

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: Hazem Gabr, Southern California Edison

Telephone: (626) 302-3619

Email: Hazem.Gabr@sce.com

Project Name: Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project: Segment6

Date of Application: February 18, 2011

**Public Notice for Amendment of Water Quality Certification
Southern California Edison
Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project: Segment6**

Affected Counties: Los Angeles

General Location: The project alignment extends north-south through the Angeles National Forest (ANF). It extends from the Vincent substation, just outside the northern boundary of the ANF near State Route 14, to the southern boundary of the ANF northeast of Duarte.

A map of the project area may be viewed at:

http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/enviro/tehachapi_renewables/TRTP_MapFiguresSeriesVolume/MapVolumeTOC.htm

Project Description: On September 9, 2010, 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 related to the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP): Segments 6 and 11. Subsequently, final engineering for Segment 6 was completed by SCE and an impact analysis update was received by the State Water Board on February 18, 2011. The impact update requested that Segment 6 be processed separately and that the Segment 11 application be retracted. Therefore, project

impacts are limited to the project descriptions, maps, and engineering drawings included in the TRTP Segment 6 impact update received on February 18, 2011. The project alignment for Segment 6 consists of the removal of one hundred and thirty two (132) existing towers. These existing towers will be replaced with approximately one hundred and six (106) new lattice steel towers (LST) and twenty nine (29) tubular steel poles (TSP). Typical disturbance activities associated with transmission line installation and update includes: wire setup sites (pulling sites); guard structures, construction work areas around each tower location; new access roads; and modification of existing access roads. Proposed activities involve work within potential Waters of the U.S., including wetlands and Waters of the State including the following activities:

- trimming, clearing, grading and/or grubbing vegetation;
- installation of new culverts;
- installation of new hard wet crossings;
- maintenance grading within existing access roads;
- widening of existing access roads;
- installation or repair of gabion walls for slope/road stabilization;
- installation of debris walls;
- installation of new or repair of existing McCarthy drains;
- creation of temporary or permanent disturbance or fill for construction areas such as wire setup sites, tower pads, structure work areas, helicopter assembly yards and helicopter support yards;
- creation of temporary or permanent disturbance or fill for construction areas such as wire setup sites, tower pads, and structure work areas;
- installation of temporary wet crossings (steel plates, timber mats, swamp mats);
- creation of temporary foot trails; and
- installation of temporary water diversions.

A combination or avoidance, minimization, restoration, enhancement, and compensatory mitigation measures are proposed to offset potential impacts to Waters of the U.S. wetlands, and Waters of the State, per mitigation ratios described in the Final EIR/SEIS. Mitigation details are provided in the Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) prepared by the National Forest Service and submitted on December 21, 2010 and by the "Southern California Edison Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project Segment 6 – Proposed State and Federal Waters Mitigation" letter prepared by SCE and submitted on May 10, 2011.

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 Environmental Impact Report/Statement (Final EIR/EIS) for the TRTP on December 17, 2009.

The Final EIR/SEIS can be viewed at:

http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/enviro/tehachapi_renewables/finalEIR.htm

Projected permanent and temporary effects to Waters of the State and U.S., including wetlands, are summarized in Table 1, below:

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 | 0.21 | 4,435 | 0.88 | 14,871 |
| Lake/Reservoir | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ocean/estuary/bay | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Riparian | 0.19 | 290 | 3.57 | 1,937 |
| Isolated Waters | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Impacts | 0.40 | 4,725 | 4.45 | 16,808 |

Status of other natural resource documents and permits:

As proposed in the EIR/SEIS, the following plans will be prepared: a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), Habitat Restoration and Vegetation Plan, and Forest Service Riparian Conservation Areas (RCA) Treatment Plan.

SCE submitted a pre-construction notification to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) on February 18, 2011 for coverage under the Corps' Section 404 Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit 12.

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 was issued on July 31, 2010.

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 February 18, 2011. This action is pending. SCE initiated consultation with CDFG for a 2081(b) Incidental Take Permit under the California Endangered Species Act on December 21, 2009. The Incidental Take Permit was issued on November 23, 2010.

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

Date Posted: June 8, 2011

State Water Resources Control Board Staff Contact:

Bob Solecki, Environmental Scientist
 Water Quality Certification Unit,
 Division of Water Quality
 State Water Resources Control Board
 Telephone: 916-341-5483
 Fax: 916-341- 5584
 Email: rsolecki@waterboards.ca.gov

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