

Notice of Exemption**- 1 -**

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: California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Amended Incidental Take Permit (ITP) No. 2081-2022-064-04 (Major Amendment No. 3) for the Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) 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 CESA (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) ITP, Major Amendment No. 1, Major Amendment No. 2 and this Amended ITP (Major Amendment No. 3) to authorize SoCalGas (Permittee) to incidentally Tipton kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratooides nitratooides*) which is 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 were identified and to install cathodic protection for integrity of the pipeline. This Amended ITP (Major Amendment No. 3) amends the original ITP issued on November 22, 2022, to incorporate all previous amendments and includes extending the expiration date from May 31, 2024, to November 30, 2024, revisions to the Project Description to expand the trench in Work Area 5 by approximately 50 feet in length to accommodate replacing up to 65 feet of pipeline, replacement of the existing wooden vault with a concrete vault, and revisions to Figure 5 to reflect these changes to the Project Description. The resulting impacts of the Project to the Covered Species remain the same.

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

DocuSigned by:
Krista Tomlinson
Signature: _____ Date: 7/9/2024
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for Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager, Central Region

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

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

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
CALIFORNIA ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT
Amended Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2022-064-04
(Major Amendment No. 3)**

**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 May 31, 2024, the Permittee requested to extend the expiration date of the ITP to November 30, 2024, because additional deteriorated pipe was discovered within Work Area 5 that needs to be replaced. The request also includes revising the Project Description to expand the trench within Work Area 5 by approximately 50 feet in length to accommodate replacing a longer section of pipeline while the limits of Work Area 5 will remain the same and replacement of an existing wooden vault with a concrete vault within Work Area 5.

This Amended ITP (Major Amendment No. 3) amends the original ITP issued on November 22, 2022, to incorporate all previous amendments and includes extending the expiration date from May 31, 2024, to November 30, 2024, revisions to the Project Description to expand the trench in Work Area 5 by approximately 50 feet in length to accommodate replacing up to 65 feet of pipeline, replacement of the existing wooden vault with a concrete vault, and a revision to Figure 5 to reflect these changes to the

Project Description. The resulting impacts of the Project to the Covered Species remain the same.

CDFW has determined that although Major Amendment No. 3 may result in an increase in take of the Covered Species but will not increase Covered Species habitat impacts, and by implementing the Conditions of Approval, there will be no increase in Project impacts to the Covered Species with Amendment No. 3. 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.