

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 (State Water 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:** Southern California Edison

**Applicant Contact:** James R. Greenwood, Southern California Edison

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**Project Name:** Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project: Segment 9 – Whirlwind Substation

**Date of Application:** February 3, 2010

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste  
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)  
Southern California Edison**

**Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project: Segment 9 – Whirlwind Substation**

Affected Counties: Kern, Los Angeles, San Bernadino

On February 3, 2009, the State Water Board received an application from the Southern California Edison Company (SCE, or applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP): Segment 9 – Whirlwind Substation, which involves construction of the Whirlwind Substation. The 500/200-kV Whirlwind Substation is the only new substation to be constructed for TRTP and is located near the intersection of 170<sup>th</sup> Street and West Rosamond Boulevard in Kern County. The other substations (included in what is collectively called Segment 9 in the Final EIR/S) involve modifications and expansions to existing substations. The new Whirlwind Substation site encompasses approximately 106 acres of land that would be acquired by SCE. Facilities associated with the proposed new substation, such as the substation pad, grading, and access roads, represent a permanent land disturbance of 70 acres. In addition, approximately 27 acres would be graded within the fence line of the new substation to allow room for future expansion of the site, resulting in a total disturbance area of 97 acres. No additional facilities or equipment would be installed as part of the proposed project within this future expansion. Major equipment and structures associated with the Whirlwind project include a 500-kV switchyard and a 220-kV switchyard to accommodate connection to

different types of transmission lines in the area. The Whirlwind Substation would also include a Mechanical Electrical Equipment Room, which would include a four-legged, free-standing microwave antenna tower approximately 190 feet in height, located immediately adjacent to the Equipment Room. Construction is expected to occur in mid 2010 and end in late 2013.

The proposed site includes a small, shallow ephemeral desert wash that dissipates to sheet flow in the middle of the proposed substation. The feature will be re-routed around the proposed substation location, partway around the western edge of the site, and all the way around the northern and western edges. The desert wash was delineated as an isolated water; therefore, it is not under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (USACE concurrence is pending). However, it is still under jurisdiction of the Water Boards. Impacts to the desert wash would amount to 0.03 acre (390 linear feet) of permanent fill to isolated waters (see Table 1, below). Flows would be restored onsite in a manner that would not cause damage to the proposed facility. The impacted desert wash will be concrete-lined and at least one bank will be entirely armored with riprap. This feature will be 5,300 linear feet with a width varying between 17 and 25 feet. In order to restore sheet flow to the desert wash area downstream of the project site, a lateral spreader will be constructed that will spread the run-off at the outlet of the rip rap channel and concrete v-ditch. The lateral spreader consists of an earthen channel approximately 1 foot deep, running in an east/west direction. The capacity of the channel will allow run-off to overtop the downstream bank and spread the flow across a large area.

SCE is proposing offsite compensatory mitigation for impacts to the desert wash as proposed in the Final Environmental Impact Report/ Statement (Final EIR/S) for the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project. In addition, all feasible and practical measures will be undertaken to minimize impacts to waters of the state during project activities.

A map of the project area may be viewed at:

[http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/enviro/tehachapi\\_renewables/TRTP\\_MapFiguresSeriesVolume/MapVolumeTOC.htm](http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/enviro/tehachapi_renewables/TRTP_MapFiguresSeriesVolume/MapVolumeTOC.htm)

The California Public Utilities Commission, acting as lead agency under CEQA, and the U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service), acting as the lead agency under NEPA, approved the Final EIR/S for the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project on December 17, 2009. The Final EIR/S can be viewed at: [http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/enviro/tehachapi\\_renewables/finalEIR.htm](http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/enviro/tehachapi_renewables/finalEIR.htm)

TABLE 1: Summary of Impacts to Waters of the State and U.S.				
Feature	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
Streambed	0	0	0	0
Lake / Reservoir	0	0	0	0
Ocean/estuary/bay	0	0	0	0
Riparian	0	0	0	0
Isolated Waters	0.03	390	0	0
Total Impacts	0.03 ac.	390 lin. ft.	0	0

**Status of other natural resource documents and permits:**

A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be developed for the project.

The Forest Service initiated Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the entire TRTP project on December 21, 2009. The Biological Opinion is pending.

An application was submitted to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for a Fish and Game Code Section 1602 Stream and Lakebed Alteration Agreement on January 28, 2010. SCE initiated consultation with CDFG for a 2081(b) Incidental Take Permit under the California Endangered Species Act on December 21, 2009. The Alteration Agreement and Incidental Take Permit are pending.

Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. 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](mailto:rsolecki@waterboards.ca.gov)

**Date Posted: April 20, 2010**

**State Water Resources****Control Board Staff Contact:**

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