**PART 2: SETS OF COMMENTS FROM AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND TRIBES AND RESPONSES**

Part two of this appendix contains all agency, organization, and Tribe comment letters received during the public comment period, as well as four additional comment letters received from agencies and a Tribe between the close of the public comment period and November 7, 2011. The comment letters are lettered alphabetically and responses are labeled accordingly. For example, Response A-1 refers to the response to the first comment in comment letter A.
LETTER A: AGUA DULCE TOWN COUNCIL

Response A-1: Your comments will be considered in the decision-making processes prior to final decisions on the Proposed Action by the BLM, USFS, and LADWP. This comment does not warrant the modification of the Proposed Action or Alternatives, the development of new alternatives, the modification of the environmental analysis, or factual corrections to the Draft EIS/EIR. This comment simply expresses an opinion.
Response A-2: Alternative 3 is not the Federal Agency Preferred or the Environmentally Superior Alternative as described in Sections 2.7 and 2.8 of the Final EIS/EIR. While Alternative 3 was designed to minimize potential take of private residences (see page 2-114 in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS/EIR for a description of the Avenue L Re-Routing), due to design and feasibility constraints, impacts to private residences would be unavoidable if Alternative 3 were selected. It is for these reasons and others that Alternative 3 is not the preferred Alternative. Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3 of the Final EIS/EIR details potential impacts to land use. Refer to Chapter 4, page 4-107, of the Final EIS/EIR for the discussion of potential impacts to existing residential land uses for Alternative 3. Your comments regarding Alternative 3 will be considered in the decision-making processes prior to final decisions on the Proposed Action by the BLM, USFS, and LADWP.

Response A-3: The Agua Dulce Community Standards District Regulations are not applicable to the BRRTP because BRRTP, as a municipal utility project, would not be subject to the provisions and requirements of the Los Angeles County Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, the LADWP would not be required to file for approval of a Conditional Use Permit or any other zoning permit issued by the County of Los Angeles. Please refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.4.2 of the Final EIS/EIR, Right-of-Way Permits and Grants, regarding property acquisition. For discussion of the potential impacts of eminent domain, please refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3 of the Final EIS/EIR, Land Use.

Response A-4: It was determined that Alternative 3 would not conflict with land use policies of the Los Angeles County General Plan as described in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3, Land Use, Table 4.2.3-3 on page 4-89 of the Final EIS/EIR.
Response A-5: As presented in Appendix D of the Final EIS/EIR, Regulatory Framework (Section D.5, Land Use), Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) Title 14, Part 77 establishes the standards for determining obstructions in navigable airspace, including height limitations on structures taller than 200 feet or within 20,000 feet (3.79 miles) of an airport. A discussion of the implementation of these FAA requirements has been added to description of the Proposed Action in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.2, page 2-76 of the Final EIS/EIR, and potential impacts are discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1, Air Quality, Section 4.22, Noise, Section 4.29, Visual Resources, and Section 4.3.1, Biological Resources. Public and private airports in the vicinity of Alternative 3 are discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3, page 4-109 of the Final EIS/EIR. While installation activities would be expected to temporarily affect aircraft movement, impacts would be expected to be adverse but less than significant. In addition, before the start of construction, LADWP would consult with the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department, the USFS, and the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission regarding Alternative 3’s potential conflicts with local aircraft operations or associated safety provisions.

Response A-6: Impacts related to trails along Alternative 3 are discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.5 of the Final EIS/EIR, Recreation. Transmission lines located along or crossing trails would not preclude the use of these trails for equestrian activities, as the required clearance for the transmission conductors would not prevent a horse and rider from passing beneath. Furthermore, in the “Transmission Line Studies Priest Rapids Project FERC No. 2114 Final Report” prepared for Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington, in April 2001 by Duke Engineering & Services, a review of available literature on the effects of exposure to EMF on wildlife was conducted (Duke Engineering and Services 2001). Within this document, Section 3.3 explains that “Mammals and birds are often attracted to transmission line rights-
of-way for the different foraging vegetation types available (Lee et al. 1996). During observations of large mammal interactions under a 500-kV transmission line in Idaho, Goodwin (1975, as cited in Lee et al. 1996) found no visible effects of the electric and magnetic fields on deer or elk movements."

In Section 3.4 of the “Transmission Line Studies Priest Rapids Project FERC No. 2114 Final Report,” Amstutz and Miller (1980) found no evidence of adverse effects on the health or behavior of cattle, sheep, pigs, and horses living under 765 kV transmission lines. Section 4.0 of the same report concludes that the “[b]ehavior patterns exhibited in laboratory animals indicate EMFs can be felt, but that field influences are too weak to alter activities... There is little evidence to suggest that EMF radiation produces any adverse affects on wildlife biology or behavior.” Based on the research presented above, it is not anticipated that equestrian activities would be impacted due to the transmission line, as EMF would not be expected to change the behavior of the horses dramatically enough to cause bodily injury to itself or any riders.

Corona noise produced by the transmission lines would result in a sustained, low-frequency humming sound, as described in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2 of the Final EIS/EIR, Noise. This type of noise would result in sound levels of 40 or 50 A-weighted decibels (dBA) at the edge of the transmission line ROW, which would be similar to a fairly quiet refrigerator, washing machine, or clothes dryer. This type of sustained sound would not be expected to startle or alarm a horse, resulting in bodily injury; however, the responsiveness of an animal to external conditions such as these would vary by individual animal, and therefore we cannot be certain that no horse would have a negative reaction resulting in bodily injury.
Impacts to these businesses are addressed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3 of the Final EIS/EIR, Land Use.

**Response A-7:** Please refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.2.13 of the Final EIS/EIR, Social and Economic Conditions, regarding effects on property values. Potential impacts to property values have been sufficiently analyzed and no further response is necessary. As described in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.12, of the Final EIS/EIR, because there is no consensus in the scientific community regarding health risks associated with electric and magnetic fields (EMF), conclusions cannot be reached on this subject in the Final EIS/EIR. Information regarding research on EMF associated with utility facilities is provided in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.12 of the Final EIS/EIR.

**Response A-8:** Your comments regarding Alternative 3 will be considered in the decision-making processes prior to final decisions on the Proposed Action by the BLM, USFS, and LADWP. Chapter 3, Section 3.2.11 of the Final EIS/EIR, Wildfire and Fuels, describes the existing conditions within the BRRTP fireshed. As discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.11 of the Final EIS/EIR, Wildfire and Fuels, Alternative 3 construction and maintenance activities would pose an additional safety hazard for firefighters and reduce the effectiveness of firefighting. These potential impacts to wildfire and fuels have been sufficiently analyzed and disclosed.

General Practices have been incorporated into the Proposed Action to avoid or reduce impacts to local roads and emergency access and existing water sources (see Table 2-8 in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS/EIR). General Practice GP-2, Traffic Control Plan, requires measures to avoid disruptions or delays in access for emergency service vehicles and to keep emergency service agencies informed of any road closures, detours, or delays. GP-32 addresses repair
and restoration of any damage caused to local roads by construction or maintenance activities. GP-28 would minimize traffic congestion and delays during construction by restricting closures to off-peak periods. GP-40 requires that existing water facilities be repaired or replaced if damaged or destroyed during construction activities.

Additionally, mitigation measures F-1a, F-1b, F-1d, F-1e, F-1f, and F-2a are recommended to reduce adverse impacts associated with the construction and maintenance activities of the transmission line, as well as the presence of the transmission line during operation. F-1a would remove, to the extent practicable, transmission line-bounded islands that would potentially prevent fire suppression activities. F-1b would remove the potential for wooden pole contact through proper engineering of the proposed transmission line. F-1d, F-1e, and F-2a would ensure proper planning and communication between Project-related construction and operation activities with firefighting activities. F-1f would ensure that proper FAA signage or lighting requirements would be met during final design of the transmission line. With the implementation of these mitigation measures, this impact would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Construction and/or maintenance activities would also increase the risk of a wildfire event where public safety is threatened. Mitigation measures F-1b, F-1c, F-1d, F-1e, F-2a, F-2b, F-2c, and F-3a are recommended to reduce adverse impacts associated with the increased risk of wildfire. F-1b would remove the potential for wooden pole contact through proper engineering of the proposed transmission line. F-1c, F-1d, F-1e, F-2a, and F-2b would ensure proper funding, planning, and communication between Project-related construction and operation activities with firefighting activities, including the maintenance of important firebreaks on the Angeles National Forest (ANF). F-2c would remove potential
hazards from work areas that could pose a fire hazard. F-3a identifies potential funding sources for fire prevention measures on private property. With the implementation of these mitigation measures, this impact would be reduced to a less than significant level.

In addition, Project activities would introduce non-native plants, altering fire regimes by increasing ignition potential and rate of fire spread. Biological mitigation measure BIO-2 (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1, of the Final EIS/EIR) would reduce the adverse impacts of this impact to a less than significant level through the implementation of a weed management plan.

Response A-9: There are no Project activities that would intentionally withdraw groundwater for consumptive use under any of the Alternatives. Impacts to water quality, groundwater supply and recharge, and surface water for Alternative 3 are discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3, of the Final EIS/EIR, Water Resources. Impacts were determined to be less than significant.

Response A-10: This information is quoted from the Draft EIS/EIR and, as such, will be considered in the decision-making processes prior to final decisions on the Proposed Action by the BLM, USFS, and LADWP.

Response A-11: NEPA and CEQA require the consideration of a reasonable range of Alternatives. As described in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1, of the Final EIS/EIR, and on pages 61 through 66 of the Alternatives Development Report, included as Appendix B to the Final EIS/EIR, identified Alternatives were eliminated from detailed analysis in the EIS/EIR because they either did not meet the Project purpose and need/objectives or were determined to be infeasible. Because Alternative 3 would meet the Project purpose and need and was determined to be feasible, Alternative 3 was
As described in Sections 2.7 and 2.8 of the Final EIS/EIR, Alternative 2 has been identified as the Federal Agency Preferred and Environmentally Superior Alternative. Alternative 3 is not the preferred Alternative due to the relatively greater magnitude of impacts associated with this Alternative. Your comments regarding Alternative 3 will be considered in the decision-making processes prior to final decisions on the Proposed Action by the BLM, USFS, and LADWP.

Response A-12: Your comments will be considered in the decision-making processes prior to final decisions on the Proposed Action by the BLM, USFS, and LADWP. NEPA and CEQA require the consideration of a reasonable range of Alternatives. Alternative 2, with the incorporation of Three-Circuit Tower Mitigation, as described in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.2 of the Final EIS/EIR, would not result in the formation of a transmission-line bounded island in the Green Valley area or any area. The Green Valley Town Council did not specifically recommend that the existing Barren Ridge-Rinaldi line be relocated to the Alternative 2a alignment. If the existing Barren-Ridge Rinaldi transmission line were relocated to the Alternative 2a alignment adjacent to the proposed 230 kV transmission line and the existing 500 kV DC line were to remain in place, a transmission-line bounded island would be created that would inhibit firefighting activities.
**LETTER B: ANTELOPE VALLEY AQMD**

**Response B-1:** Your comments will be considered in the decision-making processes prior to final decisions on the Proposed Action by the BLM, USFS, and LADWP. Per the requirements of mitigation measure AIR-2a, LADWP’s construction contractor will develop a Fugitive Dust Control Plan. The plan and contact information will be submitted to the Antelope Valley Air Quality Control District prior to start of the Project.

October 17, 2011

BRRTP—Forest Service/BLM/LADWP

c/o POWER Engineers, Inc.

731 Ball Road, Suite 100

Anaheim, CA 92805

*Project Description: Barren Ridge Renewable Transmission Project*

Mr. McColgan,

The Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (District) has reviewed the draft EIS/EIR document for the Barren Ridge Renewable Transmission Project (BRRTP). The proposed project would connect renewable resource areas in Kern County with Los Angeles Department of Water and Power’s (LADWP) transmission system. The Preferred Alternative selected by the Forest Service and BLM includes new transmission lines and upgraded infrastructure along an approximately 5-mile corridor beginning at the Barren Ridge Substation in Kern County and extending south through the Antelope Valley, the Angeles National Forest, and continuing to the Haskell Substation in Los Angeles County, in California.

Based on our review of the EIS/EIR, the District concurs with the air and dust mitigation measures to be incorporated into the Fugitive Dust Emission Control Plan. The District requests that the contractor submit the plan and his/her contact information prior to the start of the project.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this planning document. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (661) 723-8070 ext. 2 or Julie Mckeehan at ext. 8.

Sincerely,

/Bret Banks
Operations Manager

BRRTP
LETTER C: SOUTH COAST AQMD

Response C-1: The revisions suggested by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) to mitigation measure AIR-2f have been incorporated into the Final EIS/EIR on page 4-12.
Response C-2: Along with Responses C-1 above and C-3 below, this is the written response requested by SCAQMD.

Response C-3: It is acknowledged that SCAQMD is available to work with LADWP to address air quality issues recommended by the SCAQMD.
Mr. Charles C. Holloway 3 October 25, 2011

questions regarding the enclosed comments. For questions regarding general conformity, please contact Kathy Hanou at (909) 396-3056

Sincerely,

Ian MacMillan
Program Supervisor, CEQA Inter-Governmental Review
Planning, Rule Development & Ares Sources

Attachment

IM-DG

LAC110825-05
Control Number
LETTER D: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

October 21, 2011

BRRTP – Forest Service/BLM/LADWP

October 21, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

The Department of Fish and Game (Department) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) submitted by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) for the Barren Ridge Renewable Transmission Project (Project) located in Los Angeles and Kern counties, California. The Project would include construction of a new 600-foot by 600-foot switching station in Haskell Canyon, 61 miles of a new double-circuit 230-kv (kV) transmission line from the Barren Ridge Switching Station to the new switching station in Haskell Canyon, and reconstructed of 76 miles of the existing Barren Ridge-Palmdale 230-kV transmission line, and a new 12-mile 230-kV circuit from Haskell Canyon to the Castaic Power Plant.

Table 1-1 of the DEIS/DEIR states that LADWP anticipates that acquisition of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) and Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) will be necessary to comply with California regulations. Species that are listed as threatened or endangered pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and may be impacted by Project activities include, but may not be limited to, desert tortoise (Gopherus agassizii), western yellow-bellied cactus (Coccyzus americanus occidentalis), southwestern willow flycatcher (Empidonax latilla eximius), least bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis), and Mohave ground squirrel (Spermophilus mohavensis). The Department agrees that an ITP and SAA are warranted to comply with the CESA and Fish and Game Code Sections 1600 et seq., respectively. Our specific comments follow.

Trustee Agency Authority: The Department is a Trustee Agency with the responsibility under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) for commenting on projects that could impact plant and wildlife resources. Pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 1652, the Department has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species. As a Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources, the Department is responsible for providing, as available, biological expertise to review and comment on environmental documents and impacts arising from project activities as those terms are used under CESA.

Conserving California’s Wildlife Since 1870
Response D-1: The community descriptions are revised in Sections 3.3.1 and 4.3.1 in the Final EIS/EIR to incorporate the use of Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf and Evens 2009.

Because most vegetation community mapping occurred during 2008 and 2009 surveys, prior to the second edition of *A Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, Evens November 2009), vegetation communities were described and mapped according to Holland (1986). When applicable, Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf (1995) equivalents were provided in the Biological Resources Technical Report included in Volume IV of the Final EIS/EIR. Vegetation mapping conducted in 2010 was described according to Holland (1986), with the Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf (1995) equivalent for consistency with earlier surveys. The Holland coding system (Holland 1986) was the accepted reference by both State and federal regulatory agencies prior to the second edition of *A Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, Evens 2009) being published. However, as mentioned above, the community descriptions were revised to incorporate the use of Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf and Evens 2009.
Response D-2: All biological measures will be implemented as appropriate for Project activities, including fire prevention activities. Clarification that that activities associated with the implementation of the wildfire and fuels mitigation measures, including vegetation clearing, would require the implementation of all other appropriate Project mitigation measures, including biological resource mitigation measures, has been added to page 4-279 of the Final EIS/EIR.

Response D-3: A discussion of Fish and Game Code section 3503, 3503.5 and 3513 has been added to the Final EIS/EIR in Section D.16 of Appendix D, Regulatory Framework.

Response D-4: Table 7-7 on page 7-13 of the Final EIS/EIR has been updated to include Craig Bailey and Erinn Wilson. The following contacts have been removed from the contact list per your request: Ed Pert and Bill Loudermilk.

Response D-5: Per the requirements of mitigation measure BIO-2, a Project-wide weed control plan would be developed and implemented. Mitigation measure BIO-2 in the Final EIS/EIR (see Table 4.3.1-1 in Chapter 4 of the Final EIS/EIR) has been revised accordingly to note that, in areas where species listed as endangered or threatened under CESA or fully protected under Fish and Game Code could be present and impacted by herbicide use, LADWP will consult with the CDFG.

Response D-6: Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) Notification has been added to the permit requirements for Project implementation within the bed, bank, or channel of a lake or stream on page 1-22 of the Final EIS/EIR. Part “f” of mitigation measure BIO-3 has been amended to indicate that final mitigation within riparian conservation areas (RCAs) will be determined in consultation with the relevant permitting agencies (see pages 4-352
Response D-7: The following text has been added to mitigation measure BIO-5a: “This only applies to species that are not listed under CESA [the California Endangered Species Act] unless authorized by an Incidental Take Permit or not fully protected under Fish and Game Code or Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR).” See page 4-353 of the Final EIS/EIR.

Response D-8: The Swainson’s Hawk (SWHA) Survey Protocols will be implemented during the preconstruction surveys. The SWHA Survey Protocols have been added to mitigation measure BIO-7 in the Final EIS/EIR on page 4-354.

Response D-9: A Nesting Bird Management Plan will be developed and submitted to CDFG for review prior to Project implementation. The plan will outline guidelines for nest-specific effective buffers and will include the recommendations listed.
Response D-10: The text has been revised on page 4-357 of the Final EIS/EIR to list these species as endangered pursuant to CESA.

Response D-11: Mitigation measure BIO-16 has been revised in the Final EIS/EIR on page 4-358 to remove funding of burrowing owl research as potential mitigation, since this would not reduce Project impacts as outlined in this comment by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). As outlined and recommended by the CDFG, mitigation measure BIO-16 would avoid and minimize the potential for take of burrowing owl nests associated with the proposed Project. This measure includes conducting preconstruction surveys, avoiding the breeding season, and providing a buffer around occupied burrows.

Response D-12: USFS and BLM are consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to determine appropriate buffers to avoid take of eagles prior to certification of the Final EIS/EIR. In addition, USFS, BLM, and LADWP will consult with the CDFG to determine appropriate buffers. Both consultations will occur prior to certification of the Final EIS/EIR.

Response D-13: LADWP will continue to consult with the CDFG regarding the Mohave Ground Squirrel. It is assumed that an Incidental Take Permit will be developed for the Mohave Ground Squirrel.
Response D-14: Although preconstruction surveys will be conducted and any detected special-status herpetofauna would be removed from construction areas, the possibility remains that use of exclusion fencing within designated construction zones could trap or capture animals that are not detected prior to fence installation or construction. This would be considered take under Section 86 of the Fish and Game Code. Therefore, mitigation measure BIO-22 has been revised on page 4-360 of the Final EIS/EIR to state that exclusion fencing will only be used in instances of special-status herpetofauna that are not protected by the CESA—unless specifically authorized by an Incidental Take Permit—or are not considered Fully Protected under Fish and Game Code or Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. The only CESA-listed herpetofauna that is expected to have the possibility of occurring within the BRRTP area is the desert tortoise. LADWP would apply for an Incidental Take Permit to avoid unauthorized take of desert tortoise by installation of an exclusion fence. The Final EIS/EIR was also revised in Chapter 4 on page 4-4-361 to include that non-federal biologists will have the appropriate CDFG scientific collection permit.

Response D-15: Although preconstruction surveys will be conducted, and detected desert tortoises removed from construction areas, the possibility remains that use of exclusion fencing within designated construction zones could trap or capture desert tortoises not located prior to fence installation. Because this would be considered take under Section 86 of the Fish and Game Code, LADWP would apply for an Incidental Take Permit to avoid unauthorized take of the desert tortoise incidentally in this manner.
If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Craig Bailey, Staff Environmental Scientist, at the address provided on this letterhead or by telephone at (559) 243-4014, extension 261, or Erin Wilson, Staff Environmental Scientist at (714) 968-0963.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jeffrey R. Single, Ph.D.
Regional Manager

cc: Charles C. Holloway (charles.holloway@ladwp.com)
    Nadia Parker (Nadia.Parker@ladwp.com)
    Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
Literature Cited


California Department of Fish and Game. 1995. Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation. California Department of Fish and Game.
