



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
MEGHAN HERTEL, Director

Inland Deserts Region
3602 Inland Empire Blvd., Ste C-220
Ontario, CA 91764
Wildlife.ca.gov

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

From:
Department of Fish and Wildlife
Inland Deserts Region
3602 Inland Empire Blvd., Ste. C-220
Ontario, CA 91764
Contact: Andy Chambers, Senior
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NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Project Title: Contour Terrace - Campanula 25kV Deteriorated Pole Replacement Project (Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act (WJTCA) Incidental Take Permit No. 1927-ITP-2026-004-06 (ITP))

Project Location (San Bernardino County): The project is located at four locations in within unincorporated San Bernardino County, near the community of Pioneertown. Project Locations 1 and 2 are located north of Chia Trail; center coordinates of 34.193445 latitude, -116.504382 longitude, and 34.195882 latitude, -116.505912 longitude, respectively. Project Location 3 is located east of Acacia Avenue; center coordinate 34.196649 latitude, -116.51107 longitude. Project Location 4 is located north of Pipes Canyon Road; center coordinate 34.201026 latitude, -116.494323 longitude.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has issued an ITP (No. 1927-ITP-2026-004-06), pursuant to Section 1927.3 of the Fish and Game Code to Southern California Edison.

The project is comprised of the replacement of two deteriorated wood utility poles in kind (1741168E and 1741175E), the replacement of one deteriorated wood pole with one composite pole (1741176E), installation of two new wood poles (4999059E and 4999094E), and the installation of two new anchors associated with Pole 1741176E. Project activities include limited vegetation trampling and removal, overland travel of vehicles and equipment, staging/laydown, excavation, and utility infrastructure construction.

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

1927-ITP-2026-004-06

Page 2

The project will encroach upon 26 western Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) which is protected under the WJTCA and the California Endangered Species Act. The WJTCA ITP referenced above as issued by CDFW authorizes incidental take of western Joshua tree that may occur as a result of project implementation.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project:

Hazem Gabr

Southern California Edison

Environmental Partners & Planners, Principal Manager

(626) 302-7608

Hazem.Gabr@SCE.com

2244 Walnut Grove Avenue

Rosemead CA, 91770

Exempt Status: On 4/24/2026, CDFW, the Lead Agency, determined that the project is statutorily exempt pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269 (c). (See attachment)

CDFW Contact Person: Andrew (Andy) Chambers, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory), Andrew.Chambers@Wildlife.ca.gov, (909) 758-6435.

Signature:  Date: 4/24/2026
Heidi Calvert, Regional Manager



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ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Southern California Edison Contour Terrace - Campanula 25kV Deteriorated Pole Replacement Project

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has approved a Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act Incidental Take Permit (ITP) for Southern California Edison's (SCE) Contour Terrace - Campanula 25kV Deteriorated Pole Replacement Project. SCE requested authorization for "take" of western Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) associated with their covered conductor project work occurring along the Campanula 25kV distribution line.

CDFW approved the Contour Terrace - Campanula 25kV Deteriorated Pole Replacement Project ITP relying on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) statutory exemption because it involves "specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency" (Pub. Res. Code, § 21080(b)(4); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15269 (c)). For the purposes of CEQA, "'Emergency' means 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. 'Emergency' includes such occurrences as fire, flood, earthquake, or other soil or geologic movements, as well as such occurrences as riot, accident, or sabotage" (Cal. Pub. Res. Code, §21060.3.). The Contour Terrace - Campanula 25kV Deteriorated Pole Replacement Project falls within the class because it involves replacing wood poles that has deteriorated, installing a composite pole more resistant to wildfire damage, installing pole anchors, and replacing bare wire conductors with covered conductors to significantly reduce the risk of electrical faults and wildfires. Covered conductors are insulated with a protective layer that prevents direct contact between conductors and the environment, helping prevent faults that can lead to overheating and prevent sparks from igniting dry vegetation in areas prone to wildfires.

At least eight of California's 20 most destructive wildfires had either electrical or power line causes, and all eight of those fires occurred within the last 10 years. This Project is located within Tier 2 of the California Public Utilities Commission's Fire-Threat Map, which outlines areas where there is higher fire risk, including a

Hazem Gabr
1927-ITP-2026-004-06
Page 2

likelihood and potential impacts on people and property from utility-related fires. Given the high risk of wildfire that electrical and power lines can pose, the location of this project within an area of higher fire risk, and the focus of this project on restoring the structural integrity of utility poles and replacing bare wire power lines to reduce the potential for wildfire, CDFW has determined that this Project involves specific actions necessary to prevent a wildfire emergency and is thus exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080, subdivision (b)(4).