

Appendix A

Alternatives Screening Report

Alternatives Screening Report

San Luis Transmission Project



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Note: This updated report presents a new alternative for consideration in the EIS/EIR (the Billy Wright Road Alternative Corridor), documents the rationale for removing the Jasper Sears Road Alternative Corridor, and revises the alternative corridor names to be consistent with those that will be presented in the EIS/EIR.

1. Overview of Alternatives Evaluation Process

This screening report presents each potential alternative identified during the planning and scoping processes and the rationale for their retention or elimination from further consideration in the EIS/EIR. The range of alternatives considered in the screening analysis includes:

- Alternatives identified by Western, Reclamation, and the Authority;
- Alternatives identified during the public scoping process; and
- Alternatives identified by the EIS/EIR team during review of the Proposed Project impacts and meetings with affected agencies and interested parties.

1.1 Alternatives Screening Methods

The evaluation of alternatives uses a three-step screening process:

- Step 1:** Clearly define each alternative so each can be compared with other alternatives.
- Step 2:** Compare each alternative with the Proposed Project, using NEPA and CEQA criteria (defined below).
- Step 3:** Based on the results of Step 2, determine the suitability of each alternative for full analysis in the EIS/EIR. If the alternative is unsuitable, eliminate it from further consideration in the EIS/EIR.

1.2 NEPA and CEQA Requirements for Alternatives

After completing the steps defined above, the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives are carefully analyzed with respect to NEPA and CEQA criteria for consideration of alternatives. Both NEPA and CEQA provide guidance on selecting a reasonable range of alternatives for evaluation in an EIS and EIR, and the requirements are similar.

1.2.1 NEPA

According to the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) NEPA Regulations (40 C.F.R. 1502.14), an EIS must present the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives in comparative form, defining the issues so they may be readily understood by the public and decision makers, and contributing to a basis for an informed and reasoned decision. The alternatives section shall:

- (a) Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives. For alternatives that were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons they were eliminated.
- (b) Devote substantial treatment to each alternative considered in detail including the proposed action so that reviewers may evaluate their comparative merits.
- (c) Include reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency.
- (d) Include the alternative of no action.
- (e) Identify the agency's preferred alternative or alternatives, if one or more exists, in the draft statement and identify such alternative in the final statement unless another law prohibits the expression of such a preference.
- (f) Include appropriate mitigation measures not already included in the proposed action or alternatives.

The CEQ has stated that “[r]easonable alternatives include those that are practical or feasible from the technical and economic standpoint and using common sense rather than simply desirable from the standpoint of the applicant” (CEQ, 1983).

1.2.1.1 Consistency with Purpose and Need

CEQ NEPA Regulations (40 C.F.R. 1502.13) require a statement “briefly specifying the underlying purpose and need to which the agency is responding in proposing the alternatives including the proposed action.” Alternatives must be consistent with Western’s purpose and need for the SLTP, which was defined as follows:

Western’s transmission contract with PG&E, under which power is transmitted between Western’s Tracy Substation and the San Luis Unit, will end in spring 2016. The San Luis Unit is a key component in delivering water for municipal, industrial and irrigation supply. The purpose of the SLTP is to minimize expected power delivery cost increases for operating the San Luis Unit.

1.2.1.2 Feasibility

The environmental consequences of the alternatives, including the proposed action, are to be discussed in the EIS/EIR in accordance with CEQ NEPA Regulations (40 C.F.R. 1502.16). The discussion shall include possible conflicts between the proposed action and the objectives of federal, regional, state, and local land use plans, policies and controls for the area concerned. Other feasibility factors to be considered may include cost, logistics, technology, and social, environmental, and legal factors. The feasibility factors are substantially the same as described for CEQA in Section 1.2.2.2, below.

1.2.2 CEQA

An important aspect of EIR preparation is the identification and assessment of a range of potentially feasible alternatives that have the potential for avoiding or substantially lessening the impacts of a proposed project. The State CEQA Guidelines require consideration of the No Project Alternative (Section 15126.6(e)) and selection of a range of reasonable alternatives (Section 15126.6(c)). The EIR must adequately assess these alternatives to allow for a comparative analysis for consideration by decision makers (Section 15126.6(d)). The State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6(a)) state that:

An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public participation.

To comply with CEQA’s requirements, each alternative will be evaluated in three ways:

- Does the alternative accomplish all or most of the project objectives?
- Is the alternative potentially feasible (from economic, environmental, legal, social, technological standpoints)?
- Does the alternative avoid or substantially lessen any significant effects of the Proposed Project (including consideration of whether the alternative itself could create significant effects potentially greater than those of the Proposed Project)?

Each of these factors is described in more detail in the following sections.

1.2.2.1 Consistency with Project Objectives

CEQA requires analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives that might feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project while avoiding or substantially lessening environmental impacts. The Authority identified the following objectives for the Proposed Project:

- Obtain durable and long-term, cost certain and efficient transmission delivery of Central Valley Project power from federal power generation sites to the major pumping stations of the San Luis Unit to reliably deliver water to the Authority's member agencies;
- Locate and install transmission facilities in a safe, efficient, and cost effective manner that meets Project needs while minimizing environmental impacts;
- Locate facilities to minimize the potential of environmental impacts resulting from damage by external sources such as geologic hazards;
- Maximize the use of existing transmission corridors and rights-of-way (ROW) in order to minimize effects on previously undisturbed land and resources; and
- Obtain stable and reliable transmission that meets Project needs in a cost-effective and timely manner.

1.2.2.2 Feasibility

The State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15364) define feasibility as:

... capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.

According to the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6(f)(1)), among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the potential feasibility of alternatives include site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or other regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and proponent's control over alternative sites in determining the range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EIR. For the screening analysis, the potential feasibility of potential alternatives will be assessed taking the following factors into consideration:

- **Economic Feasibility.** Is the alternative so costly that implementation would be prohibitive?
- **Environmental Feasibility.** Would implementation of the alternative cause substantially greater environmental damage than the Proposed Project, thereby making the alternative clearly inferior from an environmental standpoint?
- **Legal Feasibility.** Does the alternative have the potential to avoid lands that have legal protection that may prohibit or substantially limit the feasibility of permitting a high voltage transmission line?
- **Regulatory Feasibility.** Is the alternative consistent with regulatory standards for transmission system design, operation, and maintenance?
- **Social Feasibility.** Would the alternative cause significant benefit or damage to the socioeconomic structure of the community or be consistent or inconsistent with important community values and needs?

- **Technical Feasibility.** Is the alternative feasible from a technological perspective, considering available technology? Are there any construction, operation, or maintenance constraints that cannot be overcome?

1.2.2.3 Potential to Reduce Significant Environmental Effects

A key CEQA requirement for identifying and assessing alternatives is that the alternatives must have the potential to “avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project” (State CEQA Guidelines Section 16126.6(a)). If an alternative is identified that clearly does not have the potential to provide an overall environmental advantage as compared to the Proposed Project, it is usually eliminated from further consideration. At the screening stage, it is not possible to evaluate all of the impacts of the alternatives in comparison to the Proposed Project with absolute certainty, nor is it possible to quantify impacts. However, it is possible to identify elements of an alternative that are likely to be the sources of impact and to relate them, to the extent possible, to general conditions in the subject area.

2. Alternative Descriptions and Determinations

2.1 Alternatives Retained for Analysis in the EIS/EIR

2.1.1 Corridor Alternatives

Patterson Pass Road Alternative

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative to reduce visual impacts to motorists along Interstate 5. As shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3 this alternative corridor would extend from about Patterson Pass in the north to near Horseshoe Road in the south. It would run parallel to the Proposed Project, but on the western side of the existing high-voltage transmission lines, farther from Interstate 5 for about 50 miles. At this point, it would cross the existing high-voltage line and run along the east side, heading southwest for about 1.3 miles to where it would join the West of Cemetery Alternative near Horseshoe Road.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need as well as the Project Objectives, particularly as they relate to use of existing transmission line corridors.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially feasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Visual Resources. This alternative would be located farther from Interstate 5 and therefore may be less visible to motorists in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Disadvantages

This alternative would potentially have no environmental disadvantages in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Determination

Retained for Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and Project Objectives and is potentially feasible. It would potentially reduce visual impacts along Interstate 5. Therefore, this alternative is retained for analysis in the EIS/EIR.

Butts Road Alternative

Alternative Description

At Butts Road, this alternative corridor would continue south on the west side of the existing transmission corridor for approximately 2.2 miles. At about McCabe Road, this alternative would turn southwest for about 4.0 miles where it would rejoin the Proposed Project corridor.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need as well as most of the Project Objectives.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially feasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Land Use. This alternative could avoid potential land use conflicts that may occur under the Proposed Project as it would avoid the O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area east of the O'Neill Forebay.

Biological Resources. By avoiding the wildlife area on the east side of the O'Neill Forebay, this alternative could reduce potential impacts to habitat in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Disadvantages

This alternative would potentially have no environmental disadvantages in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Determination

Retained for Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need as well as the Project Objectives and is potentially feasible. It could reduce potential land use conflicts and biological impacts as compared to the Proposed Project by avoiding the O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area. Therefore, this alternative is retained for analysis in the EIS/EIR.

West of Cemetery Alternative

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative corridor in response to comments requesting the avoidance of a proposed solar development north of the O'Neill Forebay. It was also developed to avoid the O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area, which is located on the east side of the O'Neill Forebay. As shown in Figure 3, at Butts Road, this alternative would head west and then south from the existing transmission corridor and then extend around the west side of the San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery (Cemetery) for approximately 2.6 miles. At this point, it would begin to follow an existing PG&E 500-kV corridor for about 1.4 miles until it turns southwest, crossing State Route (SR) 152. This alternative would then head east paralleling SR 152 to the south for 2.8 miles where it would interconnect with either the existing Los Banos Substation or new Los Banos West Substation.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need as well as most of the Project Objectives; however, it would not maximize the use of existing transmission corridors and ROW. For about 2.6 miles, as it extends along the west side of the Cemetery and for about one mile before it terminates at the San Luis Substation, the corridor would not be adjacent to existing transmission ROW.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially feasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Land Use

This alternative would avoid potential land use conflicts that could occur under the Proposed Project as it would avoid approved solar development north of the O'Neill Forebay and the O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area east of the O'Neill Forebay.

Biological Resources. By avoiding the wildlife area on the east side of the O'Neill Forebay, this alternative would reduce potential impacts to habitat in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Disadvantages

This alternative would potentially have no environmental disadvantages in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Determination

Retained for Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need as well as the Project Objectives, and is potentially feasible. It could address certain concerns and recommendations expressed in scoping comments and reduce the potential for land use conflicts associated with an approved solar development north of the O'Neill Forebay and the Wildlife Area east of the O'Neill Forebay. By avoiding the Wildlife Area, it could also reduce biological impacts in comparison to the Proposed Project. Therefore, this alternative is retained for analysis in the EIS/EIR.

West of O’Neill Forebay 70-kV Alternative

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative corridor to avoid the O’Neill Forebay Wildlife Area, which is located on the east side of the O’Neill Forebay. As shown in Figure 3, this alternative corridor would extend from the San Luis Substation, cross Highway 152, and run northeast for about one mile. At this point, it would begin to follow an existing PG&E transmission corridor for about 2.6 miles around the west side of the O’Neill Forebay to a point just north of McCabe Road. At that point, it would turn east and then turn to the southeast, around the northeast side of the Forebay, following another PG&E high-voltage transmission corridor, to a point where it terminates at the O’Neill Substation.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need as well as most of the Project Objectives.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially feasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Land Use. This alternative could avoid potential land use conflicts that may occur under the Proposed Project as it would avoid the O’Neill Forebay Wildlife Area east of the O’Neill Forebay.

Biological Resources. By avoiding the wildlife area on the east side of the O’Neill Forebay, this alternative could reduce potential impacts to habitat in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Disadvantages

This alternative would potentially have no environmental disadvantages in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Determination

Retained for Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need as well as the Project Objectives and is potentially feasible. It could reduce potential land use conflicts and biological impacts as compared to the Proposed Project by avoiding the O’Neill Forebay Wildlife Area. Therefore, this alternative is retained for analysis in the EIS/EIR.

Los Banos to Dos Amigos Alternative

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative to reduce visual impacts to motorists along Interstate 5. As shown in Figure 3, this alternative would start at San Luis Substation and would parallel SR 152 heading east for approximately 2.8 miles, to a point near the Los Banos Substation. At this point, this alternative corridor would extend approximately 6 miles south from the Los Banos Substation along the western side of the

existing high-voltage transmission lines. Just north of the Los Banos Creek Reservoir, this line would cross the existing high voltage transmission lines to join the Proposed Project corridor.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need as well as the Project Objectives, particularly as they relate to use of existing transmission line corridors.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially feasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Visual Resources. This alternative would be located farther from Interstate 5 and therefore may be less visible to motorists in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Disadvantages

This alternative would potentially have no environmental disadvantages in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Determination

Retained for Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and Project Objectives and is potentially feasible. It would potentially reduce visual impacts along Interstate 5. Therefore, this alternative is retained for analysis in the EIS/EIR.

Billy Wright Road Alternative

Alternative Description

The Billy Wright Road Alternative Corridor would connect the San Luis Substation to the Dos Amigos Substation. The northern portion of the new corridor runs adjacent to and east of the existing PG&E 500-kV transmission lines for approximately 9 miles, and west to east for approximately 4.5 miles to join the Proposed Project.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need as well as the Project Objectives, particularly as they relate to use of existing transmission line corridors.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially feasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Land Use. This alternative would avoid conflict with the proposed Wright Solar Park. Therefore, it could reduce potential land use conflicts. Conflicts with the Villages of Laguna San Luis Community Plan would be similar to the Proposed Project.

Disadvantages

Ground Disturbance. This alternative would be longer than the Proposed Project and therefore could result in increased ground disturbance.

Determination

Retained for Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most of the Project Objectives, and is potentially feasible. It could result in more ground disturbance than the Proposed Project, but it could reduce the potential for land use conflicts in comparison to the Proposed Project. Therefore, this alternative is retained for analysis in the EIS/EIR.

2.1.2 Voltage Alternatives

230-kV Transmission Line

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative to provide the option of constructing a lower voltage transmission line in comparison to the 500-kV portion of the Proposed Project. Under this alternative, a 230-kV line would be constructed between the Tracy and San Luis substations within either the Proposed Project or the Alternative Corridors. The 230-kV transmission line between the San Luis and Dos Amigos substations, as well as the 70-kV transmission line between the San Luis and O'Neill substations, are the same as the Proposed Project.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need as well as the Project Objectives.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially feasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Ground Disturbance and Visual Resources. This alternative would require towers that would be shorter and have a smaller disturbance area than those of the Proposed Project. Therefore, it could reduce ground disturbance and visual impacts in comparison to the Proposed Project. In addition, less substation expansion and modification at the Tracy and Los Banos substations would be needed in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Disadvantages

This alternative would potentially have no environmental disadvantages in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Determination

Retained for Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and Project Objectives, and is potentially feasible. It would potentially reduce ground disturbance and visual impacts in comparison to the Proposed Project. Therefore, this alternative is retained for analysis in the EIS/EIR.

500-kV Transmission Line Operated at 230-kV

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative to provide operating flexibility. Under this alternative, a 500-kV line would be constructed between the Tracy and Los Banos substations within either the Proposed or Alternative corridors. However, it would be operated at 230-kV. The 230-kV transmission line between the San Luis and Dos Amigos substations, as well as the 70-kV transmission line between the San Luis and O'Neill substations, are the same as the Proposed Project.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need as well as the Project Objectives.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially feasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Noise and EMF. This alternative could reduce corona noise and EMF in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Disadvantages

This alternative would potentially have no environmental disadvantages in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Determination

Retained for Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and Project Objectives, and is potentially feasible. It could potentially reduce corona noise and EMF in comparison to the Proposed Project. Therefore, this alternative is retained for analysis in the EIS/EIR.

2.2 Alternatives Eliminated from Analysis in the EIS/EIR

Mountain House Road 500-kV Corridor

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative to minimize the length of the Project and reduce impacts to houses in the Mountain House Developments. As shown in Figure 1, this alternative corridor would exit the Tracy Substation and extend due south for about 0.9 mile along Mountain House Road, then turn southeast for approximately 0.8 mile through agricultural fields before intersecting the Proposed Project at the existing transmission corridor. This corridor would be about 0.2 mile shorter than the Proposed Project. Several landowners expressed opposition to this alternative corridor in scoping comments based on concerns related to noise, property devaluation, electric and magnetic fields (EMF), visual resources, agricultural operations, proximity to the Mountain House Elementary School, and others.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives; however, it would not maximize the use of existing transmission corridors ROW. All of this corridor would be located within agricultural fields and not adjacent to existing transmission ROW.

Feasibility

A portion of this alternative would be located on the eastern side of Mountain House Road, less than 100 feet from the existing Mountain House Elementary School, which is located on the western side of Mountain House Road. The distance between the alternative corridor ROW and the Mountain House Elementary School may be incompatible with the California Department of Education guidelines for school siting¹. Due to possible EMF concerns, these guidelines state that there must be 350 feet from the edge of an easement for a 500-550 kV line to any part of a school property line. The Project would require up to a 250-foot-wide ROW easement for a 500-kV transmission line within the 500-foot alternative corridor. As such, this alternative may be infeasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Air Quality, Noise, and Soil Erosion. This alternative would be 0.2 mile shorter than the Proposed Project, which would result in slightly shorter and less-intense construction impacts related to air quality, noise, and soil erosion.

Disadvantages

Agricultural Resources. This alternative would bisect agricultural fields where there are no existing transmission lines. This would result in more interference with agricultural operations in comparison to the Proposed Project, which would run along property boundaries and an existing transmission line.

¹ <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/schoolsiteguide.asp#highvoltage>

Noise, and Health and Safety. This alternative would run along Mountain House Road, across the street from rural houses and the Mountain House Elementary School. Closer to residential receptors and school visitors; potentially increased construction traffic and noise, and increased EMF concerns in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Visual Resources. Given its location adjacent to Mountain House Road, this alternative would be more visible to residents and school visitors than the Proposed Project, which would be about 0.5 mile east of the road and adjacent to an existing transmission line.

Determination

Eliminated from Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives. In comparison to the Proposed Project; however, it would result in greater agricultural and visual impacts and construction disturbance to nearby residents. Also, it may be regulatorily infeasible. Therefore, this alternative will not be fully analyzed in the EIS/EIR.

Grant Line Road 500-kV Corridor

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative corridor to minimize canal crossings. As shown in Figure 1, it would deviate from the Proposed Project and the existing transmission line corridor to remain along the east side of the Delta-Mendota Canal for about 0.7 mile. This short alternative segment would be about the same length as the Proposed Project, but would be about 0.25 mile closer to a new residential community along Grant Line Road in unincorporated Tracy.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives; however, it would not maximize the use of existing transmission corridors and ROW. For about 0.7 mile near Grant Line Road, the corridor would be located within agricultural fields and not adjacent to existing transmission ROW.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially feasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Land Use. This alternative would avoid two crossings of the Delta-Mendota Canal, thereby reducing any potential for conflicts with canal operation and maintenance activities.

Disadvantages

Visual Resources. This alternative would be located about 0.20 miles from an existing residential community in unincorporated Tracy. It would be more visible to residents than the Proposed Project, which would be about 0.25 mile farther west and adjacent to an existing transmission line.

Determination

Eliminated from Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives, and is potentially feasible. In comparison to the Proposed Project, it would require fewer canal crossings and therefore result in less potential for conflicts with canal operations; however, it would be nearer to houses outside of any existing transmission corridor and therefore result in greater visual impacts. Due to its potential for greater environmental impacts, this alternative will not be fully analyzed in the EIS/EIR.

Delta-Mendota Canal/Interstate 580 500-kV Corridor

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative in response to comments requesting an alternative that uses the corridor between the Delta-Mendota Canal and Interstate 580, to avoid houses west of the Proposed Project near Patterson Pass Road. The California Aqueduct runs down the center of this corridor and therefore, more specifically, the route will be located between the California Aqueduct and Interstate 580. This alternative also avoids impacts to the Tracy Hills conservation easements located west of Interstate 580. As shown in Figure 1, this corridor would deviate from the Proposed Project just south of the California Aqueduct and would continue south for about 7.3 miles between the California Aqueduct and Interstate 580 until it turns southwest, across Interstate 580, to rejoin the Proposed Project.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives; however, it would not maximize the use of existing transmission corridors and ROW. The full extent of this alternative would be located within agricultural fields or open space and not adjacent to existing transmission ROW.

Feasibility

This alternative is not technically feasible due to engineering constraints between the California Aqueduct and Interstate 580, just south of the intersection of Interstate 580 and Mountain House Road. In some areas, the spacing between the California Aqueduct and Interstate 580 is only 21 to 100 feet wide, which would not allow sufficient space for construction, operation, and maintenance of a transmission line.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Land Use. This alternative would avoid existing conservation easements west of Interstate 580. Therefore, it would eliminate the potential for land use conflicts that could result from an incompatibility of the Proposed Project with existing wildlife or land management plans.

Biological Resources. By avoiding the conservation easements west of Interstate 580, this alternative would reduce potential impacts to habitat in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Disadvantages

Visual Resources. This alternative would increase visual impacts in comparison to the Proposed Project as it would introduce new transmission infrastructure to an area previously without transmission lines.

Determination

Eliminated from Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives. It would address public comments regarding the proximity of the Proposed Project to houses near Patterson Pass Road. It would reduce land use and biological resources impacts in comparison to the Proposed Project. However, this alternative would be outside of any existing transmission corridor, thereby resulting in greater potential visual impacts than the Proposed Project. It would be technically infeasible as certain locations between the California Aqueduct and Interstate 580 are too narrow to allow for construction, operation, and maintenance of a transmission line. This alternative is infeasible due to engineering constraints and therefore will not be fully analyzed in the EIS/EIR.

East of Delta-Mendota Canal 500-kV Corridor

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative corridor to address public comments about the proximity of the Proposed Project to houses near Patterson Pass Road. It would provide another option to the Delta-Mendota Canal/Interstate 580 Alternative. As shown in Figure 1, it would deviate from the Proposed Project 0.1 mile south of Interstate 205 and continue southeast on the east side of the Delta-Mendota Canal for about 3 miles. It would then cross the California Aqueduct and extend southeast, traversing agricultural fields, between the Delta-Mendota Canal and the California Aqueduct for about 1.3 miles before crossing the California Aqueduct to join the Delta-Mendota Canal/Interstate 580 Alternative.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative would meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives; however, it would not maximize the use of existing transmission corridors and ROW. All of this alternative would be located within agricultural fields or open space and not adjacent to existing transmission ROW.

Feasibility

This alternative is not technically feasible due to engineering constraints. About 0.75 mile southeast of where the alternative corridor deviates from the Proposed Project, the alternative would pass between the Delta-Mendota Canal and existing cell towers. The spacing between the Delta-Mendota Canal and the existing cell towers is about 150 feet wide, which would not allow sufficient space for construction, operation, and maintenance of a transmission line.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Land Use. This alternative would avoid conservation easements along the Interstate 580 corridor. Therefore, it would avoid the potential for land use conflicts that could result from incompatibility of the Proposed Project with existing wildlife or land management plans.

Biological Resources. By avoiding the conservation easements along Interstate 580, this alternative would reduce potential impacts to habitat in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Disadvantages

Visual Resources. This alternative may increase visual impacts in comparison to the Proposed Project as it would introduce new transmission infrastructure to an area without transmission lines.

Agricultural Resources. This alternative would cross agricultural areas where there are no existing transmission lines. This would potentially result in more interference with agricultural operations in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Determination

Eliminated from Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives. It would address public comments about the proximity of the Proposed Project to houses in the vicinity of Patterson Pass Road. It would potentially reduce land use and biological resources impacts, but potentially increase visual and agricultural impacts in comparison to the Proposed Project. This alternative is infeasible due to engineering constraints; therefore it will not be fully analyzed in the EIS/EIR.

West of Cemetery 2 500-kV Corridor

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative corridor to avoid approved solar development and to reduce visual impacts to visitors of the San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery. It would provide another option to the West of Cemetery Alternative that is farther from the San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery. As shown in Figure 3, this alternative would extend south from the West of Cemetery Alternative at about 1.4 miles northeast of the Cemetery. This corridor would follow a valley, behind a ridge line, until it turns east to rejoin the West of Cemetery Alternative about 1 mile southeast of the Cemetery.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives; however, it would not maximize the use of existing transmission corridors and ROWs. All of this corridor would be located within the foothills and not adjacent to existing transmission ROW.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially technically infeasible due to the ruggedness and steepness of the terrain. The nature of the terrain would result in access challenges for crews and equipment during construction, operation, and maintenance.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Land Use. This alternative would avoid potential land use conflicts by avoiding approved solar development north of the O'Neill Forebay.

Visual Resources. This alternative would be located behind a ridgeline and farther from the Cemetery in comparison to the Proposed Project and would therefore reduce potential visual impacts to Cemetery visitors.

Disadvantages

Water Quality and Soil Erosion. This alternative would require new access roads on steep terrain potentially resulting in increased soil erosion and water quality impacts in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Determination

Eliminated from Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives. It would reduce potential land use conflicts and visual impacts. However, due to the ruggedness of the terrain this alternative would potentially cause soil erosion and water quality impacts, and may be technically infeasible. Therefore, it will not be fully analyzed in the EIS/EIR.

Forebay 500-kV Corridor

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative corridor to shorten the length of the Project and maximize use of existing transmission corridors. This alternative would provide another option to the West of O'Neill Forebay Alternative. As shown in Figure 3, this alternative would deviate from the West of O'Neill Forebay Alternative where that alternative turns southwest towards the San Luis Substation. This alternative would continue southeast following two existing PG&E 500-kV transmission lines across the southeastern portion of the O'Neill Forebay to the Los Banos Substation. A 0.7-mile segment of this alternative would cross the O'Neill Forebay in the existing transmission corridor.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives, particularly as they relate to use of existing transmission line corridors. All of this corridor would follow an existing transmission corridor.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially feasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

This alternative would potentially have no environmental advantages in comparison to the Proposed Project.

Disadvantages

Recreation. This alternative would cross the O’Neill Forebay in a popular recreational area and may temporarily interfere with recreational activities in this portion of the Forebay.

Water Quality and Soil Erosion. Expansion of the islands would result in potential water quality and soil erosion impacts in the Forebay.

Determination

Eliminated from Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and Project Objectives. It would maximize the use of existing transmission line corridors and ROW. However, construction in the Forebay would result in potential water quality, soil erosion, and recreation impacts. This alternative would have no environmental advantages in comparison to the Proposed Project. Therefore, this alternative will not be fully analyzed in the EIS/EIR.

Jasper Sears Road 230-kV Corridor

Alternative Description

Western developed this alternative in response to scoping comments about potential land use conflicts of the Proposed Project with proposed solar development (Wright Solar Park), and current and proposed residential development (The Villages of Laguna San Luis), south of the Los Banos Substation. Scoping comments suggested an alternative alignment along Jasper Sears Road to minimize conflicts to The Villages of Laguna San Luis. This alternative corridor would exit the Los Banos Substation from the south and follow Jasper Sears Road and Western’s existing 500-kV transmission line for about 9 miles before turning due east for about 5.3 miles to join the Proposed Project.

Consideration of NEPA/CEQA Criteria

Purpose and Need, Project Objectives

This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most Project Objectives; however, it would not maximize the use of existing transmission corridors and ROW. For about 5.3 miles from where the corridor turns east to where it joins the Proposed Project, the corridor would not be adjacent to existing transmission ROW.

Feasibility

This alternative is potentially feasible.

Environmental Considerations

Advantages

Land Use. This alternative would avoid conflict with proposed solar development (Wright Solar Park), and minimize conflict with current and proposed residential development (The Villages of Laguna San Luis) south of the Los Banos Substation in comparison to the Proposed Project.

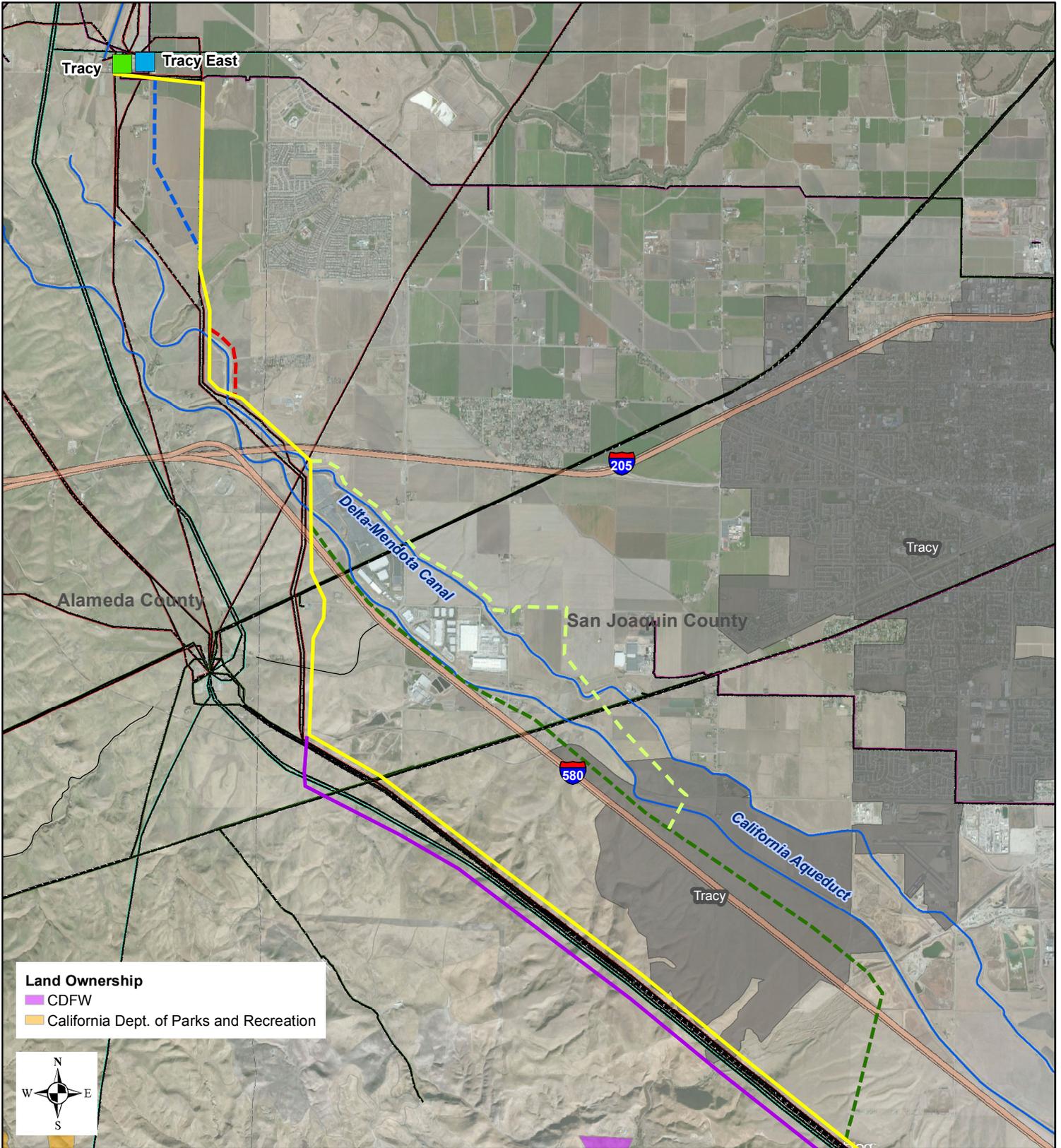
Disadvantages

Land Use. This alternative would conflict with the future Agua Fria development, southeast of the Los Banos Substation.

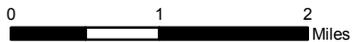
Ground Disturbance. This alternative would be longer than the Proposed Project and therefore would result in increased ground disturbance.

Determination

Eliminated from Analysis. This alternative could meet the Purpose and Need and most of the Project Objectives, and is potentially feasible. Similar to the Billy Wright Road Alternative, this alternative would avoid proposed solar development; however, it would conflict with the planned Agua Fria development. It would result in more ground disturbance than the Proposed Project. Therefore, this alternative will not be analyzed in the EIS/EIR.



Land Ownership
 CDFW
 California Dept. of Parks and Recreation



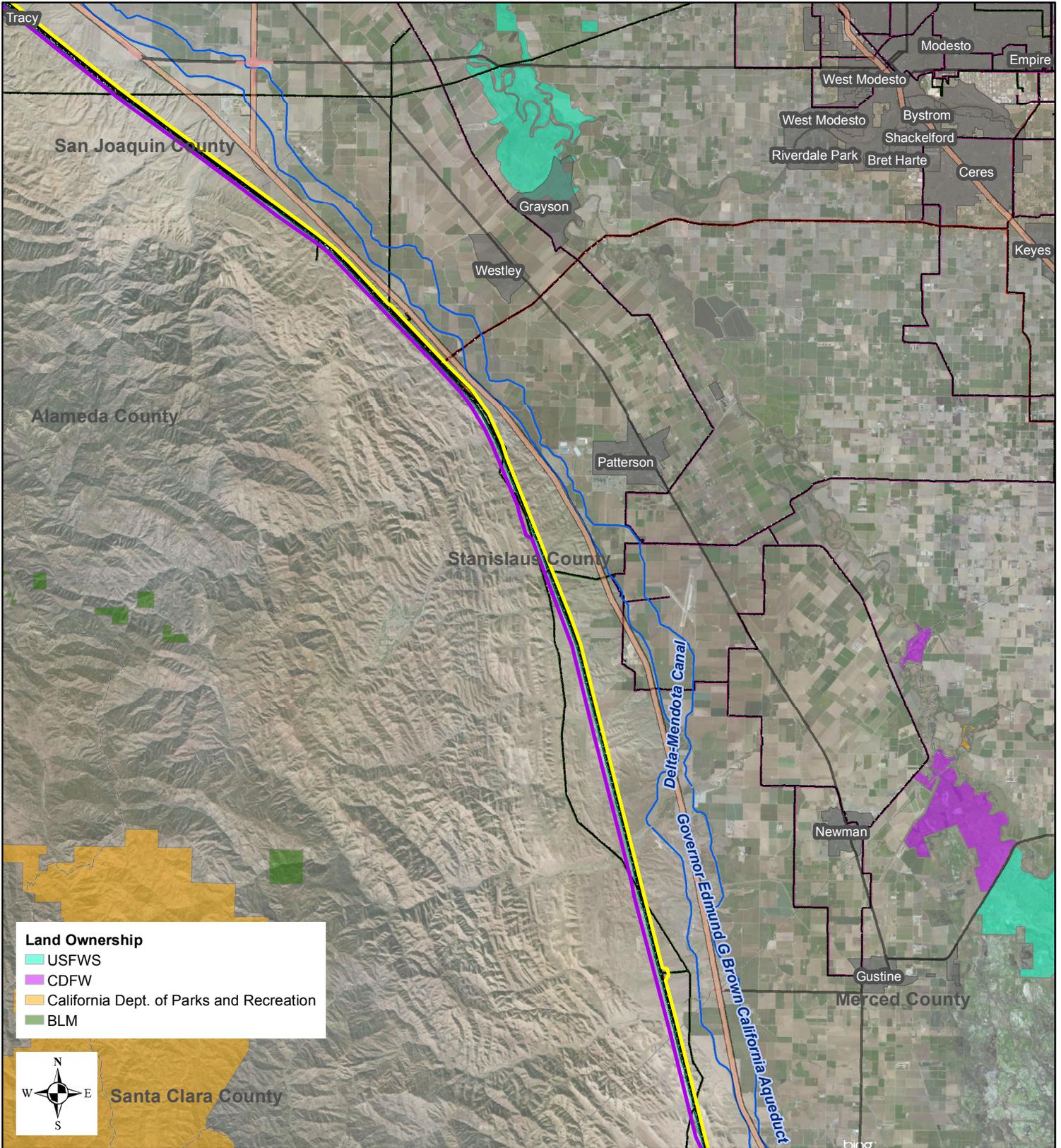
- Existing Substation
- Proposed New Substation
- Proposed Project
- City Boundary
- County Boundary
- Existing Transmission Lines
 - 69 kV — 230 kV
 - 115 kV — 500 kV

- Alternative Corridors Retained**
- Patterson Pass Road Alternative

- Alternative Corridors Eliminated**
- - - Mountain House Road 500-kV
 - - - Grant Line Road 500-kV
 - - - East Of Delta-Mendota Canal 500-kV
 - - - Delta-Mendota Canal/Interstate 580 500-kV

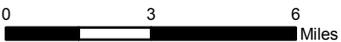
Alternatives Screening Report

Figure 1



Land Ownership

- USFWS
- CDFW
- California Dept. of Parks and Recreation
- BLM



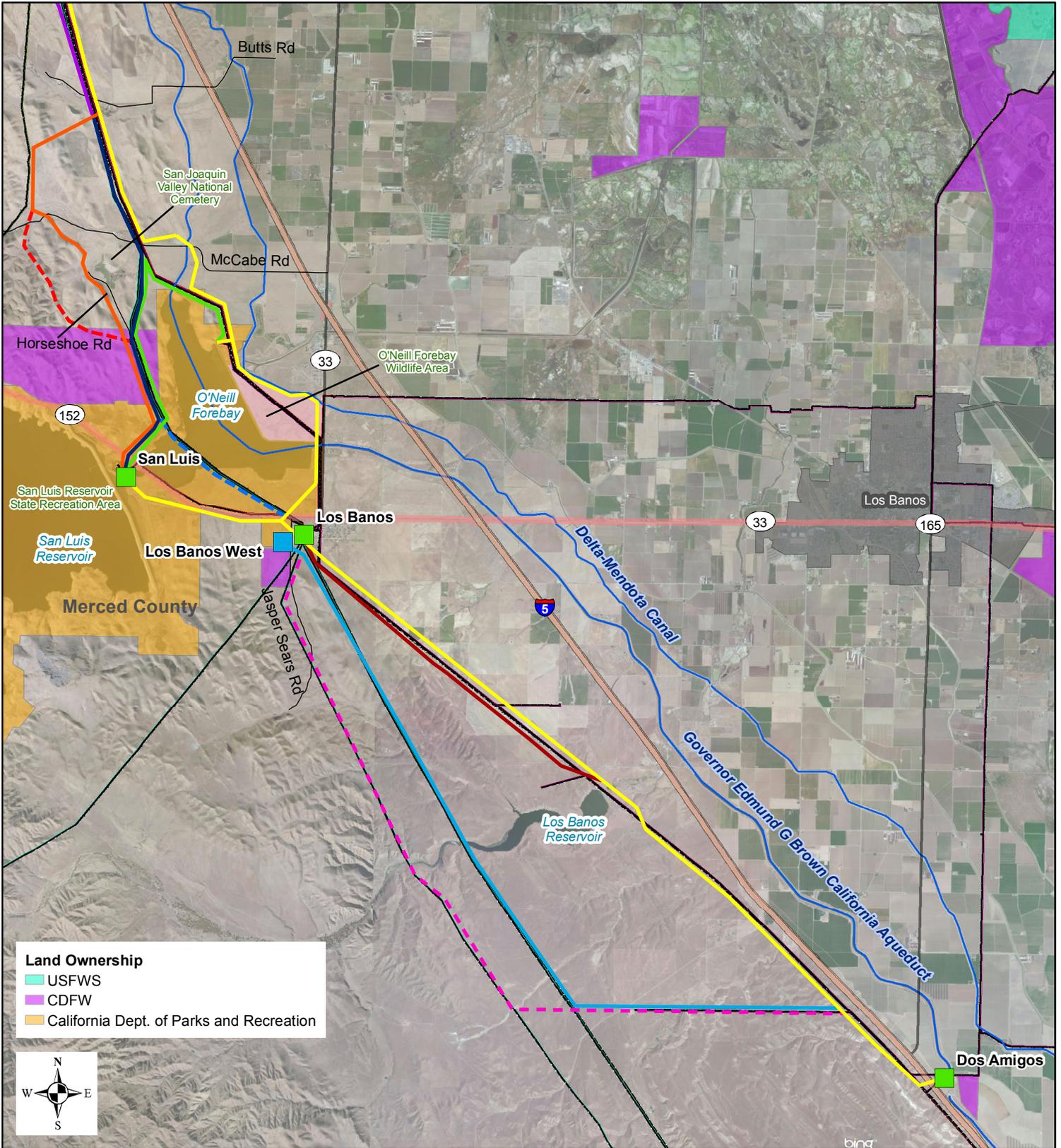
- Proposed Project
- City Boundary
- County Boundary

- Existing Transmission Lines
- 69 kV — 230 kV
 - 115 kV — 500 kV

- Alternative Corridors Retained**
- Patterson Pass Road Alternative

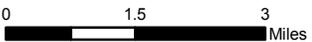
Alternatives Screening Report

Figure 2



Land Ownership

- USFWS
- CDFW
- California Dept. of Parks and Recreation



- Existing Substation
- Proposed New Substation
- Proposed Project
- City Boundary
- County Boundary
- Existing Transmission Lines
 - 69 kV
 - 230 kV
 - 115 kV
 - 500 kV

- Alternative Corridors Retained**
- Patterson Pass Road Alternative
 - Butts Road Alternative
 - Billy Wright Road Alternative
 - Los Banos to Dos Amigos Alternative
 - West of Cemetery Alternative
 - West of O'Neill Forebay 70-kV Alternative
- Alternative Corridors Eliminated**
- Forebay 500-kV
 - West Of Cemetery 2 500-kV
 - Jasper Sears Road

Alternatives Screening Report

Figure 3

Appendix B

Scoping Report

San Luis Transmission Project Scoping Report



Prepared for:



Sierra Nevada Region
114 Parkshore Drive
Folsom, CA 95630

Prepared by:



Aspen Environmental Group
8801 Folsom Boulevard, Suite 290
Sacramento, California 95826

Blanket Purchase Agreement No.: DE-AB65-10WN87101
Task Order No.: 1118.020m

March 4, 2014

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Appendix C	Newspaper Advertisements
Appendix D	Postcard Notice
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1. Introduction

This scoping report summarizes the public scoping effort conducted for the proposed San Luis Transmission Project (Project or SLTP). In compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Western Area Power Administration (Western), an agency of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (Authority), a California joint powers agency, intend to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the SLTP. Western is the Federal lead agency under NEPA and the Authority is the CEQA lead agency. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is a cooperating agency under NEPA.

The EIS/EIR will evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project and will identify mitigation measures to reduce these impacts, where possible. To assist in the development of the scope of the EIS/EIR, Western and the Authority held a 60-day public scoping period to allow the public and regulatory agencies an opportunity to comment on the scope of the EIS/EIR and to identify issues that should be addressed in the document. This report documents the scoping process and summarizes the comments received from the public, community organizations, and governmental agencies during the public scoping period.

Comments received during the scoping process are part of the public record as documented in this scoping report. The comments received during the public scoping process have been reviewed and considered by Western and the Authority in determining the appropriate scope of issues to be addressed in the SLTP EIS/EIR.

1.1 Purpose of Scoping

The process of determining the focus and content of the EIS/EIR is known as scoping. Scoping helps to identify significant issues as well as the range of actions, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in the EIS/EIR. Scoping also eliminates from detailed study those issues that are not pertinent to the final decision on the proposed Project. The scoping process was not intended to resolve differences of opinion regarding the proposed Project or evaluate its merits. Instead, the process allows all interested parties to express their views regarding problems, issues, and opportunities associated with the proposed Project. This ensures that all opinions and comments related to the environmental review process for the proposed Project are considered in the environmental analysis. Members of the public, Federal, state, regional and local agencies, and other interested parties participated in the scoping process by providing comments or recommendations regarding issues to be investigated in the EIS/EIR.

The purpose of the scoping process for the SLTP EIS/EIR was to:

- Inform the public and relevant public agencies about the proposed Project, NEPA and CEQA requirements, and the environmental review process;
- Identify potentially significant issues for consideration in the EIS/EIR;
- Identify possible mitigation measures for consideration in the EIS/EIR;
- Identify alternatives to the proposed Project for evaluation in the EIS/EIR; and
- Compile a mailing list of agencies, organizations, and individuals interested in future Project meetings and notices.

1.2 Summary of Proposed Project

Western has a statutory responsibility to deliver Federal power to federally authorized projects including the San Luis Unit (SLU), a part of the Central Valley Project (CVP). Reclamation submitted a transmission request to Western to interconnect several key SLU facilities to Western's CVP transmission system. Reclamation requested that Western consider various transmission service arrangements so Reclamation can continue to economically deliver Federal water when the current transmission service contract with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) expires. Western must respond to Reclamation's transmission request consistent with Western's Open Access Transmission Tariff and existing laws. The Authority, a Reclamation contractor that operates and maintains part of the SLU, has a direct interest in this requested transmission service between Western's Tracy Substation and the O'Neill pumping plant of the SLU.

Western proposes at a minimum to construct, own, operate, and maintain a new 230-kV transmission line approximately 62 miles in length between Western's Tracy Substation and Western's San Luis Substation and a new 70-kV transmission line approximately 5 miles in length between the San Luis and O'Neill substations. Western also will consider other transmission construction options including:

- a new 500-kV transmission line approximately 62 miles in length operated at 230-kV between Western's Tracy and San Luis substations;
- a new 500-kV transmission line operated at 500-kV approximately 62 miles in length between the Tracy Substation and PG&E's Los Banos Substation; and
- a new 230-kV transmission line approximately 18 miles in length between the San Luis Substation and the Dos Amigos Substation.

Additional components of the proposed Project would include constructing new 230-kV breaker terminal bays at Western's Tracy 230-kV Substation or new 500-kV breaker terminal bays at the Tracy 500-kV Substation; new 230-kV breaker terminal bays at Western's San Luis 230-kV Substation or new 500-kV breaker terminal bays at PG&E's Los Banos Substation. Western may also build new 230-kV breaker terminal bays at Western's Dos Amigos 230-kV Substation and a new 230/70-kV transformer bank and interconnection facilities at the San Luis Substation.

The proposed Project also would include the following facilities and improvements:

- Right-of-way easements for the transmission lines with a typical width of approximately 125 to 175 feet for 230-kV line and 200 to 250 feet for the 500-kV line.
- Tubular or lattice steel structures will be used to support the transmission lines. For the 230-kV line, structures typically would be between 100 and 200 feet tall depending on site-specific conditions. A few taller structures may be required in some locations to address engineering constraints.
- Access roads, including improvements to existing roads, new overland access, and new unpaved temporary roads to access the proposed Project facilities and work areas during construction and operation.
- Ancillary facilities, such as communications facilities (e.g. overhead fiber optic ground wires, regeneration facilities) for access control and protection.

1.3 Scoping Report Organization

This scoping report includes four main sections and appendices, as described below:

- Section 1 provides an introduction to the report, describes the purpose of scoping, and provides a brief overview of the proposed Project.
- Section 2 provides information on the scoping meetings and notification materials, including the NEPA Notice of Intent (NOI) and CEQA Notice of Preparation (NOP).
- Section 3 summarizes the comments and issues raised during the scoping comment period.
- Section 4 provides the next steps in the EIS/EIR environmental review process.
- Appendices include copies of the NOI, NOP, newspaper advertisement, postcard notice, and scoping comment card.

2. Project Scoping

The 60-day public scoping comment period began on November 22, 2013 when the NOI was published in the Federal Register and the NOP was filed with the California State Clearinghouse (SCH# 2013112059). The 60-day public scoping comment period ended on January 21, 2014.

2.1 Notice of Intent

To comply with NEPA (40 C.F.R section 1501.7), Western published a NOI to prepare a joint EIS/EIR for the proposed Project in the Federal Register on November 22, 2013 (see Appendix A). Portions of the proposed Project may affect floodplains and wetlands, so the NOI also serves as a notice of proposed floodplain or wetland action in accordance with DOE floodplain and wetland environmental review requirements. The NOI initiates public scoping for the EIS/EIR, provides information about the proposed Project, and invites other agencies and the public to provide comments on the scope and content of the EIS/EIR.

2.2 Notice of Preparation

On November 22, 2013, the Authority issued a NOP, consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15082. The NOP summarizes the proposed Project, states its intention to prepare a joint EIS/EIR, and requests comments from interested parties (see Appendix B). The NOP includes information on the date, time, and location of the public scoping meetings. In addition, the NOP includes a summary of potential Project impacts, instructions for obtaining additional Project information, and information on how to provide comments.

149 notices were distributed to Federal, state, and local responsible agencies, elected officials, and other key stakeholders, as follows:

- 75 local agencies
- 8 state agencies
- 6 Federal agencies
- 21 organizations

- 39 elected officials

2.3 Scoping Meetings

Western, Reclamation, and the Authority held two public scoping meetings on January 8 and 9, 2014 (see Table 1). The scoping meetings provided an opportunity for the public and agencies to obtain more information on the proposed Project, learn more about the NEPA and CEQA environmental review processes, and provide scoping comments.

Table 1. Public Scoping Meetings

Date and Time	Location	No. of People Signed in
Wednesday January 8, 2014 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm	Tracy Tracy Transit Center, 50 East Sixth Street, Tracy, CA 95376	26
Thursday January 9, 2014 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm	Santa Nella Hotel Mission De Oro 13070 South Highway 33 Santa Nella, CA 95322	15

Notification Postcards

To provide additional notification of the proposed Project and encourage participation in the scoping process, Western and the Authority conducted two separate postcard mailings. The postcards announced the start of the public scoping period and provided information on the date, time, and location of each public scoping meeting (see Appendix D). The postcards also provided an overview map of the Project area, a brief summary of the proposed Project, how to provide scoping comments, and how to obtain additional information on the proposed Project. The postcard was mailed on November 22, 2013 to all landowners within and adjacent to the proposed Project area as well as any agencies and organizations that did not receive a copy of the NOP. The same postcard was mailed again on January 3, 2014 to all 361 contacts on the Project mailing list including Federal, state, and local agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Newspaper Advertisements

An advertisement announcing the proposed Project and the scoping comment period was published in 5 newspapers (see Table 2). The advertisement provided information on the date, time, and location of each public scoping meeting, an overview map of the Project area, and a brief summary of the proposed Project. It also provided information on how to provide scoping comments, and how to obtain information on the proposed Project (see Appendix D).

Table 2. Newspaper Advertisements

Publication	Type	Advertisement Dates	Circulation
Los Banos Enterprise	Legal	December 20, 2013	Los Banos, Dos Palos, Santa Nella
The Modesto Bee	Legal	December 20, 2013	Stanislaus County
Patterson Irrigator	Legal	December 19, 2013	City of Patterson
The Record	Legal	December 13, 2013	San Joaquin County

Table 2. Newspaper Advertisements

Publication	Type	Advertisement Dates	Circulation
Tracy Press	Legal	December 13, 2013	City of Tracy

2.4 Agency Consultation

The NOP was sent to potentially affected agencies and the State Clearinghouse to provide notice of and information about the proposed Project. Consultation meetings with agencies will be an on-going process throughout EIS/EIR preparation.

2.5 Scoping Comment Submittal

Western and the Authority provided several comment methods to encourage public participation. Comments could be submitted by mail, electronic mail (email), fax, and by providing a written comment at the scoping meeting. Comment cards with Western’s address were made available at the scoping meetings (see Appendix E). The following information for comment submittal was included in the NOI, NOP, newspaper advertisement, and postcard:

Mail: Mr. Don Lash, NEPA Document Manager
Western Area Power Administration
Sierra Nevada Region
114 Parkshore Drive
Folsom, CA 95630

Electronic Mail (email): SLTPEIS-EIR@wapa.gov

Fax: (916) 353-4772

2.6 Outreach

Western provided additional opportunities for the public to obtain information outside of the scoping meetings. The Project website was updated with Project information during the public comment period. Information on this outreach effort is described below.

Internet Website

Information about the proposed Project is available on Western’s website (<http://www.wapa.gov/sn/environment/SanLuisTransmissionProject.asp>) and the Project website (www.sltpeis-eir.com). The websites provide electronic versions of Project documents including the NOP, NOI, and Project-related maps. The website will remain a public information resource for the proposed Project and will announce public meetings and document availability.

3. Summary of Public and Agency Comments

All comments received during the public scoping comment period were reviewed for this report and will be considered in preparation of the EIS/EIR (see summary in Table 3). A total of 21 unique commenters (8 individuals, 4 organizations, and 9 agencies) submitted 21 comment documents (letters, emails, faxes, and comment cards). Within these comment documents, a total of 81 individual scoping comments were submitted.

Table 3. Scoping Comment Summary

Date	From	Summary of Comments
Government Agencies		
December 30, 2013	San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District David Warner Director of Permit Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a list of current Federal and state air quality designations for the San Joaquin Air Pollution District. ▪ Suggests Project-related criteria pollutant emissions be identified and quantified. ▪ Suggests that construction emissions should be quantified and compared to significance thresholds. ▪ Suggests that stationary and mobile sources should be analyzed separately for operation. ▪ Recommends mitigation for emissions during construction and operation. ▪ Suggests the proposed Project be evaluated to determine the likelihood that it would produce nuisance odors. Notes that nuisance odors are subjective, therefore, the District has not established thresholds of significance. ▪ Suggests health impacts be evaluated to determine if emissions of toxic air contaminants (TACs) will pose significant health risk to sensitive receptors. Provides additional sources of information regarding TACs. ▪ Provides a list of additional recommendations of air-quality related discussions to include in the EIS/EIR. States that this list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive and provides a phone contact and website for further information. ▪ Provides a list of District rules and regulations that the proposed Project may be subject to. ▪ Specifically states that the proposed Project will be subject to District Rule 9510 because it is expected to exceed the applicability threshold. Provides guidelines on District Rule 9510 and a website link regarding compliance with the Rule. ▪ Recommends that a copy of the District's comments be provided to the Project proponent.
January 13, 2014	Stanislaus County, Jami Aggers, Director of Environmental Resources and Parks and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ States that the proposed Project crosses property owned and leased out by the County and requests the avoidance or minimization impacts to the lease holders. ▪ Requests the County be compensated if new easements are required. ▪ Requests contact in advance to discuss these comments, access, and possible impacts. ▪ Suggests new power lines be installed parallel to existing lines to minimize impacts. ▪ Notes that cooperation with the County regarding compensation for easements or property access for the proposed Project may need County Board authorization.
January 15, 2014	Environmental Protection Agency, Ann McPherson Environmental Review Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a detailed discussion and recommendations on the following subject matters for the EIS/EIR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statement of Purpose and Need - Alternatives Analysis - Water Resources - Biological Resources, Habitat, and Wildlife - Invasive Species - Air Quality - Climate Change - Hazardous Materials/Hazardous Waste/Solid Waste - Cumulative and Indirect Impacts - Coordination with Tribal Governments

Table 3. Scoping Comment Summary

Date	From	Summary of Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental Justice and Impacted Communities - Coordination with Land Use Planning Activities - Public Health and Safety (specifically "Valley Fever")
January 15, 2014	Central Valley Region Water Quality Control Board, Trevor Cleak, Environmental Scientist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides the following list of permits that may be required by the Project proponent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction Storm Water General Permit - Phase I and II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permits - Industrial Storm Water General Permit - Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit - Clean Water Act Section 401 Permit-Water Quality Certification - Waste Discharge Requirements - Low or Limited Threat General NPDES Permit ▪ Provides a summary and web link and a contact number available for further information for each permit listed above.
January 16, 2014	San Joaquin County Department of Public Works, Amy Spitzer, Assistant Planner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requests a San Joaquin County Watercourse Encroachment Permit be obtained for work done on Corral Hollow Creek and within 25 feet of the top of its bank. ▪ Requests the Central Valley Flood Protection Board Encroachment Permit be obtained for work done on Lone Tree Creek and within 30 feet of the top of its bank.
January 17, 2014	Alameda County, Bruce Jensen, Senior Planner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expresses belief that Alameda County is an affected agency and therefore the proposed Project is subject to the policies of the East County Area Plan. Provides a web link to the Plan. Indicates that the proposed Project is consistent with the Plan and requests that the EIS/EIR clearly describe this consistency. ▪ Provides the Plan's goals as well as recommendations on preparing the EIR consistent with the Plan for each of the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open space - Agriculture - Watersheds - Water quality - Sensitive viewsheds - Biological resources - Cultural resources - Noise - Air quality
January 21, 2014	Stanislaus County Tera Chumley, Senior Management Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indicates that the County has begun the CEQA process for the proposed Crows Landing Airport expansion which would be located in proximity to the proposed Project and provides the following comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expresses concern that the proposed steel structures and conductors of the proposed Project may negatively impact the development and use of the proposed Crows Landing Airport. Provides an attachment of the Draft Airport Layout Plan. - Requests full consideration of the Crows Landing Airport with respect to its location and anticipated aeronautical operations. ▪ Requests the proposed Project follow the requirements of Section 21.08.020(C) of the Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance General Provisions. ▪ Suggests the EIS/EIR identify and evaluate the addition of new access roads to the transmission right-of-ways. ▪ Suggests visual impacts be included in the EIS/EIR.

Table 3. Scoping Comment Summary

Date	From	Summary of Comments
January 22, 2014	Merced County, James Holland, Planner III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ States that the proposed Project scope and alternatives were identified effectively in the materials that were provided at the scoping meetings. ▪ Suggests the purpose of the proposed Project is not clearly identified in the scoping materials and recommends that considerable emphasis be given to demonstrate the need for the Project. ▪ Requests that the No Action alternative be fully considered. ▪ Recommends that if an alternative requires acquisition of additional ROW, the proposed location and amount of land be clearly identified. ▪ Requests full evaluation of potential growth-inducing impacts.
January 24, 2014	California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Jeffrey Single, Regional Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indicates the proposed Project crosses several pristine habitat types which support special-status species. Provides a list of these habitat types and the special-status species that may be impacted. ▪ Recommends focused biological surveys be conducted at the appropriate times of the year and by qualified biologists. ▪ Recommends that results from the surveys be used to define species-specific avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures that should be included in the EIS/EIR. ▪ Indicates potential impacts to and specific mitigation recommendations for nesting birds, riparian habitat and wetlands, Fully Protected raptors, Swainson's hawk, California tiger salamander, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, San Joaquin kit fox, and burrowing owl.
Organizations		
January 10, 2014	Connelly Ranch, Mark V. Connelly, Attorney, Connolly Law Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offers mitigation opportunities at the Connelly Ranch and provides a website with detailed information about the Ranch. ▪ Provides information regarding several past projects in which the Ranch provided mitigation habitat. ▪ Provides an attachment with a map showing the location of a mitigation easement granted to the San Joaquin Council of Governments. ▪ Describes the location, size, and setting of the Ranch. ▪ Provides information on habitat available at the Ranch as well as the species it supports.
January 16, 2014	Frontier Renewables (Represented by GTB Consulting) Greg Blue, Principal, GTB Consulting Balduin Hesse, President and CEO, Frontier Renewables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expresses support of the proposed 62 mile 230-kV transmission line between Tracy and San Luis substations and 5 mile 70-kV transmission line between San Luis and O'Neill substation. ▪ Expresses opposition to a portion of the proposed Project, the 18 mile 230-kV transmission line between San Luis Substation and the Dos Amigos Substation, because it will intersect Frontier's Wright Solar Park. ▪ Suggests the 18 mile section would be detrimental to the Wright Solar Park project and may cause a delay in the Wright Solar Park project schedule. ▪ Provides a map of the Park. ▪ Indicates that Frontier is undergoing the permitting process and CEQA review for the Park with a Draft EIR expected to be released on April 1, 2014.

Table 3. Scoping Comment Summary

Date	From	Summary of Comments
January 21, 2014	Sun Power Corporation (Represented by Allen Matkins LLC) Barry Epstein, Attorney, Allen Matkins LLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indicates the proposed Project including both the Preferred Corridor and the Alternate Corridor will interfere with and intersect SunPower Corporation's approved Quinto Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project. ▪ Requests Western and the Authority identify different alignments of the proposed Project before proceeding with the environmental review. ▪ Provides information on the location, background and phases of the Quinto Solar PV Project. ▪ Indicates a Purchase Power Agreement is in place for the solar project and construction is anticipated to begin in the next few months.
January 21, 2014	AKT Developments (Represented by Thomas Law Group) Christopher Butcher, Attorney, Thomas Law Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suggests the NOI and NOP provide an inadequate description of the proposed Project. Provides details on the inadequacies of the Project Description. ▪ Requests Western and the Authority issue a clarified NOI and NOP. ▪ Suggests the proposed Project will result in significant impacts to residential areas, biological resources, and renewable energy production and provides a description of these impacts. ▪ Requests the EIS/EIR consider alternatives to avoid significant impacts. ▪ Provides specific recommendations on alternatives to be considered including a Jasper Sears Road Alternative Alignment, utilizing existing corridors and providing space between existing transmission corridors and the proposed corridors. ▪ Notes that the scoping comments provided in the letter were limited due to the inadequacy of the Project Description and map provided in the NOI and NOP.
January 21, 2014	Pacific Gas and Electric, David T. Kraska, Director and Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies the two following potential conflicts with PG&E approved or existing facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of a 230-kV switch station and the reconductoring of its 230-kV Los Banos-Westley transmission line to support interconnection of SunPower Corporation's Quinto Solar Photovoltaic Project. - Two existing gas transmission pipelines located along Highway 5 corridor between Los Banos and Dos Amigos . ▪ Requests that alternative corridors are fully considered in the EIS/EIR.
Individuals		
January 10, 2014	Geraldine Jensen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes the current condition on the commenter's property and adjacent parcels west of the proposed Project as three parallel high voltage transmission lines and a Shell Oil pipeline. ▪ States that each infrastructure project described above has existing access roads and requests the use of existing access roads for the proposed Project when possible to minimize costs and environmental damage.
January 13, 2014	Eugene Sparks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suggests the proposed Project would negatively affect personal property values. ▪ Proposes the proposed Project be moved to a corridor along the canal and highway and suggests this will be more cost effective and less impactful to personal property.
January 14, 2014	James S. Obanion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suggests increasing the size of the existing towers rather than purchasing new right-of-ways.

Table 3. Scoping Comment Summary

Date	From	Summary of Comments
January 19, 2014	Antemio A. Preciado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expresses opposition to the project. ▪ Requests compensation for their affected property. ▪ Indicates there are power lines already crossing their property. ▪ Indicates they were unable to attend the Santa Nella scoping meeting due to other commitment.
January 21, 2014	Donn Campion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requests the public scoping meetings be re-initiated and the public be provided a reasonable timeframe to submit comments. ▪ Expresses discontent with scoping efforts and how the scoping meetings were conducted. ▪ Suggests the information provided to the public was inadequate.
January 21, 2014	Gordon L. and Marianne Griffith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expresses concern about the proposed Project. ▪ Proposes the proposed Project follow the land between Highway 580 and the canal as an alternative to traversing private property. ▪ Indicates they are unable to distinguish a difference between the proposed Project and the alternative routes. ▪ Expresses concern about the amount of electricity emitted by surrounding towers and lines. ▪ Indicates that they were previously forced to move out of their home due to electromagnetic fields. ▪ Indicates that the Project is not proposed to cross their property. ▪ Expresses concern regarding the health and safety of the Mountain House Elementary School community.
January 21, 2014	Dolores and Gary Kuhn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expresses concern about encroachment, cumulative EMF effects, and cumulative effects on agriculture from existing infrastructure on their property (two canals, three pipelines, one proposed highway, five transmission lines) in combination with the proposed Project. ▪ Suggests transmission lines have visual and environmental effects on agricultural practices and that crop farming methods have to be altered to accommodate the lines. ▪ Suggests an increased fire hazard in areas with flammable brush and grass. ▪ Expresses concern that EMF surrounding power lines may contribute to an increased risk of cancer. Provides two web links to articles regarding health risks associated with EMF. ▪ Suggests noise levels will increase as a result of the proposed Project. ▪ Indicates previously experiencing noise from power lines associated with wet weather conditions. ▪ Suggests a decrease of property value attributable to the presence of transmission lines. ▪ Suggests Western purchase their property. ▪ Suggests that their personal contribution to the public has been fulfilled by paying taxes. ▪ Notes that they do not receive power from any of the existing power facilities adjacent to their property. ▪ Suggests that limits have been established for locating any part of a school site property line near the edge of easements near high-voltage transmission lines. Provides a link to the California Department of Education website. ▪ Requests research be conducted on the public safety of transmission lines associated with the effects of earthquakes.
January 21, 2014	Douglas J. and Geraldine P. Mathews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expresses concern regarding kit foxes, condors, tule elk, EMF, and visual impacts. ▪ Prefers an alternative route farther from their property. ▪ Suggests the proposed Project will affect property resale value.

Table 3. Scoping Comment Summary

Date	From	Summary of Comments
January 21, 2014	Robert J. and Anne D. Watson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ States a strong preference for the “preferred corridor”. ▪ Describes an existing impact from transmission lines to two parcels on the west side of the canal and suggests the use of the “preferred corridor” will minimize impacts to them. ▪ States an intention to sell one of their parcels and suggests the “alternative corridor” will significantly decrease its value.
January 28, 2014	Phyllis H. Castello	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requests compensation for landowners for a fee title purchase or an easement for access roadways, temporary loss of production, and temporary or permanent relocation of an irrigation system as a result of the proposed Project. ▪ Recommends using fence lines or property boundaries and avoiding bisecting fields when selecting preferred routes.

4. Next Steps in EIS/EIR Process

While scoping is the initial step in the environmental review process, additional opportunities to comment on the EIS/EIR will be provided. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the Draft EIS/EIR and Western and the Authority will hold public meetings on the Draft EIS/EIR. Table 4 presents the anticipated schedule for the EIS/EIR, and identifies where in the process the public and agencies can provide additional input into the environmental review process.

Table 4. EIS/EIR Events/Documents

Event/Document		Purpose	Approximate Date
Draft EIS/EIR	Release of Draft EIS/EIR	Presents impacts and mitigation for the proposed Project	February 2015
	Public Review Period	45-day public review period on the Draft EIS/EIR	February through March 2015
	Draft EIS/EIR Public Hearings	Allows for public comment on the draft document	March 2015
Final EIS/EIR	Release of Final EIR	Presents revisions to the Draft EIS/EIR and responses to comments on the Draft EIS/EIR	November 2015
	Record of Decision	Western approves the EIS and issues a Decision on the Project	February 2016
	Notice of Decision	The Authority certifies EIS/EIR and issues a Decision on the Project	February 2016

Appendix A

Notice of Intent



Department of Energy
Western Area Power Administration
P.O. Box 281213
Lakewood, CO 80228-8213

NOV 07 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR CLARA BARLEY, GC-71, WASHINGTON, DC

FROM: MARK GABRIEL^{A.}
ADMINISTRATOR 

SUBJECT: Publication of Notice in the *Federal Register*

Please arrange for the publication of the attached Notice of Intent for the San Luis Transmission Line Project in the *Federal Register*.

If you have any questions, please contact Shellie Scott at (202) 586-5581.

Attachment

cc:
Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance, GC-54, Washington, DC
Assistant General Counsel for Environment, GC-51, Washington, DC
Assistant General Counsel for Legislative and Regulatory Law, GC-71, Washington, DC
(w/copy of attachment)

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL SUFFICIENCY

APPROVED:  _____

DISAPPROVED: _____

DATE: November 4, 2013

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Western Area Power Administration

**Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the San Luis
Transmission Project, Alameda, Merced, San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties,
California (DOE/EIS-0496)**

AGENCY: Western Area Power Administration, DOE.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and to
Conduct Scoping Meetings; Notice of Floodplain and Wetlands Involvement.

SUMMARY: Western Area Power Administration (Western) is a power marketing
administration within the U.S. Department of Energy. Western has a statutory
responsibility to make the necessary arrangements to deliver federal power to federally
authorized projects including the San Luis Unit (SLU), a part of the Central Valley
Project (CVP). The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) submitted a transmission
request to Western to interconnect several key SLU facilities to Western's CVP
transmission system. Reclamation requested Western to consider various transmission
service arrangements so Reclamation can continue to economically deliver federal water
when the current transmission service contract with the Pacific Gas and Electric
Company (PG&E) expires. Western must respond to Reclamation's transmission request
consistent with Western's Open Access Transmission Tariff and existing laws. The San
Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (Authority), a Reclamation contractor that
operates and maintains a part of the SLU, has a direct interest in this requested

transmission service between Western's Tracy Substation and several key pumping and generating facilities of the SLU.

Western determined an environmental impact statement (EIS) is the appropriate level of review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Western will prepare the EIS in accordance with NEPA, the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures, and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA. Western will be the lead federal agency for the NEPA EIS review process, and Reclamation will be a cooperating agency. Western intends to prepare a joint EIS/environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed San Luis Transmission Project (SLTP) in coordination with the Authority. The Authority will be the lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) EIR review process. Portions of the proposed action may affect floodplains and wetlands, so this Notice of Intent (NOI) also serves as a notice of proposed floodplain or wetland action in accordance with DOE floodplain and wetland environmental review requirements.

DATES: Western invites public comments on the scope of the SLTP EIS during a 60-day public scoping period beginning with publication of this notice and ending on **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION OR JANUARY 21, 2014, WHICHEVER IS LATER]**. See *Public Participation* in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section for the public scoping meeting dates and locations.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the scope of the EIS/EIR and requests to be added to the EIS/EIR distribution list may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- Electronic comments via the project Web site at www.sltpeis-eir.com.

- Email to: SLTPEIS-EIR@wapa.gov.
- U.S. Mail to: Mr. Donald Lash, NEPA Document Manager, Western Area Power Administration, 114 Parkshore Drive, Folsom, CA 95630.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For additional information or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact Mr. Donald Lash, NEPA Document Manager, Western Area Power Administration, 114 Parkshore Drive, Folsom, CA 95630, telephone (916) 353-4048, facsimile (916) 353-4772, email at SLTPEIS-EIR@wapa.gov.

For general information on the DOE NEPA process, contact Ms. Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance (GC-54), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585, telephone (202) 586-4600, voicemail at (800) 472-2756, or email at askNEPA@hq.doe.gov.

For information related to Reclamation's participation, contact Mr. Russell Grimes, Chief, Environmental Compliance and Conservation, Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95818, telephone (916) 978-5051, email at rwgrimes@usbr.gov.

For information related to the Authority's participation and the CEQA process, contact Ms. Frances Mizuno, General Manager, San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority, 15990 Kelso Road, Byron, CA 94514, telephone (209) 832-6200.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Background

Western is a federal power marketing administration within the DOE that markets and delivers federal electric power (mostly hydroelectric power) to federal preference customers defined to include municipalities, rural electric cooperatives, public utilities,

irrigation districts, federal and state agencies, and Native American tribes in 15 western and central states, including California. Western is responsible for making the necessary arrangements to deliver federal power to federally authorized projects.

Reclamation is the largest wholesaler of water in the country, supplying more than 31 million people, and providing one out of five Western farmers (140,000) with irrigation water for 10 million acres of farmland. Reclamation is also the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the western United States with 53 power plants that provide more than 40 billion kilowatt hours annually and generate nearly a billion dollars in power revenues. Reclamation's mission is to assist in meeting the increasing water demands of the West while protecting the environment and the public's investment in these structures. Reclamation emphasizes fulfilling its water delivery obligations, water conservation, water recycling, and reuse goals; developing partnerships with customers, states, and Native American tribes; and finding ways to address the competing needs for limited water resources.

The Authority is a California joint powers agency, comprised of water agencies representing approximately 28 federal and exchange water service contractors within the western San Joaquin Valley, San Benito and Santa Clara counties. One of the primary purposes of establishing the Authority was to assume the operation and maintenance responsibilities of certain Reclamation CVP facilities, and to do so at an optimum level and at a lower cost than Reclamation. The Authority also has the mission of pursuing additional reliable water supply for its member districts and delivering the water with a reliable system in a cost efficient manner.

In 1960, Congress authorized construction of the SLU as part of the CVP and also as part of the State of California Water Project. Reclamation owns the SLU and the State of California, Department of Water Resources operates the Gianelli Pump/Generation and the Dos Amigos Pumping Plant portion of the SLU under contract with Reclamation for use by both agencies. Some features are joint-use facilities of the federal and the state governments. The principal purpose of the federal portion of the SLU facilities is to furnish approximately 1.25 million acre-feet of water as a supplemental irrigation supply to some 600,000 acres located in the western portion of Fresno, Kings, and Merced counties. Reclamation is the federal agency responsible for executing and managing water contracts with state water authority agencies. Since 1965, PG&E has provided transmission service between the Tracy Substation and the SLU over PG&E's transmission lines. The PG&E contract expires on March 31, 2016. PG&E has stated it will not renew the existing contract under the same terms and conditions; however, PG&E has indicated service is available from the California Independent System Operator (CAISO). Such service is expected to increase Reclamation's costs the first year by at least \$8,000,000. In anticipation of PG&E's termination of the contract, Reclamation submitted a transmission service request to Western. Reclamation requested Western to consider various transmission service arrangements so Reclamation can continue to economically deliver federal water when the PG&E contract expires.

2. Purpose and Need for Agency Action

Western must respond to Reclamation's request for transmission service consistent with Western's Open Access Transmission Tariff and existing laws. Reclamation must evaluate options to economically pump, store, convey, and deliver federal water through

the SLU. The Authority must continue to deliver water with a reliable system in a cost efficient manner.

3. Proposed Action and Alternatives

Western proposes at a minimum to construct, own, operate, and maintain a new 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line about 62 miles in length between Western's Tracy Substation and Western's San Luis Substation and a new 70-kV transmission line about 5 miles in length between the San Luis and O'Neill Substations. Western also will consider other transmission construction options including: a new 500-kV transmission line about 62 miles in length operated at 230-kV between Western's Tracy and San Luis Substations; a new 500-kV transmission line operated at 500-kV about 62 miles in length between the Tracy Substation and PG&E's Los Banos Substation; and a new 230-kV transmission line about 18 miles in length between San Luis Substation and Dos Amigos Substation. Western proposes to parallel existing transmission facilities whenever practicable.

Additional components of the proposed project would include constructing new 230-kV breaker terminal bays at Western's Tracy 230-kV Substation or new 500-kV breaker terminal bays at the Tracy 500-kV Substation; new 230-kV breaker terminal bays at Western's San Luis 230-kV Substation or new 500-kV breaker terminal bays at PG&E's Los Banos Substation. Western also may build new 230-kV breaker terminal bays at Western's Dos Amigos 230-kV Substation and a new 230/70-kV transformer bank and interconnection facilities at San Luis Substation.

The proposed project would include the following facilities and improvements:

- Right-of-way easements for the transmission lines with a typical width of about 125 to 175 feet for 230-kV lines and 200 to 250 feet for the 500-kV line.
- Tubular or lattice steel structures used to support the transmission lines. For the 230-kV line, structures typically would be between 100 and 200 feet tall depending on site-specific conditions while a few taller structures may be required in some locations to address engineering constraints. The 500-kV structures would be larger.
- Access roads, including improvements to existing roads, new overland access, and new unpaved temporary roads to access the proposed project facilities and work areas during construction and operation phases.
- Ancillary facilities, such as communications facilities (e.g., overhead fiber optic ground wires, regeneration facilities) for access control and protection.

Western will evaluate other potential alternatives, including obtaining transmission service from a local public utility or private agency, such as PG&E or the CAISO.

Western will consider a no action alternative. Under the no action/no project alternative, Western will continue to receive transmission service for the SLU under contract with PG&E. Under NEPA, the no action/no project alternative would serve as a baseline against which to measure the environmental effects of the proposed action alternatives. For purposes of impact analysis under NEPA, the environmental baseline consists of the existing physical conditions in the vicinity of the project at the time of issuance of this NOI. Other alternatives may be identified through the EIS scoping process.

4. Notice of Floodplain or Wetlands Involvement

Floodplains and wetlands may be in the project area. Since the proposal may involve action in floodplains or wetlands, Western is providing this notice of proposed floodplain or wetland action. The EIS will include an assessment of impacts to floodplains and wetlands. If needed, Western would prepare a floodplain statement of findings following DOE regulations for compliance with floodplains and wetlands environmental review requirements.

5. Preliminary Identification of Environmental Issues

Western proposes to analyze potential short-term environmental impacts, such as those from construction, and potential long-term environmental impacts of operating and maintaining the transmission line. DOE's guidance for the preparation of an EIS recommends the use of a sliding-scale approach when evaluating environmental impacts. This approach would focus the analysis and discussion of impacts on significant environmental issues in proportion to the level of the potential impacts. Western identified the following preliminary list of impact areas for evaluation in the EIS:

- Land Use, Recreation, and Visual Resources
- Water Use and Water Quality
- Surface Water Features including Rivers, Floodplains, and Wetlands
- Fish, Wildlife, and Vegetation, including Critical Habitat
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental Justice
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soil, and Mineral Resources

- Human Health and Electric and Magnetic Fields
- Construction-Related Impacts, including Access, Traffic, and Noise

This list is not intended to be all-inclusive or to imply a predetermination of impacts. Western invites interested stakeholders to suggest specific issues, including possible mitigation measures, within these general categories, or other categories not included above, to be considered in the EIS.

6. Public Participation

The purpose of the scoping process is to identify alternatives and potential environmental impacts that Western should analyze in the EIS. Western will hold two public scoping meetings at the following dates, locations, and times to provide the public with an opportunity to present comments, ask questions, and discuss the scope of the San Luis Transmission Project EIS/EIR with Western, Reclamation, and the Authority.

- Wednesday, January 8, 2014, 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. at Tracy Transit Center, 50 East Sixth Street, Tracy, CA 95376.
- Thursday, January 9, 2014, 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. at Hotel Mission De Oro, 13070 South Highway 33, Santa Nella, CA 95322.

Western also will announce the public scoping meetings in local news media and by posting on the project environmental Web site at www.sltpeis-eir.com and on the DOE NEPA Web site at <http://energy.gov/nepa/Public-comment-opportunities> at least 15 days before the meeting.

The scoping meetings will be conducted as informal open house meetings to facilitate discussions between project officials and the public, and to allow interested people to attend as their schedules allow. The public will have the opportunity to view maps and

project information and present comments on the scope of the SLTP EIS.

Representatives from Western, Reclamation, and the Authority will be available to answer questions and provide additional information to meeting attendees.

In addition to providing comments at the public scoping meetings, stakeholders may submit written comments as described in the **ADDRESSES** section. Western will consider all comments postmarked or received during the public scoping period identified in the **DATES** section.

Western will coordinate with appropriate federal, state, and local agencies, and potentially affected Native American tribes during the preparation of the EIS/EIR. Agencies with legal jurisdiction or special expertise are invited to participate as cooperating agencies in preparation of the EIS, as defined in 40 CFR 1501.6. Designated cooperating agencies have responsibilities to support the NEPA process, as specified in 40 CFR 1501.6(b). Western will contact tribes and inform them of the planned EIS. Government-to-government consultations will be conducted in accordance with Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (65 FR 67249); the President's memorandum of April 29, 1994, Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments (59 FR 22951); DOE-specific guidance on tribal interactions; and applicable natural and cultural resources laws and regulations.

Western expects to publish the draft EIS by the end of 2014. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will publish a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS in the Federal Register, which will begin a minimum 45-day public comment period. Western will announce how to comment on the Draft EIS and will hold at least one public hearing

during the comment period. People who would like to receive a copy of the Draft EIS should submit a request as provided in the **ADDRESSES** section. For those requesting to be added to the distribution list, you are encouraged to download the EIS and other documents from the above Web site; however, if you prefer to be mailed a copy, please specify the format of the EIS that you would like to receive (CD or printed) and a preference for either the complete EIS or the Summary only.

Western will maintain information about the process including documents, meeting information, and important dates on the project Web site given above. The EIS and other project information will be available for download from the project Web site. Please visit the project Web site for current information.

Dated: **NOV 07 2013**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark A. Gabriel', written in a cursive style.

Mark A. Gabriel
Administrator

Appendix B

Notice of Preparation

Notice of Preparation

Of a Joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report

Including

Notice of Public Scoping Meetings/Request for Scoping Comments

On the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report

For the

San Luis Transmission Project

November 22, 2013

To: All Interested Parties

A. Introduction

The San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority (Authority), a California joint powers agency, comprised of water agencies representing approximately 28 federal and exchange water service contractors within the western San Joaquin Valley, San Benito and Santa Clara counties, and Western Area Power Administration (Western), an agency of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), intend to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) referred to as an EIS/EIR for the San Luis Transmission Project (SLTP). The Authority is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lead agency and Western is the federal lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Authority and Western will prepare the Draft and Final EIS/EIR to comply with both CEQA and NEPA. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is a cooperating agency under NEPA.

Western proposes at a minimum to construct, own, operate, and maintain a new 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line about 62 miles in length between Western's Tracy Substation and Western's San Luis Substation and a new 70-kV transmission line about 5 miles in length between the San Luis and O'Neill Substations. Western also will consider other transmission construction options including a new 500-kV transmission line about 62 miles in length operated at 230-kV between Western's Tracy and San Luis Substations; a new 500-kV transmission line operated at 500-kV about 62 miles in length between the Tracy Substation and PG&E's Los Banos Substation; and a new 230-kV transmission line about 18 miles in length between San Luis Substation and Dos Amigos Substation. Proposed corridor locations would traverse through Alameda, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced Counties.

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIS/EIR provides:

- a brief description of the proposed SLTP;
- a summary of potential project impacts;
- the times and locations of public scoping meetings;
- information on how to provide comments; and
- instructions for obtaining additional project information.

Concurrent with publication of this NOP, Western published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the SLTP in the Federal Register. The Authority and Western intend to prepare a joint EIS/EIR and will conduct a public scoping process, during which public comments will be received on the scope of the EIS/EIR, the proposed action, alternatives, and other issues to be addressed in the EIS/EIR.

B. Project Description and Location

Since 1965, the United States has had a contract with PG&E to transmit power between Western's Tracy Substation and Reclamation's San Luis Unit facilities near Santa Nella and Los Banos, including but not limited to the Gianelli Pump-Generating Plant, Dos Amigos Pumping Plant and the O'Neill Pump-Generating Plant (SLU). Reclamation requested that Western investigate options for transmission service so Reclamation can continue to economically pump, store, release and convey and deliver federal water resources through the SLU facilities under its existing and future renewal water service contracts when the current contract with PG&E expires in 2016. Western must respond to Reclamation's request consistent with Western's Open Access Transmission Service Tariff and existing laws.

Reclamation's water contractors have a direct interest in Western's transmission service arrangements to serve the SLU facilities and are represented by the Authority. One of the primary purposes of the Authority is to operate and maintain certain Reclamation Central Valley Project (CVP) water pumping/conveyance facilities, including the O'Neill Pumping Plant. The Authority and its member agencies are responsible for payment of the cost associated with the delivery of the CVP water including the costs associated with power transmission. The Authority's interest is to ensure reliable and cost effective electrical transmission to allow the continued cost-effective delivery of CVP water supplies to its member agencies. Another primary purpose of the Authority is to represent the common interests of its member agencies by assisting them with ensuring water is available for beneficial use within their service area.

Western proposes at a minimum to construct, own, operate, and maintain a new 230-kV transmission line about 62 miles in length between Western's Tracy Substation and Western's San Luis Substation and a new 70-kV transmission line about 5 miles in length between the San Luis and O'Neill Substations. Western also will consider other transmission construction options including:

- a new 500-kV transmission line about 62 miles in length operated at 230-kV between Western's Tracy and San Luis Substations;
- a new 500-kV transmission line operated at 500-kV about 62 miles in length between the Tracy Substation and PG&E's Los Banos Substation; and
- a new 230-kV transmission line about 18 miles in length between San Luis Substation and Dos Amigos Substation.

Additional components of the proposed project would include constructing new 230-kV breaker terminal bays at Western's Tracy 230-kV Substation or new 500-kV breaker terminal bays at the Tracy 500-kV Substation; new 230-kV breaker terminal bays at Western's San Luis 230-kV Substation or new 500-kV breaker terminal bays at PG&E's Los Banos Substation. Western may also build new 230-kV breaker terminal bays at Western's Dos Amigos 230-kV Substation and a new 230/70-kV transformer bank and interconnection facilities at San Luis Substation.

The proposed project also would include the following facilities and improvements:

- Right-of-way easements for the transmission lines with a typical width of about 125 to 175 feet for 230-kV lines and 200 to 250 feet for the 500-kV line.
- Tubular or lattice steel structures used to support the transmission lines. For the 230-kV line, structures typically would be between 100 and 200 feet tall depending on site-specific conditions. A few taller structures may be required in some locations to address engineering constraints.

- Access roads, including improvements to existing roads, new overland access, and new unpaved temporary roads to access the proposed project facilities and work areas during construction and operation phases.
- Ancillary facilities, such as communications facilities (e.g. overhead fiber optic ground wires, regeneration facilities) for access control and protection.

Proposed and alternative corridors have been identified based on currently available information that avoid, to the extent possible, residential and known environmentally-sensitive areas. Western and the Authority will evaluate other potential alternatives, including obtaining transmission service from a local public utility or private agency or the California Independent System Operator.

Western and the Authority will consider a no action/no project alternative. Under the no action/no project alternative, Western will continue to receive transmission service for the SLU under the existing contract with PG&E. Under CEQA, the no action/no project alternative would serve as a baseline against which to measure the environmental effects of the proposed action alternatives. For purposes of impact analysis under CEQA, the environmental baseline consists of the existing physical conditions in the vicinity of the project at the time of issuance of this NOP.

C. Potential Environmental Effects

The EIS/EIR will discuss the potential environmental effects of the proposed SLTP, and will identify mitigation measures to avoid or substantially reduce any potentially significant adverse effects, to the extent feasible. It also will discuss the potentially significant environmental impacts of the alternatives to the transmission line route and the proposed mitigation to reduce those impacts.

Based on preliminary analysis, construction and operation of the proposed SLTP may result in the following environmental effects:

- Land use, recreation, and visual resources
- Water use and water quality
- Surface water features including rivers, floodplains, and wetlands
- Fish, wildlife, and vegetation, including critical habitat
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental justice
- Historic and cultural resources
- Geology, soil, and mineral resources
- Human health and electric and magnetic fields
- Construction-related impacts, including access, traffic, and noise
- Growth-inducing effects

No determinations have been made as to the significance of these potential impacts. Such determinations will be made in the EIS/EIR after the issues are thoroughly analyzed. The Authority and Western invite interested parties to suggest specific issues within these general categories, or other issues not included above, to be considered in the EIS/EIR. The EIS/EIR also will analyze the cumulative impacts of the proposed SLTP in combination with other present and planned projects in the area.

D. Public Scoping

Pursuant to both CEQA and NEPA, the main intent of the EIR and EIS scoping process is to initiate the environmental review process for the project and to solicit input from affected governmental agencies and the public on the scope and content of the environmental document (i.e., the joint EIS/EIR). According to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d), the lead agency for a project may forego the detailed initial review of a project and begin work on the preparation of an EIR if the lead agency is able to determine that an EIR would clearly be required for the project. Because of the large-scale nature of the SLTP and its potential impacts on the environment, an Initial Study was not prepared and the Authority, in coordination with Western, will proceed with preparation of an EIS/EIR. A public scoping process will help to identify the range of actions, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in depth in the EIS/EIR, and to eliminate from detailed study those issues that are not pertinent to the final decision on the proposed project.

Members of the public, affected federal, State, and local agencies, interest groups, and other interested parties may participate in the scoping process by providing written comments or recommendations concerning the issues to be analyzed in the EIS/EIR.

E. Public Scoping Meetings

Open-house public scoping meetings will be held on January 8 and January 9, 2014 (see specific dates, times and locations in the table below). The purpose of the scoping meetings is to provide information about the proposed SLTP, review project maps, answer questions, and take written comments from interested parties. The scoping meetings will not be used to resolve differences concerning the merits of the project or to anticipate the ultimate decision on the proposed project.

The dates and locations for the public scoping meetings are provided in the table below. Each meeting is scheduled to begin at 5:00 p.m. with an open-house format during which attendees are invited to speak one-on-one with SLTP representatives and cooperating agency staff. Attendees are welcome to come and go at their convenience throughout the meeting.

All meeting locations will be wheelchair accessible. Please call Aspen Environmental Group at (916) 379-0350x17 if you are in need of additional accommodations, including translation services.

Public Scoping Meetings

Date	Location/Address
Wednesday, January 8, 2014 5:00 – 8:00 PM	Tracy Transit Center 50 East Sixth Street, Tracy, CA 95376
Thursday, January 9, 2014 5:00 – 8:00 PM	Hotel Mission De Oro 13070 S. Highway 33, Santa Nella, CA 95322

F. Scoping Comments

At this time, the Authority and Western are soliciting comments regarding any issues and alternatives that should be considered in the preparation of the EIS/EIR. Suggestions for submitting scoping comments are presented at the end of this section. Written comments must be postmarked or sent by no later than **January 21, 2014**. All written comments may be submitted in a variety of ways: (1) by mail, (2) by electronic mail (email), (3) by fax, or (4) by attending a Public Scoping Meeting (see times and locations above) and/or by providing a written comment at the meeting. Instructions for each method of comment submittal are provided below.

By Mail: If you send comments by mail, please use first-class mail and be sure to include your name and return address (please write legibly). All written comments on the scope of the SLTP EIS/EIR must be sent to:

**Mr. Don Lash
NEPA Document Manager
Western Area Power Administration
Sierra Nevada Region
114 Parkshore Drive
Folsom, CA 95630**

By Electronic Mail: E-mail communications are welcome; however, please remember to include your name and return address in the email message. Email messages must be sent to SLTPEIS-EIR@wapa.gov.

By Fax: Faxed comments must be sent to (916) 353-4772. Your name and return address must be included in the fax.

Suggestions for Effective Participation in Scoping: Following are some suggestions for preparing and providing the most useful information for the SLTP EIS/EIR scoping process.

- Review the description of the proposed SLTP.
- Review the potential environmental effects.
- Attend the scoping meetings.
- Submit written comments.
- Suggest mitigation measures.
- Suggest alternatives.

G. Agency Comments

We are seeking comments from all CEQA Responsible and Trustee Agencies and all other public agencies with jurisdiction by law with respect to the project as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIS/EIR. Agency responses should identify the issues to be considered in the EIS/EIR, including significant environmental issues, alternatives, mitigation measures, and whether the responding agency will be a responsible or trustee agency, and the basis for that determination. Due to the time limits mandated by state and federal laws, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but must be postmarked by no later than January 21, 2014. Please send your comments to:

**Mr. Don Lash
NEPA Document Manager
Western Area Power Administration
Sierra Nevada Region
114 Parkshore Drive
Folsom, CA 95630**

H. Additional Project Information

Internet Website: In addition to notice to be given in the manner required by law, information about the environmental review process will be posted on the Internet at: www.sltpeis-eir.com. This site will be used to post all public documents during the environmental review process and to announce upcoming public meetings. Additional project information will be posted at: <http://www.wapa.gov/sn/environment/>.



-  Substations
-  Proposed Corridor
-  Alternative Corridor
-  County

San Luis Transmission Project

Project Overview



Appendix C

Newspaper Advertisements



Public Scoping Meetings for the San Luis Transmission Project

For more information visit:
www.sltpeis-eir.com or
www.wapa.gov/sn/environment

Western Area Power Administration (Western), a power marketing administration within the U.S. Department of Energy, is proposing to construct and operate a new transmission line between Tracy power substation in Tracy, CA and the San Luis Reservoir power substation in Santa Nella, CA. The San Luis Transmission Project would interconnect several of the key Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) San Luis Unit (SLU) water facilities of the Central Valley Project (CVP) within Western's CVP transmission system.

The proposed project includes:

- constructing a new 62-mile long 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line between the Tracy and San Luis substations
- constructing a new 5-mile long 70-kV transmission line between the San Luis and O'Neill substations
- constructing new access roads and improving existing access roads
- constructing ancillary facilities, such as overhead fiber optic groundwire and substation improvements

Other transmission construction options include: a new 500-kV transmission line about 62 miles in length operated at 230-kV between the Tracy and San Luis substations; a new 500-kV transmission line operated at 500-kV about 62 miles in length between the Tracy and Los Banos substations; and a new 230-kV transmission line about 18 miles in length between San Luis and Dos Amigos substations.

Western determined an environmental impact statement (EIS) is the appropriate level of review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Western will be the lead federal agency for the NEPA EIS review process, and Reclamation will be a cooperating agency. Western intends to prepare a joint EIS/environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed SLTP, in coordination with the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (Authority), a California joint powers agency that operates and maintains the SLU facilities for Reclamation. The Authority will be the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act. Your input is sought to help Western, Reclamation, and the Authority identify potential impacts and alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS/EIR.

Come to the open-house public scoping meetings:

Wednesday, January 8, 2014, 5 - 8 p.m.

Tracy Transit Center
50 East Sixth Street
Tracy, CA 95376

Thursday, January 9, 2014, 5 - 8 p.m.

Hotel Mission De Oro
13070 South Highway 33
Santa Nella, CA 95322

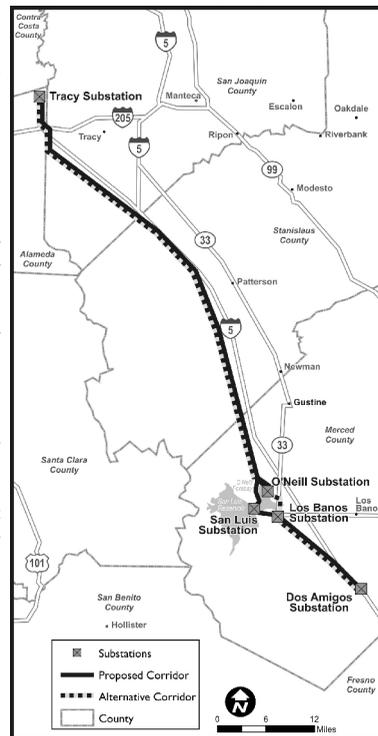
Send us your comments:

Provide your comments at the open house, by email, by fax, or by mail.

Send comments by January 21, 2014 to:

Western Area Power Administration
Donald Lash, NEPA Document Manager
114 Parkshore Drive, Folsom, CA 95630
Email: SLTPEIS-EIR@wapa.gov Fax: 916-353-4772

For translation services,
call 916-379-0350 x17



Wednesday, January 8, 2014, 5 – 8 p.m. and Thursday, January 9, 2014, 5 – 8 p.m.

Appendix D

Postcard Notice

Public Scoping Meetings for the San Luis Transmission Project

Western Area Power Administration (Western), a power marketing administration within the U.S. Department of Energy, is proposing to construct and operate a new transmission line between Tracy power substation in Tracy, CA and the San Luis Reservoir power substation in Santa Nella, CA. The San Luis Transmission Project would interconnect several of the key Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) San Luis Unit (SLU) water facilities of the Central Valley Project (CVP) within Western's CVP transmission system.

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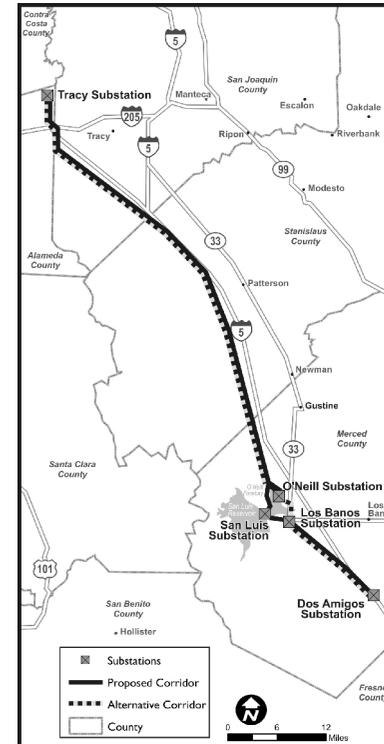
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Send comments by January 21, 2014 to:

Western Area Power Administration
Donald Lash, NEPA Document Manager
114 Parkshore Drive, Folsom, CA 95630
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Wednesday, January 8, 2014, 5 – 8 p.m. and Thursday, January 9, 2014, 5 – 8 p.m.



For more information visit:
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www.wapa.gov/sn/environment

IMPORTANT NOTICE – PUBLIC MEETING FOR TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT



Appendix E

Comment Card

