

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

**Public Notice of
Report of Waste Discharge for
Waste Discharge Requirements**

Pursuant to state law (Section 13260(a) of the California Water Code), a person discharging waste or proposing to discharge waste (fill) that could affect the quality of the waters of the state must file a Report of Waste Discharge (RWD) with the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board). A RWD affecting waters within multiple Regional Water Board jurisdictions must be filed with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board). The Regional Water Board or State Water Board, after any necessary hearing, shall issue Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) based on the discharge or proposed discharge. These WDRs, issued pursuant to Water Code section 13263, regulate the proposed discharge of fill material including structural material and/or earthen wastes to waters of the state. WDRs are necessary to adequately address potential and planned impacts to waters of the state, to require mitigation for these impacts, and to comply with the waters quality standards specified in the Basin Plans of the appropriate Regional Water Boards.

Applicant: Southern California Edison

Applicant Contact: Hazem Gabr
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Project Name: SCE Antelope Transmission Project: Segment 3B

Date of Application: April 3, 2012

**Public Notice for
Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)
Southern California Edison
Antelope Transmission Project:
Segment 3B
Affected Counties: Kern**

On April 3, 2012, the State Water Board received a RWD from the Southern California Edison Company (SCE or applicant), requesting WDRs for activities related to the Antelope Transmission Project (ATP): Segment 3B (Project). The Segment 3B Project will consist of a new 220kV transmission line that originates at a new 500/220/66 kV substation (Highwind Substation). The transmission line will extend approximately 9.6 miles from the proposed Highwind Substation, near the town of Tehachapi just south of SR-58, and will terminate at the Windhub Substation west of the City of Mojave. The Segment 3B Project is the last component of the ATP Segments 1, 2, and 3 to be constructed and provides connectivity to Segment 10 of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP).

The Segment 3B Project is part of a larger effort that would provide transmission capacity for wind energy resources that are being developed in Kern County. The purpose of the Segment 3B Project is to interconnect these renewable generation projects to the California Independent

System Operator (CAISO) grid and to help California meet its renewable energy goals. The project includes the Alternating Current (AC) Gas Pipeline Mitigation (AC mitigation) component, which is required to protect existing gas pipelines from induced AC effects by the energized Segment 3B transmission. SCE plans to complete the project in the fourth quarter of 2012, or earlier, if possible.

Proposed Project activities involve work within waters of the state. The Segment 3B Project is not expected to involve impacts to waters of the U.S. based on a jurisdictional delineation of waters by the applicant. The project area consists of ephemeral drainages that typically originate in the foothills and along steep hills, with much of the low-lying areas being subject to flash flooding. The northern portion of the project alignment is located in the Freemont Hydrologic Unit (HU), which drains to Proctor Valley Dry Lake, and the southern portion of the project alignment is located in the Antelope HU, which drains to Rosamond Dry Lake. Both the Proctor Valley and Rosamond Dry Lakes are considered to be isolated waters (non-federal waters).

The proposed Project will result in 0.19 acres of permanent impacts and 0.20 acres of temporary impacts to waters of the state. Project activities associated with these impacts include construction of transmission towers, installation of outfall structures at Highwind Substation, installation of McCarthy drains, construction of new access roads, widening of existing access roads, installation of riprap, construction of gabion retaining walls and concrete v-ditches, construction of paved wet crossings, and installation of zinc ribbons for AC Mitigation.

A combination of avoidance, minimization, restoration, and compensatory mitigation measures are proposed to offset potential impacts to waters of the state. All feasible and practical measures will be undertaken to avoid or minimize impacts to waters of state during Project activities. All mitigation measures proposed for temporary and permanent impacts are summarized in SCE's RWD, the Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan (HRRP), and the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the ATP Project Segments 2 and 3. Temporary impact areas are proposed to be mitigated on-site and returned to pre-construction conditions through the restoration of contours and construction site BMPs, and implementation of the HRRP. Off-site preservation for permanent impacts to waters of the state are proposed through purchase of lands for preservation within the Desert Tortoise Natural Area (Preserve), which is being established to compensate for unavoidable impacts to special-status biological resources, and to conserve and protect waters under state jurisdiction. The Preserve includes water bodies with habitat for desert wash, desert tortoise habitat and Joshua tree woodlands. The Land Manager will be Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee. The Land Manager, and subsequent Land Managers upon transfer, shall manage and monitor the off-site preservation areas in perpetuity to protect its habitat and conservation values in accordance with the WDRs.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), acting as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) issued the Final EIR for the ATP Project Segments 2 and 3 on December 26, 2006. The EIR was certified by the CPUC on March 15, 2007, and can be viewed at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/aspen/atp2-3/EIR/TOC.htm>.

Status of Other Natural Resource Documents and Permits:

SCE is currently covered under the California General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction General Permit), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ; National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit No. CAS000002, as a Linear Underground/Overhead Project (LUP), Type 1 for the Segment 3B Project. SCE prepared two

SWPPPs, one for the Segment 3B transmission line (WDID # 6B15C362656) and one for the Highwind Substation (WDID# 6B15C361498).

An HRRP was prepared to provide mitigation for Project impacts to waters. The HRRP was mailed with permit applications to the State Water Board.

SCE has requested an approved Jurisdictional Determination (JD) from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). SCE is requesting concurrence from the Corps that the delineated waters on the Project are isolated, lack federal jurisdiction, and Project activities in waters would not require authorization under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The approved JD is currently pending confirmation from the Corps.

An application was submitted to the California Department of Fish and Game for a Fish and Game Code, Section 1602, Stream and Lakebed Alteration Agreement, on March 30, 2012. The agreement is pending approval by CDFG.

State Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this Project pursuant to Section 13260(a) of the California Water Code. 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 Bob Solecki at 916-341-5483 or rsolecki@waterboards.ca.gov.

Date Posted: May 11, 2012

State Water Resources

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Note: No regulatory decision on the application is implied or intended in this public notice.