

Notice of Exemption



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

Project Title: California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2023-003-04 for the Southern California Gas Company eTS 56109.02 Line 85 Milepost 70.54 Leak Repair Project (Project)

Project Location: The Project is located in the southern San Joaquin Valley approximately one-half mile west of the community of Valley Acres in Kern County, California. The Project is specifically located within property owned by California Resources Elk Hills LLC in within the United States Geological Survey 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Map Taft in Township 31 South, Range 24 East, Section 29, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian, at approximately 35.206175°N Latitude, -119.418448°W Longitude.

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. 2081-2023-003-04, to authorize Southern California Gas Company to incidentally take San Joaquin antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*) which is listed as a threatened species under CESA, respectively (Fish & G. Code § 2050 et seq.; see Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 670.5, subd. (b)(6)(B)).

The ITP authorizes take of San Joaquin antelope squirrel (Covered Species) for activities associated with the Project which is necessary to repair/replace a section of a high-pressure gas pipeline where a leak has been detected to prevent failure which is urgently required for health and human safety. The Project includes activities to inspect, replace, and recoat the pipeline segment, and return the temporary disturbance area to pre-project conditions. The Project is expected to temporarily disturb 0.69 acre of Covered Species habitat.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: Southern California Gas Company, Mangione Mitchell, Project Manager, 701 North Bullis Road, Compton, California 90221

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:

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Signature: _____

Date: 2/22/2023

Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager, Central Region

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Attachment to Notice of Exemption

California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2023-003-04 Southern California Gas Company eTS 56109.02 Line 85 Milepost 70.54 Leak Repair Project (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 replacing a segment of the 26-inch natural gas pipeline (Line) 85 near Milepost 70.54 where a leak has been detected. The replacement is needed urgently to continue safe operation of the pipeline, maintain gas service to the San Joaquin Valley, and protect to the health and safety of the nearby community of Valley Acres.

The proposed Project includes excavating a trench to expose the pipeline for replacement and recoating. The trench will be approximately 150 feet long by 10 feet wide by 10 feet deep. In total, the area of excavation will be 1,500 square feet (0.03 acre) within a 300-foot long by 100-foot wide workspace, totaling approximately 30,000 square feet (0.69 acre). Approximately 556 cubic yards of soil will be excavated using a backhoe or excavator and will be stockpiled adjacent to the trench. Once exposed, up to approximately 120 feet of existing pipe will be cleaned and abated with containment used to capture any materials from sandblasting the exposed pipe. If found, asbestos-containing material will be removed. The integrity of the pipe will be inspected both visually and using wave and b-scan inspection equipment, portable phased-array ultrasonic testing and/or portable hand and pipe latching equipment.

The existing Line 85 will be cross-compressed to remove gas from the replacement segment and allow for temporary continued natural gas transmission around the replacement section. The exposed existing pipeline segment will be cut, removed from the trench, and hauled away for disposal. The replacement pipeline segment will be placed in the trench using a reach forklift for line-up, welding, bending (if needed), and installation. The replacement section will be coated with fusion-bonded epoxy or similar material, then inspected; any imperfections will be sandblasted, cleaned, and recoated using the same procedure described previously. Zero-sack slurry, or wet sand, will be placed below and cover the exposed pipeline segment to approximately 18 inches above the top of the pipe, then the trench will be backfilled with stockpiled native soil or certified clean fill, as needed. The soil will be compacted to pre-Project conditions to the extent feasible. The Project Area will be allowed to revegetate naturally. The Project is expected to cause the temporary loss of 0.69 acre of habitat for the Covered Species.

Impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated through the implementation of measures required by Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2023-003-04. Measures include: 1) Weekly Compliance Reports; 2) establishment of avoidance zones; 3) worker education; 4) species relocation; and 5) permanent habitat protection.