

State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Quality
Water Quality Certification Program

**Public Notice
of Application for Water Quality Certification**

Pursuant to federal law (Title 33, United States Code, Section 1341; Clean Water Act Section 401), applicants for a federal license or permit for activities which may discharge to waters of the United States must seek Water Quality Certification from the state or Indian tribe with jurisdiction. Such Certification is based on a finding that the discharge will meet water quality standards and other applicable requirements. In California, Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) issue or deny Certification for discharges within their geographical jurisdiction. The State Water Resources Control Board has this responsibility for projects affecting waters within multiple RWQCB jurisdictions.

The following information is provided in satisfaction of the public notice requirements of Section 3858, Title 23, of the California Code of Regulations, which govern the State's Certification Program.

Applicant: San Diego Gas & Electric Company

Applicant Contact: Don Haines

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Project Name: Sunrise Powerlink Project

Date of Application: Oct. 8, 2009

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)
San Diego Gas and Electric Company
Sunrise Powerlink Project**

Affected Counties: San Diego, Imperial

On Oct. 15, 2009, the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) received an application from the San Diego Gas and Electric Company (applicant, or SDG&E), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the Sunrise Powerlink (SRPL), a proposed 120 mile-long electric transmission line and appurtenant substations and access roads, spanning San Diego and Imperial Counties. The stated purpose of the proposed project is the construction and ongoing maintenance of this transmission power lines. The project includes one new substation, the Suncrest Substation. The project also includes three system upgrades from Sycamore Canyon Substation to Pomerado, Scripps, and Elliott substations. These upgrades will replace existing conductors (i.e., the "wires") on existing lines with new, larger conductors ("reconductoring"). Applicant state that these upgrades will be required to reliably operate the new transmission line. Reconductoring activities will use existing facilities and access roads and will not create any new impacts to streams or wetlands.

The SRPL Project will traverse approximately 120 miles between the El Centro area of Imperial County and southwestern San Diego County, in southern California. The proposed Right of Way (ROW) for the project crosses Federal lands (BLM, USFS, and DOD) for about 70 miles of its approximate 120-mile length. Approximately 58% of the land affected is federal land, and 42% is non-federal. The ROW crosses or enters numerous local jurisdictions.

A map of the project area may be viewed at http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspden/sunrise/mmcrp/att_A_project_segments_map.pdf

The project originates at the Imperial Valley Substation, just west of El Centro, Imperial County. It proceeds west roughly parallel to Interstate Highway 8 to a point just east of State Highway 94. From that point, the route proceeds north about 6 miles, then turns south crossing I-8 at a point just east of the community of Boulder Oaks. From this point, the route proceeds south around Lake Morena and Barrett Reservoir, then north toward the community of Alpine. The route passes underground through Alpine, then turns north, and proceeds along the south shore of El Capitan Reservoir. From El Capitan Dam, the route proceeds west toward State Highway 67, near the community of Morena. The route then crosses Highway 67 heading west, just south of San Vicente Reservoir. The route proceeds north of Sycamore Canyon Park, then south to the existing Sycamore Canyon Substation just south of the community of Poway.

The California Public Utilities Commission, acting as lead agency under CEQA, has approved a Sunrise Powerlink Final Environment Impact Report (<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspden/sunrise/toc-feir.htm>) and a Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report / Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspden/sunrise/toc-rdeir.htm>).

The proposed activities involve work within potential Waters of the U.S., including wetlands, and Waters of the State. Projected permanent and temporary effects to Waters of the U.S. including wetlands and Waters of the State are summarized in Table 1, below.

A combination of avoidance, minimization and compensatory mitigation measures are proposed to offset potential effects of project implementation, operation and maintenance to wetlands and waters of the U.S. and the state, as described in the EIR/S and supplements. Additional mitigation details will be described in a mitigation and monitoring plan, which is still under development. All feasible and practical measures will be undertaken to avoid or minimize impacts to waters of the state during project activities.

A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be prepared.

In compliance with federal Clean Water Act, section 404 and USACE regulations, all project activity will occur under Nationwide Permit number 12.

TABLE 1: Summary of Impacts to Waters of the State and U.S.				
	Permanent Impacts (expressed as ac.)	Permanent Impacts (expressed as lin. ft.)	Temporary Impacts (expressed as ac.)	Temporary Impacts (expressed as lin. ft.)
Wetlands	0.0	0.0	0.140	NA
Streambed (Using Top of Bank)	0.890 (SNR)* and 5.300 (DW)*	10,881.0 (SNR)	1.17 (SNR) & 9.410 (DW)	10,088.0 (SNR)
Lake / Reservoir	0	0	0	0
Ocean/estuary/bay	0	0	0	0
Riparian (Using Riparian Drip Line)	0	0	0.770	905
Isolated Waters	0	0	0	0
Total effects	6.19 ac.	10,881.0 lin. ft.	2.08 ac.	10993.0 lin. ft.
*SNR: Streams with no riparian vegetation. DW: Dry washes.				

A Biological Opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act, USFWS Section 7 FWS-2008B0423 and 2009F0097, was obtained in January of 2009.

Applications to California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for a Fish and Game Code Section 1602 Stream and Lakebed Alteration Agreement and a 2081(b) Incidental Take Permit under the California Endangered Species Act are pending.

Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments submitted in writing and received at this office by mail during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions, please contact Cliff Harvey at (916) 558-1709. (charvey@waterboards.ca.gov).

Date Posted: Nov. 23, 2009

State Water Resources

Control Board Staff Contact:

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 State Water Resources Control Board
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Note: No regulatory decision on the application is implied or intended in this public notice.