

Notice of Exemption

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To:
Office of Land Use and Climate
Innovation
[CEQA Submit](#)

From:
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710



SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Exemption pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21108

Project Title: California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2023-046-04 for the Line 85 Mile Post 55.91 Deep Well Anode Install Project (Project)

Project Location: The Project is located in the southern San Joaquin Valley approximately 3.5 miles northeast of the community of McKittrick in Kern County, California. The Project is specifically located on the northwest side of State Route (SR) 58 within the West Elk Hills United States Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map in Township 30 South, Range 22 East, and Section 3, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian. The approximate center of the site is located at latitude 35.34946° N and longitude -119.60254° W.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has issued a California Endangered Species Act (CESA; Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) Incidental Take Permit (ITP) No. 2081-2025-023-04 authorizing Southern California Gas Company to incidentally take giant kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys ingens*), a species listed as endangered under CESA (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 670.5, subd. (a)(6)(C)), and San Joaquin antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*) and San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*), species listed as threatened under CESA (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 670.5, subd. (b)(6)(B) and (b)(6)(E), respectively).

The ITP authorizes take of giant kangaroo rat, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, and San Joaquin kit fox (Covered Species) for Project activities to install a deep well anode to Line 85 at approximate Mile Post 55.91 to distribute cathodic protection and protect the integrity of the pipeline from corrosion. The Project will ensure this pipeline complies with federal and state pipeline safety regulations and ensure a safe and constant supply of natural gas to customers. The Project will include vegetation removal, drilling new 8-inch diameter anode well to a depth of approximately 500 feet, installing associated wires within the well, capping and abandoning the existing anode well, trenching a 1-foot wide by 2-foot deep by 400-foot long excavation to install and connect the new anode wire conduits and structure wires, installing a well vent pipe, excavating a 10-foot wide by 10-foot long by 5-foot deep bellhole to connect electrical wires to the pipeline, and replacing the Electronic Test Station and aboveground fink head. Temporary disturbance areas will be returned to pre-project conditions and revegetated. The Project is expected to temporarily disturb 0.35 acre of Covered Species habitat.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: Southern California Gas Company, Pourya Arefi, Project Manager, 9400 Oakdale Ave, Chatsworth, California 91311

Exempt Status:

- Statutory Exemption. California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269, subdivision (b); Public Resources Code, section 21080, subdivision (b)(4)
- Categorical Exemption.

Reasons why project is exempt: See Attachment

CDFW Contact Person: Sarah Bahm (Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)), sarah.bahm@wildlife.ca.gov

DocuSigned by:
Signature: *Krista Tomlinson* Date: 7/10/2025
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for Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager, Central Region

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Attachment to Notice of Exemption

California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2023-046-04

Southern California Gas Company Line 85 Mile Post 55.91 Deep Well Anode Install Project

Approval of this Project is subject to the statutory exemption for “Specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency” (Emergency Project; Pub. Resources Code, §21080, subd. (b)(4)) and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269, subdivision (b)), “Emergency repairs to publicly or privately owned service facilities necessary to maintain service essential to the public health, safety, or welfare which includes those actions that require a reasonable amount of planning to address an anticipated emergency” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Pub. Resources Code, §21000 et seq.). “Emergency” is defined as “A sudden, unexpected occurrence, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services” (Pub. Resources Code, §21060.3).

The purpose of the Project is to distribute cathodic protection (CP) current to protect the integrity at the Project location along the existing 26-inch natural gas pipeline 85 (Line 85) by controlling the corrosion of the metal surface by connecting it to a metal that is more easily corroded to act as the anode of the electrochemical cell. Southern California Gas Company is required to maintain natural gas pipelines by the California Public Utilities Commission General Order 112 E, which incorporates the U.S. Department of Transportation regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Part 192), Transportation of Natural and Other Gas by Pipeline, as well as the California Department of Water Resources California Well Standards Bulletins 74-81 and 74-90, to ensure a safe and constant supply of natural gas to customers. The CP system has been out-of-tolerance for approximately 1,500 days. The associated pipeline segment faces an elevated and time-sensitive risk of failure. When a CP system is depleted, the pipe is no longer protected from corrosion. When pipelines have been out-of-tolerance for an extended period, localized corrosion (especially coating defects) can rapidly progress to wall thinning and leaks. The risk of a pipeline rupture or leak is significantly increased, especially in corrosive environments or aging infrastructure. Because of how long the CP system has been out of tolerance for this pipeline, it is an urgent threat.

The Project will ensure this pipeline complies with federal and state pipeline safety regulations and ensure a safe and constant supply of natural gas to customers. The Project will include vegetation removal, drilling new 8-inch diameter anode well to a depth of approximately 500 feet, installing associated wires within the well, capping and abandoning the existing anode well, trenching a 1-foot wide by 2-foot deep by 400-foot long excavation to install and connect the new anode wire conduits and structure wires, installing a well vent pipe, excavating a 10-foot wide by 10-foot long by 5-foot deep bellhole to connect electrical wires to the pipeline, and replacing the Electronic Test Station and aboveground fink head. Temporary disturbance areas will be returned to pre-project

conditions and revegetated. The Project is expected to temporarily disturb 0.35 acre of Covered Species habitat.

Impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated through the implementation of measures required by Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2023-046-04. Measures include: 1) Weekly Compliance Reports; 2) establishment of avoidance zones; 3) worker education; 4) species relocation; and 5) permanent habitat protection.