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CEQA Findings of Fact

Regarding the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the
Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project
State Clearinghouse No. 2005061161
Federal Docket No. 05-12734

I. Certification

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Commission) hereby certifies the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project (Project) Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), State Clearinghouse No. 2005061161. In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines §15090, the CPUC, as California Lead Agency for the Project, certifies that

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

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

(3) The Final EIR/EIS 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/EIS 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 significant impacts 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/EIS (Appendix 9, Table Ap.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, 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).

II. Project Background

II.1 Project Description Summary

Southern California Edison (SCE) filed an application (Application Number A.04-12-007) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) with the California Public Utilities Commission

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(CPUC) on December 9, 2004, for Segment 1 of the Antelope Transmission Project, also known as the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project (Project). The Project as originally proposed by SCE in its Application to the CPUC included a new 25.6-mile 500-kV line from SCE's Antelope Substation in the City of Lancaster to SCE's Pardee Substation in the City of Santa Clarita. The CPUC's Decision on the Project specifies a number of routing conditions on the Project. The following is a description of the Project as adopted.

The Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project will include the construction of a new 500-kV transmission line, approximately 26.7 miles in length, between the Antelope and Pardee Substations, as well as modification of these substations to accommodate the Project. The Project will also involve removal of the existing Antelope-Pole Switch 74 66-kV subtransmission line and associated hardware from the Saugus-Del Sur Utility Corridor, relocation of the 66-kV subtransmission line located near the Antelope Substation to allow for expansion of the substation, and relocation of approximately 3.5 miles of 12-kV circuit from Avenue J to Elizabeth Lake Road. The Antelope Substation will be expanded to accommodate increasing the rating of the substation from 220 kV to 500 kV. Telecommunication infrastructure associated with the transmission line will also be installed.

From the Antelope Substation, the first 1.1 miles of the Project will be constructed within a new 180-foot right-of-way (ROW) in the City of Lancaster. Within this new ROW, double-circuit 220-kV poles will be installed to carry the new line for the first 0.1 miles from the Antelope Substation. At Mile 0.1, the line will use new single-circuit 500-kV lattice steel towers. At Mile 1.1, the Project route will turn southwest and enter SCE's existing Saugus-Del Sur Utility Corridor, which will be widened from 50 to 180 feet. The Project will replace SCE's existing Antelope-Pole Switch 74 66-kV line that is located within this corridor.

Upon entering the Angeles National Forest (ANF) at approximately Mile 5.7, the Project route will depart from the route of the existing Antelope-Pole Switch 74 66-kV line. The Project route will be located east of the existing Antelope-Pole Switch 74 line in an alignment that will proceed south, and placing the transmission line on the eastern side of Del Sur Ridge, approximately mid-slope between the ridge top and the bottom of Bouquet Canyon. The transmission line will follow this route in a new 160-foot-wide ROW for approximately 12.9 miles to a point where the route returns to the existing Antelope-Pole Switch 74 line within the ANF north of Haskell Canyon Road, approximately 1.2 miles north of the southern boundary of the ANF. The EIR/EIS analysis determined that this route, referred to as the *"East Mid-Slope Route"* (or EIR/EIS Alternative 2), is environmentally preferable to the route proposed by SCE in the same area. The CPUC finds that the *"East Mid-Slope Route"* will meet Project objectives, will be feasible, and will be environmentally superior (see EIR/EIS Section D.5 – CEQA Environmentally Superior Alternative) to the portion of SCE's original route that it replaces. Overall, the *"East Mid-Slope Route"* will lessen impacts on visual resources, fire suppression, biological resources, cultural resources, and recreation in comparison to the portion of the Project route proposed by SCE. The *"East Mid-Slope Route"* and the portion of the Project it will replace are located primarily on National Forest System (NFS) lands. For this reason, the ultimate approval of this portion of the route will be the responsibility of the Forest Service through the issuance of a Special Use Authorization

At approximately Mile 18.6, where the East Mid-Slope route returns to a point along the existing Antelope-Pole Switch 74 line, the Project route will once again depart from the route originally proposed by SCE. The transmission line will proceed south for approximately 2.5 miles to the existing SCE Pardee-Vincent 500-kV ROW exiting the ANF at approximately Mile 19.9. The transmission line will then head west for approximately 0.6 miles and rejoin SCE's originally proposed route. From the point where the transmission line joins the existing SCE Pardee-Vincent transmission ROW to the terminus of the line at

the Pardee Substation, the transmission line will be placed on double-circuit towers that will replace existing single-circuit towers. The EIR/EIS analysis determined this portion of the route, referred to as *"Re-Routing of New Right-of-Way along Haskell Canyon"* (or EIR/EIS Alternative 4), is environmentally preferable to the route proposed by SCE in the same area. The CPUC finds that the *"Re-Routing of New Right-of-Way along Haskell Canyon"* will meet Project objectives, will be feasible, and will be environmentally superior (see EIR/EIS Section D.5 – CEQA Environmentally Superior Alternative) to the portion of SCE's original route that it replaces. Overall, this route will avoid visual and noise impacts on the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch, which would otherwise affect the use and function of this facility. This portion of the *"Re-Routing of New Right-of-Way along Haskell Canyon"* is partially located on NFS lands. For this reason, the ultimate approval of this portion of the route will be the responsibility of the Forest Service through the issuance of a Special Use Authorization.

The Project route from Haskell Canyon to Pardee Substation within the Pardee-Vincent 500-kV ROW will remain as proposed by SCE in its Application to the CPUC. The Project will continue west in the existing Pardee-Vincent 500-kV ROW and span across Haskell Canyon. At approximately Mile 24.1, the transmission line will turn in a southwesterly direction in the existing SCE ROW and continue to until it terminates at Pardee Substation.

The Project will traverse NFS lands owned and managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Therefore, on January 11, 2005, SCE submitted a Special Use Application (SF 299) to the Forest Service for a 50-year Special Use Easement for those portions of the transmission line that will cross NFS lands. These NFS lands are located on the Santa Clara-Mojave Rivers Ranger District of the Angeles National Forest.

II.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-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project. Additionally, SCE's objective for the approval and implementation of the Project has two primary aspects, as follows:

1) Prevent overloading of the existing Antelope-Mesa transmission line by adding capacity between Antelope Substation and Pardee Substation.
2) Increase reliability of the SCE transmission grid by providing a new pathway to deliver power to load south of Antelope Substation from generation facilities located north of Antelope Substation.

III. Environmental Review Process and the EIR/EIS

A joint Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) was published in July 2006 by the CPUC and the Forest Service in compliance with CEQA and NEPA requirements. The Final EIR/EIS on the Project was published in January 2007. The Final EIR/EIS 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/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:

- **Notice of Preparation.** Thirty-day scoping process began with the CPUC's issuance of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR on June 24, 2005 and the Forest Service's publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register on June 28, 2005 (Volume 70, Number 123, pages 37080-37083).
- The NOP was filed with the State Clearinghouse on June 28, 2005. Seventy-seven (77) copies of the NOP were distributed to federal, State, regional, and local agencies, and elected officials. A separate notice of the two public scoping meetings was mailed to over 2,500 individuals in the Project area. Copies of the NOP were available at 16 local libraries and agency offices.
- The EIR/EIS preparers attended seven (7) consultation meetings with agencies and local jurisdictions to discuss the Project and hear any comments or concerns.
- **Scoping Report.** In August 2005, a comprehensive Scoping Report was issued, summarizing issues and concerns received from the public and various agencies during the scoping period. A total of 13 written comments were submitted and nine individuals presented verbal comments during the public scoping meetings. In addition, 21 phone messages were received on the Project hotline.
- **Draft EIR/EIS.** The CPUC issued the Draft EIR/EIS on July 24, 2006. Copies of the full Draft EIR/EIS and Appendices were sent to 147 interested parties and agencies, including the 16 document repositories. Twelve copies of the Executive Summary and 135 CDs with the text of the Draft EIR/EIS were also sent out. Additional copies of the Executive Summary and of the CDs with the text of the Draft EIR/EIS were distributed at the EIR/EIS Public Meetings held in August 2006.
- **Notice of Completion.** The Notice of Completion for the Draft EIR/EIS was filed with the State Clearinghouse on July 24, 2006.
- **Notice of Availability.** A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EIR/EIS was mailed to approximately 2,700 interested parties, agencies, county and city departments, special districts, as well as property owners along the Alternative 5 route, in July 2006.
- **Public Meetings.** Four Public Meetings were held in August 2006. Approximately 330 members of the public, including representatives of organizations and government agencies, were documented in attendance at the Public Meetings for the Draft EIR/EIS.
- **Project Resources.** The Project e-mail address, telephone hotline, and a Project-specific Internet site 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.

IV. 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 III.2 and III.3 below.

The EIR/EIS evaluation included a detailed analysis of impacts in 14 environmental disciplines, analyzing the Project and alternatives, including the No Project Alternative. The EIR/EIS discloses the environmental impacts expected to result from the construction and operation of the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project. 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/EIS. The issue area analyses of the EIR/EIS 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.

IV.1 Environmental Impacts Found to be Less Than Significant

Based on the issue area assessment in the Final EIR/EIS 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 Section C of the EIR/EIS, located in Volume 1. 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 at the end of each issue area subsection in Section C of the EIR/EIS.

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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 will create mildly objectionable odors. These odors will be temporary and will not affect a substantial number of people.
	Cumulative Air Quality Impacts	Construction activities from related projects within one mile of the Project route that occur concurrently with construction of the Project will produce cumulative, but not significant, impacts associated with odors (Impact A-4) and conformance to ANF air quality strategies (Impact A-5). Given the temporary nature and relative mildness of the Project's construction odors, odor impacts would be adverse but not cumulatively significant. Furthermore, because conformance with SCAQMD and AVAQMD fugitive dust rules and implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i would reduce impacts from the Project to a less-than-significant level, and because any other current or proposed construction project within the ANF would be required to conform with the same regulatory standards, if not he same level of additional mitigation, the cumulative impact of the Project and all cumulative projects would result in conformance with the ANF air quality strategies resulting in a less-than-significant impact. The potential impact of failing to conform to Federal General Conformity Rules (Impact A-3) does not include the potential for cumulative impacts as conformance with these rules is determined on a project by project basis, and only involves federally permitted, approved, or funded project, none of which were identified in the Project area.
Biological Resources	B-5: Construction activities and increased vehicular traffic on access roads will disturb wildlife species.	Local wildlife populations along the Project ROW will temporarily decline or disperse during the construction phase of the Project but will return to their pre-construction levels following the restoration of the laydown areas and tower erection sites. Also, as construction is limited to relatively small areas and will continue for a short duration, wildlife will return to the ROW as work crews move to new tower locations.
	B-13: The Project would result in the electrocution of listed bird species.	Swainson's hawks, California condors, and other large aerial perching birds are most susceptible to electrocution because of their size, distribution, and behavior. Raptor and other bird species that utilize the towers for nesting could be electrocuted while landing. Based on studies completed, it was found that the likelihood of electrocutions occurring at voltages greater than 69 kV is extremely low. In addition, the relocation of the transmission line to mid-slope locations will reduce impacts from birds utilizing thermal areas along the tops of ridgelines, including condors, and will also reduce impacts from line collisions with migratory birds. As such, impacts are considered potentially adverse but less than significant. To comply with the ANF Forest Plan standards, Mitigation Measure B-13, below, will be implemented. B-13 Raptor safety protection will be required on tower/conductor (lines) of NFS lands. Install high-visibility or avoidance devices and appropriate raptor guards on poles and other structures potentially used as perching sites by California Condors. Guidance on raptor protection can be found in Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines (Electric Institute/Raptor Research Foundation) and 2005 Avian Protection Plan Guidelines (Electric Institute/USFWS).
	B-22: The Project would result in electrocution of special-status bird species.	Golden eagles, northern goshawk, prairie falcon, and other large aerial perching birds are susceptible to the same threats of electrocution as listed bird species (see Impact B-13). Based on studies completed, it was found that the likelihood of electrocutions occurring at voltages greater than 69 kV is extremely low. In addition, the relocation of the transmission line to a mid-slope location will reduce impacts from line collisions with raptors and migratory birds to a less-than-significant level.

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Biological Resources, cont.	B-24: The Project would result in loss of special-status bat species.	Numerous sensitive bat species, including pallid bat, spotted bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and western red bat, have the potential to occur in the hilly terrain located in the ANF. Construction activities will have an impact on these sensitive bat species if present in areas where that towers are located adjacent to rocky hillsides. Implementation of APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-4, and BIO-5 will avoid most impacts to roosting bats by identifying locations of possible roosting colonies and scheduling work activities to avoid work adjacent to these areas during the breeding season if present. Therefore impacts will be less than significant. Mitigation Measure A-1a will further reduce these less-than-significant impacts.
	B-28: The Project would result in the loss of jurisdictional waters and wetlands.	Numerous jurisdictional drainages and intermittent creeks, including Bouquet Creek and San Francisquito Creek, were noted throughout the Project route. Impacts are not expected to occur to Bouquet Creek, and are not authorized under the Forest Plan. Activities that involve the modification of the bed or bank of a State jurisdictional waterway will be regulated by the CDFG, USACE, and the RWQCB. Implementation of APM BIO-3 will reduce impacts to streambeds and banks along the Project route to less than significant, and will require SCE to obtain and comply with a Streambed Alternative Agreement (if applicable) from the CDFG to minimize impacts to jurisdictional waters and wetlands on non-NFS lands to a less than significant level.
	B-29: The Project would affect linkages and wildlife movement corridors.	The disturbance associated with project construction and maintenance on existing roads in Haskell Canyon will result in temporary impacts to wildlife utilizing Haskell Canyon and adjacent habitat as a movement corridor. A temporary increase in traffic and activities in these areas will be conducted in accordance with existing use of the road and will not result in a new or increased amount of disturbance to this area. Although helicopter usage may temporarily disrupt wildlife usage of the area, it would not completely impede the movement of wildlife and would not affect the nocturnal movement of wildlife. Therefore, the increased traffic and helicopter usage will not completely impede the movement of wildlife and will not affect the nocturnal movement of wildlife, resulting in less-than-significant impacts.
	B-33: The Project would conflict with the proposed West Mojave Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).	Construction guidelines for construction of utility lines are included as part of the proposed West Mojave HCP in order to minimize impacts to raptor species. SCE will comply with the design guidelines included in *Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1996*. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.
	Cumulative Biological Resources Impacts	The Project will not significantly impact jurisdictional waters and wetlands (Impact B-28), linkages and wildlife movement corridors (Impact B-29); nor will it conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources (Impact B-30 and B-32), or the Forest Plan regarding construction in riparian conservation areas (Impact B-31), or the proposed West Mojave Habitat Conservation Plan (Impact B-33). Therefore, the Project will not significantly contribute to cumulative effects of these projects on these biological resources.
Cultural Resources	C-1, C-3, and C-4: Potential destruction of CA-LAN-3474, CA-LAN-3476, and CA-LAN-3480 would occur as a result of the Project.	Because the Project route as adopted will avoid CA-LAN-3474, CA-LAN-3476, and CA-LAN-3480, no impacts to these resources will occur as a result of the Project.
	C-5: Grading of Forest Service roads during Project construction would affect the roads.	In total, four Forest Service roads (P19-186904 [6N08], P19-186914 [6N04.1], P19-186915 [5N24], and P19-120075 [6N19]) will be affected by grading. Grading will not affect the characteristics that could make the roads eligible, and will not permanently alter road alignments. Less-than-significant impacts will occur.

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Cultural Resources, cont.	C-6, C-9, C-11, C-15 through C-23: Potential destruction of (or part of) CA-LAN-3475, CA-LAN-3132, CA-LAN-3131, CA-LAN-3542, CA-LAN-3537, CA-LAN-3535, CA-LAN-3539, CA-LAN-3544, CA-LAN-3538, CA-LAN-529, CA-LAN-591, CA-LAN-586, CA-LAN-3541, CA-LAN-3543, and CA-LAN-3534 would occur as a result of the Project.	Because the Project route as adopted will avoid CA-LAN-3475, CA-LAN-3132, CA-LAN-3131, CA-LAN-3542, CA-LAN-3537, CA-LAN-3535, CA-LAN-3539, CA-LAN-3544, CA-LAN-3538, CA-LAN-529, CA-LAN-591, CA-LAN-586, CA-LAN-3541, CA-LAN-3543, and CA-LAN-3534, no impacts to these resources will occur as a result of the Project.
	Cumulative Cultural Resources Impacts	For the segment of the Project route through the ANF, there may be zero to one significant cultural resource that cannot be avoided. Therefore, impacts on cultural resources from the Project on NFS lands will contribute little, if any, significant impacts to the magnitude of cumulative impacts on cultural resources from other projects on NFS lands. Therefore, impacts to cultural resources on NFS lands will be less than significant.
Geology, Soils, and Paleontology	G-3: Minor changes in topography due to excavation and grading.	Only limited shallow grading for access roads and work areas will occur and excavations will be limited to the tower footing areas and within the substations for foundations. Only minor changes to topography will occur resulting in a less-than-significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measures G-2 and B-1a following construction will substantially reduce the effects of minor changes in topography due to grading of access road and work areas.
	G-11: Construction activities would interfere with access to known mineral resources.	The Bouquet Canyon Stone Quarry is located in the vicinity of the Project; however the quarry is located west and upslope of the Project route, and no active production/quarrying operations are located near the Project. No impacts will occur.
	G-12: Installation of underground infrastructure would permanently alter topography.	Ground disturbance will include only shallow grading for access roads and work areas and excavations for the tower footing areas and within the substations for foundations. No underground infrastructure will be installed as part of the Project. No impacts will occur.
	G-13: Underground transmission line damaged by surface fault ruptures at crossing of active San Gabriel Fault.	The Project will not include any underground transmission line segments; therefore, no impacts will occur.
	Cumulative Geologic Impacts	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. No cumulative impact will occur on non-NFS lands or on NFS lands.
Public Health and Safety	PH-7: Project operation would cause synchronous pacemakers to revert to an asynchronous mode.	While the transmission line's electric field may impact operation of some older model pacemakers, the result of the interference is of short duration and will not be significant or harmful. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

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	Cumulative Public Health and Safety Impacts	Because Project impacts associated with release of hazardous materials during construction (Impact PH-1) or operation (Impact PH-4) and encountering known or unknown soil/groundwater contamination (Impacts PH-2 and PH-3) will be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR/EIS for each of these impacts, the Project will not cumulatively contribute to these impacts. Impacts associated with the creation of induced currents and shock hazards (Impact PH-6), and the interruption of synchronous pacemakers (Impact PH-7) would not combine with similar impacts of other projects. Therefore, the Project will not cumulatively contribute to these impacts.
Forest Management Activities	F-7: Project operation could adversely affect fire prevention activities.	Because the Project route as adopted will not be located on Del Sur Ridge, but rather mid-slope to the east of Del Sur Ridge, fire prevention activities and maintenance of Del Sur Ridge Fuelbreak could be performed unrestricted. No impacts will occur.
	Cumulative Forest Management Activities Impacts	The transmission line will not interfere with the Del Sur Ridge Fuelbreak, and the existing 66-kV line will be removed allowing for maintenance of other NFS fuelbreaks. Therefore, impacts to aggressive fire suppression activities (ground and aerial) from Project construction and operation (Impacts F-3 and F-4) will be less than significant, and will not contribute significant cumulatively considerable impacts. Additionally, because Project impacts to fixed-wing aircraft water retrieval (Impact F-5) and ground firefighting (Impact F-6) activities would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measures F-5 and F-6, respectively, the Project will not contribute to a cumulatively considerable effect from either of these impacts.
Hydrology and Water Quality	H-3: Degradation of surface water or groundwater quality would result from the accidental release of potentially harmful materials during operational activities.	Surface and groundwater 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 would be avoided or reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of APMs HYD-4 through HYD-6, which require implementation of environmental training and procedures to prevent and control the accidental spill or potentially hazardous materials.
	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 expansion of Antelope Substation and tower concrete footings. The substation expansion will result in only small volumes of surface water runoff entering the drainage system because it is located on a flat alluvial fan and most of the expansion will consist of untreated crushed rock, both of which allow for the infiltration of surface runoff. Surface runoff produced due to tower footings will be minimal. In addition, there is no stormwater drainage system in the ANF and therefore no opportunity to overload such a system.
	Cumulative Hydrologic Impacts	Cumulative impacts to local stormwater drainage systems will be less than significant on non-NFS lands (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. Additionally, there will be no impacts to local stormwater drainage systems on NFS lands as there is no drainage system in the ANF and because the Project will create less-than-significant impacts to local stormwater drainage systems through the introduction of increased runoff due to new impervious areas such as transmission tower footings on non-NFS lands. Therefore, the Project will not contribute significant cumulatively considerable impacts to local stormwater drainage systems.

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Land Use and Public Recreation	L-2: Construction of the Project would temporarily disrupt access to Bouquet Canyon Stone Quarry.	Construction activities associated with the Project will require the use of equipment along Del Sur Ridge Road, which provides primary access to the Bouquet Canyon Stone Quarry. However, continual access will be provided along Del Sur Ridge Road allowing the passage of vehicles, therefore access to the quarry will not be precluded and impacts will be less than significant.
	L-4: Operation of the Project would cause long-term disruption of existing commercial land uses.	Operation of the Project as adopted will avoid long-term disruptions to existing commercial land uses, and will not cause any impacts to commercial uses. The Project will be located east of the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch, unlike the alignment originally proposed by SCE, and will therefore not interfere with the current use of the ranch as an outdoor filming location.
	R-2: The siting of Project components would contribute to the long-term loss or degradation of recreational trails.	The Project will not alter the number and types of nonconforming land uses that cross recreational resources (PCT and other trails), but merely replace an existing 66-kV subtransmission line with the Project. Due to the presence of the existing subtransmission line, the overall recreational value of the area affected has already been compromised and the impact is less than significant. Additionally, the Project will not require physical modification to the PCT, change the existing types of land uses and recreational opportunities surrounding the PCT, or alter the number of recreationists that can access the trail. Therefore, impacts to the recreational value and experience of the PCT and other trails in the area will be adverse but less than significant.
	Cumulative Land Use and Recreation Impacts	Construction activities associated the Project will create less-than-significant impacts to the operations of the Bouquet Canyon Stone Quarry, and no current or future projects have been proposed in the vicinity of the quarry that will contribute to a cumulative disruption of quarry operations. As such, cumulative impacts to the quarry (Impact L-2) will be less than significant.
Noise	N-2: Operational corona noise levels at Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch would violate Los Angeles County standards.	Because the Project as adopted will be at least 2,000 feet from the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch, unlike the alignment originally proposed by SCE, corona noise levels associated with Project operations will not conflict with Los Angeles County standards and no impact will occur.
	N-3: Operational corona noise levels at residences would violate Los Angeles County standards.	The closest residential sensitive receptor to the Project is approximately 150 feet away. The typical corona noise at this distance will equal a sustained noise level of approximately 34 to 44 dBA, which does not exceed the Los Angeles County Noise Ordinance. During rain or heavy fog, the highest noise level at the closest residential receptor will be approximately 50 dBA, but this noise level will only be periodic and occur infrequently resulting in less-than-significant impacts.
	N-5: The Project would result in a permanent increase in ambient noise levels at Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch.	The Project route as adopted will avoid the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch, unlike the alignment originally proposed by SCE, and will therefore not result in permanent operational impacts to ambient noise levels at the ranch. No impact will occur.
	N-6: The Project would result in a permanent noise level increase related to routine inspection and maintenance.	Routine inspection and maintenance visits will be infrequent and will not involve heavy-duty equipment. As such, no notable noise increase will occur, and the noise impact will be less than significant.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
	Cumulative Noise Impacts	Project noise impacts associated with permanent noise level increases due to 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 would be similarly intermittent and short term (Impact N-6). No cumulative noise impacts associated with corona noise (Impact N-2) or permanent increases in ambient noise levels (Impact N-5) at Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch, noise increases that are in violation of local standards due to inspection/maintenance (Impact N-4), or temporary increases in ambient noise levels in the ANF that will disturb recreational users will occur (Impact N-8).
Public Services	None	None
Socioeconomics	S-1: Construction activities could cause a temporary decrease in revenues for Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch.	The Project route as adopted will circumvent the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch and will avoid detrimental impacts to the economic viability of the ranch as a result of compromised operations, resulting in no impacts.
	S-2: Operational activities could cause a decrease in revenues for Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch.	The Project route as adopted will circumvent the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch and will avoid detrimental impacts to the economic viability of the ranch as a result of compromised operations, resulting in no impacts.
	S-5: Operational activities would substantially decrease property values along the Project alignment.	Based on conclusions in the Kinnard-Dickey (2005) paper (*A Primer on Proximity Impact Research: Residential Property Values Near High-Voltage Transmission Lines*), which have been applied to the Project analysis, it is concluded that the Project will not generate effects that will significantly impact property values. Where Project impacts are less than significant or have been mitigated to less-than-significant levels, then any associated property value impacts will also be less than significant.
Socioeconomics, cont.	S-6: Construction activities could cause a temporary decrease in revenues for Bouquet Canyon Stone Company.	Construction activities will not block access to Sur Ridge Road and will allow the passage of vehicles. Therefore, access to the Bouquet Canyon Stone Quarry will not be precluded and quarry operations will continue, resulting in no impact.
	S-7: Construction activities would require the removal of existing housing.	Project construction will not require the removal of existing houses, resulting in no impacts.
	Cumulative Socioeconomic Impacts	No cumulative socioeconomic impacts will occur to the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch or the Bouquet Canyon Stone Company due to a decrease in revenues (Impacts S-1, S-2, and S-6) because the Project will avoid the ranch and the quarry, thereby allowing both businesses to remain operational with no revenue decreases. Additionally, as there will be no Project impacts from the removal of existing housing (Impact S-7), there will be not cumulative impact from the removal of existing housing. There will also be less than significant cumulative impacts to agricultural revenues (Impact S-3) and property values (Impact S-5) along the Project route No cumulative impacts will occur on NFS lands.
Traffic and Transportation	T-8: Project transmission structures could present an aviation hazard.	There are no public airports in the immediate vicinity of the Project; however the Project will include towers up to 220 feet above the ground surface. Pursuant to FAA guidelines, SCE will submit FAA Form 7460-1, Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration, to the Manager of the FAA Air Traffic Division for review and approval of the Project. Adherence to these FAA guidelines will ensure that operational impacts to aviation activities will be less than significant.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
Traffic and Transportation, cont.	T-9: Underground construction activities would temporarily restrict access to properties.	The Project will not include underground construction; therefore, no impact will occur.
	T-10: Construction activities could be inconsistent with transportation plans.	The Project is an energy infrastructure project whose operation will have no impact on transportation projects or routes in the area. Construction of the Project will result in short term, temporary impacts to traffic on local roadways, but construction activities will not impact regional or local transportation plans within the area. Furthermore, the Project alignment will no cross State Route 14 and therefore will be consistent with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's North County Combined Highway Corridors Study.
	Cumulative Traffic and Transportation Impacts	There will be no cumulative impacts from the Project as a result of the temporary disruption of transit and school bus routes (Impact T-4) or the temporary interference with pedestrian/bicycle paths (Impact T-5) as project-specific impacts will be short-term and temporary and limited to small localized areas. Because any project-specific conflicts between the Project and plans for a City of Santa Clarita connector road (Impact T-6) will be eliminated with implementation of Mitigation Measure T-6, and because cumulative projects would also be required to be designed to avoid conflicts with the connector road, there will be less-than-significant cumulative impacts. Damage to road ROWs (Impact T-7) 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-8) will not be cumulatively significant as all projects are required to adhere to FAA Air Traffic Division guidelines. Temporary access restrictions to properties (Impact T-9) along the alignment will not be cumulatively significant as any project within a public road occurring at the same time as the Project would have to obtain an encroachment permit from the responsible agency, which would ensure that work does not occur simultaneously. The Project is consistent with all applicable transportation plans (Impact T-10) and therefore does not contribute to a cumulative impact. On NFS lands the Project will not contribute to cumulative impacts as a result of substantial congestion due to closure of roads or reduction of travel lanes (Impacts T-1 and T-2), or interfere with emergency response (Impact T-3), as Project impacts are mitigated (Mitigation Measure T-1a) and current and future projects planned within the ANF are not likely to substantially increase traffic volumes or congestion on ANF roads. Disruption of transit or school bus routes will not occur or result in cumulative impacts on NFS lands as no transit routes go through the Forest (Impact T-4). Temporary interference with pedestrian/bicycle paths in the ANF resulting from the Project (Impact T-5) will not create cumulative impacts as no past, present, or future project will occur simultaneously with Project construction. Conflicts with plans for the City of Santa Clarita connector road (Impact T-6) do not apply within the ANF; therefore, no cumulative impacts occur. The Project will not cumulatively contribute to damage to road ROWs on NFS lands (Impact T-7) since any road damage will be repaired within two months after construction is completed. Cumulative impacts resulting in aviation hazards (Impact T-8) will not be cumulatively significant as all projects are required to adhere to FAA Air Traffic Division guidelines. Temporary access restrictions to properties (Impact T-9) along the alignment will not be cumulatively significant as no past, present, or future projects will occur simultaneously with the Project to create cumulative impacts. Finally, the Project is consistent with all applicable transportation plans (Impact T-10) and therefore does not contribute to a cumulative impact.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
Utilities and Service Systems	U-1: Construction and operational utility and service system demands would change the ability of water utilities and service system facilities to accommodate local demands.	Water used during Project construction and operation is not anticipated to place demands on the available water suppliers serving the project area, and will not result in the need for new or expanded water facilities. Consequently, water demands of the Project will have a less-than-significant impact.
	U-2: Construction and operational utility and service system demands would change the ability of solid waste utilities and service system facilities to accommodate local demands.	The volume of solid waste generated by Project construction will be very small compared to the capacities of the landfills serving the project area, and Project operation will not generate solid waste. These landfills will have adequate capacity to receive solid waste generated during construction of the Project. Less-than-significant impacts to solid waste facilities will occur. Although impacts will be less than significant, Mitigation Measure U-2 (see Impact U-5 below), will ensure that maximum recycling activities occur.
Utilities and Service Systems, cont.	U-3: Construction and operational utility and service system demands would change the ability of stormwater and wastewater utilities and service system facilities to accommodate local demands.	Construction and operation of the Project will cause only minor changes to the amount of runoff due to generally equal number of tower footings/foundations constructed as are removed and refilled. Generation of wastewater will be limited to construction personnel averaging 50 persons, which will not significantly impact the capacity of wastewater providers. As the ANF has no wastewater treatment facilities, there will be no impacts on NFS lands, nor will there be impacts during Project operation because there will be no operational employees at the substation. The Project will not result in a significant demand on stormwater or wastewater facilities serving the area and will not affect existing capacities of wastewater treatment plants serving the area, resulting in less-than-significant impacts.
	U-4: Construction and operational water supply demands would require new or expanded water entitlements or resources.	Water used during Project construction and operation represents a minute fraction of the total water supply of the project area, and is therefore not anticipated to place demands on the available water suppliers serving the Project area, and will not result in the need for new or expanded water entitlements or resources. Consequently, water demands of the Project will have a less-than-significant impact.
	Cumulative Utilities and Service System Impacts	The Project's incremental contribution to Impact U-5, regarding the amount of waste material recycled during construction that will conflict with State standards, will not be significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure U-2 (see Impact U-5 below) will ensure compliance with the Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 and Assembly Bill 939 by incorporating the maximum recycling efforts during Project construction. Furthermore, the requirements of these regulations will apply to all other development projects, making the combined effect of the Project with cumulative projects less than significant. Additionally, NFS lands will not be specifically impacted or will be impacted considerably less than non-NFS land due to the nature of projects on NFS lands being primarily recreational or infrastructure related to maintaining or improving the natural conditions. Therefore the combined effect of Project impacts to water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waster service systems, with other related projects on NFS land will be less than significant.
Visual Resources	V-9: The Project would alter the visual quality of landscape views as seen from Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch (KOP 9).	The Project route as adopted will circumvent the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch and will not alter landscape views seen from the ranch, resulting in no impacts.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
Visual Resources, cont.	V-16: Project infrastructure would conflict with adopted visual quality policies and objectives contained in Forest and local plans.	The Project will not conflict with existing scenic integrity objectives (SIOs) and visual quality policies contained in Forest and local plans after amendment of the Forest Plan, resulting in less-than-significant impacts. Amendment of the Forest Plan is part of the Project, and will modify the SIOs along the Project route on NFS lands to ensure consistency between the Forest Plan and the Project. Implementation of Mitigation Measures V-16a and V-16b, as well as V-16c (for the portion of the route represented between Mile 18.6 and Mile 19.9), identified below are the method by which consistency with the Forest and local plans will be ensured. V-16a Forest Plan Amendment (Miles 5.7 to 19.9). SCE shall obtain all necessary and applicable approvals and permits from the USDA Forest Service, including any required Forest Plan amendments, and shall submit said approvals and permits to the CPUC at least 60 days prior to construction. V-16b Local Agency Approvals (Miles 0.0 to 26.7). SCE shall obtain all necessary and applicable approvals and permits from Los Angeles County and affected local agencies, and shall submit said approval(s) and permits to the CPUC at least 60 days prior to construction. V-16c Transmission Line Siting Study within the ANF. SCE and its Contractors shall prepare an additional siting study that provides a detailed analysis of the least visually impacting location for a new 500-kV transmission line within the ANF to ultimately connect the Antelope Substation to the Pardee Substation. SCE and its Contractors shall relocate aboveground structures to areas where topographic features would provide screening of these large, industrial structures, as feasible. SCE and its Contractors shall provide this siting study to the CPUC and Forest Service, and any other affected agencies, prior to construction.
	V-17: Project infrastructure would create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime views in the area.	The Project's new lattice steel towers will be constructed of dull galvanized angle steel. During certain times of day and from certain viewing angles and distances, the new towers and conductors will reflect sunlight, creating glare and drawing attention of viewers. In order to minimize reflected light that will cause glare, it is important to create structures with colored, nonreflective, textured surfaces. Implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1e (see Impact V-1 below) and V-17a, as identified below, will ensure that the tower structures do not create light or glare. The Project will have no new sources of light that would affect nighttime views. V-17a Use Only Non-Specular and Non-Reflective Conductors and Insulators. The Applicant (SCE) shall use only non-specular and non-reflective conductors, and the insulators shall be non-reflective and non-refractive. The Applicant (SCE) shall submit samples of these materials to the CPUC and Forest Service for review and approval at least 120 days prior to the start of construction.
	V-19 through V-31: Project infrastructure would substantially degrade the visual quality of landscape views as seen from KOPs 5-1 through 5-13, respectively.	The Project will not be seen from KOPs 5-1 through 5-13, thus the quality of landscape views from these KOPs will not be degraded, resulting in no visual impacts.

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Resource	Impact Evaluation Category	Rationale for No Impact or Less-than-Significant Impacts
	Cumulative Visual Resources Impacts	Other existing and planned developments do and will contribute new sources of light and glare that adversely affect nighttime views, and permanently change the landscapes with reflections off windows and glare off windshields and highly reflective materials, respectively (Criterion VIS3). However, implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1e and V-17a will reduce Project glare impacts to less than significant levels. Therefore the Project will not contribute to cumulative visual impacts. Additionally, 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).

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

Based on the issue area assessment in the EIR/EIS, the Commission hereby finds, pursuant to Section 21081, that the following environmental impacts can and will be mitigated to below a level of significance based upon the implementation of the mitigation measures in the EIR/EIS. These findings are based on the discussion of impacts in the detailed issue area analyses in Section C of the EIR/EIS, located in Volume 1 of the Final EIR/EIS.

IV.2.1 Air Quality

As discussed in Section C.2 (Air Quality) of the EIR/EIS, 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, include the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) 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: Construction of the project would expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

As discussed in Section C.2.7 (Air Quality – Alternative 2: Antelope-Pardee East Mid-Slope) of the EIR/EIS, construction of the Project would result in short-term impacts to ambient air quality. Daily construction emissions would be expected to exceed the Air District Regional planning thresholds for significance for NOx, VOC, CO, and PM10 in the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), and for NOx, CO, and PM10 in the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). The major source of the maximum daily NOx emissions is the offroad equipment, including the helicopters. The maximum daily PM10 emissions are dominated by the unpaved road dust emissions due to the long round trip travel distances to the more remote tower construction sites.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact A-2 to a less-than-significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i, presented below, will reduce daily emissions from construction activities at sensitive receptor locations to a less-than-significant level.

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 and ANF approved (on NFS lands) non-toxic soil binders shall be applied per manufacturer recommendations to active unpaved roadways, unpaved staging areas, and unpaved parking area(s) throughout construction (as allowed by responsible agencies such as the Forest Service) 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.

Rationale for Finding. Most of the construction route through the SCAB and MDAB are 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/EIS provides a complete assessment of the air quality impacts of the Project on sensitive receptors.

Impact A-3: The Project would not conform to Federal General Conformity Rules.

As discussed in Section C.2 (Air Quality) of the EIR/EIS, the Project would result in significant impacts if the Project were to cause annual emissions that exceed the General Conformity de minimus 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/EIS from Impact A-3. Specifically, the Project's emission estimate (see EIR/EIS Appendix 3), which considers the implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1f (identified above), does not exceed the General Conformity emission thresholds within the SCAB or the MDAB. Therefore, the Project's General Conformity construction and operational impacts will be less than significant.

Rationale for Finding. The Project's estimated emissions have been determined to be below the General Conformity applicability thresholds with implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1f.

Reference. Section C.2 (Air Quality) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the air quality impacts of the Project as they relate to the Federal General Conformity Rules.

Impact A-5: The Project would not conform to Angeles National Forest air quality strategies.

The Angeles National Forest air quality strategies are limited to (1) minimizing smoke and dust emissions, and (2) providing an air quality inventory for prescribed burns and wildfires. The first of these strategies is directed to "Control and reduce fugitive dust to protect human health, improve safety and moderate or eliminate environmental impacts". The only action item of this of this strategy is to "Incorporate visibility requirements into project plans." The second strategy related to providing an air

quality inventory for prescribed burns and wildfires and therefore does not directly relate to Project's construction and operation emissions.

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 Final EIR/EIS from Impact A-5. Specifically, conformance with SCAQMD and AVAQMD fugitive dust rules and implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i (identified above), will reduce NOx and PM10 emission during construction, which will provide for compliance with the Angeles National Forest air quality strategies and reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i and conformance with SCAQMD and AVAQMD fugitive dust rules will control fugitive dust and reduce NOx and PM10 emission during construction; therefore, the Project will be in compliance with the Angeles National Forest air quality strategies.

Reference. Section C.2 (Air Quality) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the air quality impacts of the Project as they relate to conformance with the Angeles National Forest Strategy.

Cumulative construction air quality impacts could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

As discussed in Section C.2.13 (Air Quality – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, there is the possibility that a variety of projects will occur at the same time as Project construction. A number of projects were identified in both the AVAQMD and SCAQMD jurisdictions. 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 projects will result in cumulative impacts.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant cumulative environmental effect identified in the Final EIR/EIS. Specifically, Mitigation Measures A-1a through A-1i, listed above, will mitigate this significant cumulative impact to a less-than-significant level.

Rationale for Finding. Construction activities associated with the Project will expose sensitive receptors in the populated areas along the construction route. For the emissions of any two projects to have the potential for significant cumulative downwind concentrations they must both be in close proximity to limit the downwind dispersion from one site to the other and generally one of the projects must be able to cause an air quality standard exceedance on it own. As the Project results in less-than-significant impacts with mitigation and it will not be located in close proximity to other projects, cumulative impacts from exposing sensitive receptors to pollutants will be less than significant with implementation of similar mitigation measures. Other cumulative projects will also need to comply with local ordinances prohibiting nuisances or requiring dust control. For the emissions of any two projects to have the potential for significant cumulative downwind concentrations they must both be in close proximity to limit the downwind dispersion from one site to the other and generally one of the projects must be able to cause an air quality standard exceedance on it 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). This would not be true for air toxic pollutants that may have synergistic effects; however, the air toxic emissions impacts from the Project would be very low at any one location and would not be of a magnitude to significantly contribute to cumulative impacts. Therefore, the potential for cumulative impacts to sensitive receptors is

the same as the Project's impacts to sensitive receptors. Cumulative air quality impacts on sensitive receptors would be less than significant with implementation of similar mitigation measures to reduce air quality emissions.

Reference. Section C.2.13 (Air Quality – Cumulative Effects) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative air quality impacts of the Project.

IV.2.2 Biological Resources

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, 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. In addition, extensive field surveys of proposed access roads, laydown areas, substation expansion and modification areas, and a 180-foot buffer area on either side of the transmission line alignment along non-NFS system lands and a 160-foot buffer on either side of the transmission line alignment within NFS system lands were conducted.

Impact B-1: The Project would cause temporary or permanent loss of native vegetation communities.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, the Project will result in both temporary and permanent impacts to non-native grasslands, disturbed habitat, coastal sage scrub, and chaparral communities. Ground-disturbing activity, including tower pad preparation and construction, grading of new or improved access and spur roads, maintenance of construction equipment and supplies, staging area and material yard preparation and use, tower removal, transportation, and the use or improvement of existing access roads has the potential to disturb vegetation.

Riparian habitat may also be permanently removed if the expansion of existing access roads is required in areas where riparian habitat occurs. Activities that involve modification of the bed or bank of a State jurisdictional waterway will be regulated by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDGF), Regional Board, and United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). No construction will occur in USFS designated Riparian Conservation Areas.

APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-5, and BIO-6 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts to native vegetation. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-1 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1a and B-1b, below, as well as Mitigation Measure R-4 (see Impact R-4 below).

B-1a **Provide Restoration/Compensation for Impacts to Native Vegetation Communities** (chamise chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and riparian, if affected). SCE shall have a qualified restoration biologist prepare a Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan for the project. Plans for restoration, enhancement/re-vegetation and/or creation should be prepared by persons with expertise in southern California ecosystems and native plant re-vegetation techniques. The plan should include at minimum: (a) the location of the mitigation site; (b) the plant species to be used; (c) a schematic depicting the mitigation area; (d) time of year that the planting will occur; (e) a description of the irrigation methodology; (f) measures to control exotic vegetation on site; (g) success criteria; (h) a

detailed monitoring program; and, (i) contingency measures should the success criteria not be met. The plan shall be designed to meet the success criteria identified in the Forest Plan which requires restoration goals to be achieved within three years of implementation.

SCE shall utilize a CPUC/Forest Service approved seed mix to revegetate areas disturbed by construction activities. This mix should consist of native, locally-occurring species collected from local seed sources. Restoration shall include the revegetation of stripped or exposed work and/or mitigation areas with vegetation native to the area. No commercially purchased seeds will be accepted unless the collection source is the Del Sur Ridge and must be certified to be free of noxious weeds. Revegetation shall include ground cover, grass, shrub, and tree species in order to match disturbed areas to surrounding conditions and to restore or improve wildlife habitat quality to pre-project or higher levels. The plan also shall include a monitoring element spanning a minimum of five years post-planting. SCE shall restore temporarily disturbed areas, including existing 66-kV tower locations that are to be removed by the Project, to pre-construction conditions following construction.

Permanent impacts outside of the NFS lands shall be mitigated at a ratio to be determined by the CPUC. Within ANF upland vegetation and ephemeral washes with permanent impacts will be mitigated at a ratio of 3:1. Temporary impacts will be replaced at a ratio of 1:1. If the temporary impacts are greater then 3 years then add 0.5 for each year over three years. Permanent impact to mulefat scrub, willow scrub, willow riparian woodland, cottonwood riparian woodland, alder woodland and sycamore woodland will be replaced at a ratio of 5:1. Temporary impacts to the scrub communities will replaced at a 1:1 ratio. Temporary impacts to woodland communities will be replaced at a 2:1 ratio. Where onsite restoration is planned for mitigation of temporary impacts to sensitive vegetation communities, SCE shall identify a Habitat Restoration Specialist to be approved by the CPUC/Forest Service to determine the most appropriate method of restoration.

The creation or restoration of habitat shall be monitored for five years after mitigation site construction to assess progress and identify potential problems with the restoration site. Remedial activities (e.g., additional planting, removal of non-native invasive species, or erosion control) shall be taken during the five-year period if necessary to ensure the success of the restoration effort. If the mitigation fails to meet the established performance criteria after the five-year maintenance and monitoring period, monitoring shall extend beyond the five-year period until the criteria are met or unless otherwise noted by the CPUC/Forest Service. If a catastrophic event occurs, such as a fire, there will be a one time replacement. If a second catastrophic event occurs, no replanting is required.

B-1b **No Activities will occur in Riparian Conservation Areas.** The final project design will include protective measures where no activities will occur on NFS lands in Riparian Conservation Areas in compliance with the Forest Plan. Examples of activities that will NOT be allowed include ground disturbance, adding potable water to these areas while implementing erosion control measures, and removing water from the waterways.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of the above mitigation measures will restore or replace the native vegetation disturbed by Project construction, including disturbances associated with tower pad preparation and construction, the grading of new or improved access and spur roads, maintenance of construction equipment and supplies, staging area and material yard preparation and use, tower removal, transportation, and the use and improvement of existing access roads. Post-restoration monitoring will ensure that all restoration efforts achieve their goals and success criteria. Prohibiting construction and maintenance activities within the boundaries of Riparian Conservation Areas will prevent the damage or destruction of

sensitive riparian and wetland habitat. Impacts to native vegetation will therefore be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the impacts to native vegetation communities resulting from the Project.

Impact B-2: The Project would cause temporary damage or permanent loss of oak trees.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, the Project ROW crosses several ephemeral and intermittent drainages, some of which support oak riparian habitat. All of these drainages will be spanned by the powerlines and avoided during placement of the towers. However, full avoidance of construction activities within oak tree canopies may not be feasible. Repair or widening of existing or new roads to support construction equipment that occurs under the canopy of oak trees may result in damage to individual trees, limbs, and/or their root systems. APM BIO-2 has been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts related to the loss or damage of oak trees. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

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

B-2 **Restoration of Coast Live Oak Trees.** Construction within the driplines of oak trees, and incidental trimming or damage to trees along the proposed route shall not occur until the trees are evaluated by a qualified arborist, who shall identify appropriate measures to minimize tree loss including the placement of fence around the dripline, padding the truck, and the placement of matting under the existing dripline during construction activities. If construction, trimming, or incidental trimming leads to damage or the removal of any coast live oak shall be replaced in kind at a 10:1 ratio. Valley oaks shall be replaced in kind at a 15:1 ratio.

On the ANF any oak or native tree which must be removed or killed as a result of construction or other project-related activities shall be replaced in kind. The replacement ratios (using rooted plants in liners or direct planting of acorns) for plants which are to be removed shall be as follows: plants less than 5 inches DBH shall be replaced at 3:1; plants from 5 to 12 inches shall be replaced at 5:1; trees from 12 to 24 inches shall be replaced at 10:1; trees from 24 to 36 inches shall be replaced at 15:1; all oaks greater than 36 inches shall be replanted at a ratio of 20:1. The replacement ratio for damaged trees shall be 2:1 for plants with DBH less than 12 inches and a 5:1 ratio for plants with DBH greater than 12 inches. Trees shall be at least 5 years old and capable of surviving without further maintenance. Compliance shall be evaluated 5 years after tree removal. Trees shall be planted at locations acceptable to the landowner or managing agency. All planting locations, procedures, and results shall be evaluated by a qualified arborist.

On non-NFS lands all protection and replacement measures shall be consistent with applicable local jurisdiction requirements, such as the Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance. Tree removal shall not be permitted until replacement trees have been planted or transplanting sites are approved.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-2 will minimize the loss of, or damage to, coast live and valley oak, western sycamore, California black walnut, elderberry, cottonwood, and willow trees during construction. Native tree species that must be removed for construction-related activities will be replaced per the species-specific ratios and physical criteria specified by Mitigation

Measure B-2, and replacement trees will be monitored to evaluate the success of their establishment either (1) five years after their planting, or (2) per the requirements of Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance, as applicable to the jurisdiction within which any given replacement tree is located. Therefore, impacts to these oaks and native tree species will be reduced a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts to oak trees.

Impact B-3: The Project would cause loss of foraging habitat for wildlife.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, the installation of new tower locations will result in the temporary and permanent removal of native and non-native vegetation communities including chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and non-native grassland. These communities function as habitat for a variety of native wildlife species and serve as foraging habitat for many birds of prey. The temporary and permanent loss of native vegetation communities that provide foraging habitat for raptor species is considered a significant impact without mitigation. APMs BIO-1 and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce the loss of foraging habitat for wildlife. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-3 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure B-1a (see Impact B-1 above).

Rationale for Finding. On-site restoration and/or appropriately located compensation sites for native vegetation which is either temporarily disturbed during construction, or permanently lost due to the placement of Project-related facilities, will provide foraging habitat for wildlife. Monitoring of the restored habitat areas for a period of five years will ensure that associated wildlife foraging habitat is successfully re-established, per the criteria outlined in an agency-approved Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan. Therefore, impacts to wildlife foraging habitat from Impact B-3 will be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts to foraging habitat.

Impact B-4: The Project would introduce non-native and invasive plant species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, the introduction of non-native plants pose a threat to the natural processes of plant community succession, fire frequency, biological diversity and species composition. The survival of some populations of special status species may be adversely affected by introduction of non-native or invasive plant species. The potential to introduce non-native and invasive plant species will primarily occur during Project construction; however, the potential to introduce these plant species will continue to occur during the Project's operational phase. APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts to native vegetation and special-status plant species. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-4 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure B-1a (see Impact B-1 above), Mitigation Measure R-4 (see Impact R-4 below), and Mitigation Measure B-4, as identified below.

ATTACHMENT B

B-4 Implement Weed Control Measures. SCE shall adhere to the USDA Forest Service management guidelines for reducing the potential for the introduction of invasive, non-native plant species in the ANF by implementation of the following standards:

- SCE SHALL WASH ALL EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES: Vehicles and all equipment must be washed BEFORE AND AFTER entering all project sites. This includes wheels, undercarriages, bumpers and all parts of the vehicle. In addition, all tools such as chain saws, hand clippers, pruners, etc must also be washed BEFORE AND AFTER entering all project sites. For example, vehicles traveling into contaminated areas are the main dispersal mechanism for yellow star-thistle. All washing must take place where rinse water is collected and disposed of in either a sanitary sewer or a landfill.

- Erosion control measures utilized on the project shall be certified weed free.

- SCE SHALL KEEP WRITTEN LOGS: When vehicles and equipment are washed, a daily log must be kept stating:

  - Location
  - Date and time
  - Methods Used
  - Staff present
  - Equipment washed
  - Signature of responsible crew member

- These written logs will be turned in to the Forest project manager and Forest Botanist on a weekly basis.

- SCE will monitor areas that have been temporarily or permanently impacted by this project and will remove any noxious weeds that may invade into those locations.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-4 minimizes the potential to introduce non-native and invasive plant species to the Project area by clearing all vehicles and equipment of the seeds and spore that propagate such species to the maximum extent feasible. The use of erosion-control measures that do not contain the seed of non-native or invasive plant species, and continued monitoring of areas disturbed by construction and maintenance activities will additionally minimize the potential to introduce these non-native species. Incorporation of APMs BIO-1, BIO-2 and BIO-5, and implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1a, B-4 and R-4 will ensure that temporary and permanent losses of native vegetation are minimized during construction, and that restoration, or appropriate compensation for permanently lost native vegetation is undertaken. The protection and post-construction restoration of native vegetation will hinder the establishment of non-native and invasive plant species. Therefore, impacts related to non-native and invasive plant species from Impact B-4 will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts associated with the introduction of non-native and invasive plant species.

Impact B-6: Construction activities during the breeding season would result in a potential loss of nesting birds.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, construction of the Project will disturb or remove vegetation utilized by nesting birds. The removal of vegetation used as habitat during the breeding season will likely result in the displacement of breeding birds and the abandonment of active nests. The displacement of birds during the breeding season may result in significant impacts and, for some birds,

would be in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. APMs BIO-1 and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts related to the potential loss of nesting birds during the breeding season. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

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

B-6 **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 breeding birds with active nests are found, a biological monitor shall establish a 300-foot buffer around the nest and no activities will be allowed within the buffer until the young have fledged from the nest or the nest fails. The 300-foot buffer may be adjusted to reflect existing conditions including ambient noise and disturbance with the approval of the CPUC and USFS. 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. The biological monitor shall be responsible for documenting the results of the surveys and the ongoing monitoring and will provide a copy of the monitoring reports for impact areas on NFS lands to the Forest Biologist.

Rationale for Finding. Pre-construction surveys, the establishment of buffer zones surrounding active nests prior to and during construction, and construction-phase monitoring for nesting birds during the breeding season by a qualified biologist will reduce potential impacts to nesting birds during the breeding season. 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/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on nesting birds.

Impact B-7: The Project would result in the loss of listed plant species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, construction of the Project may result in direct impacts related to the removal, burial, or destruction of habitat for listed plant species. APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-4, BIO-5, and BIO-6 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce significant effects to listed plant species from Impact B-7 to a less-than-significant level. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4. However, due to the difficulty of identifying several of these plant species unless they are in bloom, measures to identify and avoid them prior to or during construction, as stipulated by the above-referenced APMs, may be unsuccessful unless the surveys are conducted at appropriate times of year. The damage or destruction of listed plant species that are not identified and flagged for avoidance prior to construction will result in significant impacts.

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 Measure B-7, as identified below.

B-7 **Conduct Surveys for Listed Plant Species.** Conduct Surveys for Listed and Sensitive Plant Species. SCE shall conduct focused surveys prior to construction during the appropriate floristic

period appropriate for each sensitive plant species in all suitable habitats located within the Project ROW *and* within 100 feet of all surface disturbing activities.

- Surveys for Braunton's milk-vetch and thread-leaved brodiaea shall be conducted in chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and grassland habitat between March and June.

- Surveys for San Fernando Valley spineflower shall be conducted in coastal sage scrub habitat between April and July.

- Surveys for Kusche's sandwort, Palmer's mariposa lily, alkali mariposa lily, San Gabriel bedstraw, rock monardella, short-joint beavertail, and Rock Creek broomrape shall be conducted in chaparral habitat in June (see Impact B-15).

- Surveys shall be conducted in chaparral and coastal sage scrub habitat between May and June for slender mariposa lily, Plummer's mariposa lily, San Gabriel Mountains dudleya, and between January and April for rayless ragwort (see Impact B-15).

- Surveys for many-stemmed dudleya shall be conducted in chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and grassland habitat between March and July (see Impact B-15).

- Surveys for Hall's monardella shall be conducted in chaparral and grassland habitat between June and August (see Impact B-15).

- Surveys for round-leaved filaree shall be conducted in grassland habitat between March and May (see Impact B-15).

Populations of sensitive plants shall be flagged and mapped prior to construction. If sensitive plants are located during the focused surveys, then modification of the placement of towers, access roads, laydown areas, and other ground disturbing activities would be implemented in order to avoid the plants. If sensitive plants cannot be avoided, SCE shall be responsible for the translocation of plants and/or collection of seeds from existing populations that would be impacted and the planting/seeding of these plants in adjacent suitable portions of the ROW that would not be affected by proposed Project construction or maintenance activities. These transplanted or seeded plants will be monitored for 5 years. In the City of Lancaster, impacts to alkali mariposa lilies may be mitigated through off-site compensation. Impacts to federally or State listed plant species would not be allowed except through the context of a biological opinion.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-4, BIO-5, and BIO-6 require pre-construction surveys and the establishment and flagging of avoidance zones, conducting biological monitoring during construction, minimization dust and runoff, and biological training for all Project staff. Additionally, implementation of Mitigation Measure B-7 requires that all pre-construction surveys for listed plant species be conducted at appropriate times of year, as well as the relocation of listed plant species that cannot be avoided during construction. In those instances when affected plant species cannot be relocated, the measure requires collection of their seeds for the purpose of re-seeding the affected area following construction. With implementation of these measures, impacts to listed plant species from Impact B-7 will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on listed plant species.

ATTACHMENT B

Impact B-8: Construction activities would result in loss of arroyo toads.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, the arroyo toad has been documented in San Francisquito Creek near the confluence with the Santa Clara River, approximately 1.5 miles south of the Project ROW. In addition, suitable habitat for this species, including shallow slow moving pools, gravel bars, and adjacent upland habitat is present within San Francisquito Creek directly under the Project ROW. Because this species is highly mobile and suitable habitat is located within the Project ROW, there is a potential for this species to be present in the Project area. Likewise, this species has been known to utilize upland habitat within 2,000 meters (6,562 feet) of its breeding habitat for foraging and wintering. Construction-related activities could result in direct and indirect impacts to the arroyo toad, if present. Direct and indirect impacts may additionally occur as the result of operational activities such as road maintenance and facility repairs. APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3 and BIO-5, have been incorporated into the Project to reduce significant effects to special-status wildlife, including the arroyo toad. APM GEO-3 will additionally reduce potentially significant impacts to this species. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4, and a complete description of APM GEO-3 is provided in EIR/EIS Table C.5-6.

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

B-8a **Conduct Focused Surveys for Arroyo Toad.** SCE shall contract with a qualified local biologist to conduct focused surveys for arroyo toad in San Francisquito Creek. 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 United States Fish and Wildlife Service (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 arroyo toads to monitor all construction activities in arroyo toad potential habitat 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 arroyo toad.
- 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 arroyo toad including color photographs;
  b. The protection the arroyo toad 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 arroyo toad and other species during construction activities associated with the proposed project; and
  d. A point of contact if arroyo toads are observed.
- All trash that may attract predators of the arroyo toad 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 arroyo toad and the actions taken to reduce impacts to this species. Because arroyo toads 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 arroyo toads. The goal of this effort is to reduce the level of mortality of arroyo toads during construction. The parties realize that complete elimination of all mortality is likely not possible because some arroyo toads may occur anywhere within suitable habitat during any given season; the detection of every individual over large areas is impossible because of the small size, fossorial habits, and cryptic coloration of the arroyo toad.

- Where construction can occur in habitat where arroyo toads 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 arroyo toads from within the fenced area to suitable habitat outside of the fence. If arroyo toads 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 arroyo toads 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 arroyo toads may congregate will be conducted during times of the year (fall/winter) when individuals have dispersed from these areas. The authorized biologist will assist SCE in scheduling its work activities accordingly.
- If arroyo toads are found within an area that has been fenced to exclude arroyo toads, activities will cease until the authorized biologist moves the arroyo toads.
- If arroyo toads are found in a construction area where fencing was deemed unnecessary, work will cease until the authorized biologist moves the arroyo toads. 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 and USFWS.
- Any arroyo toads 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 within potential toad habitat.
- 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.

- Drift fence/pitfall trap surveys will be implemented in toad sensitive areas prior to construction in an effort to reduce potential mortality to this species. Prior to any construction activities in the project area, silt fence shall be installed completely around the proposed work area and a qualified biologist should conduct a preconstruction/ clearance survey of the work area for arroyo toads. Any toads found in the work area should be relocated to suitable habitat. The silt fence shall be maintained for the duration of the work activity.
- SCE shall restrict work to daylight hours, except during an emergency, in order to avoid nighttime activities when arroyo toads may be present on the access road. Traffic speed should be maintained at 15 mph or less in the work area.

B-8b Implement Seasonal Restrictions for Road Maintenance, Culvert Replacement, and Grading of New Access and Spur Roads That Occur Within Drainages. SCE shall conduct road maintenance activities and new construction activities that occur within drainages when no water flow is present. Seasonal restrictions will reduce the potential for increased sedimentation of potential arroyo toad breeding pools or other listed riparian dependent species that could occur downstream of the ROW. Vehicles and equipment shall not utilize the Bouquet Creek crossing (Forest Road 6N19) if flowing water covers any portion of the bridge.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-8a and B-8b for the protection of arroyo toad will require 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 agency coordination, 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 any arroyo toads that are found within work areas by a qualified biologist, authorization of the monitoring biologist to stop construction activities if any arroyo toads considered to be in harms way, restrictions on construction to daylight hours, a maximum vehicle or mobile equipment speed of 15 mph, and seasonal restrictions for construction and maintenance activities within drainages. The activities and requirements prescribed by these measures, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3 and BIO-5, will reduce impacts to arroyo toad a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on arroyo toads.

Impact B-9: Construction activities would result in the loss of California red-legged frogs.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, 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 artificial stockponds that are present in the Project area between Miles 3.0 and 5.0. This species may also be present in the headwaters of drainages that occur throughout the Project area. 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 proposed Project ROW. Construction-related activities would avoid impacting the primary habitat of this species, streambeds and banks, to the extent feasible, thereby minimizing potential impacts. However, the replacement of culverts and the placement of new access and spur roads may result in indirect impacts to this species upstream or downstream of disturbed areas. Additionally, during the spring and summer the California red-legged frog may move to upland areas to feed or aestivate; construction and maintenance activities that disturb these upland areas may potentially affect this species. APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-4 and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts to the California red-legged frog. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

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 B-9 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure B-8b (see Impact B-8 above), and Mitigation Measure B-9, as identified below.

B-9 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 Measure B-9 for the protection of California red-legged frog will require 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 agency coordination, 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. The activities and requirements prescribed by this measure, in conjunction with the requirements of Mitigation Measure B-8b and APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3 and BIO 5, will reduce impacts to California red-legged frog a less-than-significant level.

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

Impact B-10: The Project would result in loss of foraging habitat for listed raptor species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, three listed raptor species (Swainson's hawk, peregrine falcon, and California condor) may forage within or near the majority of the Project area. However, because of the mobility of raptors, and the large spatial extent of their foraging areas, construction activities are not expected to adversely impact these species. Although the Project will result in only limited disturbances to the foraging habitat utilized by these species, the temporary and permanent loss of native vegetation communities that provide foraging habitat for listed raptor species may result in adverse effects. APMs BIO-1 and BIO-2 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts associated with special status wildlife species and native vegetation. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-10 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures identified as B-1a (under Impact B-1, above) and B-6 (under Impact B-6, above).

Rationale for Finding. The activities and requirements of Mitigation Measure B-1a include the preparation and implementation of a Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan for construction-related disturbances, including temporary disturbances to raptor foraging habitat. The measure additionally requires post-restoration monitoring to ensure that all habitat-specific restoration criteria outlined in the Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan are achieved, and that permanently lost native habitat areas, including raptor foraging habitat, are compensated for with replacement lands. Mitigation Measure B-6 requires pre-construction surveys for special status nesting birds, including listed raptors, the establishment of buffer zones surrounding active nests prior to and during construction, and construction-phase monitoring for special status nesting birds during the breeding season. With implementation of the activities and requirements prescribed by these measures, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1 and BIO-2, impacts to the foraging habitat of listed raptor species will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on foraging habitat for listed raptor species.

Impact B-11: The Project would result in loss of listed riparian bird species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, three listed song birds have the potential to nest in riparian habitat located within or adjacent to the Project ROW. These species are associated with riparian areas that occur adjacent to access roads at Bouquet Reservoir, San Francisquito Creek, and in Haskell Canyon. Riparian vegetation is also located at the quarry haul road crossing at Bouquet Canyon

Creek. To reduce potential impacts related to listed riparian bird species APMs BIO-1, BIO-4, and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4. However, construction-related activities including noise, vehicle traffic, and human presence may still result in impacts to nesting riparian birds if these activities are conducted in isolated areas, including Haskell Canyon, during the breeding season.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-11 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure B-6 (see Impact B-6 above).

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-6 will ensure that pre-construction surveys for nesting bird species are conducted and that active nesting sites that are identified during the breeding season which may be affected by construction are flagged and monitored for avoidance. The measure additionally requires that all of these activities must be carried-out by a qualified biologist, and that summary reports of these activities will be provided to appropriate regulatory agencies. With implementation of Mitigation Measure B-6, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1, BIO-4, and BIO-5, impacts to riparian bird species will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on listed riparian bird species.

Impact B-12: The Project would result in the loss of coastal California gnatcatchers.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, coastal California gnatcatchers have a limited potential to occur in the coastal sage scrub habitat that occurs along the ROW west of Haskell Canyon. Gnatcatchers, if present in or adjacent to the Project ROW, could be directly impacted by construction activities through the removal of nests and habitat. Construction-related noise and dust, and the presence of project personnel may additionally result in the disruption of breeding or nursery behavior. APMs BIO-1, BIO-4, and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts to special status wildlife species and their associated habitat. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

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 Measure B-12, below.

B-12 Conduct Protocol Surveys for California Gnatcatchers. SCE shall conduct protocol level surveys for coastal California Gnatcatchers in all areas supporting suitable coastal sage scrub habitat that may be affected by the project. This will include a minimum 300-foot buffer. Presence/absence of this species shall be determined prior to construction activities. If present, SCE shall avoid construction in or adjacent to occupied habitat during the breeding season (March 15-July 31). If direct impacts to coastal California gnatcatcher occupied habitat cannot be avoided, project activities shall not occur in occupied habitat until impacts to this species have been addressed through either the Section 7 or Section 10(a)(1)(B) Process under the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. SCE shall complete compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act prior to Project construction. Mitigation measures developed through this process shall include restriction of construction activities within coastal sage scrub habitat during the gnatcatcher breeding season (March 15-July 31), restoration/creation/enhancement of on-site coastal sage scrub habitat, and/or the purchasing of land or mitigation bank credits at an appropriate ratio to offset impacts to gnatcatchers and their habitat.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-12 requires that prior to construction, surveys for the coastal California gnatcatcher must be completed to avoid construction-phase impacts to the species during the breeding season. The measure further requires that if impacts to this species cannot be avoided, that applicable procedures and processes required by the Federal Endangered Species Act must be completed, prior to construction, to identify mitigation measures that minimize construction-related impacts during the breeding season, as well as impacts related to habitat disturbance and loss. With implementation of Mitigation Measure B-12, in conjunction with APMs BIO 1, BIO 4, and BIO-5, impacts to coastal California gnatcatcher will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on California gnatcatchers.

Impact B-14: The Project would result in transmission line collisions by listed bird species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, it is generally expected that collision mortality potential related to the Project's transmission line will be greatest where the movements of susceptible bird species (typically larger bird species) are the greatest, such as Bouquet Reservoir, Leona Valley, and San Francisquito Canyon. These areas contain features such as wetlands, open water bodies and ridge lines that attract larger bird species, and also support existing 66-kV transmission lines that birds can collide with. Due to the presence of the existing transmission lines, strikes associated with the Project are not expected to result in a substantial increase from baseline conditions. However, collision-related mortality associated with listed bird species, such as the California condor, may result in significant impacts.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-14 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure identified as B-14, below.

B-14 Utilize Collision-reducing Techniques. Collision-reducing techniques, as outlined in "Mitigating Bird Collisions with Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1994," shall be implemented with the Project.

- Placement of towers and lines shall not be located significantly above existing transmission line towers and lines, topographic features, or tree lines to the maximum extent practicable.

- Overhead lines (i.e., conductors and ground wires) that occur significantly above the above-mentioned features and that are located in highly utilized avian flight paths (i.e. Bouquet Canyon Reservoir, Leona Valley, San Francisquito Canyon), will be marked utilizing aerial marker spheres, swinging plates, spiral vibration dampers, bird flight diverters, avifauna spirals, or other diversion device approved by the Forest Biologist (on NFS lands) as to be visible to birds and reduce avian collisions with lines.

- Where overhead transmission lines occur in California Condor habitat work with utility companies or authorization holders to install high-visibility or avoidance devices and raptor guards on poles and other structures potentially used as perching sites by California Condors.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-14 will ensure that the Project is designed with features that divert the flight path of birds away from its towers and lines, and that the height and location of towers are designed in a manner that minimizes the potential for bird strikes. Implementation of the Mitigation Measure B-14 will thus reduce impacts related to transmission line collisions by listed bird species to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on listed bird species resulting from transmission line collision.

Impact B-15: The Project would result in the loss of special-status plant species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, special-status plant species with the potential to occur within the area affected by the Project include: Kusche's sandwort; Slender mariposa lily; Palmer's mariposa lily; Plummer's mariposa lily; Alkali mariposa lily; San Gabriel Mountains dudleya; San Gabriel bedstraw; Rayless ragwort; Many-stemmed dudleya; Short-joint beavertail cactus; Hall's monardella; Rock Creek broomrape; Round-leaved filaree; and, Rock monardella. Construction-related impacts to special-status plant species will be same as those described for listed plant species, as addressed under Impact B-7, above. Ground-disturbing activity, including tower pad preparation and construction, grading of new access roads, tower removal, and use or improvement of existing access roads has the potential to disturb listed plant species. APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-4, BIO-5, and BIO-6 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts associated with special status wildlife species and native vegetation. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-15 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure identified as B-7 (see Impact B-7 above).

Rationale for Finding. The activities and requirements of Mitigation Measure B-7 include the completion of focused, pre-construction surveys for listed, sensitive and special-status plant species at appropriate times of year, and that any of these plant species that cannot be avoided during construction be either relocated to suitable areas outside of the construction zone, or their seed collected for re-seeding of the affected area following construction. With implementation of the activities and requirements prescribed by Mitigation Measure B-7, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-4, BIO-5 and BIO-6, impacts to special-status plant species will be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on special-status plant species.

Impact B-16: The Project would result in the loss of special-status amphibian species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, two sensitive species of amphibians, the yellow-blotched salamander and the western spadefoot toad, have the potential to occur in the Project area. The yellow-blotched salamander has a low potential to occur in the oak tree leaf litter and woody debris associated with oak woodlands that occur in the Santa Clarita Valley. The western spadefoot toad, however, has a high potential to occur in grassland habitat located throughout the project area, including Haskell Canyon, San Francisquito Canyon, and the lowland hills in the northern portion of the alignment (north of the ANF) and in the southern portion of the alignment through Santa Clarita. The Project may adversely impact the western spadefoot toad and its habitat as the result of vegetation removal, tower construction and line installation, the preparation and use of laydown areas, the use and improvement of existing unpaved access roads, and expansion of the Antelope Substation. APMs BIO-1, BIO-4, and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

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 identified as B-16, below.

B-16 Conduct Pre-construction Surveys for Sensitive Amphibians and Reptiles. SCE shall contract with a qualified local biologist to conduct pre-construction surveys for sensitive amphibians and reptiles. Habitat occupied by toads shall be flagged and avoided during construction. Adult toads shall be moved to suitable habitat if construction activities will impact the pool or depression. Sensitive reptiles shall be moved a minimum of 500 feet off the ROW to suitable habitat.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure B-16 requires the completion of pre-construction surveys for sensitive amphibian and reptile species, as well as avoidance flagging for these species prior to the start of construction-phase activities. The measure additionally requires that any adult spadefoot toads or sensitive reptiles which are identified within construction zones be relocated to suitable habitat and out of harms way during construction-related activities. These activities must be completed by a qualified biologist. With implementation of Mitigation Measure B-16, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1, BIO-4, and BIO-5, impacts related to the loss of special-status amphibian and reptile species from Impact B-16 will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on special-status amphibian species.

Impact B-17: The Project would result in the loss of special-status reptile species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, construction of the Project will remove habitat for San Diego and California coastal horned lizards. The Project may also result in impacts to the silvery legless lizard, coastal rosy boa, San Bernardino ringneck snakes, and the San Bernardino Mountain king snake. Permanent and temporary loss of habitat or mortality to individual species may occur at laydown/staging areas, along temporary access/spur roads, and in other areas that are temporarily disturbed during construction, such as tower locations. APMs BIO-1 and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts to these species and their associated habitat. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

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-1a (see Impact B-1 above), Mitigation Measure B-16 (see Impact B-16 above), and Mitigation Measure G-2 (see Impact G-2 below).

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure B-1a requires the preparation and implementation of a Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan for all affected areas, including the habitat associated with special-status reptile species. The measure additionally requires appropriate compensation for habitat types that are permanently lost due to Project construction and operation. Mitigation Measure B-16 requires pre-construction surveys and avoidance flagging for special-status reptile species, as well as construction-phase relocation of any of these species that are found within construction zones by a qualified biologist. Mitigation Measure G-2 requires the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize erosion-related effects that could impact these species and/or their habitat. With implementation of these measures, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1 and BIO-5, impacts to special-status reptile species will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impact on special-status reptile species.

Impact B-18: The Project would result in the loss of aquatic special-status reptile species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, the southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake have the potential to occur in permanent or nearly permanent water bodies located along and adjacent to the Project ROW. Impacts to these species may occur during construction as the result of mechanical crushing, the loss or disruption of nesting, breeding or basking (as related to southwestern pond turtles) sites, human trampling, and the disturbance and removal of habitat. Impacts could also result from temporary impacts to water quality. APMs BIO-1, BIO-4, BIO-5 and GEO-3 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts associated these species and their habitat. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4; a complete description of APM GEO-3 is provided in EIR/EIS Table C.5-6.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-18 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures identified as B-8b (see Impact B-8 above), B-16 (see Impact B-16 above), and G-2 (see Impact G-2 below).

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure B-8b prohibits any Project-related activities within drainages during periods of water flow. This restriction will minimize direct and indirect impacts to aquatic special-status species and their primary habitat. Mitigation Measure B-16 requires pre-construction surveys and avoidance flagging for special-status reptile species, including aquatic species, as well as construction-phase relocation of these species if they are found within construction zones. These activities must be completed by a qualified biologist. Mitigation Measure G-2 requires the implementation of BMPs to minimize erosion-related effects that could impact these species and/or their habitat. With implementation of these measures, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1, BIO-4, BIO-5, and GEO-3, impacts to aquatic special-status reptile species will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impact on aquatic special-status reptile species.

Impact B-19: The Project would result in the loss of burrowing owls.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, burrowing owls were not identified in the Project area during reconnaissance surveys, and have a low potential to over-winter in burrows that occur in the grassland habitat located along the eastern end of the Project ROW. However, this species is protected under Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code and the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. If burrowing owls are found within or adjacent to the Project ROW during construction, direct impacts related to the damage or destruction of burrowing sites could occur. Secondary impacts to the species, including effects related to noise levels, sensitivity to humans, and dust may also occur. APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-4, BIO-6 and BIO-7 have been incorporated into the Project to minimize these direct and secondary impacts. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

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

ATTACHMENT B

B-19 Relocate Individual Burrowing Owls During the Non-Breeding Season. SCE shall conduct pre-construction surveys for the western burrowing owl. Surveys will be conducted prior to ground disturbance activities in areas that contain habitat for this species. Burrows located outside the project area shall be flagged for avoidance. Un-occupied burrows located in the right of way shall be covered to prevent owls from re-occupying the burrows prior to construction. If active owl burrows are discovered within 300 feet of a tower the owls would be relocated from the burrows using either active or passive techniques as recommended by the CDFG. Owl relocation, as well as discouragement of owls from returning to the site, will occur in the following manner:

- During the non-breeding season (September 1 through January 31), burrowing owls occupying the proposed plant site will be evicted by passive relocation. Passive relocation would include the installation of one-way doors on burrow entrance. Any active burrow would be replaced off-site in adjacent habitat with an artificial burrow. Burrows shall be inspected with a fiber optic camera to ensure animals do not remain in the den.

- If construction would occur during the breeding season (February 1 through August 31) and prior to the relocation of the owls a 300 foot protective buffer would be maintained around burrows occupied by owls until the young have fledged. Other actions could include passive relocation if it is determined that owls have not begun laying eggs or postponement of construction in the area until the young are fledged and no longer dependent upon the nest burrow.

- Once fledglings are capable of independent survival and adult non-breeding owls have successfully been relocated offsite, potential owl habitat (squirrel burrows) would be collapsed in order to keep the owls from returning.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-19 will ensure that pre-construction surveys for burrowing owls are conducted. The measure additionally requires that any burrows which are identified during these surveys must be either flagged for avoidance or covered or collapsed to prevent entry, as warranted by their location. The measure also prescribes pre-construction relocation techniques for any burrowing owls that may be present in areas designated for earth disturbing activities during the breeding and non-breeding season. With implementation of Mitigation Measure B-19, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-4, BIO-6 and BIO-7, impacts to burrowing would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on burrowing owls.

Impact B-20: The Project would result in the loss of foraging habitat or disruption of special-status raptor species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, ten special-status raptor species have the potential to occur in the proposed Project area. Impacts to the foraging habitat of special-status raptor species are the same as those described for Impacts B-6 and B-10, above. APMs BIO-1, BIO-2 and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts to special-status wildlife species and their associated habitat. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

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 Measure B-1a (see Impact B-1 above) and B-6 (see Impact B-6 above).

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-1a requires the preparation and implementation of a Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan, including procedures for the restoration of, and/or compensation for the foraging habitat of special-status raptor species. The measure additionally requires monitoring for a five-year period to ensure that all habitat restoration efforts are successful. Mitigation Measure B-6 requires pre-construction surveys and avoidance flagging, as well as construction-phase monitoring by a qualified biologist to ensure the protection of nesting birds, including special-status raptor species, during the breeding season. With implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1a and B-6, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-5, impacts to special-status raptor species and their foraging habitat will be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on the foraging habitat or disruption of special-status raptor species.

Impact B-21: The Project would result in the loss of nesting special-status and migratory birds.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, four special-status raptor species have the potential to nest within the Project ROW, including Cooper's hawk, northern harrier, white-tailed kite, and golden eagle. Three special-status songbird species, including the yellow warbler, yellow-breasted chat, and California horned lark also have the potential to nest within or immediately adjacent to the Project ROW. Project-related impacts to these species are the same as those described for Impacts B-6 and B-10, above. APMs BIO-1, BIO-2 and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts related to these species. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-21 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures identified as B-1a (see Impact B-1 above) and B-6 (see Impact B-6 above).

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-1a requires the preparation and implementation of a Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan, including procedures for the restoration of, and/or compensation for the nesting habitat of special-status and migratory bird species. The measure additionally requires monitoring for a five-year period to ensure that habitat restoration efforts are successful. Mitigation Measure B-6 requires pre-construction surveys and avoidance flagging, as well as construction-phase monitoring by a qualified biologist to ensure the protection of nesting birds during the breeding season. With implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1a and B-6, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-5, impacts to special-status raptor species and their foraging habitat will be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impact on nesting special-status and migratory birds.

Impact B-23: The Project would result in transmission line collision by special-status bird species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, it is generally expected that collision mortality related to the Project's transmission line will be greatest where the movements of susceptible bird

species are the greatest, such as Bouquet Reservoir, Leona Valley, and San Francisquito Canyon. Project-related impacts associated with transmission line collisions by special-status bird species are the same as those described for Impact B-14, above.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-23 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure B-14 (see Impact B-14 above).

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-14 will ensure that the Project is designed with features that divert the flight path of birds away from its towers and lines, and that the height and location of towers are designed in a manner that minimizes the potential for bird strikes. Implementation of the Mitigation Measure B-14 will thus reduce impacts related to transmission line collisions by listed bird species to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impact on special-status bird species resulting from transmission line collisions.

Impact B-25: The Project would result in loss of the American badger.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, the American badger has a moderate potential to occur in the chaparral and scrub habitats located along and within the Project ROW. 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. APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-4 and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts to special status wildlife species and their associated habitat, including the American badger. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-25 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure A-1a (see Impact A-2 above), and Mitigation Measure B-25, as identified below, will mitigate significant effects related to the American badger to a less-than-significant level.

B-25 Passively Relocate American Badgers During the Non-breeding Season. SCE shall survey and identify any badger dens located within the project area and 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 Forest Service and CDFG.

Rationale for Finding. Preparation and implementation of a Fugitive Dust Control Plan, as required by Mitigation Measure A-1a, will ensure that multiple actions are routinely undertaken to minimize the dust and particulate matter generated by construction. These actions will minimize dust-related impacts to the American badger and the habitat within which it dens. 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-25, will also minimize impacts to this species and its habitat. With implementation of Mitigation Measure B-12, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-4, and BIO-5, impacts to American badgers will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

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

Impact B-26: The Project would result in loss of special-status rodent species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, the southern grass hopper mouse and Tehachapi pocket mouse have a moderate potential to be present within or adjacent to the northern- and southern-most portions of the Project ROW. Permanent loss of habitat for these two special-status rodent species may occur from the placement of tower footings. Additionally the Los Angeles pocket mouse has the potential to occur along the Project ROW. Ground-disturbing activities within grassland habitat during the construction of new towers, expansion of the Antelope Substation, and removal of the existing 66-kV transmission line and towers could result in direct impacts to this species as well as the Tehachapi pocket mouse, if present. APM BIO-1 has been incorporated into the Project to reduce impacts associated with special status wildlife species and native vegetation, including special-status rodent species. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

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

B-26 Avoid Burrow Areas. SCE's Biological Monitor shall flag areas with high concentrations of small rodent burrows and these areas will be avoided to the extent feasible.

Rationale for Finding. The activities and requirements of Mitigation Measure B-26 include pre-construction avoidance flagging of high concentrations of small special-status rodent burrows. The avoidance flagging will minimize disturbances to these species during construction-related activities to the extent feasible. With implementation of Mitigation Measure B-26, in conjunction with APM BIO-1, impacts to special-status small rodent species and their habitat will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impact on special-status rodents species.

Impact B-27: The Project would result in impacts to Management Indicator Species.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, Management Indicator Species (and their associated habitat) located in the ANF include: Healthy mule deer (Diverse Habitats), mountain lions (Fragmentation); California spotted owl, California black oak, and White fir (Montatne Conifer Forest); Song sparrow (Riparian Habitat); Arroyo toad (Aquatic Habitat); Blue oak, Engleman oak, and Valley oak (Oak Regeneration); Bigcone Douglas-fir (Bigcone Doulglas-fir Forest); and, Coulter pine (Coulter Pine Forest). Of these Management Indicator Species, impacts to the mule deer and mountain lion will be less than significant. Project-related impacts to the California spotted owl will be similar to those associated with Impact B-6 and B-10, above. Impacts to the song sparrow will be similar those described for Impact B-11, above; APMs BIO-1, BIO-4, and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project to avoid impacts to this species. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4. Project-related impacts to the Arroyo toad are the same as those described under Impact B-8, above, and possible impacts to Blue oak, Engleman oak, and Valley oak are the same as those identified under Impact B-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 B-27 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1a and B-1b (see Impact B-1 above), B-2 (see Impact B-2 above), B-6 (see Impact B-6 above), B-8a and B-8b (see Impact B-8 above), and A-1a (see Impact A-1 above).

Rationale for Finding. Several mitigation measures have been identified to minimize impacts to Management Indicator Species, as follows:

- Mitigation Measure B-1a requires the preparation and implementation of a Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan for all areas disturbed by Project-related construction, including post-restoration monitoring to assess restoration success, and compensation for habitat that is permanently lost due to Project construction and operation. This measure applies to areas and habitat associated with Management Indicator Species.

- Mitigation Measure B-1b prohibits Project-related activities within Riparian Conservation Areas, which will minimize impacts to the spotted owl, which utilizes riparian habitat.

- Mitigation Measure B-2 requires pre-construction and construction phase activities to minimize damage to oak trees, and the replacement of any oak trees that must be removed for, or killed as the result of, construction, including Blue oak, Engleman oak, and Valley oak.

- Mitigation Measure B-6 requires pre-construction surveys for breeding birds, as well as pre-construction avoidance flagging and construction-phase monitoring and related activities by a qualified biologist to minimize disturbances to these species, including the spotted owl and song sparrow.

- Mitigation Measures B-8a and B-8b prescribe specific measures and protocols that must be followed to protect the Arroyo toad, including pre-construction and construction activities by a qualified biologist, and restrictions on construction and maintenance activities within drainages.

- Mitigation Measure A-1a requires the preparation and implementation of a Fugitive Dust Control Plan, which will require the completion of multiple, on-going actions to minimize the dust and particulate matter generated by construction. These actions will minimize dust-related impacts to Management Indicator Species and their associated habitats.

With implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1a, B-1b, B-2, B-6, B-8a, B-8b and A-1a, in conjunction with APMs BIO-1, BIO-4, and BIO-5, impacts to Management Indicator Species and their habitat will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on Management Indicator Species.

Impact B-30: The Project would conflict with Los Angeles County's oak tree ordinance.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, access to the Project ROW will require the utilization of existing roads that traverse Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest habitat on non-NFS lands. The majority of this sensitive natural community occurs in Haskell Canyon. In addition, new access and spur roads would be constructed in Haskell Canyon and in close proximity to oak woodland habitat. SCE will

comply with the regulations identified in the Los Angeles Oak Tree Ordinance, and apply replacement mitigation for potential losses to oak trees caused by the Project. Additionally, the removal of oak trees will be avoided, and existing roads will be utilized without improvement to the maximum extent possible to avoid damage to oak trees. However, the transport of large and heavy equipment through these areas during construction may result in damage to individual oak trees, limbs, and/or their root systems.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-30 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure B-2 (see Impact B-2 above).

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure B-2 specifies that no construction activities will occur until oak trees are evaluated by a qualified arborist, who will identify appropriate measures to minimize oak tree damage and loss, including the placement of fencing around driplines, padding trunks, and placing matting under driplines. Additionally, the measure requires protection and replacement measures consistent with applicable local jurisdiction requirements, including the Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance. With implementation of Mitigation Measure B-2, impacts related to conflicts with the Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance will be reduced a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's impacts on oak trees in Los Angeles County.

Impact B-31: The Project would conflict with Angeles National Forest Land Management Plan direction for construction within Riparian Conservation Areas within the ANF.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, the Forest Plan (Part 2, Appendix B) directs that the ANF Manage Riparian Conservation Areas (RCA) to maintain or improve conditions for riparian dependent resources. Riparian dependent resources are those natural resources that owe their existence to the area, such as fish, amphibians, reptiles, fairy shrimp, aquatic invertebrates, plants, birds, mammals, soil, and water quality. Any construction conducted within RCA's on the ANF, including intermittent drainages and creeks, will conflict with the ANF Forest Plan and will not be authorized by the ANF.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-31 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure B-1b (see Impact B-1 above).

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure B-1b specifies that no construction activities will occur on NFS lands in Riparian Conservation Areas in compliance with the Forest Plan. As such, any potential for conflict with the Forest Plan will be eliminated and impacts will be less-than-significant.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the Project's potential to conflict with the Angeles National Forest Land Management Plan direction for construction within Riparian Conservation Areas within the ANF.

Impact B-32: The Project would conflict with the City of Santa Clarita General Plan's policies for construction in or adjacent to drainages or waterways.

As discussed in Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS, construction restrictions specified in the City of Santa Clarita General Plan include: avoidance of construction during breeding and migration periods; avoiding disturbance of areas that would remove watershed vegetation; minimizing excavations that would result in changes in the stream flow or increase siltation; and, preventing activities that would

contribute pollutants to the water of San Francisquito Creek and the Santa Clara River. Project-related activities including road maintenance, new access road construction, and replacement of culverts may conflict with these General Plan restrictions. APMs BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-4, and BIO-5 have been incorporated into the Project to reduce the impacts associated with conflicts related to the City of Santa Clarita General Plan's policies for construction in or adjacent to drainages or waterways. A complete description of APMs applicable to biological resources is located in EIR/EIS Table C.3-4.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact B-32 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures B-6 (see Impact B-6 above), B-8b (see Impact B-8 above), and B-26 (see Impact B-26 above).

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure B-6 requires the completion of pre-construction surveys for breeding birds in and adjacent to areas designated for construction, the delineation of a 300-foot buffer around any nesting birds that are identified during the surveys for construction-phase avoidance, and monitoring of construction to ensure that impacts to breeding birds and their habitat are minimized, including habitat located in and adjacent to drainages and water ways. These activities must be completed by a qualified biologist. Mitigation Measure B-8b prohibits road maintenance activities and new construction activities in drainages when water is present and the use of the Bouquet Creek crossing by vehicles and equipment when water covers any portion of the bridge. Mitigation Measure B-26 requires pre-construction surveys and avoidance flagging of highly concentrated special-status rodent species burrows to ensure their protection during construction-related activities. Implementation of these measures will reduce impacts to the species and habitat associated with drainages and water ways, including those located within the jurisdiction of the City of Santa Clarita. With implementation of Mitigation Measures B-6, B-8b, and B-26, in conjunction with APMs BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-4, and BIO-5, impacts related to conflicts with the City of Santa Clarita General Plan's policies for construction in or adjacent to drainages or waterways from Impact B-33 will be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.3 (Biological Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of Project conflicts with the City of Santa Clarita General Plan's policies for construction in or adjacent to drainages or waterways.

IV.2.3 Cultural Resources

As discussed in Section C.4 (Cultural Resources) of the EIR/EIS, record searches were conducted consisting 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 affected by new project development and areas of temporary construction activity. For the purposes of the analysis in the EIR/EIS and based on NEPA and CEQA requirements, cultural resources are defined as places or objects that are important for historical, scientific, and religious reasons and are of concern to 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. Paleontologic 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 impacts assessed in the Final EIR/EIS. Some sites identified along the alignment originally proposed by SCE will not apply to the adopted Project, as the alignments identified in the EIR/EIS as *"East Mid-Slope Route"* (EIR/EIS Alternative 2) and *"Re-Routing of New Right-of-Way along Haskell Canyon"* (EIR/EIS Alternative 4) will avoid these sites. The avoided sites are identified in Section IV.1, which includes a discussion of those impacts found to be less than significant or to have no impact, which include Impacts C-1, C-3, C-4, C-6, C-9, C-11, and C-15 through C-23.

Destruction, Modification, or Degradation of the Integrity of Known Cultural Resources.

As discussed in Section C.4.5 of the EIR/EIS, any ground-disturbing activity, including tower pad preparation and construction, grading of new access or spur roads, reconductoring activity, tower removal, 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 several known cultural resources. Impacts to known cultural resources include destruction, partial destruction, degraded integrity, or modification. The following is list of known historic resources that will be impacted by the Project and type of impact:

- Impact C-2: Destruction of P19-186857
- Impact C-7: Potential destruction of portions of CA-LAN-3478
- Impact C-8: Degradation of the integrity of CA-LAN-1334/H and the Cochem Ranch site
- Impact C-10: Potential destruction of CA-LAN-3479
- Impact C-12: Modification of CA-LAN-3477
- Impact C-13: Potential destruction of P19-120077

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impacts C-2, C-7, C-8, C-10, C-12, and C-13 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-2

C-2 Evaluate the NRHP Eligibility of P19-186857 and Perform Historical Documentation if Eligible. Prior to construction, the NRHP eligibility of the PS 74 transmission line shall be evaluated by carrying out historical research and determining whether the transmission line facilities retain integrity of workmanship, design, and materials. If the Forest Service and the SHPO determine the transmission line is eligible (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), the adverse effect will be mitigated by formulating and implementing a mitigation plan. The mitigation plan will require historical documentation to standards set by the SHPO. 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 of an example tower that meets standards set by the SHPO with the results provided in a report to be filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Forest Service, and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). The CPUC and U.S. Forest Service will ensure that the documentation is completed and filed.

Mitigation Measures for Impact C-7

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C-7a **Avoid CA-LAN-3478.** CA-LAN-3478 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. Avoidance and protection may be achieved by implementing measures for avoidance, such as moving tower locations or using non-destructive construction methods, contained in the PA between the USDA Forest Service and the California State Historic Preservation Officer. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

Or

C-7b **Evaluate the NRHP Eligibility of CA-LAN-3478 and Perform Historical Documentation and/or Archaeological Data Recovery if Eligible.** Prior to construction, the NRHP eligibility of CA-LAN-3478 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 prehistory. If the Forest Service and the SHPO determine the site is eligible under Criterion D (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 and. Forest Service will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Forest Service, and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). If the site is determined eligible under Criteria A or B (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), the adverse effect will be mitigated by formulating and implementing a mitigation plan. The mitigation plan will require historical documentation to standards set by the SHPO. 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 that meets standards set by the SHPO with the results provided in a report to be filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Forest Service, and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). The CPUC and Forest Service will ensure that the documentation is completed and filed.

Mitigation Measures for Impact C-8

C-8a **Avoid CA-LAN-1334/H.** CA-LAN-1334/H and the Cochem Ranch buildings shall be avoided by all Project construction activities by moving the location for proposed new tower T-104 off-site and removing existing tower 23-2 without disturbing the ground, in accord with the avoidance and protection measures in the PA between the USDA Forest Service and the California State Historic Preservation Officer. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

Or

C-8b **Evaluate the NRHP eligibility of CA-LAN-1334 and Cochem Ranch and Perform Historical Documentation and/or Archaeological Data Recovery if Eligible.** Prior to initiating any construction activities in the vicinity of CA-LAN-1334/H, an archaeological test program will be completed in order to provide information necessary to evaluate the prehistoric component of CA-LAN-1334/H for eligibility for the NRHP. If the Forest Service and SHPO determine that the site is eligible under Criterion D (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 by removal of existing tower 23-2 and for the portion of the site that will be

impacted for installation of proposed new tower T-104, if this proposed tower location cannot be moved off the archaeological site. The CPUC and Forest Service will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Forest Service, and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). The complex of buildings and structures known as the Cochem Ranch will be evaluated for NRHP eligibility by an architectural historian prior to construction. If the Forest Service and SHPO determine that the Cochem Ranch is eligible under Criteria A, B, or C (and therefore also a CEQA Historical Resource), the adverse effect will be mitigated by formulating and implementing a mitigation plan. The mitigation plan will require historical documentation to standards set by the SHPO. 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 that meets standards set by the SHPO with the results provided in a report to be filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Forest Service, and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). The CPUC and Forest Service will ensure that the documentation is completed and filed.

Mitigation Measures for Impact C-10

C-10a Avoid CA-LAN-3479. CA-LAN-3479 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities by moving the location of proposed new tower T-107 away from the site, one of the measures for avoidance in the PA between the USDA Forest Service and the California State Historic Preservation Officer. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

Or

C-10b Evaluate the NRHP Eligibility of CA-LAN-3479 and Perform Archaeological Data Recovery if Eligible. If site CA-LAN-3479 cannot be avoided, prior to initiating any construction activities in the vicinity of CA-LAN-3479, an archaeological test program will be completed in order to provide information necessary to evaluate the CA-LAN-3479 for eligibility for the NRHP. If the Forest Service and SHPO determine 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 and Forest Service will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Forest Service, and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP).

Mitigation Measure for Impact C-12

C-12 Evaluate the NRHP Eligibility of CA-LAN-3477 and Perform Historical Documentation if Eligible. Prior to construction, the NRHP eligibility of CA-LAN-3477 shall be evaluated by carrying out historical research. If the Forest Service and the SHPO determine 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 historical documentation to standards set by the SHPO. 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), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Forest Service, and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). The CPUC and U.S. Forest Service will ensure that the documentation is completed and filed.

Mitigation Measures for Impact C-13

C-13a Avoid P19-120077. P19-120077 shall be avoided by all Project construction activities. Avoidance and protection may be achieved by implementing measures for avoidance, such as moving tower locations or using non-destructive construction methods, contained in the PA between the USDA Forest Service and the California State Historic Preservation Officer. The site will be fenced off as an environmentally sensitive area during construction.

Or

C-13b Evaluate the NRHP Eligibility of P19-120077 and Perform Archaeological Data Recovery if Eligible. If site P19-120077 cannot be avoided, prior to initiating any construction activities in the vicinity of P19-120077, an archaeological test program will be completed in order to provide information necessary to evaluate P19-120077 for eligibility for the NRHP. If the Forest Service and SHPO determine 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 and Forest Service will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Forest Service, and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP).

Rationale for Finding. Direct impacts 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. If the cultural resources identified in Impacts C-2, C-7, C-8, C-10, C-12, and C-13 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 California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Forest Service, and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP).

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

Impact C-14: Undiscovered cultural resources would be disturbed through Project activities.

As discussed in Section C.4.5 of the EIR/EIS, buried or otherwise obscured cultural resources may be present in the project area. If such resources are encountered, this impact 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-14, identified below.

C-14 Conduct Construction Monitoring in Sensitive Areas in the Project Area, Evaluate the Eligibility of Previously Undiscovered Resources, and Perform Archaeological Data Recovery if Eligible. All Project-related ground-disturbing activities in sensitive areas, defined as on ridge tops and in canyon bottoms and within 500 feet of identified resources, 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 and the Forest Service District Ranger or Forest Supervisor shall be notified. The Forest Service will evaluate the NRHP eligibility of the find if it cannot be avoided. If the Forest Service and SHPO determine 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 and Forest Service will ensure that the data recovery report is completed and filed with the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Forest Service, and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). Construction work that was halted within 500 feet of the find cannot proceed until authorized by the District Ranger or Forest Supervisor.

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, Forest Service, and OHP preserving information on all of the characteristics that made the resource eligible.

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

Cumulative project activities could impact cultural resources along the Project route.

As discussed in Section C.4.13 (Cultural Resources – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, most of the remaining undeveloped land south of the ANF in Santa Clarita and unincorporated Los Angeles County will be developed in the near future. In Lancaster, development will move westward from its present location about 3 miles from the Project route to within one to two miles from the Project route. Although the total number of cultural resources (NRHP-eligible and CEQA Historical Resources) that have been, and will be, impacted as a result of development in all of these areas is unknown, an order of magnitude estimate would be 30 to 70. The Project will contribute to cumulative impacts to cultural resources with regard to materially altering cultural resources or their immediate surroundings.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant cumulative effects on the environment from Impacts C-2, C-7, C-8, C-10, C-12, C-13 and C-14 to a

less-than-significant level. These include Mitigation Measures C-2, C-7a/b, C-8a/b, C-10a/b, C-12, C-13a/b, and C-14 presented above.

Rationale for Finding. The combined impacts from existing and proposed development in the cumulative impact study area and the impacts on cultural resources from the Project will be significant without mitigation. Mitigation measures for the Project's impacts to cultural resources, consisting of avoidance, historical documentation, or archaeological data recovery, will reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. If the other development projects in the 10-mile-wide corridor also implement these mitigation measures, cumulative impacts on cultural resources will be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

Reference. Section C.4.13 (Cultural Resources – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts of the Project on cultural resources.

IV.2.4 Geology, Soils, and Paleontology

As discussed in Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR/EIS, the CPUC and Forest Service 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/EIS. The literature review and field reconnaissance focused on the identification of specific geologic hazards, mineral resources, and soil conditions.

In general, the impacts identified for the alignment originally proposed by SCE apply to the adopted Project; however, due to the location of towers on the eastern mid-slope of Del-Sur Ridge, impacts related to slope instability (Impact G-1) and erosion (Impact G-2), and permanent alteration of topography from the grading of access roads (Impact G-14) will be specific to the Project.

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

As discussed in Section C.5.7 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology – Alternative 2: Antelope-Pardee East Mid-Slope) of the EIR/EIS, 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 a history of previous failure, in weak geologic units exposed on unfavorable slopes and areas of weak, and in areas of fault-sheared rock. Many of the hills and slopes crossed by the Project alignment are underlain by geologic units prone to landslides, including the Pelona Schist, the Mint Canyon Formation, the Castaic Formation, and the Saugus Formation. The mid-slope portion of the Project alignment through the ANF crosses several existing landslides and is underlain by the landslide prone Pelona Schist. Unmapped landslides and areas of localized slope instability may be encountered. 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.

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 regraded 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 and Forest Service AFS (for areas on NFS land) 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. Requiring SCE to submit geotechnical surveys and design measures to the CPUC and Forest Service will ensure that impacts will be limited to the extent authorized by the CPUC and Forest Service.

Reference. Section C.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR/EIS 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.5.7 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology – Alternative 2: Antelope-Pardee East Mid-Slope) of the EIR/EIS, excavation and grading for tower and substation foundations, work areas, access roads, and spur roads could loosen soil and accelerate erosion. Portions of the Project alignments cross areas 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 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, which requires SCE to prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), will generally limit erosion from construction activities. 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.

ATTACHMENT B

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

Impact G-4: Transmission line damaged by surface fault ruptures at crossings of active faults.

As discussed in Section C.5.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR/EIS, project facilities will be subject to hazards of substantial surface fault rupture and offset at overhead crossings of active traces of the San Andreas Fault and of the San Gabriel Fault. Both of these faults are significant active faults with mapped Alquist-Priolo zones. Fault rupture hazards would be less where the overhead transmission line crosses the trace of the potentially active Clearwater Fault.

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 Minimize Project Structures Within Active Fault Zone. Perform a geologic/geotechnical study to confirm location of mapped traces of active and potentially faults (the San Gabriel and San Andreas Faults) crossed by the 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-4, which requires SCE to locate towers as far outside of fault areas as possible, will minimizes 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/EIS provides a complete assessment of the seismic impacts of the Project.

Impact G-5: Project structures could be damaged by landslides, liquefaction, settlement, lateral spreading, and/or surface cracking resulting from seismic events.

As discussed in Section C.5.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR/EIS, 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 proposed Project structures. Much of the Project alignment is located along hillsides or ridgelines in geologic units of moderate to steep slopes, which are particularly susceptible to this type of ground failure. Some of these areas, which include the Pelona Schist, and Mint Canyon, Castaic, and Saugus Formations, have a high possibility of seismic-induced ground failure in the form of landsliding or ground-cracking. Portions of the alignment 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-5 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-5 is included below.

G-5 Geotechnical Investigations for Liquefaction and Slope Instability. Since 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.

Rationale for Finding. SCE's application of standard design and construction practices and implementation of Mitigation Measure G-5 formalizes the specific procedures necessary to protect Project structures from liquefaction, lateral spreading, seismic slope instability, and ground-cracking hazards.

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

Impact G-6: Project structures could be damaged by strong groundshaking.

As discussed in Section C.5.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR/EIS, 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-6 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-6 is included below.

G-6 **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. SCE's application of standard design and construction practices and implementation of Mitigation Measure G-6 formalizes the specific procedures necessary to ensure the protection of the Project structures in a manner sanctioned by the CPUC.

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

Impact G-7: Buried tower and substation foundations could be damaged by corrosive soils.

As discussed in Section C.5.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR/EIS, corrosive subsurface soils which could have a detrimental effect on concrete and metals may exist in places along the Project route. 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.

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 Studies for Corrosive Soils. In areas underlain by potentially corrosive soils or in areas of unknown corrosion potential (primarily in the ANF), 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-7 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/EIS provides a complete assessment of the corrosive soil impacts of the Project.

Impact G-8: Tower and substation foundations could be damaged by expansive or collapsible soils.

As discussed in Section C.5.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR/EIS, expansive soil, characterized by shrink-swell behavior, is a condition in which clay-rich soils react to changes in moisture content by expanding or contracting. Some of the natural soil types, identified primarily along the ANF portion of the alignment (Calcixerolic Xerochrepts-Calleguas soils) have moderate to high clay contents and many have moderate to high shrink-swell potential. Expansive soils may cause differential and cyclical foundation movements that can cause damage and/or distress to structures and equipment. Potential operational impacts from loose sands, soft clays, and other potentially compressible soils include excessive settlement, low foundation-bearing capacity, and limitation of year-round access to Project facilities, which may result 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-8 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-8 is included below.

G-8 Geotechnical Studies for Problematic Soils. The Applicant shall perform design-level geotechnical studies to identify areas with potentially problematic soils and develop appropriate design features, including excavation of potentially problematic soils during construction and replacement with engineered backfill, ground-treatment processes, and redirection of surface water and drainage away from expansive foundation soils.

Rationale for Finding. SCE's application of standard design and construction practices and implementation of APMGEO-2, which requires a geotechnical study to be performed, will reduce the adverse effects of problematic soils. In addition, Mitigation Measure G-8 formalizes the site-specific

procedures, such as excavation of problem soils and replacement with engineered backfill, necessary to ensure the protection of the Project structures from the hazards of expansive soils.

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

Impact G-9: Transmission line structures could be damaged by landslides, earth flows, or debris slides.

As discussed in Section C.5.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR/EIS, portions of the Project alignment cross hillside areas that are underlain by landslide prone geologic units (Pelona Schist, Mint Canyon Formation, Castaic Formation, and Saugus Formation) 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-9 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-9 is included below.

G-9 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 APMGEO-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-9 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/EIS provides a complete assessment of the landslide and debris flow impacts of the Project.

Impact G-10: Excavation for transmission line structures could damage unique or significant fossils.

As discussed in Section C.5.5 (Geology, Soils, and Paleontology) of the EIR/EIS, several fossil-bearing geologic formations with moderate to 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-10 to a less-than-significant level. This measure identified as Mitigation Measure G-10 is included below.

G-10 Protection of 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.

- If fossils are found on NFS lands, a special use permit will be required to allow for any recovery actions to occur.

Rationale for Finding. SCE has proposed APM PAL-1 to avoid impacts to paleontological resources, which will require that certified paleontologist will be retained by SCE to supervise monitoring of construction excavations and to produce a mitigation plan for the Project. Mitigation Measure G-10 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/EIS provides a complete assessment of the paleontological impacts of the Project.

Impact G-14: Grading of new access roads would permanently alter topography.

As discussed in Section C.5.7 (Alternative 2: Antelope-Pardee East Mid-Slope) of the EIR/EIS, construction of the Project will require fairly significant grading and potential cut and fill to construct new spur roads along the eastern slope, which is susceptible to wind and water erosion due to its exposed face and gradient. Temporary and permanent disturbances to this slope will result in the potential to increase or exacerbate erosion due to wind and surface water runoff. Consequently, the Del Sur Ridge mid-slope segment of the Project that is not constructed by helicopter will result 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-14 to a less-than-significant level. These measures identified as Mitigation Measure G-2 (see Impact G-2 above) and B-1a (see Impact B-1 above).

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure G-2 during construction would minimize alteration of the topography from erosion. Implementation of Mitigation Measure B-1a following construction would require SCE to physically restore and compensate for the adverse effects of grading and cut and fill. Together these measures would reduce impacts of Impact G-14 to a less-than-significant level

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

IV.2.5 Public Health and Safety

Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS examined the potential for environmental contamination and hazardous materials as a result of the Project, as well as concerns about electric and magnetic fields and other electrical field issues.

Impact PH-1: Soil or groundwater contamination results due to improper handling and/or storage of hazardous materials during construction activities.

As discussed in Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS, hazardous materials such as vehicle fuels, oils, and other vehicle maintenance fluids will be used and stored in staging yards 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 would occur at staging areas or at a local airport using the helicopter contractor's fuel truck, and would 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 P-1 to a less-than-significant level. These measures are identified as Mitigation Measures PH-1a through PH-1d and are included below.

PH-1a 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, Waste Characterization and Management Plan, and Hazardous Substances Control and Emergency Response Plan. Properly trained construction and maintenance staff are expected to prevent accidental 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 will also be implemented to ensure that the plans are followed throughout the period of construction. Best Management Practices, as identified in the Project SWPPP and

Erosion Control and Sediment Transport Plan, will 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.

PH-1b Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan. SCE will prepare a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan, which will include preparations for quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills. This plan will be submitted with the grading permit applications to the appropriate oversight agency based on grading location. It will prescribe hazardous-materials handling procedures for reducing the potential for a spill during construction, and will include an emergency response program to ensure quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills. The plan will 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 and Forest Service for review.

PH-1c 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, will 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.

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

Rationale for Finding. SCE's Application indicated that they will prepare a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan to reduce impacts to soil contamination. Mitigation Measures PH-1a through PH-1d formalize the preparation of this plan and specify procedures that will reduce the potential for soil and groundwater contamination. Additionally, the environmental training and monitoring program described in Mitigation Measure PH-1a ensures that all field personnel are aware and trained in the implementation of these procedures. Consequently, if a spill or leak of hazardous materials were to occur, personnel will be able to respond in a manner that will limit soil and groundwater contamination. Accordingly, implementation of the measures outlined in Mitigation Measures PH-1a through PH-1d will reduce construction impacts from Impact PH-1 to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the soil and groundwater contamination impacts of the Project during construction.

Impact PH-2: Project results in encountering known preexisting soil or groundwater contamination.

As discussed in Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS, in APM PHS-1, SCE commits to conducting Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) to assess all Project-related areas of planned ground disturbance prior to the initiation of construction. Disturbance of a site along the Project route where there is the potential to encounter an existing environmental contamination will be 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 PH-2 to a less-than-significant level. This measure is identified as Mitigation Measure PH-2 and is included below.

PH-2 Conduct Phase II Investigation. A Phase II investigation shall be conducted for any sites revealed to be potentially contaminated by the Phase I ESAs prior to commencement of construction activities. The Phase II investigation shall include a review of current status from agency files of known contaminated sites, including identification of the concentration and limits of contamination, type of release, and media affected; and collection of samples for laboratory analysis and quantification of contaminant levels within the proposed excavation and surface disturbance areas in areas of known and potential contamination. The scope of the field investigation shall be developed in accordance with the standard of practice for assessment of appropriate worker protection and material handling and disposal procedures. Soil sampling and laboratory testing shall be conducted at locations along the Project route where known contaminated sites are within 0.25 miles of the tower locations and substations or are determined to pose a threat to the Project based on the results of agency file review. The Phase II shall be conducted and recommendations completed prior to the start of construction.

Subsurface investigation shall determine appropriate worker protection and hazardous material handling and disposal procedures appropriate for the subject area. Areas with contaminated soil and/or groundwater determined to be hazardous waste shall be removed by personnel who have been trained through the OSHA recommended 40-hour safety program (29CFR1910.120) with an approved plan for groundwater extractions, soil excavation, control of contaminant releases to the air, and off-site transport or on-site treatment. Results of the agency file review and Phase II investigations shall be reviewed and approved by the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Health Hazardous Materials Division and/or DTSC prior to construction. A copy of the DTSC or Health Hazardous Materials Division approval letter must be provided to the CPUC prior to start of construction.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure PH-2 will ensure that measures are implemented to protect the health of Project construction workers and the local public from exposure to known soil or groundwater contamination. The procedures will ensure the compliance of the Project with the appropriate State and federal requirements. Accordingly, implementation of the measure outlined in Mitigation Measure PH-2 will reduce impacts from Impact PH-2 to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the soil and groundwater contamination impacts of the Project during construction.

Impact PH-3: Project results in encountering unknown preexisting soil or groundwater contamination.

As discussed in Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS, previously unknown soil or groundwater contamination associated with industrial contamination (e.g., solvents, hydrocarbons, heavy metals, etc.) could be encountered during grading or excavation, particularly at the existing substations or in other commercial and light industrial areas.

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

PH-3 Observe Exposed Soil. During grading, or excavation work for the Project, the contractor shall observe the exposed soil for visual evidence of contamination. If visual contamination indicators are observed during construction, the contractor shall stop work until the material is properly characterized and appropriate measures are taken to protect human health and the environment. The contractor shall comply with all local, State, and federal requirements for sampling and testing, and subsequent removal, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials. In the event that evidence of contamination is observed, the contractor shall document the exact location of the contamination and shall immediately notify the CPUC's Environmental Monitor and propose actions for addressing the contamination. A weekly report listing encounters with contaminated soils and describing actions taken shall be submitted to the CPUC.

Rationale for Finding. Requiring SCE to evaluate exposed soils for evidence of contamination will ensure that measures are implemented to protect the health of workers associated with the Project along with the public in the vicinity of construction activities. The submittal of weekly reports to the CPUC will also ensure the compliance of activities with local, State, and federal requirements. Accordingly, implementation of the measure outlined in Mitigation Measure PH-3 will reduce impacts from Impact PH-3 to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the soil and groundwater contamination impacts of the Project during construction.

Impact PH-4: Release of hazardous materials during operation at substations and transmission line maintenance.

As discussed in Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS, soil or groundwater contamination may result from accidental spills or releases of hazardous materials at the Antelope and Pardee Substations during facility operations or along the transmission line during maintenance operations. This may result in exposure of facility and maintenance workers and the public to hazardous materials.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact PH-4 to a less-than-significant level. These measures, identified as Mitigation Measures PH-4a and PH-4b, are included below.

PH-4a Documentation of Compliance. SCE shall document compliance with updating and preparing the SPCC Plan for this project 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.

PH-4b Emergency Spill Supplies and Equipment. Hazardous material spill kits will be maintained in maintenance vehicles for small spills. This shall include oil-absorbent material, and spill kits to be used to contain and control any minor releases. During significant maintenance operations, emergency-spill supplies and equipment will be kept adjacent to all areas of work and in staging areas, and will be clearly marked. Detailed information for responding to accidental spills and for handling any resulting hazardous materials will be provided in the Project's Hazardous Substances Control and Emergency Response Plan.

Rationale for Finding. Preparation of the Spill Prevention, Countermeasure, and Control Plans formalizes the procedures necessary to limit soil contamination during an accidental spill or release, thereby

protecting the health of workers and the general public. Submittal of the plans to the CPUC ensures the agency knows what is required of SCE in case of a spill or release so that they can also prepare accordingly. Furthermore, emergency spill supplies and equipment will allow for quick response and control in the event of a hazardous waste spill. Accordingly, implementation of the measures outlined in Mitigation Measures PH-4a and PH-4b will reduce impacts from Impact PH-4 to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the impacts of hazardous materials release during maintenance activities.

Impact PH-5: Project would cause radio or television interference.

As discussed in Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS, corona can generate high frequency energy that may interfere with broadcast signals or electronic equipment. Magnetic field interference may also occur as a result of the new transmission line. Such interference is considered a significant impact. Corona or gap discharges related to high frequency radio and television interference impacts are dependent upon several factors including the strength of broadcast signals. Such corona or gap discharges are anticipated to be very localized. Any individual sources of adverse radio or television interference as a result of the Project can be identified and corrected on the power lines. Any magnetic field interference with electronic equipment can be corrected through the use of software, shielding, or changes in the location of the equipment being effected.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact PH-5 to a less-than-significant level. These measures, identified as Mitigation Measures PH-5a and PH-5b, are included below.

PH-5a Limit the Conductor Surface Electric Gradient. As part of the design and construction process for the Project, the Applicant shall limit the conductor surface electric gradient in accordance with the IEEE Radio Noise Design Guide.

PH-5b Document and Resolve Electronic Interference Complaints. After energizing the transmission line, SCE shall respond to and document all radio/television/equipment interference complaints received and the responsive action taken. These records shall be made available to the CPUC for review upon request. All unresolved disputes shall be referred by SCE to the CPUC for resolution.

Rationale for Finding. By limiting the conductor surface electric gradient, SCE reduces the overall potential for television and radio interference. By recording and responding to complaints about interference, SCE can locate and correct individual sources of adverse radio/television interference impacts on the power lines or can shield or correct electronic equipment such as computer monitors through the use of software. Accordingly, implementation of the measures outlined in Mitigation Measures PH-5a and PH-5b will reduce impacts from Impact PH-5 to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the radio and television interference impacts of the Project.

Impact PH-6: The Project would create induced currents and shock hazards in joint-use corridors.

As discussed in Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS, transmission lines constructed for the Project would create induced currents and voltages on conducting objects nearby conducting objects.

This is considered a significant impact. However, this impact does not pose a threat in the environment if the conducting objects are properly grounded.

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

PH-6 Determine Proper Grounding Measures. As part of the siting and construction process for the Project, SCE shall identify objects (such as fences, metal buildings, and pipelines) that have the potential for induced voltages and work with the affected parties to determine proper grounding procedures (CPUC G095 and the NESC do not have specific requirements for grounding). SCE shall install all necessary grounding measures prior to energizing the line. Thirty days prior to energizing the line, SCE shall notify in writing, subject to the review and approval of the CPUC, all property owners within and adjacent to the Project ROW of the date the line is to be energized. The written notice shall provide a contact person and telephone number for answering questions regarding the line and guidelines on what activities should be limited or restricted within the ROW. SCE shall respond to and document all complaints received and the responsive action taken. These records shall be made available to the CPUC for review upon request. All unresolved disputes shall be deferred by SCE to the CPUC for resolution.

The written notice shall describe the nature and operation of the line, and the Applicant's responsibilities with respect to grounding all conducting objects. In addition, the notice shall describe the property owner's responsibilities with respect to notification for any new objects, which may require grounding and guidelines for maintaining the safety of the ROW.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure PH-6 requires SCE to implement procedures to identify and properly ground objects near the Project which will prevent shock hazards to workers and the general public in the vicinity of the Project. Accordingly, implementation of these measures will reduce impacts from Impact PH-6 to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.6 (Public Health and Safety) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the shock hazard impacts of the Project.

IV.2.6 Forest Management Activities

As discussed in Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS, lands traversed by the Project ROW are susceptible to wildland fires. The Project's potential to cause wildland fires affects Forest management activities related to fire suppression and prevention. Impacts to these activities are a key concern of the ANF, and have been incorporated into the Forest Service's objectives for the Project (see Section A.3, Purpose and Need, of the EIR/EIS). According to the ANF Fire Management Plan, the majority of the Project area is within Fire Management Unit 2, a mid-elevation, non-wilderness area that has the potential for high intensity fires; it is characterized by steep slopes and heavily bisected topography that limit fire prevention and control strategies.

Chaparral vegetation is the predominant fuel type within the ANF and severe weather and Santa Ana winds present a high risk for large catastrophic wildfires. In response, the ANF has developed an extensive system of fuelbreaks (approximately 170 miles) to assist fire suppression and firefighting forces in limiting wildland fire size under normal burning conditions. On large fires burning under severe conditions, firefighters typically take an indirect approach to fire suppression, often using a backfiring strategy from roads and fuelbreaks. As many as 20 fixed-wing and rotary-winged aircraft may be assigned to such a fire in support

of the ground forces involved in the fire suppression. On small fires burning under more moderate conditions, aircraft drop fire retardant on fuelbreaks and ridge tops to halt the spread of the fire, while ground forces take the opportunity to fight the fire directly by creating a containment line around the fire.

Limitations to fire management (i.e., fire prevention and suppression) result in a significant impact. As such, the alignment originally proposed by SCE has been relocated onto the eastern mid-slope of Del-Sur Ridge to reduce conflicts with Forest management activities. For example, (1) the Project will improve aerial fire suppression activities, as the new transmission line will be located mid-slope and the existing 66-kV subtransmission line will be removed thereby improving the existing conditions resulting in a beneficial impact (Impact F-4); and (2) allow for unrestricted fire prevention activities, specifically maintenance of the Del-Sur Ridge Fuelbreak (see Impact F-7 in Section IV.1 above).

Impact F-1: Construction activities from the Project could start a wildfire.

As discussed in Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS, the use of construction equipment such as generators, vehicles, or chainsaws could ignite vegetation or combustible material and start a wildland fire. Depending on the size of a wildfire caused by construction, a variety of Forest management activities could be affected including, but not limited to, moving critical fire-fighting resources to the affected area and depleting these resources from other critical need areas. SCE has prepared a Fire Prevention and Response Plan (FPRP) for the Project that will be implemented during construction to reduce fire hazard risks.

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

F-1 **Develop a Fire Plan with the Forest Service.** In consultation with the Forest Service Authorizing Officer (or delegated Forest officer) prior to construction, SCE shall develop a Fire Plan. This plan shall be attached to and become a part of the Special Use Authorization. The Fire Plan shall include fire prevention and suppression measures approved by the Forest Service. These measures shall be reviewed annually by the Forest Service and updated as appropriate.

Rationale for Finding. The Project will include the construction of 37 towers using helicopters (without road access) on NFS lands. Should a fire start at one of these roadless tower site locations during construction, initial fire suppression activities by SCE and/or its contractors will be difficult to access with water trucks. Restricted water truck access will increase the risk of wildfires occurring. Additionally, the towers that will be accessed by new or existing access and spur roads will still require use of the types of construction equipment noted above, thereby maintaining the Project's potential to ignite a wildland fire. Although the FPRP stipulates multiple activities and protocols for fire prevention and control, it does not address all ANF fire prevention and suppression concerns, or how prescribed fire control and suppression measures affect overall Forest management activities. Developing a Project-specific Fire Plan with the Forest Service (Mitigation Measure F-1) will ensure that the concerns of the ANF regarding Forest management activities that are related, either directly or indirectly, to fire prevention and control are adequately addressed. With implementation of Mitigation Measure F-1, impacts related to construction activities that could start a wildfire will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the impacts to Forest management activities resulting from Project construction.

ATTACHMENT B

Impact F-2: Operation and maintenance activities from the Project could start a wildfire

As discussed in Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS, when operational, the Project will pose a potential fire risk if its transmission lines come in contact with vegetation or other potentially combustible materials. Routine maintenance activities may also cause a wildfire (e.g., a catalytic converter on maintenance trucks could ignite vegetation), as could faulty equipment on the transmission system (e.g., improper or loose connections, as well as other incipient deterioration). A wildfire started in any of these manners, or others, could affect Forest management activities, and draw firefighting resources away from other critical need areas.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact F-2 to a level of less than significant. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure F-2, as identified below, and Mitigation Measure R-4 (see Impact R-4 below).

F-2 **Develop an Operation and Maintenance Plan with the Forest Service.** In consultation with the Forest Service Authorizing Officer (or delegated Forest officer) prior to construction, SCE shall develop an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Plan. This plan shall be attached to and become a part of the Special Use Authorization. The O&M Plan shall include, at a minimum, road maintenance specifications, vegetation treatment and rehabilitation specifications, and conditions on maintenance and replacement of improvements. These measures shall be reviewed annually by the Forest Service and updated as appropriate.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of the Project will include the placement of 37 towers along the east facing slope of Del Sur Ridge. These towers will not have road access; therefore, routine inspections during operation and maintenance activities will be more difficult, take more time, and could increase risks of starting wildfires. Even on portions of the Project route that are easily accessible, impacts related to the ignition of a wildfire will be significant without mitigation. Preparation and implementation of an Operation and Maintenance Plan (O&M Plan) that is reviewed and approved by the Forest Service will ensure that ANF concerns regarding potential fire risks, fire prevention and suppression activities, and how they affect other Forest management activities are addressed. In addition, implementation of Mitigation Measure R-4 will require the closure and restoration of all new access and spur roads that are not required for Project operation. This measure will minimize the number and miles of new roads created within the ANF, thereby minimizing the risks associated with fires ignited by vehicles traveling along them. With implementation of these measures, impacts associated with the Projects operational and maintenance activities that may start a wildfire will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the impacts to Forest management activities resulting from Project operation and maintenance.

Impact F-3: Construction activities could adversely affect aggressive fire suppression activities

As discussed in Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS, construction activities may limit emergency vehicle access on existing roads within the ANF. Additionally, when roads are temporarily closed for construction, designated bypasses may not provide a direct route for ground fire suppression forces, and could jeopardize the time needed to reach a wildland fire. Helicopter construction and maintenance of the 37 towers located mid-slope on Del Surge Ridge may also conflict substantially with aerial firefighting forces during a wildfire event. This will disrupt aerial fire suppression activities if fire staff members are unable to contact the SCE helicopters. Furthermore, non-essential aircraft in the area could prevent aerial firefighting forces from accessing the wildfire quickly.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact F-3 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure F-3, identified below, and Mitigation Measure T-1a (see Impact T-1 below).

F-3 Helicopters Shall Cease Activities in the Event of Fire. SCE shall contact ANF dispatch seven days prior to helicopter use and shall provide ANF with radio frequencies being used by the aircraft, aircraft identifiers, the number of helicopters that will be used while working on NFS lands at any given time, and the flight pattern of helicopters used on NFS lands. Should a wildfire occur in the area, upon contact from the Forest Aviation Officer, helicopters in use by SCE shall immediately cease construction activities and not restart aerial operations until the Forest Aviation Officer provides clearance.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure F-3 requires several notification and administrative reporting protocols prior to, and during, all helicopter construction and maintenance activities. The measure additionally prohibits any helicopter use for construction or maintenance during wildfire events, and requires Forest Service approval for helicopter use following a wildfire. These requirements will minimize the potential for Project-related activities to interfere with aerial fire fighting operations. Mitigation Measure T-1a requires the preparation and implementation of Traffic Control Plans that will identify: all roads that may be closed due to Project-related activities; the aerial hauling routes required for tower construction and stringing activities; and, stipulations and activities to minimize traffic-related detours and delays. The Traffic Control Plans will also identify all emergency response agencies and entities that may be affected by the Project, specify provisions to accommodate emergency response activities, require 30-day advance notification of Project-related activities to affected emergency response agencies, and include the names and contact information for Project-related personnel and contractors that should be contacted in the event of an emergency situation. With implementation of Mitigation Measure F-3 and T-1a, construction activities that could adversely affect aggressive fire suppression activities will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the impacts to Forest management activities resulting from Project construction.

Impact F-5: The Project would limit the ability of fixed-wing aircraft to fill up water tanks for aerial water drops.

As discussed in Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR.EIS, the Project's transmission tower height near Bouquet Reservoir may create conflicts with fixed-wing "Super Scooper" amphibious aircraft which skim the reservoir to fill up water tanks for aerial water drops. The height of the new towers may increase the risk of collision, and potentially restrict the use of these aircraft and their fire fighting capabilities.

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

F-5 Site and Design Towers to Match Existing Height. New towers near Bouquet Canyon Reservoir shall be relocated and designed on sites near the reservoir dam where the tops of the towers would be no higher than those of the existing towers.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure F-5 will ensure that towers located in the vicinity of Bouquet Reservoir are positioned and designed to minimize collision hazards with fixed-wing

"Super Scooper" amphibious aircraft that may need to access the reservoir to fill up water tanks. Along with removal of the existing 66-kV line, this measure will substantially remove limitations on the ability of these types of aircraft to fill up water tanks for aerial water drops. Therefore, with implementation of this measure, impacts related to the ability of fixed-wing aircraft to fill up water tanks for aerial water drops will be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the impacts to Forest management activities.

Impact F-6: The Project would adversely affect ground firefighting activities and would create a hazard for firefighting personnel.

As discussed in Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS, because approximately five miles of the Project route is located on or directly adjacent to a fuelbreak, ground firefighting resources would be at risk due to the potential for arcing from wildfire smoke particulates, water, and/or retardant if the line is energized. In other words, if a fire starts mid-slope, within or adjacent to the Project ROW, ground firefighting resources will not be able to take a direct approach to fighting the fire. Under these conditions, ground firefighting resources will likely wait for the fire to reach the ridge to fight the fire. This is considered to be a significant impact due to Project-related fire fighting delays.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact F-6 a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure F-6, identified below, and Mitigation Measure F-8a (see Impact F-8 below).

F-6 **De-energize the Transmission Line.** SCE shall provide ANF dispatch with a contact person (and 24-hour phone number) that has the authority to shut down the power and reroute it onto another transmission line. Prior to fire prevention or firefighting activities or during firefighting activities, when ANF feels continued power transmission on the proposed line will impact fire prevention activities, firefighter safety, or the ability to fight the fire aggressively, the ANF will contact SCE and SCE shall make every effort to immediately de-energize the transmission line. This shall be acknowledged through a Memorandum of Understanding between the ANF and SCE.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure F-6 provides for emergency protocols to de-energize the Project transmission line under circumstances when the ANF believes that operation of the line will conflict with fire fighting activities and place fire fighting personnel are risk. Cutting power to the transmission line will allow immediate access to the fire without risking firefighters safety, and will improve the potential for firefighters to contain the fire once it reaches the ridge top. Mitigation Measure F-8a requires SCE to provide the ANF with funding to widen and maintain portions of the Del Sur Ridge fuelbreak in locations where the Project ROW may affect ground firefighter forces' safety; widening the fuelbreak in these locations will minimize impediments to ground fighting activities. Therefore, with implementation of these mitigation measures, impacts related to ground firefighting activities and firefighting personnel will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the impacts to Forest management activities as they relate to fire prevention, control and suppression.

Impact F-8: Project operation would adversely affect firefighter safety.

As addressed in Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS, one of the ANF's strategies outlined in the Forest Plan is to improve firefighter safety. The Project may result in long-term adverse effects on the safety of firefighters on the ground working under or near the transmission line, 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 F-8 a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure F-6 (see Impact F-6 above), and Mitigation Measures F-8a and F-8b, identified below.

F-8a **SCE Shall Enter into an Agreement with the ANF to Widen the Del Sur Ridge Fuelbreak.** This agreement shall acknowledge that SCE will aid in the cost of construction and maintenance for widening the portions of Del Sur Ridge fuelbreak in locations where the proposed transmission line could adversely impact ground firefighter forces safety. These shared costs and/or maintenance shall be for the life of the Special Use Authorization.

F-8b **Provide Transmission Line Safety Training to ANF Staff.** SCE shall provide appropriate transmission line safety training to ANF staff prior to fire season on an annual basis.

Rationale for Finding. As addressed above under Impact F-6, above, providing mechanisms to de-energize the Project transmission line under wildfire conditions (Mitigation Measure F-6), and widening the Del Surge Ridge fuelbreak (Mitigation Measure F-8a) to facilitate access in the Project area, will reduce impacts related to the safety of firefighting personnel. In addition, SCE will be required to provide transmission line safety training to ANF personnel involved with firefighting on an annual basis to ensure their on-going ability to appropriately respond to fires located within the vicinity of the Project ROW (Mitigation Measure F-8b). With implementation of these measures, impacts related to firefighter safety will be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the impacts to Forest management activities as they relate to fire prevention, control and suppression.

IV.2.7 Hydrology and Water Quality

As discussed in Section C.8 (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, 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. In general the impacts identified for the alignment originally proposed by SCE apply to the adopted Project; however impacts associated with increased runoff from the creation of new impervious areas will require additional mitigation due to the additional road surface created to allow access to those towers located mid-slope that are not installed by helicopter (see Impact H-5 below).

Impact H-1: Soil erosion and sedimentation caused by construction activities would degrade water quality.

As discussed in Section C.8.5 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR/EIS, 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-1f which are described below, as well as Mitigation Measures G-1 and G-2 (see Impacts G-1 and G-2 above), and R-4 (see Impact R-4 below).

H-1a Implementation of Erosion and Sediment Best Management Practices. 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 necessary, as described in Section 12.22 (Road and Building Site Construction Best Management Practices) of the USDA's guidance document entitled "Water Quality Management for Forest System Lands in California" (USDA, 2005). 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.

- 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 as necessary. Proposed road designs on NFS lands shall be submitted to the USDA Forest Service for prior approval and shall be incorporated into the Special Use Authorizations to be issued by the USDA Forest Service.

- 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. Proposed stabilization efforts on NFS lands shall be submitted to the USDA Forest Service for prior approval and shall be incorporated into the Special Use Authorizations to be issued by the USDA Forest Service.

- Strictly control vehicular traffic to only that which is necessary.

- Restore temporary construction areas (e.g., temporary roads, pulling and splicing stations) to a near natural condition and ensure that the sites are re-vegetated and stabilized, unless operation and maintenance of the project would require the areas to remain clear. Restoration plans on NFS lands shall be submitted to the USDA Forest Service for prior approval, and shall be incorporated into the Special Use Authorizations to be issued by the USDA Forest Service.

- 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. Any concrete waste shall be disposed of properly on non-NFS lands.

- Erosion control measures shall be completed prior to the first anticipated rains at all construction sites. An Erosion Control Plan shall be prepared as part of the Project SWPPP, and shall be submitted to the USDA Forest Service for prior approval and incorporated into the Special Use Authorizations to be issued by the USDA Forest Service.

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 on non-NFS lands 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. The Forest Service shall approve all road surface treatments implemented on NFS lands. Watering of roads shall be required on NFS lands. 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 **Dispersion of Subsurface Drainage from Slope Construction Areas.** In order to minimize sediment production from the potential failure of slope construction areas, subsurface drainage devices shall be implemented where necessary, as determined during final siting and engineering of transmission towers. Where it is determined necessary due to site-specific conditions such as slope severity, soil condition, precipitation levels, and inherent instability, subsurface drainage will be utilized to avoid moisture saturation and potential subsequent slope failure. Subsurface dispersion methods would include underdrains or subdrains such as pipes, horizontal drains, or chimney drains. Proposed subsurface drainage devices on NFS lands shall be submitted to the USDA Forest Service for prior approval, and shall be incorporated into the Special Use Authorizations to be issued by the USDA Forest Service.

H-1f **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. Temporary waste areas shall be located on NFS lands as needed, but shall be subject to prior approval by the USDA Forest Service Officer. At a minimum, temporary waste areas shall be removed before the first anticipated rains. Disposal areas shall not be located on NFS lands.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of SCE's APMs HYD-2 and HYD-3, which require preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and an erosion control and sediment transport control plan (part of SWPPP), will reduce the potential for water quality degradation from erosion during construction. Mitigation Measures H-1a through H-1f formalize the preparation of specific procedures to reduce the potential water quality degradation due to soil erosion and sedimentation. Additionally, Mitigation Measures G-1 and G-2 (see Impacts G-1 and G-2 above), and R-4 (see Impact R-4 below) provide measures to further prevent and reduce soil erosion and slope instability during construction. The implementation of these mitigation measures reduces the environmental effect from Impact H-1 to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.8 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR/EIS 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 surface water or groundwater quality would occur from the accidental release of potentially harmful materials during construction activities.

As discussed in Section C.8.5 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR/EIS, accidental spills or disposal of potentially harmful 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 PH-1a through PH-1d (see Impact PH-1, above).

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of SCE's APMs HYD-4 through HYD-6, which requires 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 PH-1a through PH-1d 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 PH-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.8 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the potential impacts of Project construction on water quality due to the spill of harmful materials.

Impact H-4: Disturbance of existing groundwater resources through project-related excavation activities.

As discussed in Section C.8.5 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR/EIS, the Project route would be routed within the boundaries of the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin for approximately the first 7.0 miles after leaving Antelope Substation, and within the boundaries of the Santa Clara Valley East Groundwater Basin for approximately the final 3.6 miles before its terminus at Pardee Substation. 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-2 through 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.8 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the potential impacts of Project construction on groundwater quality.

Impact H-5: Increased runoff from the creation of new impervious areas.

As discussed in Section C.8.7 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Alternative 2: Antelope-Pardee East Mid-Slope) of the EIR/EIS, construction of Project will introduce new impervious surfaces that could increase surface water runoff. During construction of overhead transmission lines and substation modifications, activities such as grading and soil compaction will introduce new impervious areas. Several (19 of the 56) towers located on the eastern mid-slope of Del Sur Ridge will require spur road construction for access to each tower site. Spur roads located on steep slopes will be cut in a switchback pattern for safety purposes; however this greatly increases the land disturbance and new impervious area compared to spur roads that extend directly from the access road to the transmission tower site.

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

H-5 **Permeability of Ground Cover.** Untreated crushed rock or a comparable material will be used to maintain permeability to the subsurface and allow for infiltration in all areas where it is necessary to provide a cap over the natural or existing ground cover, including over trenches, graded access roads, underground transition stations, and substation additions or expansions, and excluding areas where it is necessary to use an impermeable material such as concrete.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure H-5 will facilitate infiltration of surface water runoff and preserve the existing drainage pattern in the project area. This mitigation measure will be applied to permanent Project facilities such as roadways, as well as to temporary Project facilities such as pulling and splicing set-up locations in hillside areas. With implementation of this measure, the Project will not significantly alter the drainage of local streams or increase surface runoff through the introduction of new impervious surfaces.

Reference. Section C.8 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the potential impacts of Project construction on increased runoff.

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

As discussed in Section C.8.5 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR/EIS, the Project route will cross through four Flood Hazard Areas, including Amargosa Creek, Bouquet Reservoir, Haskell Canyon Creek, and San Francisquito Creek. 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 Aboveground Structures shall be Protected 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 and approvals 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.8 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the potential flood hazard impacts of the Project.

Impact H-8: Mudflow hazards created through the placement of permanent, aboveground structures.

As discussed in Section C.8.5 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR/EIS, the project area may be subject to mudflows and associated hazards or impacts. Mudflow may be triggered by heavy rainfall that the soil is not able to sufficiently drain or absorb. As a result, soil and rock materials become unstable and eventually slide away from their existing location. Project construction would be scheduled to occur year-round, which will include the rainy season. Heavy rains could result in potentially damaging mudflow in Project construction areas, particularly in mountainous terrain through the ANF.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact H-8 to a less-than-significant level. These measures identified as Mitigation Measures H-1a through H-1f (see Impact H-1 above).

Rationale for Finding. The erosions control measures described above for Impact H-1 will prevent and reduce erosion and sedimentation which will also reduce the impacts of mudflows.

Reference. Section C.8 (Hydrology and Water Quality) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the potential mudflow hazard impacts of the Project.

IV.2.8 Land Use and Public Recreation

Project-related facilities will be placed within the jurisdictional boundaries of the USDA Forest Service, Los Angeles County, City of Lancaster, City of Palmdale, and City of Santa Clarita. To gather information regarding the effects of the Project on local and regional land uses, including recreation and agriculture, 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 Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch, and will therefore not result in long-term disruption of existing commercial land uses (see Impact L-4 in Section IV.1 above).

Impact L-1: Construction of the Project would temporarily disrupt existing residential and commercial land uses

As discussed in Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS, construction of the Project will temporarily disrupt existing residential and commercial land uses due to increased traffic, noise levels and air quality emissions. Construction activities will be located within 400 feet of more than 20 residential communities within the City of Santa Clarita and unincorporated Los Angeles County.

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 N-1a, N-1b and N-1c (see Impact N-1 below).

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure N-1a will prohibit construction-related activities and its associated impacts on noise, traffic and air quality between the nighttime hours of 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Monday through Friday, and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. on Saturdays without the approval of a variance from the City of Santa Clarita. Mitigation Measure N-1b requires pre-construction notification, by mail, to property owners affected by construction-related activities, as well as publication of substantial changes to projected construction schedules and locations if they occur. These notifications will additionally include suggestions on how to minimize construction-related nuisances. Mitigation Measure N-1c will require that SCE or its construction contractors install temporary shields or curtains to reduce stationary equipment noise levels in unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County to protect surrounding land uses from excessive noise. With implementation of these measures, temporary disruptions to existing residential and commercial land uses due to construction will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.9 (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: Construction of the Project would temporarily encroach upon Farmland

As discussed in Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS, the Project will traverse lands classified as Prime Farmland and Unique Farmland from approximately Mile 2.6 to Mile 2.7, and from Mile 4.7 to Mile 5.1. Although an existing transmission line ROW is located in this area, with

implementation of the Project the existing ROW width will be expanded from 50 feet to 180 feet. While no new permanent access roads will be constructed on Farmland, tower removal and construction activities in these areas will require that construction equipment and vehicles traverse active Farmland on temporary access roads. During the peak growing season, some crops in these agricultural fields will likely be damaged.

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 includes implementation of Mitigation Measure L-5, identified below.

L-5 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 Farmland (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland) 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 Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique 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 Farmland will be temporarily disturbed in order 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. Thirty (30) days prior to the start of construction, copies of the signed agreements shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to the start of construction.

Rationale for Finding. Requiring SCE to establish agreements with affected property owners of Farmland will ensure that construction-related activities that affect agricultural production and operations are minimized. The agreements will also ensure that damage to farmland and farmland production as a result of construction are adequately compensated for, as mutually agreed upon by SCE and affected property owners. The submittal of copies of all signed agreements at least 30 days prior to the start of construction in Farmland areas will verify compliance with this measure. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure L-5, impacts related to temporary encroachments on Farmland during construction will be reduced to a less-than-significant-level.

Reference. Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the impacts related to Farmland due to construction and operation of the Project.

Impact L-6: The right-of-way expansion and larger 500-kV towers would permanently preclude use of Farmland

As discussed in Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS, and addressed under Impact L-5, above, the Project will traverse and expand the width of an existing ROW along approximately 0.5 miles of Prime Farmland and Unique Farmland (Mile 2.6 to 2.7 and Mile 4.7 to 5.1). The width of the existing ROW will be expanded from 50 feet to 180 feet. The new 500-kV towers that will be located on Farmland in this area will be larger at the base than the existing 66-kV towers being replaced. As such, the erection of larger towers on Prime and Unique Farmland will preclude some existing agricultural uses, which may result 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 L-6 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure L-6, identified below.

L-6 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 agricultural operations. Specifically, SCE shall comply with the following measures when siting transmission towers and splicing/pulling stations within areas where active cultivated farmland would be removed through the presence of structures:

- SCE shall avoid orchards, 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 proposed 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 activities described in Mitigation Measure L-5 (Establish Agreement and Coordinate Construction Activities with Agricultural Landowners).

Rationale for Finding. The requirements outlined in Mitigation Measure L-6 require SCE to ensure the avoidance of areas that are actively used for agricultural production and operations. Mitigation Measure L-6 will additionally reinforce the requirements of Mitigation Measure L-5, which protect active Farmland and their operation. The submittal of proof of compliance at least 90 days prior to the start of construction in Farmland and active agricultural areas will ensure implementation of Mitigation Measure L-6. Therefore, impacts related to the permanent preclusion of Farmland areas will be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) provides a complete assessment of the impacts related to Farmland due to construction and operation of the Project.

Impact R-1: Construction of the Project would preclude the use of established recreation areas in the Angeles National Forest and in the City of Santa Clarita

As discussed in Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS, construction of the Project will temporarily preclude the use of established recreation areas. Construction of a new ROW within the ANF will generate traffic and other impacts (i.e., noise, visual), which may discourage public use of

recreational facilities. The Project will additionally cross the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and other trails, and will require both the use and temporary closure of some off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes for construction. The use of construction equipment along Del Sur Ridge Road and helicopters to install towers mid-slope along Del Sur Ridge will also require the temporary closure of Del Sur Ridge Road. Additionally, the Project will traverse a community park (Mountainview Park) located in the City of Santa Clarita, thereby creating temporary disturbances during construction.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact R-1 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures R-1a through R-1d, identified below, in conjunction with Mitigation Measure B-1a (see Impact B-1 above).

R-1a **Coordinate Construction Schedule with the Authorized Officer for the Recreation Area.** No less than 40 days prior to construction, SCE shall coordinate construction activities and the Project construction schedule with the authorized officer of the recreation areas listed below. SCE shall schedule construction activities to avoid heavy recreational use periods, including major holidays, in coordination with, and at the discretion of the authorized officer. SCE shall prepare a public notice of construction activities consistent with Mitigation Measure N-1b (Provide Advanced Notification of Construction), which shall be distributed to ranger stations within the ANF as well as published in local newspapers. SCE shall document its coordination efforts with the authorized officer, and provide this documentation to the CPUC and the USDA Forest Service 30 days prior to construction.

Angeles National Forest	Cliffie Stone Trail
Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail	Bouquet Canyon Trail
Mountainview Park	Leona Valley Loop Trail
Ritter Ranch	Vasquez Loop Trail
California Poppy Trail	Acton Community Trail
Northside Trail	Mint Canyon Trail

R-1b **Identify Alternative Recreation Areas.** No less than 40 days prior to construction, SCE shall coordinate with the authorized officer for the recreation areas listed below in order to identify alternative recreation sites (i.e., trails, parks) that may be used by the public during construction. SCE shall post a public notice at ranger stations within the ANF and at other recreation facilities that would 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 and the USDA Forest Service 30 days prior to construction.

Angeles National Forest	Cliffie Stone Trail
Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail	Bouquet Canyon Trail
Mountainview Park	Leona Valley Loop Trail
Ritter Ranch	Vasquez Loop Trail
California Poppy Trail	Acton Community Trail
Northside Trail	Mint Canyon Trail

R-1c **Temporary Closure of Off-Highway Vehicle Routes.** During Construction. SCE shall coordinate with the Forest Service and shall post a public notice consistent with Mitigation Measure N-1b (Provide Advanced Notification of Construction). The notice shall be posted in local newspapers, ranger stations within the ANF, and at adjacent recreation facilities, and shall

include a list of the specific off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes to be closed during construction. SCE shall maintain these postings throughout the temporary OHV route closure period. SCE shall document its coordination with the authorized officer, and submit this documentation to the CPUC and the USDA Forest Service 30 days prior to construction.

R-1d **Temporary Upgrades to Forest System Roads.** SCE shall submit its plans of proposed road maintenance work to the Forest Service Engineer for review and approval, which shall be incorporated into a temporary Special Use or Road Use Authorization to be issued by the USDA Forest Service. The proposed maintenance work shall include a road restoration plan and restoration schedule to ensure that the Forest System roads are restored at the designated Maintenance Level (i.e., Level 2) following Project construction, in order to allow for their continued use by OHV recreationists.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures R-1a and R-1b will require that construction-related activities at the recreational facilities identified in these two measures are adequately forecast and publicly noticed to minimize inconveniences from temporary facility closures and disruptions, and provide the public with suggestions for alternative locations for recreational activities during construction. Mitigation Measure R-1c will provide adequate forecasting and public noticing of temporary OHV trail closures to minimize inconveniences and disruptions to OHV users during construction. Mitigation Measure R-1d will ensure that OHV trails that require upgrading for construction-related activities are restored to their pre-construction condition following construction. Mitigation Measure B-1a will require the preparation and implementation of a Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan to restore and/or replace the native vegetation disturbed by Project construction, including disturbances within and adjacent to recreational areas and trails. With implementation of these measures, temporary preclusions of established recreational areas in the ANF and the City of Santa Clarita due to construction will be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) provides a complete assessment of the impacts to recreational areas resulting from construction and operation of the Project.

Impact R-3: The Project would contribute to the long-term loss or degradation of OHV routes

As discussed in Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS, the Project will include clearing and grading of existing access and spur roads, some of which will be located along designated OHV routes. OHV roads along Project ROW in the ANF have been designated Maintenance Level 2 and are maintained for high clearance vehicles. Operation of the Project will require improvements to some of these roads from Level 2 to Level 3 to accommodate equipment and vehicles. These upgrades will likely preclude OHV use, thereby creating 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 R-3 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure R-3, identified below.

R-3 **Avoid Upgrades to Forest System Road Maintenance Levels.** SCE shall implement the requirements for road improvements and maintenance as mandated by the conditions in the Special Use or Road Use Authorization to be issued by the USDA Forest Service for the proposed Project. For all designated Maintenance Level 2 Forest System roads, SCE shall adhere to the Management Prescription Guidelines for Level 2 as delineated in the Forest Service Handbook (FSH 7709.58), which includes maintaining the road prism to provide for the passage of high

clearance vehicles. Plans for any proposed road maintenance work during Project operation shall be submitted to the Forest Engineer for review and approval prior to maintenance activities.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure R-3 requires that any Level 2 road improvements that are undertaken for Project operation must follow the guidelines outlined in the Forest Service Handbook to ensure that the ANF road system is maintained for the passage of high clearance vehicles (OHVs). The submittal of road maintenance plans to the ANF for review and approval prior to their implementation will ensure compliance with this measure. Therefore, impacts related to the long-term loss or degradation of OHV routes will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.9 (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 R-4: The Project would facilitate unmanaged recreational uses that would contribute to the long-term loss or degradation of recreational facilities in the Angeles National Forest

As discussed in Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS, the Project will require the construction and/or improvement of approximately 10.4 miles of access roads, and approximately 0.3 mile of spur roads within NFS lands. The creation of new roads will allow unauthorized uses (i.e., illegal OHV use) and access to new areas of the ANF, which will contribute to the long-term loss or degradation of recreational areas and facilities. Although helicopter construction of the towers located along the mid-slope of Del Sur Ridge will minimize access to new areas of the ANF, the construction of new roads and improvement of existing roads will still impact recreational areas.

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

R-4 Permanent Closure and Re-vegetation of Construction Roads. Access roads built and re-opened for construction of the Project, which are not part of the Forest System roads, shall be blocked from vehicle access and rehabilitated to a near natural condition. The USDA Forest Service shall consider authorizing to SCE the use of access roads that are demonstrated not to introduce unmanaged recreation, erosion, invasive plan species, or impacts to scenic values. SCE shall prepare a Restoration and Revegetation Plan for Project access and spur roads, consistent with Mitigation Measure B-1a (Provide Restoration/Compensation for Impacts to Native Vegetation Communities). The Restoration and Revegetation Plan shall include resource protection measures that reestablish former drainage patterns, stabilize slopes, block illegal road access, install water bars, remove culverts, remove unstable fill, pull back road shoulders, and eliminate the roadbed by restoring natural contour and slope. The Restoration and Revegetation Plan shall be submitted to the CPUC and the USDA Forest Service for prior approval, and shall be incorporated into the Special Use Authorization to be issued by the USDA Forest Service.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure R-4 requires that new roads required for Project construction, but are not needed for Project operation, must be blocked and restored following construction. The measure additionally provides the ANF with the authority to determine which new roads can be maintained for Project operations and maintenance. The measure also requires preparation and implementation of a Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan, which will outline the specific road restoration and revegetation actions to be completed and monitored following construction. Review and approval of the Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan by the USDA Forest Service prior to its implementation, and its incorporation into the Project's Special Use Authorization, will ensure

compliance with this measure. Therefore, impacts related to unmanaged recreational uses that may contribute to the long-term loss or degradation of recreational facilities in the ANF will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) provides a complete assessment of the impacts related to unmanaged recreational use due to construction and operation of the Project.

Cumulative project activities could temporarily preclude the use of established recreation areas in the Angeles National Forest and in the City of Santa Clarita during construction

Construction of the Project will temporarily prohibit access to, and use of, some recreational areas in the ANF and the City of Santa Clarita, including the PCT, other Los Angeles County and local trails, OHV trails within the ANF, and Mountainview Park. Construction of other projects in the vicinity could result in similar effects on temporary access to and use of recreational areas.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures R-1a, R-1b, R-1c and R-1d (see Impact R-1 above), and Mitigation Measures B-1a (see Impact B-1 above), which will mitigate Project-specific and cumulative effects related to temporary preclusions on the use of recreation areas in the ANF and City of Santa Clarita during construction.

Rationale for Finding. As addressed under Impact R-1, Mitigation Measures R-1a, R-1b, R-1c, and R-1d require pre-construction public notifications, as well as construction and post-construction phase activities that will minimize the preclusion of, or restrictions on, access and use of recreational facilities and areas within the Project area. Additionally, Mitigation Measure B-1a will require restoration or replacement compensation for all vegetation disturbed during construction, including those areas used for recreational activities. With implementation of these Project-specific mitigation measures, cumulative impacts to recreational resources resulting from the construction of multiple projects will be mitigated to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the land use and recreation cumulative construction impacts related to the Project.

Cumulative project activities could contribute to the long-term loss or degradation of recreational facilities and OHV Routes in the Angeles National Forest

Project-related activities will require the clearing and grading of existing access and spur roads, some of which are designated OHV routes. These clearing and grading activities will jeopardize OHV driver and passenger safety, thereby prohibiting OHV access to some ANF roads that are currently designated and deigned for such use. Additionally, implementation of the Project will require the construction of new access roads and improvement of existing roads within the ANF, which will increase the unauthorized and authorized access to lands that are currently difficult to reach. Improved access may lead to the long-term degradation of some recreational facilities of the ANF.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measures R-3 and R-4 (see Impacts R-3 and R-4 above), which will reduce Project-specific and cumulative effects related the degradation of recreational facilities and OHV routes in the ANF.

Rationale for Finding. As addressed under Impact R-3 (above), implementation of Mitigation Measures R-3 (Avoid Upgrades to Forest System Road Maintenance Levels) will ensure that impacts related to the ANF OHV road system are minimized due to construction and operation of the Project. Additionally, this measure will require submittal of Project-related road maintenance plans to the Forest Engineer for review and approval per the guidelines specified for Level 2 (OHV) roads. Mitigation Measure R-4, as addressed under Impact R-4, above, will provide the ANF with the authority to determine which Project-related roads are allowed to be maintained following construction, and which roads must be closed and restored; the measure also requires preparation and implementation of a Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan, which must include restoration and revegetation actions for the closure of temporary access and spur roads. With implementation of these Project-specific mitigation measures, cumulative impacts related to the long-term loss or degradation of recreational facilities and OHV routes in the ANF from the construction and operation of multiple projects will be mitigated to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the land use and recreation cumulative construction impacts related to the Project.

IV.2.9 Noise

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. Specific to the project area, an additional land use of notable sensitivity was identified – the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch. Unlike the alignment originally proposed by SCE, the adopted Project will avoid most impacts to the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch (Impacts N-2 and N-5). As such, these impacts are discussed in Section IV.1, above. Other 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-7: Temporary increases in ambient noise levels would severely disrupt operations at Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch.

As discussed in Section C.10.9 (Noise – Alternative 4: Antelope-Pardee Re-Routing of New Right-of-Way along Haskell Canyon) of the EIR/EIS, the transmission line route for the adopted Project will be located approximately 2,000 feet away from the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch. There is a possibility that noise from construction activities will disrupt operations at the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch due to the sensitive nature of motion picture filming.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated in the Project that mitigate effects on the environment from Impact N-7 to a less-than-significant level. Mitigation Measures N-1a through N-1c, as well as Mitigation Measure N-7, identified below, will restrict nighttime construction noise in Santa Clarita, provide advanced notification of construction, provide shields for stationary construction equipment, and provide for coordination with the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch.

N-1a **Nighttime Construction Noise Restriction in Santa Clarita.** During construction, SCE or its construction contractor will not perform construction activities within 300 feet of a City of Santa

Clarita residentially zoned property between the nighttime hours of 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Monday through Friday and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, without the approval of a variance from the City of Santa Clarita.

N-1b **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 and businesses 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. If any significant changes in scheduling were to occur, SCE would publish an updated notice in the local papers or send an updated Fact Sheet. 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. Prior to construction, copies of all notices will be submitted to the CPUC and Forest Service for review and approval.

N-1c **Provide Shields for Stationary Construction Equipment.** During construction, SCE or its construction contractor will install temporary shields or curtains to reduce stationary equipment noise levels in unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County when operating within 600 feet of single-family residences, within 350 feet of multi-family residences, and within approximately 200 feet of commercial uses 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-7 **Coordination of Construction Activities with the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch.** SCE or its construction contractor will coordinate all construction activities that will occur within one half mile of the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch with the operators of the ranch, at least two months prior to construction. SCE or its construction contractor will make a good faith effort to schedule all construction activities within one half mile of the ranch in order to cause the least amount of disturbance as possible to the operations of the ranch.

Rationale for Finding. While there is a possibility that construction activities will disrupt operations at the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch, implementation of Mitigation Measures N-1a through N-1c and N-7 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level by providing limitations on when construction activities can occur within the City of Santa Clarita, advanced notification of construction, noise shielding for stationary construction equipment, and a mechanism for coordinating construction activities with the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch.

Reference. Section C.10 (Noise) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the temporary noise impacts of the Project on the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch. Specifically Section C.10.9 (Alternative 4: Antelope-Pardee Re-Routing of New Right-of-Way along Haskell Canyon) discusses Impact N-7 as a result of the adopted Project.

ATTACHMENT B

IV.2.10 Public Services

Section C.11 (Public Services) of the EIR/EIS analyzed effects of the Project on public services, including fire fighting services, police protection services, schools and hospitals. The public services analyzed in the EIR/EIS included those associated with the City of Santa Clarita, City of Lancaster, City of Palmdale, the ANF, and applicable portions of unincorporated Los Angeles County. Because government and public service agencies have recently categorized data pertaining to public services (including their capacity, staffing, and type) as sensitive critical information, public access to these data are often restricted for security reasons. As such, only information that is publicly accessible was reviewed.

Impact P-1: Construction activities would temporarily increase demands on fire and police protection.

As discussed in Section C.11 (Public Services) of the EIR/EIS, construction activities will likely increase the need for emergency services due to accidents caused by construction personnel or equipment. The presence of construction equipment (vehicles, generators, tools, etc.) will also increase the likelihood of a wildland fire, as will the presence of construction personnel due to human influenced ignition (e.g., the use of smoking paraphernalia, flammables, etc.). Increases in construction-related temporary fire hazards will increase temporary demands on fire protection services.

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

P-1 Expansion of the Southern California Edison Fire Prevention and Response Plan (FPRP). SCE's FPRP shall apply to the entire length of the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Line ROW, including the portions of the route in unincorporated Los Angeles County, and the Cities of Lancaster and Santa Clarita. SCE shall modify its plan to include the entire Project route, and shall notify the construction contractor(s) that the SCE FPRP and all measures contained within shall be applicable to the entire Project route and be in effect during the entire Project construction phase. SCE shall provide the revisions to the plan to CPUC for review and approval prior to the start of construction.

Rationale for Finding. While a temporary increase in demand for fire protection will occur on non-NFS lands, the majority of the area at risk from construction-related wildland fires will be on NFS lands. Mitigation Measure F-1 (Develop a Fire Plan with the Forest Service) will require SCE to develop and implement a Fire Plan with the USDA Forest Service that is approved by the ANF and incorporated into the Project's Special Use Authorization. The Fire Plan must include fire prevention and suppression requirements on ANF lands, and must also be updated, as warranted. During construction increased fire hazards will also occur in portions of the City of Santa Clarita, the City of Lancaster, and in unincorporated portions of Los Angeles County. Mitigation Measure P-1, above, will require SCE and its contractors to implement SCE's FPRP for the duration of construction along all portions of the Project ROW. The measure will additionally require revisions and modifications to the FPRP, as needed, to reflect current fire hazard conditions and concerns. With implementation of these measures, impacts to temporary increases on the demands of fire and police protection services will be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Sections C.11 (Public Services) and C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS provide a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts associated with emergency response services.

Impact P-2: Operational activities could increase demands on fire and police protection.

As described in Section C.7 of the EIR/EIS, operation of the Project will pose a potential wildfire risk if transmission lines contact vegetation or other potentially combustible materials. Routine maintenance activities may also result in a wildfire if a vehicle's catalytic converter were to ignite vegetation. With completion of the regular maintenance activities proposed by SCE, the potential for risk of fire will not substantially increase demands for fire protection on non-NFS lands. However, impacts to emergency response services in the ANF could be significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact P-2 to a less-than-significant level. This includes implementation of Mitigation Measure F-2 (see Impact F-2 above).

Rationale for Finding. Due to the amount of ANF land traversed by the Project, the wildfire history of the ANF, and the sensitive nature of the habitat within the ANF, the increased risk of fire associated with operation of the Project on ANF lands could require the reallocation of firefighting and fire prevention resources from other critical areas on NFS lands. However, implementation of Mitigation Measure F-2 (Develop an Operation and Maintenance Plan with the Forest Service) will require the preparation and implementation of an Operation and Maintenance Plan (O&M Plan) that must include, at a minimum, road maintenance specifications, vegetation treatment and rehabilitation specifications, and conditions on maintenance and replacement of improvements. The measure additionally requires NFS review of the O&M Plan annually, as well as O&M Plan updates, as warranted. With implementation of Mitigation Measure F-2, impacts on ANF lands related to increased demands on emergency response services and protection will be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Sections C.11 (Public Services) and C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS provide a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts associated with emergency response services.

IV.2.11 Socioeconomics

Section C.12 (Socioeconomics) of the EIR/EIS examined regional and local population, housing, and employment data applicable to the Project, including data for Los Angeles County, the Cities of Santa Clarita, Lancaster, and Palmdale, and NFS lands. Current demographic data from the Year 2000 U.S. Census were evaluated, and estimates of population, housing, and employment characteristics that are prepared annually through a joint effort of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) were also assessed.

To reduce socioeconomic impacts, the adopted Project will avoid the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch, unlike the alignment originally proposed by SCE. As such, construction and operational activities will not impact revenues for the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch (see Impacts S-1 and S-2 in Section IV.1 above).

Impact S-3: Construction activities could cause a decrease in revenues for agricultural landowners.

As described in Section C.12 (Socioeconomics) of the EIR/EIS, Miles 2.6 to 2.7 and 4.7 to 5.1 of the Project ROW will traverse active agricultural lands. No new permanent roads will be constructed over these lands, and, although the ROW will be widened from 50 feet to 180 feet, this widening will not preclude the agricultural operations. However, removal of the existing 66-kV lattice steel towers and construction of new 500-kV towers in these areas will require construction equipment to traverse these agricultural lands. These construction activities may temporarily restrict crop production, or potentially

damage crops if activities occur during growing season. The restriction of crop production or damage to crops may decrease revenues for the agricultural landowners whose crops are affected. These effects will only occur on privately owned land; NFS lands will not be impacted.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact S-3 to a less-than-significant level. This measure is identified as Mitigation Measure L-5 (see Impact L-5 above).

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measure L-5 requires SCE to establish agreements with affected property owners to ensure that construction-related activities which may affect agricultural production and operations are minimized. The agreements must additionally stipulate that construction-related damages to active Farmland are adequately compensated for, as mutually agreed upon by SCE and each affected property owner. The measure also requires SCE to submit copies of all signed agreements to the CPUC at least 30 days prior to the start of any construction within active agricultural areas to verify compliance. With implementation of Mitigation Measure L-5, construction-related impacts associated with decreases in agricultural landowner revenues will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Sections C.12 (Socioeconomics) and C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS provide a complete assessment of the Project's construction-related impacts on agricultural landowner revenues.

IV.2.12 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.13, Transportation and Traffic, of the EIR/EIS.

For the purposes of the analysis in the EIR/EIS and based on NEPA and 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.

As discussed in Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS, construction of the Project will result in temporary road closures during transmission line stringing activities. Traffic detours or implementation of controlled continuous traffic breaks may be required at road crossings. Temporary road closures may substantially disrupt traffic flow and substantially increase traffic congestion, resulting in significant impacts. SCE has committed to APMs TRA-3, TRA-4, and TRA-7, which require encroachment permits or similar authorization to be obtained from the applicable jurisdictions when streets are used for more than normal traffic purposes, require the preparation of a traffic control plan for all work requiring a permit from a local jurisdiction, and require Forest Service consultation for details of helicopter use in the ANF.

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. Specifically, Mitigation Measures T-1a and T-1b will reduce traffic impacts from lane closures to a less-than-significant level. These measures are 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 will be affected by overhead construction activities as part of the required traffic encroachment permits. TCPs shall define the locations of all roads that will 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 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, including Los Angeles County and the cities of Lancaster and Santa Clarita and Los Angeles County.

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. Scheduling lane closures during off-peak hours will limit the amount of congestion on roadways since lower volumes of traffic will be traversing the affected roadways at these times. Implementation of the traffic control plan will include measures such as signage, flag persons, and alternative routes to facilitate traffic through roadways with closed or restricted lanes. By implementing Mitigation Measures T-1a and T-1b, congestion on roadways during construction related to road closures and reduced travel lanes will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of Project construction traffic impacts.

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

As discussed in Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS, construction worker commute trips, Project equipment deliveries, and hauling materials such as support towers, concrete, conductor, and excavation spoils will increase existing traffic volumes on regional and local roadways in the Project area which may result in significant congestion on area roads.

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. Specifically, Mitigation Measure T-2, identified below, will reduce congestion on area roadways from construction traffic to a less-than-significant level. This measure is 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. Staging construction workers offsite and shuttling them to construction sites will reduce the number of Project-related vehicles traveling on roads within the project area. Implementing Mitigation Measure T-2 will ensure that Project-related construction traffic does not contribute to unacceptable levels of service on area roadways.

Reference. Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of Project construction traffic impacts.

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

As discussed in Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS, construction activities could 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 in the ANF could lengthen the response time required for emergency vehicles passing through the construction zone(s).

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. Specifically, Mitigation Measure T-1a, identified above, will reduce impacts on emergency response resulting from construction activities to a less-than-significant level.

Rationale for Finding. Notifying emergency service providers of lane closures in advance will allow providers to develop and utilize alternate routes in order to avoid potential delays from construction activities. Additionally, Mitigation Measure T-1a will have provisions to accommodate emergency vehicles, such as immediately stopping work for emergency vehicle passage and short detours to prevent delays. These measures will therefore reduce the traffic impacts to emergency services associated with construction to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of Project construction traffic impacts.

Impact T-4: Construction activities could temporarily disrupt transit and school bus routes.

As discussed in Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS, overhead stringing activities that will require short-term road closures associated with construction of the proposed transmission line will disrupt up to three Santa Clarita Transit bus routes (Routes 3, 7, and 503) and a number of local school bus routes (see EIR/EIS Table C.13-4). Potential impacts include scheduling delays and temporary bus re-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. Specifically, Mitigation Measure T-4, identified below, will reduce impacts on bus service resulting from construction activities to a less-than-significant level.

T-4 **Avoid Disruption of Bus Service.** SCE will coordinate with Santa Clarita Transit at least one month prior to construction to reduce potential interruption of bus transit services. SCE will also consult with the Saugus Union School District at least one month prior to construction to ensure construction activities are scheduled such that they will not disrupt school bus routes.

Rationale for Finding. Notifying bus service providers of potential disruptions of service in advance will allow providers to develop and utilize alternate routes in order to avoid potential delays from construction activities. Additionally, Mitigation Measure T-4 will have provisions to schedule construction activities at times that will avoid causing disruption to bus service. This measure will therefore reduce the traffic impacts to bus services associated with construction to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of Project construction traffic impacts.

Impact T-5: Construction activities could temporarily interfere with the use of pedestrian/bicycle paths.

As discussed in Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS, construction activities for the Project may impact pedestrian and bicycle circulation by temporarily blocking established pedestrian and bicycle routes where the transmission line will cross over roads in the Santa Clarita 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-5. Specifically, Mitigation Measure T-5, identified below, will reduce impacts on pedestrian and bicycle paths from construction activities to a less-than-significant level.

T-5 **Provide Temporary Pedestrian and Bicycle Access.** Where construction will result in temporary closures of sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities, SCE will provide temporary pedestrian access through detours or safe areas along the construction zone. Any affected pedestrian facilities and the alternative facilities or detours that will be provided will be identified in the Traffic Control Plan required pursuant to Mitigation Measure T-1a. Where construction activity results in bike lane closures, appropriate detours and signs will be provided.

Rationale for Finding. Providing detours around construction zones or safe areas through construction zones where construction activities will block pedestrian and/or bicycle paths will ensure that impacts to pedestrian and bicycle access will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

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Reference. Section C.13 (Transportation and Traffic) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of Project construction traffic impacts.

Impact T-6: Conflict with plans for a City of Santa Clarita connector road.

As discussed in Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS, the transmission line route will cross the route of the planned Santa Clarita Cross-Valley Connector at approximately Mile 25.5. Construction of connector road is expected to be completed in 2008. Placement of transmission line towers may interfere with future widening or development of the Santa Clarita Cross-Valley Connector

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact T-6. Specifically, Mitigation Measure T-6, identified below, will reduce impacts to the Santa Clarita Cross-Valley Connector road to a less-than-significant level.

T-6 **Coordinate with Caltrans and the City of Santa Clarita to Avoid Conflicts with the Santa Clarita Cross-Valley Connector.** SCE shall coordinate project design with Caltrans and the City of Santa Clarita to ensure that structures associated with the transmission line are not placed in locations that could block further widening or development of the Santa Clarita Cross-Valley Connector.

Rationale for Finding. Coordinating with planning officials will allow SCE to avoid placing transmission line towers in locations that will conflict with future expansion of the Cross-Valley Connector road.

Reference. Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of Project construction traffic impacts.

Impact T-7: Construction vehicles and equipment could damage road ROWs.

As discussed in Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS, the use of heavy trucks and other equipment during construction activities for the Project may cause physical damage and/or deterioration of the surface on the road right-of-ways that will provide access to the Project alignment.

Finding. The CPUC finds changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact T-7. Specifically, Mitigation Measure T-7, identified below, will reduce effects on the environment from Impact T-7 to a less-than-significant level by repairing any damaged roadways or roadway features as a result of construction activities.

T-7 **Repair Damaged Road ROWs.** If damage to roads, sidewalks, and/or medians (including irrigation systems for landscaped medians) occurs, 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. Most construction activities will be localized at the point of construction; however, construction vehicle use could damage existing roadways and roadway facilities. Implementation of Mitigation Measure T-7 will reduce construction impacts related to physical damage to roadways and facilities to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.13 (Traffic and Transportation) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of Project construction traffic impacts.

Cumulative construction traffic would result in congestion on area roadways.

As discussed in Section C.13.13 (Traffic and Transportation – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, rapid residential development in the Santa Clarita area has contributed to congestion on area roadways that will likely be traveled by construction-related traffic associated with the Project. Eight development projects were identified within one-half mile of the Project route, which will combine with Project traffic resulting in cumulatively significant congestion on area roadways.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project that mitigate significant effects on the environment from congestion on area roadways (Impact T-2). Specifically, Mitigation Measure T-2 (see Impact T-2 above), will reduce congestion on area roadways from Project-related construction traffic to a less-than-significant level. If similar measures are applied to the other projects identified within one-half mile of the Project route, cumulative impacts will be less than significant.

Rationale for Finding. Mitigation Measure T-2 will reduce the number of Project-related construction vehicles required for the Project; thereby reducing the potential for Project-related construction traffic to substantially contribute to a cumulative impact. Furthermore, if similar measures are applied to the other projects identified within one-half mile of the Project route, cumulative impacts will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.13.13 (Traffic and Transportation – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of Project construction traffic impacts.

IV.2.13 Utilities and Service Systems

As discussed in Section C.14 (Utilities and Service Systems), the project area is served by utility and service systems in Los Angeles County and within the Cities of Santa Clarita, Lancaster, and Palmdale. A variety of local purveyors in these areas provide and maintain utility and service system facilities associated with electricity, water, stormwater and wastewater, solid waste, and natural gas.

Project construction will generate waste largely in the form of soil, concrete from existing foundations, utility line cable, and scrap metal/wood from the replacement of the existing 66-kV towers.

Impact U-5: The amount of waste material recycled during construction activities would not adhere to State standards.

As discussed in Section C.14 (Utilities and Service Systems) of the EIR/EIS, waste material generated during construction will include conductor wiring and metal from replaced tower structures, which will be dismantled and recycled. Soil from drilling or excavation will be screened and separated for use as backfill to the maximum extent possible. Other waste such as packing crates, spare bolts, and other construction debris will be hauled off site for recycling when possible. While these activities are proposed by SCE as part of the project, the amount of total waste material recycled during construction may not adhere to State standards.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Project which mitigate significant effects on the environment from Impact U-5 to a less-than-significant level. Specifically,

implementation of Mitigation Measure U-2, identified below, during construction will reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

U-2 **Recycle Construction Waste.** To comply with the Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, during Project construction SCE and/or its construction contractor shall recycle a minimum of 50 percent of the waste generated during construction activities. Following the completion of construction activities, SCE shall provide the CPUC and Forest Service with documentation from the recycling and landfill facilities used to show that the amount of waste recycled was 50 percent or more.

Rationale for Finding. SCE has proposed recycling of waste materials generated during construction as part of the Project. Mitigation Measure U-2 will ensure that maximum recycling activities will occur during construction, and ensure that the Project will be compliant with the Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 and Assembly Bill 939. Accordingly, implementation of Mitigation Measure U-2 will reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.14 (Utilities and Service Systems) provides a complete assessment of the impacts of the Project on utilities and service systems.

IV.2.14 Visual Resources

Two different methodologies to assess impacts to Visual Resources were used depending on how the land was administered. For federal lands administered by the USDA Forest Service, the Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) in the 2005 Angeles National Forest Land Management Plan (Forest Plan) and Scenery Management System (SMS) was used. For non-National Forest System (non-NFS) lands, the Visual Sensitivity/Visual Change (VS/VC) method was used.

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. Accumulating the "seen areas" from each of these viewpoints defines the Project viewsheds. Viewsheds will be extensive, given the considerable heights (2-3 times taller than the existing 66-kV towers) and lighter colors (dulled galvanized steel) of the proposed 500-kV tower structures.

For those vantage points north of the ANF and west of Haskell Canyon, the analysis provided in Section C.15.5 (Impact Analysis: Proposed Project/Action) of the EIR/EIS applies. Within the ANF, generally Section C.15.7 (Alternative 2: Antelope-Pardee East Mid-Slope) of the EIR/EIS applies, whereas east of Haskell Canyon Section C.15.9 (Alternative 4: Antelope-Pardee Re-Rerouting of New ROW along Haskell Canyon) applies.

Impacts V-1 and V-2: Project infrastructure would alter the visual quality of landscape views as seen from 110th Street at Johnson Road (KOP 1) and Avenue K (KOP 2).

As discussed in Section C.15.5 of the EIR/EIS, replacement of the existing 66-kV subtransmission line with the Project's taller and wider towers will introduce substantial industrial character, visual contrast and view blockage to landscape views from KOP 1 and KOP 2. As seen from KOP 1, the new towers will be located in the same ROW as the existing 66-kV towers, but in different locations and with longer spans. The increased height and width of the new towers and longer spans gives the visual impression that the new towers are located in a different ROW, but the ROW will not change. The resulting visual contrast will be high. From KOP 2, the increased height and width of the new towers will create an adverse change in scale which will result in several adverse visual effects. The substantial increase in structure size will cause additional focus on the skylined structures. Increased arm width will spread the conductors further

along the horizon, which will make them more prominent (depending on viewing position, lighting circumstances, and time of day). The increased structure size will also cause a significant increase in structure prominence and industrial character when viewed from Avenue K and from nearby residences. As a result, visual contrast will be moderate-to-high.

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-2 to a less-than-significant level. This includes the implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a through V-1e, identified below.

V-1a **Use Tubular Steel Poles.** In locations designated by the CPUC and Forest Service, to reduce significant visual impacts as seen from sensitive receptor locations, SCE and its Contractors shall eliminate lattice steel towers from the Project, and substitute tubular steel poles in the locations where indicated to reduce visual impacts and where deemed technically feasible and where reliability will not be compromised. SCE and its Contractors shall provide documentation demonstrating where tubular steel poles will lessen visual impacts, and conversely, where lattice steel towers will blend in with a landform backdrop. To the extent that SCE and its contractors deem the use of tubular steel poles to be infeasible or to adversely impact reliability in a location where they will lessen visual impacts, SCE and its contractors shall provide documentation of such infeasibility or adverse impact on reliability. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC or Forest Service, as appropriate, to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE and its Contractors shall submit these plans and studies to the CPUC, and as appropriate to the Forest Service, for review and approval at least 90 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1b **Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Existing Access/Spur Roads.** In locations designated by the CPUC and Forest Service, the Applicant (SCE) shall remove existing transmission line towers and conductors using existing access roads and spur roads, and shall construct the new transmission line using existing access roads and spur roads. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC or Forest Service, as appropriate, 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 and, as appropriate, to the Forest Service 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 will 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 and, as appropriate, to the Forest Service for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1d **Dispose of Excavated Materials.** For areas where excavated materials will be visible from sensitive viewing locations, SCE and its Contractors 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 and, as appropriate, to the Forest Service for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

V-1e **Treat Surfaces with Appropriate Colors, Finishes, and Textures.** For all structures that are visible from sensitive viewing locations, the Applicant (SCE) 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 tubular steel pole will 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 or Forest Service, as appropriate, 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 and, as appropriate, to the Forest Service for review and approval at least 90 days prior to the start of construction.

Rationale for Finding. The mitigation measures incorporated as part of the Project will result in minimized obstruction of foreground views of transmission towers. These measures will also prevent further degradation of views of the Mojave Desert by not constructing new access roads. The mitigation measures will also minimize views of construction materials and debris from public roadways during construction activities. 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.15 (Visual Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of visual quality alteration impacts of the Project.

IV.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/EIS, 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/EIS, located in Volume 1 of the Final EIR/EIS.

IV.3.1 Air Quality

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

As discussed in Section C.2 (Air Quality) of the EIR/EIS, dust and exhaust generated during construction of the Project will create significant impacts to the segments along the entire Project route located within air basins managed by the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). Daily construction emissions would be expected to exceed the Air District Regional planning thresholds for significance for NOx, PM10, VOC and CO in the SCAB and NOx, PM10, and CO in the MDAB.

Finding. The CPUC finds that Mitigation Measures A-1a to A-1i (see Impact A-1 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 regional emission thresholds resulting in significant and

unavoidable impacts. The use of emission offsets to further mitigate the significant daily construction emissions is not considered feasible, due to lack of availability and prohibitive cost. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. During construction of the Project within the AVAQMD and the SCAQMD, construction emissions will create a short-term, but significant, air quality impact by exceeding the daily NOx, PM10, VOC (SCAB only), and CO thresholds in the SCAB and the MDAB. 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 SCAQMD and AVAQMD regional emission thresholds.

As discussed in Section C.2.13 (Air Quality – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, there is the possibility that a variety of projects will occur at the same time as Project construction. A number of projects were identified in California in both the SCAQMD and 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-1 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 SCAQMD and AVAQMD regional emission thresholds and will be significant and unavoidable.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Pollutants generated from construction of related projects identified in the Final EIR/EIS 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 potentially significant project-related construction impacts. Other cumulative projects would 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) impacts from the Project will remain significant within AVAQMD and SCAQMD 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 C.2.13 (Air Quality – Cumulative Effects) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative air quality impacts of the Project.

ATTACHMENT B

IV.3.2 Biological Resources

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

As discussed in Section C.3.13 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, the Project will have the potential to result in the: temporary or permanent loss of native vegetation communities; temporary damage or permanent loss of oak trees; loss of foraging habitat for wildlife; introduction of non-native and invasive plant species); disturbance of wildlife species through construction activities; and, potential loss of nesting birds due to construction activities scheduled during the breeding season. The implementation of multiple projects within the same area will create a significant cumulative impact on any riparian habitat or other sensitive habitat communities identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by CDFG or USFWS.

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-1a, B-1b, B-2, B-4 B-6 and R-4, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts related to biological resources will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Any additional projects that may directly or indirectly affect riparian or other sensitive habitat communities in the Project area will further reduce natural habitats and communities in and outside of the ANF. Although implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1a (Provide Restoration/Compensation for Impacts to Native Vegetation Communities [chamise chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and riparian, if affected]), B-1b (No Activities will occur in Riparian Conservation Areas), B-2 (Restoration of Coast Live Oak Trees), B-4 (Implement Weed Control Measures), B-6 (Conduct Pre-construction Surveys and Monitoring for Breeding Birds), and R-4 (Permanent Closure and Re-vegetation of Construction Roads) 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. Ongoing land development in the Leona Valley, including the Ritter Ranch residential development, will likely result in adverse impacts to biological resources such as annual grasslands, wetlands, and riparian communities. The loss of habitats, including coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodland, and riparian can be reasonably foreseen as ongoing development continues in the region. 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 C.3.13 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS 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 C.3.13 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIR, construction and operation of the Project will have the potential to result in the loss of: listed plant species; arroyo toads; California red-legged frogs; foraging habitat for listed raptor species; listed riparian bird species; and, coastal California gnatcatchers. Implementation of the Project will also be likely to result in the

electrocution of listed bird species, as well as transmission line collisions by listed bird species. The construction and operation of multiple projects in the Project area will create cumulatively significant impacts, directly and indirectly, on plant and wildlife species list as endangered, threatened or rare. Cumulatively significant adverse impacts may also occur within areas designated as proposed or critical habitat for these species, although the Project itself will not affect proposed or critical habitat.

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-1a, B-1b, B-6, B-7, B-8a, B-8b, B-9, B-13 and B-14, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts related to biological resources will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. The cumulative projects discussed in Section B.5.3 of the EIR/EIS are concentrated near the northern and southern ends of the Project route. Some of these cumulative projects, particularly the large community developments, may be situated in areas which provide habitat relevant to listed species. For example, the Copper Hill and Meadow Peak Housing project would occur in or adjacent to habitat that may support populations of California gnatcatchers and arroyo toads. Continued degradation of native plant communities and riparian habitat in the Santa Clarita Valley from ongoing development will continue to contribute to the decline of listed species or their habitat throughout the region. Although portions of the proposed Project or alternatives that occur in rural areas or NFS lands may be subject to reduced effects due to their more isolated locations, overall the combined list of projects unidentified in Table B-5-1 would result in significant cumulative impacts. The increased construction of above ground distribution lines, sub-stations, and switch yards in rural areas may further increase the potential for impacts from bird electrocution of line collisions. Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1a (Provide Restoration/Compensation for Impacts to Native Vegetation Communities [chamise chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and riparian, if affected]), B-1b (No Activities will occur in Riparian Conservation Areas), B-6 Conduct Pre-construction Surveys and Monitoring for Breeding Birds), B-7 (Conduct Surveys for Listed and Sensitive Plant Species), B-8a (Conduct Focused Surveys for Arroyo Toad), B-8b (Implement Seasonal Restrictions for Road Maintenance, Culvert Replacement, and Grading of New Access and Spur Roads That Occur Within Drainages), B-9 (Conduct Focused Surveys for California Red-legged Frog), B-12 (Conduct Protocol Surveys for California Gnatcatchers), B-13 (Raptor Safety Protection Will be Required on Tower/Conductor [Lines] of NFS Lands), and B-14 (Utilize Collision-reducing Techniques) will reduce Project-specific impacts to a level of less than significant. However, unavoidable cumulative impacts related to either 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 impact to wilderness and recreation to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.3.13 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS 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, USFWS, or USDA Forest Service.

As discussed in Section C.3.13 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIR, the cumulative projects discussed in Section B.5.3 of the EIR/EIS are concentrated near the northern and southern ends of the Project route. Some of these cumulative projects, particularly the large community developments, 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, USFWS, or USDA Forest Service. The Project will have the potential to result in the loss of: special-status plant species; special-status amphibian species; special-status reptile species; aquatic special-status reptile species; burrowing owls; foraging habitat for special-status raptor species; nesting special-status and migratory birds); special-status bat species; American badger; and, special-status rodent species. Additionally, it is likely that the Project will result in the electrocution of special-status bird species, transmission line collisions by special-status bird species, and impacts to Management Indicator Species.

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-1a, B-1b, B-2, B-6, B-7, B-8a, B-8b, B-13, B-14, B-16, B-19, B-25, B-26, A-1a, and G-2, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts biological resources will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR/EIS.

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 NFS lands 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, USFWS, or USDA Forest Service have the potential to combine with similar impacts for other projects. Implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1a (Provide Restoration/Compensation for Impacts to Native Vegetation Communities [chamise chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and riparian, if affected]), B-1b (No Activities will occur in Riparian Conservation Areas), B-2 (Restoration of Coast Live Oak Trees), B-6 (Pre-construction Surveys and Monitoring for Breeding Birds), B-7 (Conduct Surveys for Listed and Sensitive Plant Species), B-8a (Conduct Focused Surveys for Arroyo Toad), B-8b (Implement Seasonal Restrictions for Road Maintenance, Culvert Replacement, and Grading of New Access and Spur Roads That Occur Within Drainages), B-13 (Raptor Safety Protection Will be Required on Tower/Conductor [Lines] of NFS Lands), B-14 (Utilize Collision-reducing Techniques), B-16 (Conduct Pre-construction Surveys for Sensitive Amphibians and Reptiles), B-19 (Relocate Individual Burrowing Owls During the Non-Breeding Season), B-25 (Passively Relocate American Badgers During the Non-breeding Season), B-26 (Avoid Burrow Areas), A-1a (Implement Construction Fugitive Dust Control Plan), and G-2 (Minimization of Soil Erosion), will reduce Project-specific impacts to a less-than-significant level. However, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts biological resources are expected to occur as the result of implementation of the projects listed in Table B.5-1 of the EIR/EIS, and they are considered significant and unavoidable.

Reference. Section C.3.13 (Biological Resources – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts related to biological resources.

IV.3.3 Cultural Resources

There are no significant and unavoidable impacts to Cultural Resources associated with the Project.

IV.3.4 Geology, Soils, and Paleontology

There are no significant and unavoidable impacts to Geology, Soils, or Paleontology associated with the Project.

IV.3.5 Public Health and Safety

Cumulative project activities would cause radio or television interference along the Project route.

As discussed in Section C.6.13 (Public Health and Safety – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, the Project may cause radio or television interference (Impact PH-5). If the cumulative projects in the vicinity of the Project were to cause radio or television interference, particularly to sensitive receptors such as businesses and schools, the cumulative effect of Impact PH-5 will be significant and unavoidable. Given the rapid and widespread development in the Project area, it is possible that a cumulative project could occur within the cumulative analysis area for the Project and could introduce radio or television interference, as with the Project. Therefore, Impact PH-5 will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. The cumulative public health impacts from radio or television interference will be substantially greater than those that will occur with the Project alone and they will be significant. For example, implementation of this Project may combine with radio and television interference effects of other development projects within one mile of the Project route and will cumulatively result in increased interference, resulting in significant, unavoidable cumulative public health impacts. Even with implementation of Mitigation Measures PH-5a and PH-5b, which may be applied to cumulative projects, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts from radio or television interference may occur for operation of the Project. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant public health impact to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.6.13 (Public Health and Safety – Cumulative effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the public health impacts of the Project.

IV.3.6 Forest Management Activities

Impact F-9: Project operation would adversely affect community safety

As outlined in Section C.7.7 (Forest Management Activities – Alternative 2: Antelope-Pardee East Mid-Slope) of the EIR/EIS, if a wildfire ignites mid-slope on Del Surge Ridge and subsequently burns to the east due to westerly winds, there will be no ground suppression tactic between the mid-slope fire and structures located in Bouquet Canyon. Because portions of the Project ROW are less than half a mile from Bouquet Canyon Road, if a fire occurs mid-slope and burns to the east, significant adverse impacts to the cabins, homes, and other facilities located within Bouquet Canyon will occur.

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 F-2, F-3, F-6, F-8a and F-8b, significant unavoidable impacts related to Impact F-9 will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations, including those

considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Impacts related to community safety in Bouquet Canyon are significant because the Project will introduce a permanent potential for fires to ignite mid-slope on Del Surge Ridge that cannot be accessed by ground suppression firefighting personnel or tactics. Implementation of Mitigation Measures F-2, F-3, F-6, F-8a, and F-8b will reduce impacts related to wildfire safety in the community of Bouquet Canyon. However, there are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant impacts of the Project from Impact F-9 to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the operational impacts of the Project on community safety.

Cumulative project activities could start a wildfire.

As discussed in Section C.7.13 (Forest Management Activities – Cumulative Effects), construction and operation of many of the cumulative projects listed in Table B.5-1 of the EIR/EIS will have the potential to start wildfires. Growing populations within the communities located in the Project area will additionally increase recreational uses in the ANF, which will, in turn, increase the likelihood of starting wildfires. For both recreational uses within the ANF, and reasonably foreseeable future development outside of the ANF, the northern and southern ends of the Project route will be subject to the greatest increased risk of wildfires.

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 F-1 and F-2, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts related to wildfires will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Continued development and associated increases in recreational uses within the Project area will lead to future wildfires. As noted in Section C.7 (Forest Management Activities) of the EIR/EIS, over 85 percent of fires started in the ANF between 1970 and 1999 were caused by human activity. Considering all of the cumulative projects outlined in Section B.5.3 of the EIR/EIS, including the Project, the cumulative risk of wildfire starts in the Project area by recreational users, future community developments, existing transmission lines and other special uses will continue to increase. Because wildfires in the Project area can be started by any number activities and affect numerous communities within northern Los Angeles County, no feasible or reasonable mitigation has been identified that will reduce impacts related to wildfire starts to a level of less than significant. Cumulative impacts will be significant and unavoidable.

Reference. Section C.7.13 (Forest Management Activities – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts related to fire prevention, suppression and control.

Cumulative project activities could adversely affect firefighter safety.

As discussed in Section C.7.13 (Forest Management Activities – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, increased community development in the Project area, and potential decreases in ANF firefighter staffing, will have a significant cumulative adverse effect on firefighter safety. With or without Project implementation, the communities in and surrounding the ANF will be at risk due to increased wildfire

potential; increased wildfire potential will also increase safety risks for firefighting forces attempting to suppress wildfires. Firefighter safety will vary in response to where a specific fire occurs, the breadth and intensity of the fire, and predominant weather patterns at the time of the fire. However, overall cumulative impacts associated with firefighter safety will likely be significant and unavoidable.

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 F-1, F-6, F-8a and F-8b, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts related to firefighter safety will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. As noted above, continued development and associated increases in recreational uses within the Project area will lead to increases in wildfire potential. Additionally, possible reductions in ANF firefighting personnel may increase safety risks to the remaining ANF firefighting force due to increased exposure to firefighting activities. Although implementation of Mitigation Measures F-1, F-6, and F-8a and F-8b will minimize Project-specific impacts related to firefighter safety, cumulative impacts related to all of the reasonably foreseeable future projects outlined in Section B.5.3 of the EIR/EIS cannot be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.7.13 (Forest Management Activities – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts related to fire prevention, suppression and control.

Cumulative project activities could adversely affect community safety.

As discussed in Section C.7.13 (Forest Management Activities – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, the communities within and surrounding the ANF are at risk for wildfires, and this risk will increase in response to continued population growth and development. Increased wildfire risks will inherently affect community safety. Although the wildfire safety of a given community is dependent on where the fire starts, prevailing weather patterns at the time the fire occurs, the accessibility of the community to emergency response services, and other factors, cumulative impacts will likely be significant and unavoidable.

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 F-6, F-8a and F-8b, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts related to community safety will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Continued development in the Project area will increase the potential for wildfires, and continued population growth will place greater numbers of people at risk from these fires. Even with implementation of Mitigation Measures F-6, F-8a, and F-8b, Project-related impacts related to community safety in the area of Bouquet Canyon will be significant and unavoidable. When combining the cumulative projects discussed in Section B.5.3 of the EIR/EIS, additional impacts to community safety from the overall increased wildfire risks will also occur. Due to the geographic breadth of the communities affected, as well as the number of variables associated with the damage potential of a specific wildfire event, no feasible or reasonable mitigation measures have been identified that will reduce impacts related to community safety to a level of less than significant. Cumulative impacts will be significant and unavoidable.

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Reference. Section C.7.13 (Forest Management Activities – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts related to fire prevention, suppression and control.

IV.3.7 Hydrology and Water Quality

Cumulative project activities could impact hydrology and water quality along the Project route.

As discussed in Section C.8.13 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future residential projects discussed in the EIR/EIS range in size from several family units, to hundreds or even thousands of units, to entire community developments, including parks, schools, stores, and roadways. These projects, among others, have the potential to affect hydrology and water quality through activities related to construction and/or operation and maintenance. Multiple projects are situated along the tributaries to the Santa Clara River, including Haskell Canyon Creek and Bouquet Canyon Creek, in Santa Clarita. Multiple projects are also situated over the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin and the Santa Clara Valley East Groundwater Basin.

The Project would have seven distinct impacts to hydrology and water quality. If at least one other ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future project identified in the EIR/EIS is located within close proximity and is constructed and/or operated at the same time of construction and operation activities of the Project, impacts from that project may combine with those of the Project to result in cumulative impacts. Significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts that may result include: degradation of water quality from soil erosion, accidental releases of hazardous materials during construction or operation, disturbance of groundwater, increased runoff, and creating flood or mudflow hazards.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated in the Project to address significant cumulative effects on the environment. However, even with implementation of Mitigation Measures H-1a through H-1f (see Impact H-1 above), PH-1a through PH-1d (see Impact PH-1 above), H-4 (see Impact H-4 above), H-5 (see Impact H-5 above), and H-7 (see Impact H-7 above), significant unavoidable cumulative impacts to hydrology and water quality will occur for construction and operation of the Project for Impacts H-1, H-2, and H-4 through H-8. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. If cumulative projects within close proximity of the Project are constructed at the same time as the Project, the resulting cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts will be incrementally greater than those that will occur with the Project alone. Incremental increases may be "cumulatively considerable" and may combine with similar impacts of other identified projects in a substantial way, resulting in significant, unavoidable cumulative 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 C.8.13 (Hydrology and Water Quality – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts of the Project.

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IV.3.8 Land Use and Public Recreation

Unlike the alignment originally proposed by SCE, the adopted Project will avoid the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch, and will therefore not result in long-term disruption of existing commercial land uses (see Impact L-4 in Section IV.1 above).Impact L-3: Operation of the Project would cause long-term disruption of existing residential land uses.

As discussed in Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS, the northern segment of the Project ROW will require the expansion of an existing transmission line ROW from 50 feet to 180 feet. While existing land uses (residential and agriculture) within the expanded ROW area will not be precluded, future uses of the easement which will be required for the expanded ROW will be restricted. Some restrictions on existing land uses within the existing ROW may also occur due to increases in the height and width of the Project's towers. The Project's restrictions and preclusions on current and future land uses on privately held property is considered a significant and unavoidable impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Impact L-3 is significant because construction and operation of the Project will restrict the existing land uses associated with some privately held properties, and permanently preclude the development of other land uses associated with these properties. There are no known feasible mitigations or alternatives to reduce the effects of restricting and precluding existing and future land uses within the Project's expanded ROW area to a level of less than significant. Impacts will be significant and unavoidable.

Reference. Section C.9 (Land Use and Public Recreation) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the operational impacts of the Project on land use and recreation.

Cumulative project activities could preclude a permitted use or create a long-term disturbance to a particular land use.

As discussed in Section C.9.13 (Land Use and Public Recreation – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, construction of the Project will temporarily disrupt existing residential and commercial land uses (Impact L-1), primarily due to construction-related increases in traffic volumes, noise levels, and air quality emissions. Additionally, operation of the Project will cause permanent preclusions of, or restrictions on, existing and futures land uses on some privately held property (Impact L-3). At a cumulative project level, these disturbances to, preclusions of, or restrictions on existing and future land uses and development will be significant and unavoidable.

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 N-1a, N-1b and N-1c, identified above for Impact N-1, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts related to the temporary and permanent preclusion or disruption of land uses will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. As identified in the discussion for Impact L-1, above, Mitigation Measures N-1a, N-1b, and N-1c 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 B.5-1 of the EIR/EIS, if they occur at the same time as the Project, will also disturb residential and commercial uses. These projects include the Meadow Peak Project, Copper Hill Project, North Park, and Boston Scientific, as well as the following residential developments: TR 46908, TR 46183, TR 47657, TR 51789, TR 54073, and TR 35783. The combined construction effects of multiple projects will likely be cumulatively significant and unavoidable at various times during construction.

Impacts related to permanent disruptions of, or restriction on, existing and future agricultural and residential uses will additionally occur and, as addressed under Impact L-3, above, will be significant and unavoidable at a Project level, particularly within the Project's North Area. Other proposed projects (e.g., the Segment 2: Antelope-Vincent 500-kV Transmission Line, and Segment 3: Antelope-Tehachapi Transmission Line) will also traverse existing residential and agricultural uses, and will thus result in similar land use preclusions. The combined operational effects to residential and commercial land uses from multiple projects will be cumulatively significant. No mitigation measures have been identified that will reduce cumulative impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.9.13 (Land Use and Public Recreation – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts related to land use and recreation.

Cumulative project activities could encroach upon or permanently preclude the use of Farmland.

As discussed in Section C.9.13 (Land Use and Public Recreation – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, construction of the Project will temporarily encroach on existing Farmland (Impact L-5) due to expansion of the existing transmission line ROW located in the Project's North Area. Additionally, expansion of the ROW in this area will permanently preclude or restrict some agricultural activities on currently active Farmland and other agricultural fields in the future (Impact L-6).

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 L-5, and L-6, identified above for Impacts L-5 and L-6, significant unavoidable cumulative impacts related to both the temporary encroachment on, and permanent conversion of, Farmland will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. As noted under the discussion of Impact L-5, above, Mitigation Measure L-5 will reduce short-term Project-related impacts associated with the encroachment on Farmland to a level of less than significant. Similarly, Project-related impacts associated with the permanent conversion of Farmland (Impact L-6) can be mitigated to a level of less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measure L-6. However, other proposed projects (e.g., the Segment 2: Antelope-Vincent 500-kV Transmission Line, and Segment 3: Antelope-Tehachapi Transmission Line) will also traverse active agricultural areas, and are also expected to result in temporary and permanent impacts to Farmland. The combined effects to Farmlands from the construction and operation of multiple projects may be cumulatively significant. No feasible mitigation measures or alternatives have been identified that will reduce cumulative impacts to Farmlands to a level of less than significant.

Reference. Section C.9.13 (Land Use and Public Recreation – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts related to land use and recreation.

Cumulative project activities could contribute to the long-term loss or degradation of recreational trails.

As discussed in Section C.9.13 (Land Use and Public Recreation – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, the location of the Project ROW will not create long-term impacts to recreational trails. Although a new utility corridor will cross the PCT, an existing transmission line will be removed. Thus, the total number of industrial uses crossing recreational trails and the PCT within the ANF will not change. While no other proposed projects have been identified within five miles of the Project ROW that will degrade existing recreational facilities, existing development on NFS lands has already contributed to the long-term loss and degradation of recreational resources within the ANF.

Finding. The CPUC finds that there are no changes or alterations that can be incorporated into the Project to address significant cumulative effects on the environment that are related to the long-term loss or degradation of recreational trails. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. The establishment of existing utility corridors (e.g., Tejon Pass, Old Ridge Route, Gorge Ranaldi, and Midway Vincent), communication sites, powerhouses, reservoirs, and mining sites have contributed to the long-term loss or degradation of recreational resources within the ANF. As such, the existing cumulative effects of past development projects on NFS lands is considered significant. Although implementation of the Project will not create any new, long-term impacts to recreation trails, impacts to recreational resources resulting from operation of the Project, in conjunction with past projects, is considered to be a significant and unavoidable impact. No feasible mitigation measures or alternatives have been identified that will reduce cumulatively significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Reference. Section C.9.13 (Land Use and Recreation – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts related to land use and recreation.

IV.3.9 Noise

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

As discussed in Section C.10 (Noise) of the EIR/EIS, noise generated by both on-site and mobile construction activities, including the use of helicopters, will result in violations of the local noise standards thereby temporarily disrupt existing sensitive receptors. The construction of the Project will bring traffic and construction noise from heavy construction equipment on temporary and permanent access roads, moving building materials to the tower sites and returning to construction staging areas. This noise will have the potential to impact residences, recreational land uses (parks, wilderness areas), public facilities (schools, memorial parks), and retail and commercial businesses.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated in the Project to address significant noise increases produced by the Project that will violate local noise standards. Mitigation Measures N-1a through N-1c (identified in the discussion of Impact N-7 above) will help to reduce violations of local noise standards; however, impacts from mobile construction equipment will continue to violate local standards and result in a significant unavoidable impact. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

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Rationale for Finding. Construction noise at closer distances to sensitive receptors, which will occur in several areas along the Project route, will violate the Los Angeles County noise standards as well as the City of Santa Clarita's nighttime construction restrictions. Mitigation Measures N-1a through N-1c (identified in the discussion of Impact N-7 above) will reduce the construction noise nuisance impacts to the extent feasible; however, noise impacts from mobile equipment, especially from helicopters would remain significant.

Reference. Section C.10 (Noise) provides a complete assessment of the Project's construction noise impacts and associated violations of the Los Angeles County noise standard.

Impact N-4: Noise level increases related to routine inspection and maintenance would violate local standards.

As discussed in Section C.10 (Noise) of the EIR/EIS, routine inspection and maintenance of the transmission line will be accomplished by either ground access or by helicopter. These activities will occur on average once a year and will cause short-term or intermittent increases in noise along the inspection route or place of maintenance that will violate local noise standards and/or ordinances resulting in significant and unavoidable impacts.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Routine inspection and maintenance activities will result in short-term or intermittent increases in noise along the inspection route or place of maintenance that will, depending on the equipment in use, be in excess of established local standards and/or ordinances resulting in significant and unavoidable impacts. There are no feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant impact to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.10 (Noise) provides a complete assessment of the noise impacts associated with routine inspection and maintenance.

Impact N-8: Temporary increases in ambient noise levels would disturb recreational users within Angeles National Forest.

As discussed in Section C.10 (Noise) of the EIR/EIS, construction of the Project within the ANF would result in substantial temporary increases in ambient noise levels, which will disturb recreational users.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated in the Project to address significant temporary increases in ambient noise levels that will disturb recreational users within ANF, including implementation of Mitigation Measures N-1b (identified in the discussion of Impact N-7 above) and R-1a (identified in the discussion of Impact R-1 above). While these mitigation measures will help to inform the public of construction activities, the Project will continue to result in significant temporary noise levels during construction that will disturb recreational users. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. While Mitigation Measures N-1b and R-1a will help to inform the public of construction activities and provide for coordination between SCE and the authorized officers of the various recreational areas in the project area (i.e., ANF, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, Mountainview Park, and Ritter Ranch), the Project will result in significant temporary noise levels during construction that will disturb recreational users which are unavoidable. There are no feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant impact to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.10 (Noise) provides a complete assessment of the construction noise impacts on recreational users within the ANF.

Cumulative construction noise levels would violate local standards.

As discussed in Section C.10.13 (Noise – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, construction activities associated with the Project will result in intermittent temporary violations of Santa Clarita and County of Los Angeles noise ordinances as a result of mobile construction equipment. Similarly, construction activities associated with other projects located in close proximity to the Project, such as the Meadow Peak Project, North Park, and other residential developments, that potentially occur at the same time as the Project could also violate local standards. The combined effect of construction noise could be cumulatively significant at various times during construction. Mitigation Measures N-1a through N-1c (identified in the discussion of Impact N-7 above) will reduce the potential to violate the local noise standards; however, noise impacts from mobile construction equipment will remain cumulatively significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. From a cumulative standpoint, the Project will have less potential to result in cumulatively considerable noise impacts in the Santa Clarita area as only one potentially cumulative project (North Park residential development) has been identified in the vicinity of the Project route. When combined with this other cumulative project, which could potentially be constructed at the same time as the Project, construction noise will be cumulatively significant. Mitigation Measures N-1a through N-1c (identified in the discussion of Impact N-7 above) will reduce the potential to violate the local noise standards; however, noise impacts from mobile construction equipment will remain cumulatively significant. A potential additional mitigation measure to reduce cumulative noise impacts would be to coordinate with Los Angeles County, the Cities of Lancaster and Santa Clarita, as well as the ANF to stagger construction schedules to the extent feasible for construction projects occurring within 600 feet of the Project construction areas. While this mitigation measure would reduce the potential for cumulative increases in ambient noise levels during construction, it would result in potentially longer periods of construction noise nuisance, which may in effect be considered by the communities to be worse than higher noise levels over a shorter duration. Therefore, this mitigation measure for cumulative noise impacts is not recommended.

Reference. Section C.10.13 (Noise – Cumulative Effects) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative noise impacts of the Project.

ATTACHMENT B

Cumulative operational noise levels would violate Los Angeles County noise standards.

As discussed in Section C.10.13 (Noise – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, the operational noise generated by the Project alone would not exceed County of Los Angeles noise standards except in conditions such as rain and fog. However, weather conditions could combine with this impact and other activities such as roadway noise and other development projects to exceed regulatory thresholds. The combined effect of operational corona noise from the Project combined with other noise sources located within close proximity to the proposed transmission line and residences will be cumulatively significant and unavoidable.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D.(Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Operational noise from the Project combined with other activities in the project area will result in violations of the Los Angeles County noise standards. There are no feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant cumulative operational noise impacts to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.10.13 (Noise – Cumulative Effects) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative noise impacts of the Project.

Cumulative temporary increases in ambient noise levels would severely disrupt operations at the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch.

As discussed in Section C.10.13 (Noise – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, there is a possibility that temporary construction noise will still disrupt ranch operations due to the sensitive nature of motion picture filming. Mitigation Measures N-1a through N-1c and N-7 (identified in the discussion of Impact N-7 above) will reduce construction noise impacts to the ranch associated with the Project to a less-than-significant level. Similar measures could be employed for other construction projects in the area. However, other proposed development projects in the vicinity of the ranch, if constructed concurrently with the Project, would result in cumulatively significant impacts to operations at the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch. Therefore, temporary increases in ambient noise levels will occur despite these measures, resulting in significant and avoidable impacts to operations of the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Operational noise from the Project combined with other activities in the project area will combine resulting in violations of the Los Angeles County noise standards. There are no feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant cumulative operational noise impacts to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.10.13 (Noise – Cumulative Effects) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative noise impacts of the Project on the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch.

IV.3.10 Public Services

Cumulative project activities could increase demands on fire and police protection

As discussed in Section C.11.13 (Public Services – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, temporary construction activities associated with the Project, in conjunction with construction of the cumulative projects described in Table B.5-1 of the EIR/EIS will result in an increase for potential fire hazards, and will likely increase the need for fire and police services due to accidents caused by construction personnel or equipment. While it is not expected that operation of energy and transportation projects listed in Table B.5-1 of the EIR/EIS will substantially increase the need for fire and police services, the large number of residential development projects described in Table B.5-1 of the EIR/EIS will contribute to increased needs for fire and police services. Additionally, because of the sensitive nature of wildland resources within NFS lands, and the fire history of the ANF, demands on fire protection services during Project construction, when combined with the cumulative projects identified in Section B.3 of the EIR/EIS will significantly contribute to the overall demand for fire services of the USDA Forest Service.

Once operational, Project maintenance activities will be necessary to reduce the potential for the transmission line to come in contact with vegetation and other potentially combustible materials. These Project-specific activities, as mitigated, will minimize impacts related demands placed on fire and police protection services on NFS Lands. However, the residential, commercial, and industrial projects listed in Table B.5-1 of the EIR/EIS will also require fire and police protection services, and these demands will increase over time as the number of users of ANF lands increases, thereby resulting in significant cumulative operational impacts.

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 F-1, F-2 (see Impacts F-1 and F-2 above), and Mitigation Measure P-1 (see Impact P-1 above), significant unavoidable cumulative impacts related to public services will occur. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Implementation of Mitigation Measures F-1, F-2, and P-1 will reduce Project-specific impacts associated with emergency response services to a level of less than significant, during both construction and operation. However, the cumulative residential, commercial, and industrial projects outlined in Table B.5-1 of the EIR/EIS, in conjunction with both the high fire hazard potential of affected ANF lands and anticipated increases in the public's recreational use of these lands, will strain the existing capacities of emergency service providers in the Project area during construction, and ultimately contribute negatively to the adequacy of these services in the future. Consequently, significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts during Project construction and operation will occur.

Reference. Sections C.11.13 (Public Services – Cumulative Effects) and C.7.13 (Forest Management Activities – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provide a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts associated with emergency response services.

IV.3.11 Socioeconomics

There are no significant and unavoidable impacts to Socioeconomics associated with the Project.

ATTACHMENT B

IV.3.12 Traffic and Transportation

Cumulative project activities would result in closure of roads to through traffic or reduction of travel lanes resulting in substantial congestion.

As discussed in Section C.13.13 (Traffic and Transportation – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, there are currently eight development projects scheduled within one-half mile of the Project route, two of which are currently under construction and will likely be at least partially occupied when construction of the Project begins. The Santa Clarita area along the Project route has experienced vast residential development in recent years that has cumulatively altered traffic congestion in the area. It is anticipated that roadways in the Santa Clarita area will continue to experience increased levels of traffic congestion as additional future residential developments are approved and implemented.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated in the Project to address significant cumulative effects on the environment. However, even with implementation of Mitigation Measures T-1a and T-1b (see Impact T-1 above), significant unavoidable cumulative traffic impacts will occur for construction of the Project with regard to congestion from construction activities (Impact T-1). The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Traffic associated with these future residential developments will contribute to congestion on area roadways. Temporary roadway congestion resulting construction-related traffic and from lane closures associated with construction of the Project will combine with congestion resulting from past, present and future residential development to create a temporary cumulative significant impact There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant traffic impacts to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.13.13 (Traffic and Transportation – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of Project construction traffic impacts.

Cumulative project activities would temporarily interfere with emergency response.

As discussed in Section C.13.13 (Traffic and Transportation – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, the Santa Clarita area along the Project route has experienced vast residential development in recent years that has cumulatively altered traffic congestion in the area. It is anticipated that if one or more future projects planned in the Santa Clarita area within one-half mile of the Project required road or lane closures on the same days as the Project will require road and/or lane closures, cumulatively significant impacts will occur.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated in the Project to address significant cumulative effects on the environment. However, even with implementation of Mitigation Measure T-1a (see Impact T-1 above), which requires the preparation of construction traffic control plans, significant unavoidable cumulative traffic impacts will occur during construction of the Project with regard to interference with emergency response (Impact T-3). The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Traffic associated with future residential developments will contribute to congestion on area roadways. If one or more future projects planned in the Santa Clarita area within one-half

mile of the Project required road or lane closures on the same days as the Project will require road and/or lane closures, cumulatively significant impacts will occur. There are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the significant traffic impacts related to interference with emergency response to a level that will be less than significant.

Reference. Section C.13 (Transportation and Traffic) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of Project construction traffic impacts.

IV.3.13 Utilities and Service Systems

Cumulative construction and operational utility and service system demands would change the ability of water utilities and service system facilities to accommodate local demands.

As discussed in Section C.14.13 (Utilities and Service Systems – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, water supplies for the region are limited and growth will put substantial strain on the ability of water agencies to provide water to the local jurisdictions. Consequently, while the incremental contribution of the Project to water utilities will not be significant, the combination of the Project along with other past, ongoing and proposed projects in the area is considered a cumulatively significant impact to water supply infrastructure and the provision of water.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Water supplies for the region are limited and any growth will put substantial strain on the ability of water agencies to provide water to the local jurisdictions. As such, water use during Project construction when combined with other ongoing and proposed projects in the area will result in a cumulatively significant and unavoidable impact. As the incremental contribution of the Project to this impact will not be significant and as this impact affects the entire northern Los Angeles County, no reasonable mitigation is feasible.

Reference. Section C.14.13 (Utilities and Service Systems – Cumulative Effects) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts of the Project on water utilities.

Cumulative construction and operational utility and service system demands would change the ability of solid waste utilities and service system facilities to accommodate local demands.

As discussed in Section C.14.13 (Utilities and Service Systems – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, the ongoing and proposed residential, commercial, and industrial projects in the project area are anticipated to substantially increase demands on local waste facilities. Planning documents for the jurisdictions in the region have anticipated the growth being implemented in these projects, but acknowledge that there is a short supply of land and inadequate locations for development of solid waste facilities that cannot readily meet the demands of projected growth. Consequently, while the incremental contribution of the Project to solid waste utilities will not be significant, the combined effect of the Project combined with the other projects on solid waste facilities will be cumulatively significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the

Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Landfill capacities in the region are limited and any growth will put substantial strain on landfill capacities. As such, waste generated during Project construction when combined with other ongoing and proposed projects in the area will result in a cumulatively significant and unavoidable impact. While Mitigation Measure U-2 (see Impact U-2 above) will reduce the solid waste generation impacts for the Project, the Project's incremental contribution to the capacities of solid waste utilities and infrastructure will be cumulatively significant. As the incremental contribution of the Project to this impact will not be significant and as this impact affects the entire northern Los Angeles County, no additional reasonable mitigation is feasible.

Reference. Section C.14.13 (Utilities and Service Systems – Cumulative Effects) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts of the Project on solid waste utilities.

Cumulative construction and operational utility and service system demands would change the ability of stormwater and wastewater utilities and service system facilities to accommodate local demands.

As discussed in Section C.14.13 (Utilities and Service Systems – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, the ongoing residential, commercial, and industrial projects in the project area are anticipated to substantially increase demands on stormwater and wastewater facilities. Planning documents for the jurisdictions affected recognize that stormwater and wastewater facilities will need to be expanded to accommodate this growth. While the incremental contribution of the Project to stormwater and wastewater utilities will not be significant, the combined effect of all the cumulative projects will place substantial demands on existing stormwater and wastewater infrastructure systems serving the area, leading to a cumulatively significant impact.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Stormwater and wastewater utilities in the region are limited and any growth will put substantial strain on the capacities of these facilities. As such, stormwater and wastewater generated during Project construction when combined with other ongoing and proposed projects in the area will result in a cumulatively significant and unavoidable impact. As the incremental contribution of the Project to this impact will not be significant and as this impact affects the entire northern Los Angeles County, no additional reasonable mitigation is feasible.

Reference. Section C.14.13 (Utilities and Service Systems – Cumulative Effects) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts of the Project on stormwater and wastewater utilities.

Cumulative construction and operational water supply demands would require new or expanded water entitlements or resources.

As discussed in Section C.14.13 (Utilities and Service Systems – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS, given the rapid pace of past, present, and future growth in the project area, the combined need for new and/or expanded water entitlements and resources will require new or expanded water entitlements and resources. While the incremental contribution of the Project to water supply demands will not be

significant, the acquisition and expansion of water entitlements and resources for the growing jurisdictions will be considered cumulatively significant.

Finding. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. Water supply demands in the region are limited and any growth will put substantial strain on water suppliers. As such, water required for Project construction and operations when combined with other ongoing and proposed projects in the area will result in a cumulatively significant and unavoidable impact. As the incremental contribution of the Project to this impact will not be significant and as this impact affects the entire northern Los Angeles County, no additional reasonable mitigation is feasible.

Reference. Section C.14.13 (Utilities and Service Systems – Cumulative Effects) provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts of the Project on water suppliers.

IV.3.14 Visual Resources

Impacts V-3, V-10, V-11, V-12, V-13, V-14, and V-18 (Off NFS lands): Project infrastructure would alter the visual quality of landscape views as seen from several KOPs on non-Forest Service lands.

As discussed in Section C.15.5 of the EIR/EIS for Impacts V-3, V-10, V-11, V-12, V-13, and V-14, and Section C.15.9 (Alternative 4: Antelope-Pardee Re-Rerouting of New ROW along Haskell Canyon) for Impact V-18, replacement of the existing 66-kV subtransmission line with the Project's taller and wider towers will increase the degree of structure prominence compared to the existing subtransmission line which traverses the landscape. Visual contrast of the larger structures will range from moderate to high in a landscape dominated by horizontal to rolling natural landforms. APMs VIS-1 and VIS-2 have been incorporated into the Project to minimize views of construction waste from public roads and to place towers at least 300 feet away from the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated in the Project to address significant effects on the environment. However, even with implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a through V-1e, significant unavoidable impacts to sensitive receptors will occur as described above. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. The overall visual change at these locations will be moderate to high in the context of the existing landscape's overall moderate-to-high visual sensitivity. Even with implementation of the above mitigation measures, the taller and wider lattice steel towers, access roads, and expanded ROW will adversely affect views from various scenic vistas, residences, public roads, and sensitive receptors, resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact. 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 C.15 (Visual Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of visual quality alteration impacts of the Project.

ATTACHMENT B

Impacts V-3, V-4, V-6, and V-7 (On NFS lands): Project infrastructure would alter the visual quality of landscape views from several KOPs on Forest Service Lands.

As discussed in Section C.15.7 (Alternative 2: Antelope-Pardee East Mid-Slope) of the EIR/EIS, replacement of the existing 66-kV subtransmission line with the Project's taller and wider towers will increase the degree of structure prominence compared to the existing subtransmission line which traverses the landscape. Visual contrast of the larger structures will result in visual conditions that are below the Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) defined in the Forest Plan. APMs VIS-1 and VIS-2 have been incorporated to the Project to minimize views of construction waste from public roads and to place towers at least 300 feet away from the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated in the Project to address significant effects on the environment. However, even with implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a and V-1e (see Impact V-1 above), V-3a through V-3c, V-4a through V-4c, B-1a and B-1b (see Impact B-1 above), and R-4 (see Impact R-4 above), significant unavoidable impacts to sensitive receptors will occur as described above. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

V-3a **Remove Existing Foundations, Rehabilitate, and Re-Vegetate Tower Sites.** Existing foundations shall be completely removed from NFS lands and shall be disposed of properly. All ground disturbances from the removal of the 66-kV line from NFS lands shall be restored to a near natural condition. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC or Forest Service, as appropriate, to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE shall include these areas in the Restoration and Revegetation Plan from Mitigation Measure B-1a (Provide Restoration/Compensation for Impacts to Native Vegetation Communities) and include appropriate erosion control and revegetation measures.

V-3b **Remove, Rehabilitate, and Re-Vegetate Crane Pads.** All crane pads ("benching") on NFS lands shall be rehabilitated to a near natural condition after the construction is complete. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC or Forest Service, as appropriate, to ensure that the objectives of this measure are achieved. SCE shall include these areas in the Restoration and Revegetation Plan from Mitigation Measure B-1a (Provide Restoration/Compensation for Impacts to Native Vegetation Communities) and include appropriate erosion control and revegetation measures.

V-3c **Avoid Locating New Roads in Bedrock.** New access and spur road locations shall be designed to avoid bedrock cuts. All road cuts shall be located in soil material. Road construction designs shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval, and roads involving NFS lands shall be submitted to the Forest Engineer for review and approval, at least 180 days prior to the start of construction.

V-4a **Construct, Operate, and Maintain with Helicopters.** In the locations designated by the CPUC and Forest Service, SCE and its contractors shall remove existing 66-kV towers and conductors with helicopters, and shall construct the Project using helicopters to place the 500-kV structures and conductors. To minimize the visual impacts of road construction, SCE and its contractors shall access structures by walking or helicopter only, for construction, operation, and maintenance, in designated locations. SCE shall consult with the visual specialist designated by the CPUC or Forest Service, as appropriate, to ensure that the objectives of this measure are

achieved. SCE shall submit plans and construction drawings for helicopter staging areas, access roads and spur roads to helicopter staging areas, and helicopter-pads and helispots, demonstrating compliance with this measure, to the CPUC and Forest Service for review and approval at least 120 days prior to the start of construction.

V-4b Dispose of Cleared Vegetation Off Site. For areas where cleared vegetation will be visible from sensitive viewing locations, SCE and its Contractors shall dispose of cleared vegetation and woody material off-site and in a manner that is not visually evident and does not create visual contrasts. SCE and its Contractors shall submit a vegetation removal and disposal plan, demonstrating compliance with this measure, to the CPUC and Forest Service for review and approval at least 120 days prior to the start of construction.

V-4c Dispose of Excavated Materials Off Site. For areas where excavated materials will be visible from sensitive viewing locations, SCE and its Contractors shall dispose of excavated materials (soil, rocks, concrete, and reinforcing steel) off-site in disposal areas off NFS-lands and at locations that do not create visual contrasts. These sites shall be pre-approved by the CPUC and Forest Service and any other applicable State, county, or city agencies. SCE and its Contractors shall submit an Excavation Plan, demonstrating compliance with this measure, to the CPUC and Forest Service for review and approval at least 120 days prior to the start of construction.

Rationale for Finding. The overall visual change will be below the SIOs defined in the Forest Plan, resulting in a significant visual impact. The taller and wider lattice steel towers, access roads, and new and expanded ROW will adversely affect the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, recreation areas, and scenic vistas, and will substantially degrade the existing visual character of NFS lands. Even with implementation of the above mitigation measures, the SIOs achieved will be below those defined in the Forest Plan, resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact. 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 C.15 (Visual Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of visual quality alteration impacts of the Project.

Impact V-15: The temporary visibility of construction activities and equipment involved with the Project would alter the visual quality of landscape views as seen from various vantage points throughout the Project area.

As discussed in Section C.15.5 of the EIR/EIS, construction vehicles, heavy equipment, helicopters, Project components, and workers will be visible during site clearing, grading, substation expansion and construction, structure erection, conductor stringing, cable placement, and site/ROW clean-up and restoration. Construction equipment and activities will be seen by various viewers in close proximity to the sites and utility corridor including adjacent and nearby residents, recreationists on trails and roads, motorists, and pedestrians.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated in the Project to address significant effects on the environment. However, even with implementation of the Mitigation Measures V-15a through V-15c, temporary significant unavoidable impacts will occur at various viewpoints throughout the project area. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

V-15a Storage and Site Cleanup (Miles 0.0 to 25.6). The Applicant (SCE) shall keep construction-related activity clean and inconspicuous by storing building materials and equipment within the proposed construction staging areas or generally away from public view and shall remove construction debris promptly at regular intervals.

V-15b Recontouring and Restoration (Miles 0 to 25.6). The Applicant (SCE) shall prepare and present to the CPUC, Forest Service (related to NFS lands), and other affected agencies a re-contouring and restoration plan at least 60 days prior to start of construction. The Applicant (SCE) shall re-contour and restore all disturbed or graded areas at the transmission line tower structures, pulling sites, staging areas, and substation expansion areas to provide a natural-appearing landform upon completion of construction.

V-15c Revegetation (Miles 0 to 25.6). The Applicant (SCE) shall prepare and present to the CPUC, Forest Service (related to NFS lands), and other affected agencies a revegetation plan at least 60 days prior to start of construction. The Applicant (SCE) shall re-vegetate all disturbed areas using approved methods commonly used in Los Angeles County, the Cities of Palmdale, Lancaster, and Santa Clarita, and the Angeles National Forest to restore the landscape's natural appearance to as near-natural appearance as possible.

Rationale for Finding. Project construction activities and equipment will substantially degrade the visual character of the area for the duration of construction activities. These short-term impacts on visual conditions during construction will be significant and unavoidable, and there are no other feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to make vehicles, heavy equipment, helicopters, and other Project components less visible.

Reference. Section C.15 (Visual Resources) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of visual quality alteration impacts of the Project.

Cumulative project activities could impact visual resources along the Project route.

As discussed in Section B.5.2 of the EIR/EIS, there are two cumulative energy infrastructure projects that will share many of the same characteristics of the Project, and may be within the same field of view. Additionally there are 93 other projects spread throughout the entire project that were included in the cumulative impact analysis. Cumulative impacts to visual resources could possibly occur as a result of construction and operation of the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project and projects listed in Table B.5-1 of the EIS/EIR, if they occupy the same field of view. Cumulative visual impacts depend on the degree to which the viewshed is altered, visual access to scenic resources is impaired, landscape character is changed, or the Project's visual contrast is increased. It is also possible that a cumulative visual impact could occur if a viewer's perception was that the general quality of an area was diminished by the proliferation of visible structures, even if the structures were not all within the same field of view. Such a perception could occur as an accumulated impression of visual impacts in the landscape, for instance, while traveling along a road and seeing many new housing developments or many new transmission lines.

Finding. The CPUC finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated in the Project to address significant cumulative effects on the environment. However, even with implementation of Mitigation Measures V-1a through V-1e (see Impact V-1 above), V-3a through V-3c (see Impact V-3 above), V-4a through V-4c (see Impact V-4 above), B-1a and B-1b (see Impact B-1 above), R-4 (see Impact R-4 above), and V-15a through V-15c (se Impact V-15 above), significant unavoidable cumulative visual impacts will occur for operation of the Project for each significance criterion analyzed in the EIR/EIS.

The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Rationale for Finding. The resulting cumulative visual impacts will be substantially greater than those that will occur with the Project alone and they will be significant. For example, implementation of this Project will combine with visual effects of existing 220-kV and 500-kV transmission lines in affected viewsheds, and will cumulatively result in increased structure sizes that will cause a significant increase in structure prominence and industrial character. Implementation of cumulative Projects 1 and 2 in Table B.5-1 of the EIR/EIS (Antelope-Vincent and Antelope-Tehachapi Transmission Lines) will cause an additional cumulative, significant increase in structure prominence and industrial character. All of these increases in structure prominence and industrial character will be "cumulatively considerable" and 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 C.15.13 (Visual Resources – Cumulative Effects) of the EIR/EIS provides a complete assessment of the cumulative impacts on visual resources.

V. Alternatives to the Project

Through the alternatives screening process for the EIR/EIS, 15 potential alternatives for the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Line Project were developed and subjected to a screening process to determine whether they should be analyzed in detail in the EIR/EIS (see Appendix 1 of the EIR/EIS). These alternatives ranged from minor routing adjustments to SCE's originally proposed 500-kV project route to entirely different transmission line routes, alternate system voltages, and system designs. The majority of these alternatives were eliminated because they did not meet project objectives; did not meet legal, regulatory, and technical feasibility criteria; and/or did not avoid or reduce environmental effects of the Project.

A total of five route alternatives were fully developed and analyzed in the EIR/EIS. The Project as adopted by the CPUC is a combination of the Antelope-Pardee East Mid-Slope (Alternative 2 from the EIR/EIS) and the Antelope-Pardee Re-Routing of New Right-of-Way along Haskell Canyon (Alternative 4 from the EIR/EIS) alternatives. The findings and rationale for not selecting the remaining three route alternatives analyzed in the EIR/EIS are discussed below.

V.1 SCE's Proposed Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Line

The Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Line Project route as proposed in SCE's CPCN Application to the CPUC and described in the EIR/EIS Section B.2, exits the Antelope Substation in the City of Lancaster in a new ROW for 1.1 miles before turning southwest and proceeding in the existing Saugus-Del Sur Utility Corridor from Mile 1.1 to Mile 5.7. At Mile 5.7, the line would enter the ANF on NFS lands and remain within the existing Saugus-Del Sur Utility Corridor until Mile 18.6. Within this corridor, the existing Antelope-Pole Switch 74 66-kV line would be replaced. At Mile 18.6, SCE's proposed route would turn south into a new ROW for 1.7 miles before exiting the ANF at Mile 19.3. At Mile 20.3, the line would turn west and enter the Pardee-Vincent 500-kV ROW, in which it would remain until is termination at Pardee Substation at Mile 25.6. Within the Pardee-Vincent 500-kV ROW the existing Pardee-Vincent 500-kV

single-circuit towers would be replaced with double-circuit towers. The total distance of this route is 25.6 miles, of which 12.6 miles would be on NFS lands and 2.8 miles would be new ROW.

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds that the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Line route as proposed by SCE in its CPCN Application to the CPUC is infeasible and less desirable than the Project being adopted by the CPUC, specifically for those portions of the alignment that traverse the ANF (Mile 5.7 to Mile 17.5)[1] and are routed through the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch (Mile 17.5 to Mile 20.3)[2]. The CPUC rejects these portions of the route proposed by SCE because they would result in greater environmental impacts than the Project, due to the increased potential for line collisions by raptors, including condors, resulting from placement of the towers on the top of Del Sur Ridge; greater impacts to cultural resources; limitations to fire prevention and fire suppression resulting from the towers being placed on the top of Del Sur Ridge; and noise and socioeconomic impacts to the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch. In addition, SCE's proposed route would result in greater visual prominence and greater disturbance to the visual environment resulting from increased structure prominence, increased skyline blockage, and increased scale dominance of industrial-character structures in the Antelope Valley, ANF, and Santa Clarita. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make this alternative infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project.

V.2 Partial Undergrounding of Antelope-Pardee Transmission Line (Alternative 1)

This alternative includes the installation of the 500-kV transmission line underground in specific visually high-impact segments of the route proposed by SCE, including along Del Sur Ridge on NFS lands within the ANF (approximately Mile 11.0 to Mile 15.0) and within the City of Santa Clarita (Mile 22.7 to Pardee Substation - Mile 26.2), as described in EIR/EIS Section B.4.1. This alternative is identical to SCE's proposed route (see Section V.1, above) except in those areas where underground construction and associated surface structures, such as transition stations, would be built and between Mile 20.3 and 22.3, where the existing single-circuit 500-kV towers located in the Pardee-Vincent 500-kV ROW would not be replaced with double-circuit towers. Instead, new single-circuit 500-kV towers would be placed in the vacant position within the existing ROW between Mile 20.3 and 22.3. The total distance of this alternative is 26.2 miles (18.7 miles overhead, 7.5 miles underground), of which 12.6 miles would be on NFS lands (4.0 miles underground) and 6.3 miles would be new ROW. The estimated duration of construction is 10 months for the overhead portions and 29 months for underground portions.

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds that this alternative is infeasible and less desirable than the Project being adopted by CPUC and rejects this alternative because it would have greater environmental impacts which result directly from underground construction, including greater air quality, biology, geology, land use, recreation, noise, socioeconomic, traffic, service system, and visual resources impacts. This alternative would result in greater air quality impacts, including higher annual and total construction emissions, significant localized impacts during construction, and cause these impacts to last longer due to the substantially longer construction schedule. Furthermore, this alternative would result in greater biological impacts due to the increased duration of disturbance to plant and wildlife communities, the large area of disturbance and increased level of construction activity for underground construction thereby

[1] This segment is replaced by Alternative 2 from the EIR/EIS.

[2] This segment is replaced by Alternative 4 from the EIR/EIS.

increasing the potential to introduce exotic weeds and impacts to Management Indicator Species (MIS) in the ANF, as well as resulting in indirect effects to wildlife from increased recreational usage due to the development of an all weather access road along Del Sur Ridge. This alternative would also have greater geologic issues as there is a substantial potential to damage the underground transmission line due to surface fault rupture at the crossing of the active San Gabriel Fault in Santa Clarita. This alterative would have greater land use and recreational impacts as it will significantly impact the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch, contribute to the permanent loss of off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes on Del Sur Ridge, as well as extended the closure of recreational trails in the ANF due to the longer construction schedule. This alternative would also result in greater noise and socioeconomic impacts due to the longer construction schedule as well as impacting both the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch and the Bouquet Canyon Stone Quarry. This alternative would result in greater traffic impacts resulting from the increased duration and magnitude of traffic associated with underground construction, as well as greater service system impacts due to generating more waste from the demolition of the existing single-circuit 500-kV towers within the Pardee-Vincent corridor. Furthermore, the visual impacts that this alternative was intended to minimize would in fact be greater than the adopted Project as the underground section in the ANF will create visually prominent, permanent landform and vegetation disturbances on Del Sur Ridge which will result in visually unacceptable modifications to the National Forest landscape and will visually impact the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those identified in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make this alternative infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project.

V.3 Antelope-Pardee Single-Circuit 500-kV Towers between Haskell Canyon and Pardee Substation (Alternative 3)

The alternative includes constructing single-circuit 500-kV towers between Haskell Canyon and the Pardee Substation in the vacant position within the Pardee-Vincent 500-kV ROW, which is situated near the center of the ROW, as described in EIR/EIS Section B.4.3. This alternative is identical to SCE's proposed route (see Section V.1, above), except between Mile 20.3 and Mile 25.6 (on non-NFS lands), where single-circuit 500-kV towers would be constructed instead of constructing double-circuit 500-kV towers and removing the existing single-circuit 500-kV towers. The total distance of this alternative is 25.6 miles, of which 12.6 miles would be on NFS lands and 2.8 miles would be new ROW.

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds this alternative infeasible and less desirable than the Project being adopted by CPUC and rejects this alternative because it would result in greater long-term environmental impacts due the increase potential for line collisions by raptors, including condors, resulting from placement of the towers on the top of Del Sur Ridge; greater impacts to cultural resources; limitations to fire prevention and fire suppression resulting from the towers being placed on the top of Del Sur Ridge; and noise and socioeconomic impacts to the Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch. The CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those identified in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make this route alternative infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project.

V.4 Antelope-Pardee Sierra Pelona Re-Route (Alternative 5)

The Antelope-Pardee Sierra Pelona Re-Route Alternative includes the construction of an overhead single-circuit 500-kV transmission line that would be routed to generally avoid the ANF, except for a short segment that would traverse the northeast corner of the Forest, as described in EIR/EIS Section B.4.5. This alternative would proceed south from the Antelope Substation, crossing through Leona Valley, approximately 0.5 miles of the ANF, and through the western-most portion of the Ritter Ranch

development area. Once crossing the Sierra Highway and the Antelope Valley Freeway (SR-14), the transmission line would traverse two NFS land properties (1.0 mile) in Soledad Canyon and then enter the existing Pardee-Vincent corridor and continue west to the Pardee Substation. Within the Pardee-Vincent corridor the existing single-circuit 500-kV towers would be replaced with double-circuit 500-kV towers. The total distance of this alternative is 37.2 miles, of which 18.8 miles would be new ROW (1.5 miles on NFS lands).

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds that the Antelope-Pardee Sierra Pelona Re-Route Alternative is infeasible and less desirable than the Project and rejects this alternative because it would have greater environmental impacts, including greater air quality, cultural resources, land use, noise, traffic, and service system impacts. This alternative would result in greater air quality impacts, including higher annual and total construction emissions, due to the increased transmission line route length. Furthermore, this alternative would result in greater cultural resources impacts as a larger number of culturally sensitive sites have been identified along this route. This alternative would traverse 103 privately owned parcels and possibly remove one or more homes resulting in greater land use impacts than the Project, which is generally located in unpopulated areas of the ANF. This alternative would also have the potential to expose a greater number of residences to noise associated with construction, operation, and maintenance activities as it will traverse multiple residential areas including Lancaster, Leona Valley, Agua Dulce, and Santa Clarita. This alternative would result in greater traffic impacts resulting from additional overhead road crossings, including two crossings of State Route 14, as well as greater service system impacts due to generating a greater amount of waste from the demolition of the existing single-circuit 500-kV towers within the Pardee-Vincent corridor. This alternative would create 18.8 miles of new ROW through the communities of Leona Valley and Agua Dulce resulting in significant, unavoidable visual impacts to these non-NFS lands. When considering the whole of the action without placing added emphasis on Forest impacts and issues, the Project is superior to the Antelope-Pardee Sierra Pelona Re-Route Alternative and will result in the fewest significant unavoidable impacts overall. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those identified in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make this alternative infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project.

V.3 No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, as described in EIR/EIS Section B.4.6, construction and operation of the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project would not occur. The Forest Service would deny the special use application for the Project and no Forest Plan amendments would be needed for this alternative. None of the associated Project activities would occur and the environmental impacts associated with the Project would not occur. For example, SCE's existing Antelope-Pole Switch 74 66-kV line along the Saugus-Del Sur Utility Corridor would remain in place, as removal of the 66-kV line is specifically linked to the construction of the Project.

The objectives of the Project would remain unfulfilled under the No Project Alternative. For example, the 350 MW of initial transmission capability when energized to 220 kV would not be added between the Antelope and Pardee Substations, and the improved system reliability and operating flexibility associated with the Project would not occur.

In the absence of the Project, SCE still would be required to interconnect and integrate power generation facilities into its electric system. According to SCE, several wind generation projects, which will need to interconnect to the SCE transmission system via Antelope Substation or some other new substation located in the vicinity, either have applications pending before Kern County or are in the advanced planning stage

and expected to submit applications in the near future. However, transmission of wind power from the Tehachapi and Antelope Valley areas is currently constrained by the existing Antelope-Mesa 220-kV transmission line, which would be overloaded by the addition of new wind generation.

Under the No Project Alternative, the following events or actions (scenarios) related to the 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, or these proposed wind projects would have to find alternate means to connect to the transmission system without compromising system reliability.
- The requirement of the Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) 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.
- Transmission providers such as SCE, PG&E, or LADWP would need to accommodate the power load by upgrading existing transmission infrastructure or building new transmission facilities along a different alignment and/or developers of wind generation facilities would need to build their own transmission facilities to connect to the transmission grid.

Finding/Rationale. The CPUC finds that the No Project Alternative is infeasible and less desirable than the 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 could also require 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 SCE's objective to prevent overloading of existing transmission facilities in the SCE grid, specifically the Antelope-Mesa 220-kV transmission line. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations have been identified in Section VIII.D. of the Decision (Statement of Overriding Considerations) that make the No Project Alternative infeasible and less desirable than the adopted Project.

VI. Findings Regarding Other CEQA Considerations

VI.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.1.4 (Growth-Inducing Effects) of the EIR/EIS, 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 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. Therefore, the additional available capacity is considered growth inducing. Accordingly, the CPUC finds that the Project will have growth-inducing impacts.

VI.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 consumption of nonrenewable resources during maintenance and inspection of the Project will not change appreciably from SCE's existing activities in the project area. Although the Project will result in total land disturbance of approximately 122 acres, approximately 64 acres will be restored to their previous condition after construction. As this new disturbance will generally be in existing utility corridors, and where located outside existing corridors generally constructed by helicopter, ground access to previously inaccessible areas will be minimal. 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. As such, the CPUC finds that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including those considerations set forth in Section VIII.D. (Statement of Overriding Considerations) of the Decision, make infeasible additional mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

VI.3 Responses to Comments on the Draft EIR/EIS and Revisions to the Final EIR/EIS

Volume 2 of the 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 §15088(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines and 40 CFR 1503.4 under NEPA.

Finding/Rationale. Responses to comments made on the Draft EIR/EIS 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).

***Finding/Rationale*.** As explained in Responses to Comments A.8-6, B.7-2, and B.17-7, none of the alternative project routes suggested in comments on the Draft EIR/EIS were feasible alternatives, considerably different from the alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIR/EIS, which would clearly lessen the significant environmental impacts of the Project. Accordingly, none of these suggested alternatives included significant new information requiring further analysis.

VII. 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/EIS. The MMRP includes mitigation measures applicable to National Forest Service (NFS) lands. However, the MMRP adopted herein by the CPUC does not constitute the mitigation monitoring and reporting program as to project elements occurring within those federal lands as the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service), the NEPA Lead Agency, has not yet issued its Record of Decision (ROD) on the Project. The CPUC and the Forest Service will coordinate their mitigation monitoring and reporting programs once the Forest Service has issued its ROD.

The discussion below provides the recommended framework for the implementation of the MMRP by the CPUC as the CEQA Lead Agency, and the Forest Service as the NEPA Lead Agency, and describes the roles and responsibilities of government agencies in implementing and enforcing adopted mitigation

VII.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. *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.

USDA Forest Service and Other Federal Lands

The Forest Service is the federal Lead Agency for the preparation of the Project's EIR/EIS in compliance with NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulation for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), and the USDA Forest Service Handbook (CFR 1909.15, Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook). As the NEPA Lead Agency, the Forest Service is also responsible for ensuring that mitigation measures are implemented on NFS lands. The Forest Service intends to work with the CPUC (under the provisions of a Memorandum of Understanding) to implement mitigation monitoring during construction of the Project across NFS lands, and will likely use the CPUC's environmental contractor for monitoring on NFS lands.

VII.2 Organization of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program Implementation Plan

Following Project approval by the Forest Service, the CPUC and the Forest Service will compile a MMRP Implementation Plan to coordinate implementation of the adopted mitigation measures by both lead agencies. The elements of the MMRP Implementation Plan are as follows:

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.

VII.3 Roles and Responsibilities

As the lead agencies under CEQA and NEPA, the CPUC and the Forest Service, respectively, are required to monitor the Project to ensure that the adopted and required mitigation measures and APMs are implemented. The CPUC and the Forest Service 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 and the Forest Service are implemented and that mitigated environmental impacts are reduced to the level identified in the Program.

The CPUC and/or the Forest Service 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 and the Forest Service, 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 and the Forest Service 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 and the Forest Service 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 and the Forest Service 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 and NEPA requirements; no Project variance will be approved by the CPUC and the Forest Service 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 and/or NEPA 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, the Forest Service, 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 or NEPA responsible agency.

VII.4 Enforcement Responsibility

The CPUC and the Forest Service are 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 and the Forest Service.

The CPUC and the Forest Service have 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 and/or the Forest Service may assign this authority to the environmental monitor for each construction spread.

VII.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, the Forest Service, and their monitors in writing of any mitigation measures that are not or cannot be successfully implemented. The CPUC and the Forest Service in coordination with their monitors will assess whether alternative mitigation is appropriate and specify to SCE the subsequent actions required.

VII.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 and/or the Forest Service'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 and/or the Forest Service Project Manager may initiate enforcement or compliance action to address deviations from the Project or adopted Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

The following steps apply to the CPUC only:

- **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.

Dispute resolution associated with impacts or resources on NFS lands will be the responsibility of the Forest Service, and the process for such dispute resolution will be included in the MMRP Implementation Plan.

VII.7 General Monitoring Procedures

Environmental Monitor

Many of the monitoring procedures will be conducted during the construction phase of the Project. The CPUC, the Forest Service, 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

ATTACHMENT B

Applicant shall provide the CPUC and the Forest Service 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 and the Forest Service on request. The CPUC, the Forest Service, 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/antelopepardee/antelopepardee.htm.

In order to facilitate the public's awareness, the CPUC will make weekly reports available on the website.

VII.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 VIII.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.

VII.9 Mitigation Monitoring Program Tables

The Mitigation Monitoring Program tables presented in Appendix 9 of the Final EIR/EIS, 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.15) of the Final EIR/EIS, as well as in Attachment A of this decision, will form thebasis for the implementation of the Mitigation Monitoring Program.

(END OF ATTACHMENT B)