

**Notice of Exemption**

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**To:**  
Office of Planning and Research  
U.S. Mail:  
P.O. Box 3044  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**From:**  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Central Region  
1234 East Shaw Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93710

**Street Address:**  
1400 Tenth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**State Clearinghouse Number:** 2022110521

**Project Title:** Major Amendment No. 2 to California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2022-064-04 for the Southern California Gas Company eTS 58713.01 Line 85 Milepost 75.85 Remediation Digs Project (Project).

**Project Location:** The Project is located in the southern San Joaquin Valley approximately 6 miles east of the City of Taft in Kern County, California. The Project is specifically located at five distinct Work Areas adjacent to and on both sides of the California Aqueduct near Lake Station Road within the United States Geological Survey 7.5-Minute Quadrangle Map Buena Vista Lake Bed. Work Areas 1 - 4 are within California Department of Water Resources-owned land in Section 12 of Township 32 South, Range 24 East, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian (MDB&M). Work Area 5 is within privately-owned land in Section 7 of Township 32 South, Range 25 East, MDB&M. Work Areas are located at approximately 35.158518, -119.349025; 35.157883, -119.346292; 35.158184, -119.345164; 35.164648, -119.349428; and 35.155344°, -119.335747.

**Project Description:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has issued a California Endangered Species Act (CESA; Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) Incidental Take Permit (ITP) No. 2081-2022-064-04, Major Amendment No. 1, and this Major Amendment No. 2 to authorize Southern California Gas Company (Permittee) to incidentally Tipton kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratooides nitratooides*) which is as an endangered species under CESA, San Joaquin antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*) which is designated as a threatened species under CESA, and San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) which is list which is designated as a threatened species under CESA (Fish & G. Code § 2050 et seq.; see Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 670.5, subd. (a)(6)(D), (b)(6)(B), and (b)(6)(E), respectively).

The Project includes activities necessary to inspect and repair five segments of the 26-inch natural gas pipeline (Line) 85 near MP 75.85 where anomalies have been identified and installing cathodic protection for the integrity of the pipeline. Major Amendment No. 2 makes eleven changes to the ITP, as amended. Major Amendment No. 2 will: 1) extend the expiration date; 2) add two Work Areas; 3) revise the Project Description for new Work Areas and expansion of existing Work Areas; 4) add San Joaquin kit fox as Covered Species; 5) add cross compression to Covered Activities; 6) increase the total footprint and impacts to Covered Species habitat; 7) revise Condition of Approval 6.5 to allow flexibility where equipment fueling can occur; 8) add San Joaquin kit fox-specific measures/ revise measures to include San Joaquin kit fox; 9) increase the amount of compensatory mitigation required to fully mitigate impacts; 10) add a section to allow a Security; and 11) add, revise and replace Figures and Attachments to reflect the changes listed above.

**Public Agency Approving Project:** CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

**Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project:** Southern California Gas Company, Mark Medina, Project Manager, 9400 Oakdale Avenue, SC9314, Chatsworth, California 91311

**Exempt Status:**

- Statutory Exemption. California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269, subdivision (b); Public Resources Code, section 21080, subdivision (b)(4)

**Reasons why project is exempt:** See Attachment

**CDFW Contact Person:** Sarah Bahm (Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)), [sarah.bahm@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:sarah.bahm@wildlife.ca.gov)

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*Gerald Hatler*  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Date: 12/27/2023

for Julie A. Vance  
Regional Manager, Central Region

Date received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment to Notice of Exemption  
State Clearinghouse No. 2022110521**

**California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2022-064-04  
Major Amendment No. 2  
Southern California Gas Company eTS 58713.01 Line 85 Milepost 75.85  
Remediation Digs Project**

Approval of this Project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) because the Project is subject to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269, subdivision (b), “Emergency repairs to publicly or privately owned service facilities necessary to maintain service essential to the public health, safety, or welfare which includes those actions that require a reasonable amount of planning to address an anticipated emergency” and Public Resources Code, section 21080, subdivision (b)(4), “Specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency”. “Emergency” is defined as “a sudden, unexpected occurrence, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services” (Pub. Resources Code, § 21060.3).

The purpose of the Project is to prevent pipeline failure by inspecting and repairing five segments of the 26-inch natural gas pipeline (Line) 85 near Milepost 75.85 where potential anomalies have been identified via remote pigging equipment and installing cathodic protection to protect the integrity of the pipeline. The repairs are needed urgently to protect the integrity and safety of the pipeline as well as to ensure service to natural gas customers is not impacted this winter. Additionally, repairs are needed urgently to reduce potential impacts to other pipelines in the vicinity of the California Aqueduct, and possibly to the California Aqueduct itself.

On November 14, 2023, the Permittee requested to extend the expiration date of the ITP to May 31, 2023, because the Project was again delayed due to access constraints by the landowner, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). The Permittee was granted authorization by DWR to begin the Project on October 24, 2023. The request also includes: revising the Project Location and Project Description to include two additional work areas and the expansion and modification of existing Work Areas 1, 2, and 3; adding San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) as a Covered Species; increasing the impacts to Covered Species habitat as a result of the new Work Areas and increased size of the existing Work Areas and vegetation trimming outside of the limits of Work Area 1 that occurred on October 26, 2023; and revising Condition of Approval 6.5 to allow greater flexibility where equipment fueling can occur in relation to Covered Species burrows due to the extensive number of Covered Species burrows within 100 feet of suitable equipment fueling locations.

CDFW has determined that although Major Amendment No. 2 will result in an increase in take of the Covered Species, and increased Covered Species habitat impacts, the additional impacts of the taking will be minimized and fully mitigated through implementation of the Conditions of Approval. CDFW determined that additional

HM Lands are necessary to fully mitigate the additional 0.587 acres of temporary impacts Covered Species habitat. Because the additional impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated, there will be no increase in Project impacts to the Covered Species with Amendment No. 2. Impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated through the implementation of measures required by Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2022-064-04, as amended. Measures include: 1) Monthly Compliance Reports; 2) establishment of avoidance zones; 3) worker education; 4) species relocation; and 5) permanent habitat protection.