

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

Project Title: California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2023-013-04 for the Line 7049 Milepost 0.02 Recoat and Anode Install Project (Project)

Project Location: The Project is located in the southern San Joaquin Valley approximately 5.5 miles east of the community of Valley Acres in Kern County, California. The Project is specifically located within the Buena Vista Lake Bed United States Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map in Township 32 South, Range 25 East, and Section 7, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian. The approximate center of the site is located at latitude at 35.1532° North and longitude -119.334387° West.

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. 2081-2023-013-04 authorizing Southern California Gas Company to incidentally take Tipton kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratooides nitratooides*) which is designated as an endangered species under CESA, and San Joaquin antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*) and San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) which are listed as threatened species under CESA, respectively (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 ITP authorizes take of Tipton kangaroo rat, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, and San Joaquin kit fox (Covered Species) for activities associated with the Project which are necessary to prevent pipeline failure and distribute cathodic protection current to protect the integrity of the existing high-pressure natural gas Line 7049 at a location where anomalies were detected. The Project will include excavating a trench to inspect the pipeline, repairing detected anomalies, recoating the pipeline, and installing four interference anodes adjacent to the pipeline. Temporary disturbance areas will be returned to pre-project conditions and allowed to revegetate naturally. The Project is expected to temporarily disturb 0.64 acre of Covered Species habitat.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

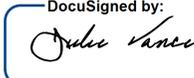
Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: Southern California Gas Company, Erika Esparza, Project Manager, 9400 Oakdale Avenue, Chatsworth, California 91311

Exempt Status:

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

Reasons why project is exempt: See Attachment

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

Signature: 
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Date: 5/11/2023

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. 2081-2023-013-04 Southern California Gas Company Line 7049 Milepost 0.02 Recoat and Anode Install Project

Approval of this Project is subject to the statutory exemption for “Specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency” (Emergency Project; Pub. Resources Code, §21080, subd. (b)(4)) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Pub. Resources Code, §21000 et seq.). “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 and distribute cathodic protection current to protect the integrity at one location along the existing high-pressure natural gas pipeline 7049 (Line 7049) where anomalies have been detected. Southern California Gas Company is required to prevent corrosion of metallic pipelines by maintaining minimum levels of cathodic protection (CP) and is required to take prompt remedial action to correct any deficiencies indicated by the monitoring of existing CP levels (49 CFR, Part 192, Subpart I). Line 7049 has been out of compliance for more than one year, since March 2022, requiring reporting regarding the status of this pipeline be sent regularly to the California Public Utilities Commission. Southern California Gas Company provided the following information regarding the urgent nature of this Project:

- Failure of Line 7049 at Milepost 0.02 would impact local customers in the town of Taft and surrounding areas which would require curtailment to non-core (i.e., gas supply to non-residential customers would be shut down until the pipeline is fixed); however, regional impacts are unlikely unless this failure also impacts Line 85.

The Project will include excavating trenches along the pipeline to inspect, repair detected anomalies, recoat the pipeline, and install four interference anodes adjacent to the pipeline. Temporary disturbance areas will be returned to pre-project conditions and allowed to revegetate naturally. The total Project area will be approximately 53,392 square feet (1.23 acres), of which approximately 27,749 square feet (0.64 acre) is valley saltbush/allscale scrub and non-native grassland and approximately 25,643 square feet (0.59 acre) is disturbed/ developed (existing, unvegetated, compacted dirt roads). The Project is expected to temporarily disturb 0.64 acre of Covered Species habitat.

Impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated through the implementation of measures required by Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2023-013-04. Measures include:

- 1) Monthly Compliance Reports;
- 2) establishment of avoidance zones;
- 3) worker education;
- 4) species relocation; and
- 5) permanent habitat protection.