UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

OCT 29 2013

Ms. Lorraine Gerchas
USDA Forest Service
c/o Aspen Environmental Group
5020 Chesebro Road, Suite 200
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Subject: Second Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project, Kern, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles Counties, CA (CEQ # 20130305)

Dear Ms. Gerchas

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the second Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project. Our review and comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under § 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The EPA provided comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on April 6, 2009 and rated the DEIS as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information. Given the complex nature of this proposed 173 mile transmission line, and the variety of landscapes, land uses, and habitat areas that would be affected, we identified concerns with the proposed alternative due to aquatic and biological resource impacts from access roads, and recommended the maximum helicopter construction on National Forest Service Lands alternative. The EPA also recommended project alignment modifications, and raised air quality, environmental justice, and weed management concerns.

The EPA reviewed the first Supplemental DEIS and submitted comments on June 14, 2010. We rated the first SDEIS as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information. We expressed concerns about the potential for increased impacts to biological and aquatic resources resulting from increased erosion, sedimentation, habitat fragmentation, and the spread of invasive species.

The EPA reviewed the second Supplemental DEIS and submitted comments on June 3, 2013. We rated the second SDEIS as Lack of Objections.

The EPA appreciates the efforts of the U.S. Forest Service, Southern California Edison and its consultants to respond to our DEIS, first SDEIS and second SDEIS comments. We continue to support the Project purpose of providing adequate transmission capacity for renewable wind energy sources. The EPA also supports the Project objectives of minimizing adverse environmental effects by maximizing the use of existing transmission line right of way, appropriate siting of infrastructure and proper aircraft hazard reduction. Thank you for including, in the second FSEIS, additional discussion of the potential

for contaminant release from the solar power system due to vandalism, and other clarifications that EPA requested.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this second FSEIS for the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project. If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3521, or contact Scott Sysum of my staff at 415-972-3742 or sysum.scott@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office (CED-2)

Cc: Mr. Jason Coontz, California Public Utilities Commission