1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Imperial Irrigation District (IID) and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) to assess the environmental effects of constructing, operating, and maintaining a transmission line from the Blythe California area to the Southern California Edison Company's (SCE's) Devers Substation, approximately 10 miles north of Palm Springs, California, a distance of approximately 118 miles. The Proposed Project will operate at 500-kV and will provide increased transmission line capabilities from the Blythe area to the Devers Substation to meet existing and future transmission system requirements.

IID is the State of California Lead Agency for the preparation of this EIS/EIR in compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et. seq.), CEQA implementing guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 14, Section 15000 et. seq.), and IID's Rules and Regulations to Implement CEQA.

BLM is the federal Lead Agency for the preparation of this EIS/EIR in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulation for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500 – 1508), and the BLM NEPA guidance handbook (H-1790-1).

The purpose of this document is to inform agency decision-makers and the general public about the potential adverse and beneficial environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives, and recommend mitigation measures that would reduce the significant adverse impacts to the maximum extent possible, and, where feasible, to a less than significant level. The information in an EIS or EIR does not dictate an agency's final determination on a project. However, under CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1), the state or local agency must adopt feasible mitigation measures or alternatives within its jurisdiction if they would avoid significant environmental effects identified for the Proposed Project.

1.1 PROPOSED PROJECT (AGENCY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE) OVERVIEW

The Proposed Project includes the construction and operation of new substation / switching stations and an approximately 118-mile 500-kV transmission line. The Project will initiate at a new substation / switching station (referred to as Keim) in the area near the Blythe Energy Project where it will available to interconnect with existing transmission facilities operated by the Western Area Power Administration, Southern California Edison, Imperial Irrigation District, and Florida Power and Light and/or parties.

As shown on Figure ES-1, the alignment of the Proposed Project would follow a generally east/west alignment from this area to the Devers Substation. The new 500-kV line would be constructed as two parallel lines from the proposed Keim substation / switching station to the proposed intersection with the existing SCE facilities. At this intersection, another new

substation / switching station (referred to as Midpoint) would be constructed to these facilitate interconnections. Initially, the Midpoint Substation would be equipped only with switching facilities to provide interconnections for the DPV1, DPV2, and DSWTP 500kV lines. In the future, 500/230/161/66kV substation equipment would be installed. The proposed 500-kV transmission line would use steel lattice structures along its entire route. The proposed 500-kV transmission line would be located along existing transmission line rights-of-way for most of its alignment, and would utilize existing access roads, requiring a limited amount of new access road construction. Upgrades will be required at the Devers Substation at the west end of the project.

In response to comments received on the Draft EIS/EIR, a minor variation to the Proposed Project has been developed (referred to as Variation PP1). This variation of the Proposed Project involves building the Proposed Project within the right-of-way for SCE's Devers - Palo Verde No. 2 (DPV2) transmission line instead of immediately adjacent to it as originally proposed. The DPV2 right-of-way is adjacent to the DPV1 right-of-way. Preferred Alternative PP1 would remain in the same general alignment as the Proposed Project but would be shifted only slightly (approximately 150 feet) into SCE's existing and approved DPV2 right-of-way. Implementation of this variation would result in one 500 kV line being built for both entities (Desert Southwest Transmission Line Project and SCE's DPV2) within this right-of-way instead of two separate lines being built by the Desert Southwest Power Management and SCE.

The original analysis in the Draft EIS/EIR included the area of the SCE right-of-way for DPV2. Therefore, no additional field reconnaissance is needed to address this minor variation/refinement to the Preferred Project. The "agency's preferred alternative" is the alternative which the BLM believes would fulfill its statutory mission and responsibilities, giving consideration to economic, environmental, technical and other factors. Based on the BLM's evaluation of Proposed Action and Alternatives, the BLM identified the Proposed Project as the "Agency Preferred Alternative."

1.2 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Four alternatives to the Proposed Project are being considered, and are analyzed in this EIS/EIR: 1) Alternative A (a second northern route alternative); 2) Alternative B (a southern route alternative that would include upgrading and use of certain existing transmission facilities); 3) Alternative C (a third northern route alternative with an alignment generally parallel to and north of the Alternative A alignment); and 4) the No Action Alternative. These alternatives, and their alignments, are shown on Figure ES-1.

Alternative A would be similar in design and structure to the Proposed Project. This alternative would also include the construction of an approximately 118-mile long transmission line from the new Keim substation / switching station to the existing Devers Substation. It would follow the same alignment as the Proposed Project except where the Alternative A route would follow Route Option A-2 for a segment west of Desert Center. In this area, Option A-2 follows the I-10 corridor where the Proposed Project parallels the north side of the existing DPV1 Transmission Line and DPV2 right-of-way.

Like the Proposed Project, in response to comments received on the Draft EIS/EIR, a minor variation to Alternative A has been developed (referred to as Variation A1). This variation involves building the proposed project within the right-of-way for SCE's DPV2 transmission line instead of immediately adjacent to it as originally proposed. Alternative A1 would remain in the same general alignment as Alternative A but would be shifted slightly (approximately 150 feet) into SCE's existing and approved DPV2 right-of-way.

Alternative B would connect the new Keim substation / switching station in the area near the Blythe Energy Project with the existing Midway Substation near Niland, California. This alternative would be built as a new double-circuit, 230-kV transmission line that would generally follow the alignment of State Route 78 (SR-78) south from the new substation/switching station to the southern portion of the Chocolate Mountains before turning generally north and continuing to the Midway Substation. This transmission line would be approximately 79 miles long. In addition to these new facilities, Alternative B would require upgrading a total of approximately 35 miles of existing transmission lines south of the Devers Substation, and upgrading substation facilities at the Midway, Coachella, Mirage and Devers Substations.

Alternative C would connect the new Keim substation / switching station in the area around the Blythe Energy Project with the Devers Substation in a manner similar to that of the Proposed Project. Alternative C would include the construction of a new transmission line (single-circuit, 500-kV) that would be approximately 117 miles in length and would follow a similar alignment slightly to the north of the Proposed Project alignment for much of its route.

As required by both NEPA and CEQA, a no project alternative is also considered in the analysis in this document. Additional alternatives were also considered during the initial alternatives formulation and screening process. These alternatives, and the reasons for their elimination from further consideration, are discussed in Section 2.7.

1.3 PROPOSED ACTION OVERVIEW

The Proposed Project and alternatives would be located within the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA), a planning area under jurisdiction of the BLM. The CDCA Plan and amendments provide planning guidelines and land use requirements on BLM land within the CDCA. The CDCA Plan identifies designated utility corridors in which more intensive development of linear utilities is generally considered consistent with the CDCA Plan. Figure ES-2 shows designated utility corridors within the CDCA.

Because the project would be located within areas under BLM jurisdiction, construction and operation of the project requires BLM to authorize a Right-of-Way Grant. The Proposed Project and Alternatives A and C would be located within CDCA Plan-designated utility corridors, and a Right-of-Way Grant for the construction and operation of the Proposed Project or Alternatives A and C would be consistent with the CDCA Plan. Alternative B, however, would require the construction of a transmission line within the CDCA, but in areas outside of designated utility corridors. As such, for the BLM to issue a Right-of-Way Grant for construction and operation of Alternative B, an amendment to the CDCA Plan would be required or an exemption to the CDCA Plan would need to be authorized by the BLM.

The term "Proposed Action" is used within this document to reference the actions that would need to be taken for the Proposed Project to be developed. The Proposed Action, therefore, includes the construction and operation of an approximately 118-mile transmission line and associated substation/switching station facilities as described in Section 2 of this EIS/EIR. Similarly, alternatives to the Proposed Action consist of the actions that would need to be taken for Alternative A, B, or C to be constructed. Alternatives to the Proposed Action include:

- Construction of an approximately 118-mile transmission line between the Blythe area and the Devers Substation (Proposed Project and Alternative A as described in Section 2).
- Construction and operation of an approximately 79-mile transmission line between the Blythe area and the Midway Substation (Alternative B as described in Section 2). This alternative would require an amendment to or exemption from the CDCA Plan
- Construction of an approximately 117-mile transmission line between the Blythe area and the Devers Substation (Alternative C as described in Section 2).

1.4 PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The *California Energy Outlook: Electricity and Natural Gas Trends Report* (CEC 2001) describes the energy supply and demand trends of the past decade to provide perspective on current events. This report provides an overview of expected developments in the near future and addresses the long-term demand outlooks through 2010. The energy trend considers both electricity and natural gas developments. The report also examines electricity demand, load management, and natural gas infrastructure developments. The report estimates that demand for electrical power in the IID service area will increase at a rate of 20 to 30 megawatts (MW) annually. The report also states that California's peak electricity demand will continue to grow at about two percent per year on average.

New generation facilities have been completed in the region to the north and east of IID's service area that may provide a portion of IID's current and future requirements. These include the Griffith Energy Project in Kingman, Arizona and the South Point Energy Project north of Parker, Arizona. The Blythe Energy Project, west of Blythe, California, began commercial operations in December 2003.

Transmission access is the main constraint to utilizing these new generation sources to meet the increased demand for electrical power in the area. IID's primary transmission system includes 92-kV, 161-kV, and 230-kV transmission lines with direct interconnections at Mirage, Imperial, Coachella Valley, Devers, and Blythe Substations. Presently, access to the Western Area Power Administration (Western) transmission grid to the northeast is an existing 161-kV transmission line from the existing Blythe Substation to Niland. This existing transmission line was operating at or near its maximum capacity by the end of 2003.

The DSWTP will increase California's transmission import capability by providing greater access to sources of low-cost energy currently operating in the Southwest. The Southwest region currently has over 6,000 MW of surplus generation, which may be imported into California. The

Southwest Transmission Expansion Planning (STEP)[1] working group independently concluded a similar magnitude of generation is available for import into California. Increased access to energy in the Southwest is forecasted to lower total energy costs and substantially benefit California consumers.

In addition, on May 8, 2004, regulatory agencies in California adopted the *Energy Action Plan* for California. The *Energy Action Plan* concluded that adequate, reliable, and reasonably priced energy supplies can be achieved, in part, by upgrading and expanding the electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure and reducing the time needed before facilities are brought on line.[2] In particular, "Action IV" of the *Energy Action Plan* states that ([t]he State will reinvigorate its planning, permitting, and funding processes to assure that necessary improvements and expansions to the bulk electricity grid are made on a timely basis."

Transmission infrastructure is necessary for a competitive market, and is vital to integrating new generation additions.[3] The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) recently stated that FERC's Goal 1 is to "Promote a Secure, High Quality Environmentally Responsible Infrastructure through Consistent Policies." Under this goal is objective 1.1:

- Expedite appropriate infrastructure development to ensure sufficient energy supplies; and
- Identify transmission and pipeline projects with high public interest benefits and facilitate their speedy completion, consistent with the Commission's (FERC) statutory mandates and due process.[4]

The California Legislature, likewise, has encouraged investment in transmission facilities to facilitate competition in the generation market. It has stated that reasonable expenditures to expand transmission facilities are in the public's interest, if made for the purpose of facilitating competition in electric generation markets.[5]

The DSWTP is expected to enhance competition amongst energy suppliers by increasing access to the California energy market, providing siting incentives for future energy suppliers, and

[1] STEP's Purpose and Scope states "Southwest Transmission Expansion Plan (STEP) is a sub-regional planning group that was formed to address transmission concerns in the Arizona, southern Nevada, southern California, and northern Mexico area. As a result of a large amount of new generation developed in this area, it was apparent to many that the transmission grid would be inadequate to efficiently deliver that power to the major load areas. The goal of STEP is "To provide a forum where all interested parties are encouraged to participate in the planning, coordination, and implementation of a robust transmission system between the Arizona, Nevada, Mexico, and southern California areas that is capable of supporting a competitive efficient and seamless westside wholesale electricity market while meeting established reliability standards."(See, Jan. 17th 2003 PDF file at: http://www1.caiso.com/docs/2003/01/22/2003012211380012544.pdf and the May 8th, 2003 document at http://www1.caiso.com/docs/2003/05/13/2003051315061917183.pdf.).

[2] The California Energy Commission's Electricity and Natural Gas Infrastructure Assessment Report (December 2003) available at www.energy.ca.gov (http://www.energy.ca.gov/reports/100-03-014F.PDF). Similarly, the report highlights the need for additional transmission infrastructure investment, particularly to support generation infrastructure.

[3] See, R.04-01-026, Order Instituting Rulemaking on policies and practices for the Commission's transmission assessment process (January 28, 2004) (Attachment B, Report of Current Planning Process for Investor-Owned Utilities).

[4] See, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Strategic Plan FY2004-FY2008, September 10, 2003, http://ferc.gov/about/strat-docs/09-29-03-detail-strategic-plan.pdf.

[5] Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 454.1 ("(a) Reasonable expenditures by transmission owners that are electrical corporations to plan, design, and engineer reconfiguration, replacement, or expansion of transmission facilities are in the public interest and are deemed prudent if made for the purpose of facilitating competition in electric generation markets, ensuring open access and comparable service, or maintaining or enhancing reliability, whether or not these expenditures are for transmission facilities that become operational.")

providing additional import capability. Facilitating a competitive energy market in the Southwest may also create employment opportunities, which are beneficial to the economy and industries in Arizona and California.

The basic objectives of the Proposed Project are to:

Objective 1: Ensure access to competitive generation sources that will allow the minimization of market price spikes, which adversely affect the region's customers.

Objective 2: Provide improved transmission access to new generation sources (e.g., the Griffith Energy Project, the South Point Energy Project, and the Blythe Energy Projects) to meet the increased demands for electrical power in the area.

Objective 3: Enhance system reliability by providing additional transmission line capacity to the Coachella Valley load center and, thus, reduce loading on other transmission lines.

Objective 4: Improve operational flexibility during normal as well as contingency situations.

The Desert Southwest Project would satisfy these objectives by constructing and operating a new transmission line from the area around the Blythe Energy Project near Blythe, California, to the existing Devers Substation, near Palm Springs, California. The operating voltage will be 500-kV.

1.5 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

1.5.1 NEPA Scoping

The scoping process for the Proposed Action was designed to solicit input from the public; from federal, state, and local agencies; and from other interested parties on the scope of issues that should be addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR. The scoping process is also intended to identify significant issues related to the Proposed Action.

Since the publication of the first Notice of Intent (NOI), the name of the proposal has been changed to the Desert Southwest Transmission Project. Publication of the Draft and Final EIS will be under that name. In addition, the Proposed Project and alternatives has been revised to address comments and concerns raised during the scoping process. The scoping process for the Proposed Action is described below.

A Revised NOI describing the Proposed Action and the modified Proposed Project was published in the Federal Register on Tuesday, August 13, 2002 (Volume 67, Number 156, pages 52737-52738) announcing the preparation a joint EIS/EIR addressing a proposed 230kV or 500kV transmission line project and possible CDCA Plan Amendment. In accordance with NEPA, a 30-day comment period was provided for the NOI. Two public scoping meetings were held on the following dates: 1) August 14, from 7-9 p.m., at the Blythe City Council Multipurpose Room, Blythe, California; and 2) August 15, from 7-9 p.m., at the IID Board Room, La Quinta, California. A copy of the Revised NOI is provided in Appendix A. Comments received in response to the NOI are provided in Appendix B.

A NOI was published in the Federal Register on Monday, March 26, 2001, (Volume 66, Number 58, pages 16485-16486) announcing the preparation of a CDCA Plan Amendment and EIS for the IID's Proposed New 230-kV "BN-BS" Transmission Line Project. Two public scoping meetings were held on the following dates: 1) March 28, from 7-10 p.m., at the IID Board Room, La Quinta, CA, and 2) March 29, from 7-10 p.m., at the Blythe City Council Multipurpose Room, Blythe, CA. A copy of the NOI is provided in Appendix C. Comments received in response to the NOI are provided in Appendix D.

1.5.2 CEQA Notification

For the IID's Proposed 230-kV "BN-BS" Transmission Line Project a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was sent to the State Clearinghouse and noticed for public and agency review on Tuesday, April 24, 2001 (SCH #2001041105). Since the publication of the NOP, the name of the proposal was changed to the Desert Southwest Transmission Project. Publication of the Draft and Final EIR was under that name. In addition, the Proposed Project was initially revised to address comments and concerns raised during the scoping process. A copy of the NOP is provided in Appendix C. Comments received in response to the NOP are provided in Appendix D.

As discussed above, IID subsequently modified its Proposed Project and issued a Revised NOP on July 31, 2002. In accordance with CEQA, a 30-day comment period on the Revised NOP was provided. A copy of the Revised NOP is provided in Appendix A. Comments received in response to the NOP are provided in Appendix B.

1.5.3 Review of Draft EIS / EIR

A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS/EIR was published in the Federal Register on December 19, 2003. This initiated a 90-day public comment period. Approximately 37 copies of the Draft EIS/EIR were distributed to interested parties and copies were also made available to anyone who requested them. Public meetings to solicit comments on the Draft EIS / EIR were held on November 18, 19, and 20 in Blythe, El Centro, and La Quinta respectively. A copy of the NOA and the notices advertising the public meetings on the Draft EIS / EIR are included in Appendix M. Copies of the comments received shown alongside how they were responded to in the Final EIS/EIR are included in Appendix L.

A Notice of Completion (NOC) for the Draft EIS / EIR was published on October 7, 2003. This initiated a 45-day public comment period. A copy of the NOC in included in Appendix M.

1.5.4 Agency Coordination

The BLM and IID have coordinated with representatives of many federal, state, and local agencies throughout the process of collecting information for this environmental analysis. Many of these agencies are identified in Table 1-1 at the end of this section.

1.6 CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

1.6.1 Regulatory Requirements

Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) states: "The Secretary shall, with public involvement ... develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land use plans which provide by tracts or areas for the use of the public lands" (43 United States Code (USC)1712). The regulations for making and modifying land use plans and planning decisions are found in 43 CFR 1600. The California Desert Conservation Area Plan (CDCA) is such a land management plan, and its applicability to this project is described below.

The proposed plan amendments must adhere to regulations set forth in 43 CFR 1610, Resource Management Planning. These regulations require an interdisciplinary approach to be used in amending resource plans, and require that the disciplines of the preparers be appropriate to the values involved and the issues identified for the amendment. Such amendments must be analyzed through the NEPA process, enabling public and other federal, state, and local government agencies opportunities to participate in and comment on the preparation of amendments. The analysis and public involvement for the proposed plan amendments must coincide, to the extent possible, with the public notices, hearings, and comment periods of the NEPA/CEQA process for the Proposed Action.

1.6.2 Need for Plan Amendments

In 1980 when the CDCA Plan was issued, utility corridors 2 to 5 miles wide were designated, mostly along existing pipelines and transmission lines (BLM 1980). Subsequently, several additional corridors were designated. The intent of these designations is to limit future disturbance and land use designation for utilities to previously disturbed areas in existing utility corridors. By the legislation enabling the CDCA Plan, a plan amendment is required to allow an exception to the plan's designated utility corridors.

An amendment to the CDCA Plan would not be necessary for the Proposed Project or Alternatives A and C, because the transmission lines would be located within a designated utility corridor on BLM land.

If the CDCA Plan is not amended, the BLM may authorize installation of a transmission line with a capacity of 161-kV or larger and within existing corridors only, or the BLM may deny the project if the existing corridor option does not prove feasible. An alternative that must be considered in this EIS/EIR is the use of existing BLM-designated utility corridors, as described in the CDCA Plan (BLM 1980 as amended). The Proposed Project and Alternatives A and C, as described in Section 2.0, meet this requirement.

However, an amendment to the CDCA Plan would be necessary for Alternative B because the Alternative B transmission line would not be located entirely within a designated utility corridor. The CDCA amendment processes are described below.

1.6.3 Planning Criteria

The BLM has developed planning criteria for the consideration of proposed plan amendments. Planning criteria (43 CFR 1610.4-2) are parameters that guide development of the plan amendment to ensure the planning process is tailored to the issues and that unnecessary data collection is avoided. Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by applicable laws and regulations; agency guidance; and the result of coordination with the public, Native American tribes, and other federal, state, and local government agencies. Planning criteria applicable to Alternative B are as follows:

- **Planning and NEPA** – The proposed plan amendments shall not amend the majority of the decisions, goals, and objectives established in the CDCA Plan and the decisions shall remain in effect. The plan amendment process shall be conducted in compliance with the FLPMA, planning regulations at 43 CFR 1600, BLM manual guidance, and all applicable federal laws affecting BLM land use decisions. The planning process shall include an environmental analysis prepared in compliance with NEPA, the President's CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1500, and BLM guidance.
- **Consistency with Other Land Use Plans** – The BLM's land use plans and amendments must be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans of Indian tribes, other federal agencies, and state and local government to the maximum extent practical, given that the BLM's land use plans must also be consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of the FLPMA, and other federal laws and regulations applicable to pubic land (43 CFR 1610.3-2(a)). Consistency with current land use plans is discussed in Section 3.7, Land Use and Recreation.
- **Consistency with BLM Planning Efforts** – The approved Northern and Eastern Colorado (NECO) Desert Plan and Coachella Valley Plan are considered in Section 3.7, Land Use and throughout the document.

1.6.4 Public Participation in the CDCA Plan Amendment Process

BLM planning regulations (40 CFR 1601-1610) provide for specific points of public involvement in environmental analysis and land use planning decisions including plan amendments. The review and analysis of the Proposed Project follow IID and BLM guidelines for public participation and opportunity to comment. Although the Proposed Project would not require a CDCA Plan amendment, an alternative to the Proposed Project (Alternative B) under consideration would require a CDCA Plan amendment were it to be selected. Section 1.3 provides a summary of BLM's and IID's consultation and coordination process for the Proposed Project.

Before the BLM approves the CDCA Plan amendment decisions, the Governor of California must have an opportunity to review the proposed decision for consistency with state and local plans.

1.7 PERMITS, APPROVALS, AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Numerous federal, state and local regulations and permit requirements would be applicable to construction and/or operation of the Proposed Project and alternatives. The Desert Southwest

Transmission Project or its contractors would be required to comply with all applicable requirements, as well as obtain and comply with terms contained within required permits. **Table 1-1** lists the major federal, state, and local permits, approvals, and consultations identified for the construction and operation of the Proposed Project and alternatives.

1.8 OTHER PROPOSED NEW TRANSMISSION LINE FACILITIES

The proposed DSWTP would cross BLM, state, and private land and be located within a 2 to5-mile-wide BLM-designated utility corridor for the entire route. Currently, there are two other proposed transmission line project, described below, that would be located within the same utility corridor as the Proposed Project. DSWTP has coordinated with the proponents of the other projects to define rights-of-way for compatibility within the corridor and with the WECC guidelines.

1.8.1 Southern California Edison's Devers–Palo Verde 500-kV No. 2 (DPV2) Project

The DPV2 Project as proposed by SCE includes a new 230-mile 500 kV line from the Harquahala Substation (in Arizona, near the Palo Verde nuclear power plant) to SCE's Devers Substation (in North Palm Springs, California). The 500 kV portion would follow the existing SCE 500 kV transmission line, Devers–Palo Verde No. 1 (DPV1). The location of the California portion of the DPV1 and proposed DPV2 Transmission Lines are shown on **Figure 4-1**.

The DPV2 Project also includes upgrades to an additional 50 miles of 230 kV transmission lines west of the Devers Substation. Forty miles of 230 kV transmission line from Devers Substation to San Bernardino Junction at the western end of San Timoteo Canyon would be reconfigured and two separate 230-kV corridors, from San Bernardino Junction to SCE's Mountain View Substation and from San Bernardino Junction to SCE's Vista Substation would be reconductored.

It should also be noted that Desert Southwest Power, LLC (DSWP) as the proponent of the DSWTP has submitted an interconnection request to SCE. The proposed DSWTP would be constructed adjacent to and parallel to SCE’s DPV1 line from Blythe, California to the Devers Substation. In an effort to minimize environmental impacts and project costs, SCE and DSWP have agreed to explore ways to integrate the two projects. Under a joint project proposal, only one, instead of two 500kV transmission lines, would be constructed between Blythe and Devers. The joint project would include the construction of one new line within SCE’s DPV2 right-of-way. In addition, the joint project would include the construction of a 500kV switchyard referred to as the Midpoint Substation in the Blythe area. The Midpoint Substation would allow the integration of the DSWTP and the DPV2 Projects. SCE will keep the CPUC informed of significant developments regarding these joint project discussions. The Midpoint Switching/Substation would allow for the proposed Blythe Energy Project Transmission Modifications.

1.8.2 Blythe Energy Project Transmission Line Modifications

The proposed Blythe Energy Project Transmission Line Modifications project would allow electrical output from the Blythe Energy Project (BEP) to be delivered to the southern California ISO-controlled electrical transmission system. The location of the BEP Transmission Line route is shown on **Figure 4-1**.

There are two distinct components to the proposed BEP transmission line modifications:

Buck to Julian Hinds Transmission Line Component:

- Upgrades to Buck Substation.
- Installation of approximately 67.4 miles of new 230 kilovolt kV transmission line between the Buck Substation located adjacent to the BEP and the Julian Hinds Substation located approximately sixty miles to the west.
- The proposed transmission line route would generally follow SCE's existing 500 kV DPV1 transmission line.
- Transmission line structures would be concrete, single-pole structures.
- Upgrades to the Julian Hinds Substation.

Buck to Devers-Palo Verde Transmission Line Component:

- Upgrades to Buck Substation.
- Installation of approximately 6.7 miles of a new 230 kV transmission line (initially operated at 161 kV) between the Buck Substation and SCE's existing DPV1 500 kV transmission line.
- Transmission line structures would be concrete single-pole structures.
- Construction of a new 161 kV to 500 kV substation ("Midpoint Substation") at the point of interconnection with SCE's existing DPV1 500 kV transmission line.

Table 1-1
Potential Permits and Approvals for the Proposed Project and Alternatives

Agency/Department	Permit/Approval	Action Associated With or Required For
FEDERAL AGENCIES		
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Biological Assessment, Section 7 Consultation, Biological Opinion (Endangered Species Act [ESA] 16 USC 1531-1544)	• Activity where there may be an effect on federally-listed endangered/threatened/proposed species (applies to projects with federal involvement).
	Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act	• Provide comments to prevent loss of and damage to wildlife resources.
Bureau of Land Management	Right-of-Way Grant (FLPMA, 43 USC 1701 *et seq*.)	• Easements on BLM-managed land.
	Temporary use permit (43 USC 1701 et seq.)	• Short-term activities on BLM-managed land (less than 3 years).
	Antiquities and Cultural Resources Use Permit	• Consider issuance of antiquities and cultural resources use permit to conduct surveys and to excavate or remove cultural resources on federal land.
	Plan of Development	• Consider approval of detailed Construction, Operation and Maintenance (COM) Plan.
	Notice to Proceed	• Following issuance of the right-of-way grant and approval of the COM Plan, consider issuance of a Notice to Proceed with project development and mitigation activities.
	California Desert Conservation Plan Amendment	• Consider amending CDCA Plan (applicable to Alternative B only).
	Clean Air Act Conformity	• Ensuring federal actions are consistent with the Clean Air Act and with federally enforceable air quality management plans.
Army Corps of Engineers	Individual/Nationwide Section 404 Permit (CWA, 33 USC 1341)	• Discharge of dredge/fill into Waters of the United States, including wetlands.
	Section 10, Rivers and Harbors Act Permit	• Activities, including the placement of structures, affecting navigable waters.
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	Section 106 Consultation, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)	• Opportunity to comment if project may affect cultural resources listed or eligible for listing on National Register of Historic Places.

Table 1-1
Potential Permits and Approvals for the Proposed Project and Alternatives

Agency/Department	Permit/Approval	Action Associated With or Required For
U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration	Encroachment Permits	• Consider issuance of permit for transmission line crossing of federally-funded highways (I-10).
U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms	Explosive User's Permit	• Consider issuance of permit to purchase, store and use explosives for site preparation during tower footing excavation.
STATE AGENCIES		
State Water Resources Control Board, Regional Water Quality Control Board	General Construction Activity Stormwater Permit	• Stormwater discharges associated with construction activity.
	Waste Discharge Requirements. (Water Code 13000 *et seq.*)	• Discharge of waste that might affect groundwater or surface water (nonpoint-source) quality.
	401 Certification (CWA, 33 USC 1341. If the project requires COE 404 permit)	• Discharge into waters and wetlands (see COE Section 404 Permit).
California State Lands Commission	Right-of-Way Permit (Land Use Lease)	• Consider issuance of a grant of right-of-way across state land.
State Department of Fish and Game	California ESA	• Activity where a listed candidate, threatened, or endangered species under California ESA may be present in the project area and a state agency is acting as lead agency for CEQA compliance. Consider issuance of a Section 2081 incidental take permit for state-only listed species and a Section 2081.1 consistency determination for effects on species that are both state and federally listed.
	California Native Plant Protection Act	• Review of mitigation agreement and mitigation plan for plants listed as rare.
	Lake/Streambed Alteration Agreement (California Fish and Game Code Section 1600)	• Change in natural state of river, stream, lake (includes road or land construction across a natural streambed).
California Department of Transportation	Encroachment Permit	• Consider issuance of permits to cross state highways.
California State Historic Preservation Office	Section 106 Consultation, NHPA	• Consult with BLM, project applicant, appropriate land management agencies, and others regarding activities potentially affecting cultural resources.

Table 1-1
Potential Permits and Approvals for the Proposed Project and Alternatives

Agency/Department	Permit/Approval	Action Associated With or Required For
LOCAL AGENCIES		
Coachella Valley Water District	Utility Clearance and Encroachment Permit.	• Consider issuance of encroachment permit.
Imperial County, Public Works Department	Road Crossing Permit	• Consider issuance of a road crossing permit.
	Grading Permit	• Excavation and fill activities.
Imperial County, Planning Department	Conditional Use Permit	• Activities where use is conditional in a particular zone.
	Variance	• Structures that exceed 40 feet in Imperial County (S-2 Zone).
	Plan Amendment (i.e., General and/or Community Plan)	• Transmission lines routed outside a designated utility corridor.
Imperial County, Sheriff's Department	Explosives Permit	• Consider issuance of a license to store flammable explosives.
Riverside County, Transportation Department	Encroachment Permit	• Consider issuance of encroachment permit.
Riverside County, Public Works Department	Grading Permit	• Excavation and fill activities.
Riverside County, Planning Department	Conditional Use Permit	• Activities where use is conditional in a particular zone.
Metropolitan Water District	Design Plan Review	• Submit design plan for any activities in area of MWD's pipelines or facilities for review.

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