

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Categorical Exclusion Checklist

License to Southern California Edison for Aerial Crossing of the Friant-Kern Canal near Milepost 65.50

CEC-12-001

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Date: 5/7/2012

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Date: 6/14/12

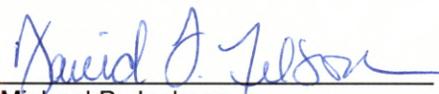
Concurred by:



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Date: 6/26/12

Approved by:



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Date: 6/27/12



Background

In 2008, Southern California Edison (SCE) filed an application with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the San Joaquin Cross Valley Loop Transmission Project (Project). The Project is needed to maintain safe and reliable electric service to customers and to serve forecasted electrical demand within the Big Creek Corridor which serves the cities of Tulare, Visalia, Hanford, Farmersville, Exeter and Woodlake as well as surrounding areas of Tulare and Kings Counties. The Project would loop the existing Big Creek 3-Springville transmission line into the Rector Substation by constructing 18.5 miles of new transmission line and replacing approximately 12 miles of existing transmission line. SCE would also modify Rector Substation and remove wave traps and line tuners and install protective relays at the Rector, Springville, Vestal, and Big Creek 3 Substations.

On June 16, 2009, the CPUC issued a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Numerous oral and written comments were received on the proposed Project during the 45-day comment period. CPUC responded to all comments in a final EIR, which was issued on February 23, 2010. On July 29, 2010, CPUC issued Decision 10-07-043 granting SCE a certificate of public convenience and necessity to construct the Project, using the environmentally superior project Alternative 2 identified in the EIR and the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Plan included in the Decision. As the lead agency for environmental review of the Project, CPUC found that the EIR prepared for the Project met the requirements of CEQA and that there were overriding considerations that merit construction of the Project notwithstanding its significant and unavoidable environmental impacts.

As Alternative 2 requires an aerial crossing over the Friant-Kern Canal (FKC), SCE has requested a license from the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for the crossing (Figure 1). The aerial crossing would connect a new steel pole and a new lattice tower outside of Reclamation's right-of-way (ROW).

Purpose and Need for Action

SCE needs permission to place a 220 kilovolt wire aerial crossing over the FKC near milepost 65.50 (Figure 1). The purpose of the Proposed Action is to issue a license to SCE for the aerial crossing.

Proposed Action

Reclamation proposes to issue a license in perpetuity to SCE for placement of a 220 kV wire aerial crossing via helicopter over the FKC near milepost 65.50 (Figure 1). The crossing would be located in Section 9, Township 17S, Range 26E in Tulare County, California.

The Proposed Action would take no more than two weeks and would likely occur between September and December of 2013. There would be no ground disturbing activity occurring

within Reclamation’s ROW as the aerial crossing would be placed over the FKC via helicopter and attached to structures located outside Reclamation ROW.

Environmental Commitments

The following environmental protection measures shall be implemented:

Resource	Protection Measure
Biological Resources	Wires shall be shielded to minimize effects from bird collisions as described in the Final EIR prepared by CPUC for the Project.
Biological Resources	There shall be a 60-inch minimum horizontal separation between energized conductors or energized conductors and grounded hardware as described in the Final EIR prepared by CPUC for the Project. If adequate spacing is not possible, hardware or conductors must be insulated against simultaneous contact.
Biological Resources	The Biological Opinion (1-1-04-F-0368) dated February 17, 2005 for Operations and Maintenance on the FKC will be implemented for all activities that occur within Reclamation’s ROW.

Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

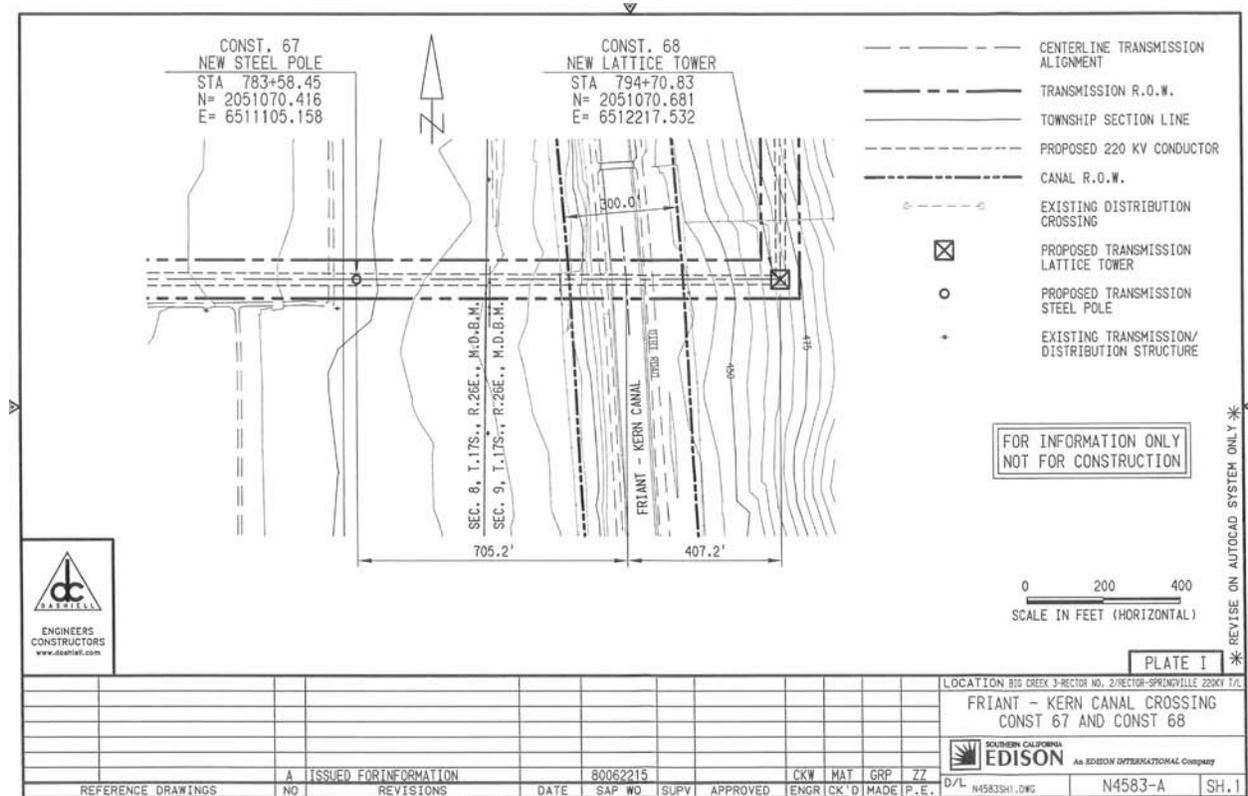


Figure 1 Proposed Action Area

Exclusion Category

516 DM 14.5 paragraph D (10): *Issuance of permits, licenses, easements, and crossing agreements which provide right-of-way over Bureau lands where the action does not allow for or lead to a major public or private action.*

Evaluation of Criteria for Categorical Exclusion:

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| 1. This action would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (40 CFR 1502.3). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. This action would have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA Section 102(2)(E) and 43 CFR 46.215(c)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. This action would have significant impacts on public health or safety (43 CFR 46.215(a)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. This action would have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographical characteristics as historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (EO 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (43 CFR 46.215 (b)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. This action would have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks (43 CFR 46.215(d)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. This action would establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects (43 CFR 46.215 (e)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. This action would have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects (43 CFR 46.215 (f)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. This action would have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by Reclamation (LND 02-01) (43 CFR 46.215 (g)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| 9. This action would have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated critical habitat for these species (43 CFR 46.215 (h)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. This action would violate a Federal, tribal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for protection of the environment (43 CFR 46.215 (i)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. This action would affect ITAs (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. This action would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898) (43 CFR 46.215 (j)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. This action would limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007, 43 CFR 46.215 (k), and 512 DM 3)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. This action would contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act, EO 13112, and 43 CFR 46.215 (l)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Regional Archeologist concurred with Item 8. Their determination has been placed within the project file.

Area Office Biologist concurred with Item 9. Their determination has been placed within the project file.

ITA Designee concurred with Item 11. Their determination has been placed within the project file.