



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: SUP-So Cal Gas, Re-bury gas line
Project ID: 09-moja-028/PEPC 25563

Project Description: Kevin Kuennen (Sempra Energy Utilities, for Southern California Gas Company) has applied for a special use permit. Southern California Gas Company wants to re-bury a portion of its gas line that has become exposed. The exposed portion of line 235 runs from SCG's Kelso Compressor Station west approximately 5.5 miles. This line is a 34"-diameter natural gas pipeline within SCG's right-of-way. An SCG crew will use a bulldozer and a front-loader to re-bury the pipeline. Three pick-up trucks will also be on-site. Native soil from the road bed, adjacent berm, and the area directly surrounding the exposure will be used to cover the line. The maximum extent of disturbance totals 0.11 acres. Line 235 traverses desert tortoise habitat; therefore, SCG will survey the area prior to construction, and have a desert tortoise biologist on site at all times while the line is being covered. This project will be conducted in accordance with Southern California Gas Company's biological opinion and memorandum of understanding with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for maintenance projects in the Southern California deserts.

Project Locations:

Location

County:	San Bernardino	State:	CA
District:	between Kelso Dunes and Granite Mountains	Section:	Southern California Gas pipeline road
Geo. Marker:		Other:	Lat 34.87761 N, Long 115.74570 W

Mitigation(s):

- **All work must conform to the right-of-way granted by the Bureau of Land Management to Pacific Lighting Service and Supply Company, now Southern California Gas Company. The pipeline must be buried at least 24 inches below ground surface. All disturbance must be contained within 25 feet to either side of the center line of the right-of-way. A map delineating the existing right-of-way should be attached to the special use permit.**
- **Desert Tortoise: The habitat compensation ratio must be applied to this project, to calculate how much desert tortoise habitat the US Government should be compensated for the destruction of such habitat in the project site. Southern California Gas will need to make habitat compensation to the National Park Service, Mojave National Preserve as a condition of any permit issued to them for this project.**
- **Desert Tortoise/Construction: The project site must be surveyed to locate and remove desert tortoises prior the start of the project. The survey shall be conducted by an authorized biologist within 24 hours of the onset of surface disturbance (grading and other road repairs). The biologist must be authorized by the US Fish & Wildlife Service to survey and handle tortoises for this project.**

- **Desert Tortoise/Construction:** Operators of heavy equipment (e.g., road graders) shall be accompanied by a qualified biologist when working in desert tortoise habitat during desert tortoise active periods (March 1 to October 31). The qualified biologist shall walk in front of the equipment during its operation, and shall function as the field contact representative. S/he has the responsibility and authority to halt all project activity should danger to a desert tortoise arise. Work may proceed only after all hazards to the desert tortoise are removed, the desert tortoise is no longer at risk, or the desert tortoise has been moved from harm's way by a biologist authorized by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. During desert tortoise inactive periods (November 1 through February 28/29), an onsite monitor is not required but the equipment operator shall be a qualified biologist. Otherwise, the operator shall be accompanied by a qualified biologist.
- **Desert Tortoise/Construction:** Equipment operator(s) shall watch for desert tortoise on the road whenever driving, transporting or operating equipment. Driving speeds shall not exceed 20 miles per hour and operating speeds shall not exceed five (5) miles per hour, to allow for adequate visibility.
- **Desert Tortoise/Underground Construction:** Open trenches shall be regularly inspected by the authorized biologist at a minimum of once per day. Any desert tortoises encountered shall be safely removed. For small projects, escape ramps may be required. The length of the trench left open at any given time shall not exceed that distance which will remain open for one week or less in duration. A final inspection of the open trench segment shall be made by the authorized biologist immediately prior to backfilling. Arrangements shall be made prior to the onset of maintenance or construction to ensure that desert tortoises may be safely removed from the trench without violating any requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.
- **Desert Tortoise/Underground Construction:** Construction rights-of-way shall be restricted to the narrowest possible width. All project construction and maintenance shall be restricted to the authorized right-of-way. If unforeseen circumstances require expansion beyond the right-of-way, the potential expanded work areas shall be surveyed for desert tortoise.
- **Desert Tortoise/Underground Construction:** The proponent shall be required to restore disturbed areas in a manner that will assist re-establishment of biological values within the disturbed right-of-way. Methods of restoration include but are not limited to: road closure, reduction of erosion, re-spreading of the top two to six (2-6) inches of soil, planting with appropriate native shrubs, and scattering any bladed vegetation and rocks, where appropriate, across the right-of-way.

Mojave National Preserve has completed an interdisciplinary review of the proposed action. Concerns were expressed regarding disturbance and rehabilitation of NPS lands, the causes of soil erosion in this area, soil deposits, borrow for backfill, dirt movement, and habitat compensation. Southern California Gas Company will run a bulldozer along the utility access road to dig up topsoil to re-cover the gas line. They will need approximately 15 cubic yards of dirt to cover up the line. The line needs to be buried at least 24" below the ground surface. A preferred depth is 36", and an ideal depth would be 48" below ground. Southern California Gas Company's right-of-way extends 25' to either side of the center line of the pipeline, for a total of 50' in width.

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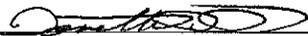
This project is located within the Ivanpah unit of desert tortoise critical habitat. The mitigations listed above address desert tortoise protections and avoidance measures. Most of the mitigations come from the US Fish & Wildlife Service's biological opinion for Mojave National Preserve's General Management Plan (1-8-00-F-36, July 6, 2001). The requirement for habitat compensation is comes from an agreement reached by the Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group, a predecessor to the Desert Managers Group (November 1991). A special use permit issued for this project must include all of these mitigations. Southern California Gas Company must adhere strictly to these and all conditions of the permit, so that significant adverse impacts to the natural and cultural resources of Mojave National Preserve are avoided. If all permit conditions are met, impairment will not result from the project.

Describe the category used to exclude action from further NEPA analysis and indicate the number of the category (see Section 3-4 of DO-12):

C.15 Installation of underground utilities in previously disturbed areas having stable soils, or in an existing utility right-of-way.

On the basis of the environmental impact information in the statutory compliance file, with which I am familiar, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No exceptional circumstances (e.g. all boxes in the ESF are marked "no") or conditions in Section 3-6 apply, and the action is fully described in Section 3-4 of DO-12.

Park Superintendent / Date: DENNIS SCHRAMM/ Lawrence J. Whalen acting
DATE: 6/18/09

NPS Contact Person: DANETTE WOO/ 

Title: Environmental Compliance Specialist

Telephone number: (760) 252-6107