

Notice of Exemption

To:
Office of Planning and Research
For 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: 2023020542

Project Title: Major Amendment No. 1 to California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Incidental Take Permit (ITP) 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 within the United States Geological Survey 7.5-Minute Taft Quadrangle Map 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 CESA (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) ITP and this Major Amendment No. 1 to authorize Southern California Gas Company (Permittee) to incidentally take San Joaquin antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*) which is listed as a threatened species under CESA (Fish & G. Code § 2050 et seq.; see Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 670.5, subd. (b)(6)(B)).

The Project includes activities 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. Major Amendment No. 1 makes five changes to the ITP. Major Amendment No. 1 will: 1) modify the Project Area to increase the footprint of the workspace surrounding the excavation area by approximately 10 feet (0.074 acre); 2) add the use of another existing access road for safe ingress and egress to the Project Description; 3) increase the total footprint of the Project and impacts to Covered Species habitat by 0.074 acre; 4) increase the amount of Covered Species Credits required to be deducted from the Permittee’s balance of conservation credits from the Coles Levee Ecosystem Preserve; and 5) revise and accordingly replace Figure 2 of the ITP with Figure 2a to depict the expanded workspace and additional existing access road within the modified Project Area.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

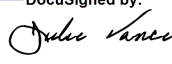
Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: Southern California Gas Company, Mangione Mitchell, Project Manager, 701 North Bullis Road, Compton, California 90221.

Exempt Status:

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

Reasons why project is exempt: See Attachment

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

DocuSigned by:

Signature: _____
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Date: 4/25/2023

Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager, Central Region

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

**Attachment to Notice of Exemption
State Clearinghouse No. 2023020542**

**California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2023-003-04
Major Amendment No. 1
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 to protect the health and safety of the nearby community of Valley Acres.

On March 24, 2023, the Permittee requested changes to the Project to increase the footprint of the workspace surrounding the excavation area by approximately 10 feet to the southwest to allow adequate room for equipment to safely ingress and egress along the excavation area perimeter. The Permittee also requested to add an existing access road to the northwest to the Project Description to use for ingress and egress when needed. The expansion of the workspace will increase the total Project footprint by 0.074 acre, and this will also increase the impacts to Covered Species habitat by 0.074 acre.

CDFW has determined that although Major Amendment No. 1 may result in an increase in take of the Covered Species and increased Covered Species habitat impacts from those contemplated in the ITP as originally issued, the additional impacts of the taking will be minimized and fully mitigated through implementation of the Conditions of Approval. Because the impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated, there will be no increase in Project impacts to the Covered Species with Major Amendment No. 1. Impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated through the implementation of measures required by Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2023-003-04, as amended. Measures include: 1) Weekly Compliance Reports; 2) establishment of avoidance zones; 3) worker education; 4) species relocation; and 5) permanent habitat protection.