implements the regional biological conservation goals of the NCCP Act of 1991. Continued participation by SDG&E in its subregional NCCP including implementation of APM BIO-01 through APM BIO-10 along with implementation of Mitigation Measure MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-7, MM BIO-10 through MM BIO-12, and MM-BIO-13 through MM BIO-33, would ensure that the project's impact to sensitive biological resources would be mitigated to less than significant through avoidance and minimization measures as well as habitat creation and restoration.

Reference. Final EIR/EIS Section D.4 Biological Resources

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Potential Effects. Result in a change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5, or result in an effect to a historic property, as defined in Section 106 of NHPA and 36 CFR 800 (Impact CUL-1). Result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5, or result in an effect to a historic property, as defined in Section 106 of NHPA and 36 CFR 800 (Impact CUL-2).

Construction components associated with the project have the potential to directly and/or indirectly impact archaeological and historical resources.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact CUL-1 and CUL-2. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact CUL-1 and CUL-2 to a less than significant level:

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- **MM CUL-1:** In order to avoid adverse effects to historic properties, SDG&E will implement a comprehensive approach to cultural resource management consistent with any project specific Programmatic Agreement developed between the federal agencies and the SHPO.
- **MM CUL-2:** In order to reduce adverse effects and significant impacts to historic resources along C79, C440, and C442 as identified in Table D.5-12 of the EIR/EIS, the original exterior materials on the cabins shall not be removed, modified, or covered. If equipment attached to the cabins must be replaced, the equipment shall retain its original appearance in terms of materials and size. If this cannot be met, then a cultural monitor is required to be present during the replacement of the lines to minimize modifications to the cabin exteriors.
- **MM CUL-3:** During construction of the proposed power line replacement projects, all measures as identified in the Cultural Resources Technical Report prepared by ASM (ASM 2011) shall be implemented.

Rationale for Finding. The proposed project would not contribute to the potential loss of known significant cultural or paleontological resources. Implementation of APM GEN-04 and APM CULT-01 through APM CUL-09 along with Mitigation Measure MM CUL-1 through CUL-3 is expected to successfully mitigate significant impacts to cultural resources through avoidance and other requirements as provided in the measures.

Reference. Final EIR/EIS Section D.5 Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Public Health and Safety

Potential Effects. Result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials (Impact PHS-1). Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school (Impact PHS-2).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact PHS-1 and Impact PHS-2. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact PHS-1 and Impact PHS-2:

- **MM PHS-1:** SDG&E shall provide written documentation that all staff, including contractor, and subcontractor project personnel, have received training regarding the appropriate work practices necessary to effectively implement hazardous materials procedures and protocols and to comply with the applicable environmental laws and

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regulations, including, without limitation, hazardous materials spill prevention and response measures.

- **MM PHS-2:** SDG&E shall implement best management practices (BMPs) to prevent impacts from release of hazardous materials during construction, operation, and maintenance activities.
- **MM PHS-3:** In the event that rock blasting is used during construction, a noise and vibration calculation will be prepared and submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission and the County of San Diego for review before blasting at each site. The construction contractor will ensure compliance with all relevant local, state, and federal regulations relating to blasting activities. In addition to any other requirements established by the appropriate regulatory agencies, the pre-blast survey and blasting plan shall meet additional requirements as identified in this measure.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of APM HYD-09 and Mitigation Measure MM PHS-1, MM PHS-2 and MM PHS-3, would mitigate significant impacts due to potential hazardous substance spills and blasting during construction to less than significant by ensuring agency oversight of the handling of hazardous materials and use of best management practices (BMPs).

Potential Effects. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment (Impact PHS-3).

With the exception of one site located along TL629, there are no other known hazardous materials sites located within the project impact area.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact PHS-3. Specifically, the following mitigation measure is feasible and is adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact PHS-3:

- **MM PHS-4:** Prior to construction, all San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), contractor, and subcontractor project personnel anticipated to work between poles Z173105 and Z173109 shall receive training regarding the location of suspected soil and groundwater contamination along TL629 between poles Z173105 and Z173109, and will be instructed to avoid any ground disturbance in the area.

Rationale for Finding. To ensure that the project would not excavate contaminated soils and expose people to hazardous materials present, Mitigation Measure MM PHS-4 would be implemented that would properly identify the area of suspected contamination during

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construction and instruct all personnel to avoid the area. With implementation of Mitigation Measure MM PHS-4, significant impacts due to potential disturbance of a known hazardous materials site along TL629 would be mitigated to less than significant.

Potential Effects. Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area (for a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport) or result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area (for a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip) (Impact PHS-4).

The proposed new steel poles and power lines would not increase safety hazards related to obstructions with aircraft. However, the proposed project would require occasional, short-term helicopter support during construction, operations, and maintenance.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact PHS-4. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact PHS-4:

- **MM PHS-5:** Prior to flight operations for helicopter use during construction as well as operations, SDG&E shall coordinate with local air traffic control and comply with all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations regarding helicopter use to prevent conflicts with air traffic generated by local airstrips. SDG&E shall prepare an Aviation Safety Plan for Forest Service approval prior to any use of helicopters in support of activities on the Cleveland National Forest.
- **MM PHS-6:** If, during construction activities, it is anticipated or planned that helicopters will be used for external load operations, including carrying structures, San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) will prepare a Helicopter Lift Plan. This plan will be prepared in accordance with and comply with all relevant FAA regulations, as well as SDG&E's Aviation Operations Manual

Rationale for Finding. Temporary use of helicopters is not expected to interfere with air traffic patterns. However, if helicopters are used for the installation or removal of structures, Mitigation Measure MM PHS-5 and MM PHS-6 will apply and will ensure that helicopter use follows all safety procedures in compliance with FAA regulations. With implementation of these measures, significant impacts to air traffic patterns and air safety due to the use of helicopters would be mitigated to less than significant.

Potential Effects. Create safety hazards due to structural failure (Impact PHS-6)

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Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact PHS-6. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact PHS-6:

- **MM PHS-7:** Conduct geotechnical investigations
- **MM PHS-8:** Facilities inspections conducted following major seismic event

Rationale for Finding. Based on the conservative nature of the specification in CPUC's General Orders 95 and 128, operation and maintenance of the power line replacement projects would not pose a significant safety hazard due to structural failure precipitated by extreme weather (high winds, lightning). With implementation of standard geotechnical design measures (Mitigation Measure MM PHS-7 and MM PHS-8), potential adverse effects due to seismic hazards would be mitigated. Therefore, significant impacts to public safety due to structural failure precipitated by either extreme weather and or seismic event would be mitigated to less than significant.

Reference. Final EIR/EIS Section D.7 Public Health and Safety

Fire and Fuels Management

Potential Effects. Increase the probability of a wildfire due to construction, operations, and maintenance activities (Impact FF-1).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact FF-1. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact FF-1:

- **MM FF-1:** Develop and Implement a Construction Fire Prevention/Protection Plan
- **MM FF-2:** Develop and Implement an Operations and Maintenance Fire Prevention/Protection Plan

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of APM HAZ-01 would provide for worker-awareness trainings that cover fire prevention and safety, restrictions on smoking and idling vehicles, and construction restrictions during Red Flag Warnings (RFW), as outlined in SDG&E's Electric Standard Practice 113-1 (2012). It will also provide training for practices to reduce the likelihood of fire ignition and to quickly extinguish ignitions that may occur. Further, it provides for coordination with fire agencies and restricts construction activities during the days when fire

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spread would be most likely (RFW periods), among others. Implementation of APM HAZ-03 would provide for clearing of dead and decaying vegetation from work or storage areas, staging areas, stringing sites, and access roads prior to starting construction activities. Additionally, implementation of APM HAZ-06 would prevent construction activity in areas affected by a RFW designation. While implementation of APM HAZ-01 through APM HAZ-06 would reduce the potential for construction, operations, and maintenance activities to ignite a wildfire, this impact is considered significant. Therefore, Mitigation Measures MM FF-1 and MM FF-2, which provide clarification and supersede APM HAZ-01, have been provided to further mitigate the increased probability of igniting a wildfire due to construction or maintenance activities. With implementation of APM HAZ-03 and APM HAZ-06, along with Mitigation Measure MM FF-1 and MM FF-2, impacts would be mitigated to less than significant. While these APMs and mitigation measures are effective methods to reduce the risk of wildfire caused by construction, operations and maintenance, particularly those measures that restrict work during periods of high fire danger, they would not eliminate the risk.

Potential Effects. Introduce non-native plants, which would contribute to an increased ignition potential and rate of fire spread (Impact FF-4).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact FF-4. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact FF-4:

- **MM FF-2:** Develop and Implement an Operations and Maintenance Fire Prevention
- **MM BIO-4:** Restore all temporary construction areas pursuant to a Habitat Restoration Plan (HRP).

Rationale for Finding. The introduction of non-native plants with an increased ignition potential and rate of wildfire spread can be mitigated by following the prevention and management protocol outlined in Mitigation Measure MM FF-2 as well as including the restoration of areas affected by project activities with native plantings, where appropriate as described in Mitigation Measure MM BIO-4. The restoration plan will revegetate disturbed areas with native plants common to the eco-region and in densities and species diversity that are consistent with pre-project conditions. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure MM FF-2 and MM BIO-4, project activities resulting in the potential increase in ignition sources due to the introduction of non-native species would be mitigated to less than significant.

Reference. Final EIR/EIS Section D.8 Fire and Fuels Management

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Hydrology and Water Quality

Potential Effects. Result in increased levels of turbidity (i.e., sediment) and other common construction-related contaminants to local rivers, creeks, or other water bodies (including groundwater) due to stormwater runoff during construction (Impact HYD-1). Introduce contaminants into local rivers, creeks or other water bodies (including groundwater) due to non-stormwater discharges during construction (Impact HYD-2).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact HYD-1 and HYD-2. Specifically, the following mitigation measure is feasible and adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact HYD-1 and HYD-2:

- **MM HYD-1:** Erosion Control Plan/Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

Rationale for Finding. The required implementation of a SWPPP per the SWRCB Construction General Permit and implementation of APM HYD-01 through APM HYD-11 would ensure that construction activities associated with proposed project would not violate any federal, state, or regional water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality during construction. Implementation of Mitigation Measure MM HYD-1, which stipulates that the permittee is responsible for the prevention and control of soil erosion and gully, would further ensure the implementation and enforcement of these standard procedures, and therefore significant impacts to water quality during construction (Impact HYD-1) would be mitigated to less than significant.

Potential Effects. Deplete groundwater supplies or result in a lowering of the local groundwater table (Impact HYD-3)

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact HYD-3. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact HYD-3:

- **MM HYD-2a:** Documentation of Purchased Water Source(s)
- **MM HYD-2b:** Groundwater Evaluations of Off-Site Sources

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure MM HYD-2a and MM HYD-2b would mitigate impacts to groundwater supply to a less-than-significant level by providing the lead agencies with documentation of purchased water sources and groundwater evaluations

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demonstrating that use of such sources would not result in significant impacts to groundwater in storage or neighboring wells.

Potential Effects. Re-grading and repair of access roads during construction and maintenance, if not conducted in a manner that permanently addresses chronic erosion issues, would continue to expose road beds to accelerated erosion and rills, thereby increasing turbidity levels in downstream water bodies (Impact HYD-4).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact HYD-4. Specifically, the partial removal of overland access roads as ordered in CPUC's decision along with the following feasible mitigation measures are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact HYD-4:

- **MM HYD-1:** Erosion Control Plan/Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- **MM HYD-3:** Access Road Decommissioning Plan
- **MM HYD-4:** Access Road Condition Evaluation and Repair Design Report

Rationale for Finding. The existing roads proposed for removal would be decommissioned in accordance with Forest Service BMPs (APM HYD-07) for road removal. Implementation of APM HYD-07 would ensure that removal and restoration of existing access roads would not violate basin plan objectives or substantially degrade water quality. Implementation of Mitigation Measure MM HYD-1 and MM HYD-3, which stipulate that the permittee is responsible for the prevention and control of soil erosion and gully, would further ensure the implementation and enforcement of these standard procedures; therefore, significant impacts to water quality (Impact HYD-4) due to access road removal would be mitigated to less than significant.

In addition to complying with existing regulations and implementing the APMs, implementation of Mitigation Measure MM HYD-4 would assess the condition of the existing road network and would ensure that, where necessary, access roads are redesigned by a qualified professional engineer or engineering geologist to adequately handle stormwater runoff. Redesign of problematic road segments, as identified in the condition assessment to better handle stormwater runoff, would substantially reduce the amount of yearly imports of fill and thus would also reduce the potential for sedimentation within nearby waterways.

The exact location and length of road segments that are too steep to implement in-place design fixes would be determined by a qualified professional reviewed and approved by the CPUC and the Forest Service (e.g., PG, PE, or CEG) as part of the Access Road Condition Evaluation and Repair Design

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Report (Mitigation Measure MM HYD-4). Removal of these overland access road segments as order in CPUC's decision would avoid identified significant and unavoidable HYD-4 impacts.

Potential Effects. Adversely affect water quality due to typical maintenance activities, such as vegetation management, pesticide, and herbicide application (Impact HYD-5).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact HYD-5. Specifically, the following mitigation measure is feasible and adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact HYD-5:

- **MM HYD-5:** Procedural Requirements for Pesticide and Herbicide Applications.

Rationale for Finding. Given the coordination and approvals required, as described in Mitigation Measure MM HYD-5, and that herbicides and pesticides would be used in spot treatment only (e.g., tree stumps and branches), the impacts to water quality would be immeasurable, and therefore would be mitigated to less than significant.

Reference. Final EIR/EIS Section D.9 Hydrology and Water Quality

Land Use and Planning

Potential Effects. Disturb land uses at or near project components due to construction (Impact LU-1).

Power lines proposed to be replaced traverse or border terrain supporting sensitive land uses including rural residences, schools, federally designated wilderness, and recreational areas including trails, parks, campgrounds, and picnic areas. More specifically, these power lines are located within 1,000 feet of approximately 992 residences, 3 schools, 1 designated state wilderness and 2 federally designated wilderness areas, and over 30 recreation areas, facilities, and trails.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact LU-1. Specifically, the following mitigation measure is feasible and adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact LU-1:

- **MM LU-1:** Prepare Construction Notification Plan

Rationale for Finding. As described in Mitigation Measure MM LU-1, the project applicant shall provide noticing detailing construction activities and identify and provide a public liaison person before and during construction to respond to concerns of neighboring property owners about noise, dust, and other construction disturbance thereby mitigating short-term construction impacts to sensitive land uses to less than significant.

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Potential Effects. Conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect (Impact LU-3).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact LU-3. Specifically, the removal of TL626 and relocation of C157 out of wilderness as ordered in CPUC's decision along with the following feasible mitigation measure is adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact LU-3:

- **MM LU-2:** If the Forest Service selects to leave TL626 or C442 in place, it would have to approve a project-specific CNF Land Management Plan Amendment contemporaneously with the decision to authorize the MSUP and pole replacement project.

Rationale for Finding. LU-3 impacts associated with TL626 have been avoided by removing TL626 from the approved project and LU-3 impacts associated with C157 have been avoided by relocating C157 out of wilderness.

With implementation of Mitigation Measure MM LU-2, inconsistencies associated with C440 with the Back Country Non-Motorized land use zone of the CNF LMP would be allowed and therefore conflicts with the CNF LMP would be addressed as required by the National Forest Management Act and under CEQA, impacts would be mitigated to less than significant. While Mitigation Measure MM LU-2 would provide an exception for the project and allow authorization of the project, it does not reduce the project effects that caused the conflict with the plan. Those physical effects are analyzed under impacts to the existing and planned land uses (Impacts LU-1) and in other land use-related topics addressed in this EIR/EIS.

Reference. Final EIR/EIS Section D.10 Land Use

Noise

Potential Effects. Disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances due to construction noise (impact NOI-1). Cause groundborne vibration due to construction activity (Impact NOI-2)

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact NOI-1 and Impact NOI-2. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact NOI-1 and NOI-2:

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- **MM NOI-1:** In the event noise levels during construction activities are expected to exceed an 8-hour L_{eq} of 75 dBA at the nearest property line or within 190 feet of the existing and proposed project alignment where noise-sensitive areas are located, San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) shall implement noise reduction measures to reduce noise levels to below 75 dBA.
- **MM NOI-2:** At least 30 days before helicopter use and stringing operations are employed, SDG&E shall prepare and submit a public notice mailer to the California Public Utilities Commission for approval. The public notice mailer shall be prepared and mailed no less than 7 days prior to helicopter use and stringing operations along the approved project alignment.
- **MM NOI-3:** In the unlikely event that rock blasting is used during construction, SDG&E will prepare a blasting plan, that will include a noise and vibration calculation, and will be submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission and the County of San Diego for review before blasting at each site. Each blasting plan will be consistent with SDG&E's blasting guidelines to reduce noise and vibration impacts from blasting activities. The blasting contractor will be required to obtain a blasting permit and explosive permit per the San Diego County Regulatory Ordinances, and will ensure compliance with all relevant local, state, and federal regulations relating to blasting activities.
- **MM NOI-4:** For any work that cannot occur during the allowable construction hours (between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday), SDG&E will follow its established protocols and will provide advance notice by mail to all property owners within 300 feet of planned construction activities. The announcement will state the construction start date, anticipated completion date, and hours of construction. SDG&E will also communicate the exception to the CPUC and San Diego County in advance of conducting the work. If necessary, SDG&E will temporarily relocate residents occupying properties located less than 220 feet from construction activities on an as-needed basis for the duration of construction activities that would affect them.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of APM NOI-01 through APM-NOI-10 and Mitigation Measure MM NOI-1 through MM NOI-4 would ensure that temporary construction noise impacts would comply with local noise ordinances and therefore would be mitigated to less than significant.

Reference. Final EIR/EIS Section D.11 Noise

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Public Services and Utilities

Potential Effects. Result in physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities, need for new or physical 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 fire protection, municipal water supplies, and telecommunications (Impact PSU-1).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact PSU-1. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and are adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact PSU-1:

- **MM FF-1:** Develop and Implement a Construction Fire Prevention/Protection Plan
- **MM FF-2:** Develop and Implement an Operations and Maintenance Fire Prevention/Protection Plan
- **MM HYD-2a:** Documentation of Purchased Water Source(s)
- **MM PSU-1:** AT&T Commitments

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of APMs HAZ-01 through HAZ-06 04 along with Mitigation Measure MM FF-1, MM FF-2, and MM BIO-1d would mitigate significant fire hazards due to the project and therefore, the demand for increased fire protection services in the study area would not increase with implementation of the project in such a way as to require the construction of new or physically altered facilities in order to maintain acceptable levels of service.

To ensure a confirmed reliable water supply, Mitigation Measure MM HYD-2a is provided. With implementation of Mitigation Measure MM HYD-2a, the construction water requirements of SDG&E's proposed project would be ensured without requiring new or expanded municipal water facilities or services.

Mitigation Measure MM PSU-1 would ensure that SDG&E coordinates with AT&T where AT&T's telecommunications lines are currently strung on replacement poles to mitigate impacts associated with interruptions of telecommunications services or a delay in the removal of the existing poles to less than significant.

Reference. Final EIR/EIS Section D.12 Public Services and Utilities

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Recreation

Potential Effects. Reduce access and visitation to recreation areas due to construction activities (Impact REC-1).

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact REC-1. Specifically, the following mitigation measure is feasible and adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact REC-1:

- **MM LU-1:** Prepare Construction Notification Plan

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of APM TRANS-01, APM TRANS-04, and APM TRANS-05 04 would minimize the severity of impacts associated with reduced access by conducting temporary lane closures during off-peak hours, coordinating lane closures with local jurisdictional agencies, and implementing a construction Traffic Control Plan. Implementation of Mitigation Measure (MM) MM LU-1 would mitigate significant impacts associated with reduced visitation during construction by providing advanced notification of construction activities to agencies with jurisdiction over local recreation areas/facilities and by posting notices of construction activities at public venues to less than significant.

Potential Effects. Result in increased, unauthorized access to specially designated or restricted areas (Impact REC-3).

Unauthorized public use of utility access roads can result in damage to sensitive natural resources (biological, cultural, and hydrological resources) and can affect the visual integrity.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact REC-3. Specifically, the following mitigation measures are feasible and adopted to mitigate significant effects from Impact REC-3:

- **MM REC-1:** Installation of Gates and Appropriate Signage
- **MM REC-2:** Enforcement of Proper Gate Protocol

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure MM REC-1 and MM REC-2 would ensure that specially designated or restricted areas are protected from unauthorized access and that existing access restrictions are maintained. Therefore, this impact would be mitigated to less than significant.

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Reference. Final EIR/EIS Section D.13 Recreation

1.5.3 Findings on Significant Environmental Impacts That Cannot Be Avoided or Reduced to a Less than Significant Level

Based on the issue area assessment in the Final EIR/EIS, the CPUC has determined that the Project as approved in CPUC Decision No.16-05-038 will have significant impacts in the resource areas discussed below, and that these impacts cannot be avoided or reduced despite the incorporation of all feasible mitigation measures. These findings are based on the discussion of impacts in the detailed issue area analyses in Sections D.2 through D.14 of the Final EIR/EIS and the cumulative impacts discussed in Section F of the Final EIR/EIS. For each significant and unavoidable impact identified below, the CPUC has made a finding(s) pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21081. An explanation of the rationale for each finding is also presented below.

Air Quality

Potential Effects. Generate dust and exhaust emissions of criteria pollutants and toxic air contaminants during construction (Impact AIR-1)

VOC, NO_x, CO, and PM_{2.5} emissions associated with project construction would exceed identified CEQA significance thresholds. APMs AIR-01 through AIR-05 would be implemented to reduce emissions; however, VOC, NO_x, CO, and PM_{2.5} emissions would remain above the thresholds after implementation of applicable APMs and are considered significant.

Findings. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which reduce significant effects on the environment from Impact AIR-1. Specifically, APM AIR-01 through APM AIR-05 would be implemented to reduce emissions; however, even with implementation of these APMs, significant unavoidable impacts will occur as described above. Therefore, the CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations make it infeasible to reduce Impact AIR-1 to a less than significant level.

Rationale for Finding. With the exception of the No Project Alternative, the proposed project and alternatives including the approved project as order in CPUC decision 16-05-038 would result in short-term unavoidable adverse impacts during construction (Impact AIR-1). APMs would be implemented to reduce emissions; however, VOC, NO_x, CO, and PM_{2.5} emissions would remain above the thresholds after implementation of applicable APMs and cannot be avoided or reduced with mitigation or selection of an alternative, except for the No Project Alternative which eliminates Impact AIR-1 entirely. Therefore, Impact AIR-1 associated with VOC, NO_x, CO, and PM_{2.5} emissions would be considered significant and unavoidable.

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Reference. Final EIR/EIS Section D.3 Air Quality

1.6 Findings on Project Alternatives

1.6.1 Alternatives Screened Out from Detailed Consideration in the EIR

The CPUC finds that all of the alternatives eliminated from further consideration in the EIR/EIS are infeasible, would not meet most project objectives and/or would not reduce or avoid any of the significant effects of the proposed project, for the reasons detailed in Section C of the Final EIR/EIS.

1.6.2 Alternatives Analyzed in the EIR

(See CPUC Decision No. 16-05-038 : Section 5 Project Alternatives, Section 6 Environmental Impacts, Section 7 Environmentally Superior Alternative, Section 8 Federally Preferred Alternative and Section 11 Infeasibility of the Environmentally Superior Alternative.)

1.7 Findings on Mitigation Measures and Alternatives Proposed in Comments

(See CPUC Decision No. 16-05-038 : Section 10 Certification of the EIR.)

1.8 Finding on Responses to Comments on the Draft EIR and Revisions to the Final EIR

Volume 2 of the Final EIR/EIS includes the comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS 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 CEQA Guidelines § 15088(b). The CPUC finds that responses to comments made on the Draft EIR and revisions to the Final EIR clarify and explain the analysis presented in the document and do not trigger the need to recirculate per CEQA Guidelines §15088.5(b).

1.9 Custodian of Records

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, 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 CEQA Guidelines §15091(e).