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3 SAN LUIS TRANSMISSION PROJECT
4 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL
5 IMPACT REPORT
6 PUBLIC MEETING
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12 Monday, August 10, 2015

13 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
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17 HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS
18 3751 North Tracy Boulevard
19 Tracy, California
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24 Reported by: Karen A. Andasola, CSR 10919
25

1 SPEAKERS:

2 KOJI KAWAMURA

3 TOM MURPHY

4 ALLISON TURNER

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8 MR. KAWAMURA: Good evening, everyone. My name
9 is Koji Kawamura. I'm an attorney with Western's office
10 of general counsel, and I would like to welcome everyone
11 to the public comment hearings on the San Luis
12 Transmission Project Draft EIS/EIR. This is part of
13 Western's National Environmental Quality Act procedures.
14 As part of those procedures we've already completed the
15 scoping process. Now we're moving into the draft
16 EIS/EIR. The notice was published in the Federal
17 Register.

18 As part of the draft EIS and EIR we are going
19 into an important step in asking for public comments.
20 And this is one of the most important steps out of the
21 NEPA process. We are very concerned with the public
22 comments, what the public has to say about our project.
23 We think that the more comments we can get, the better
24 decisions we can make. And so we definitely encourage
25 all the public to provide as many comments as they can

1 on the proposed project. We look forward to those and
2 we will address the comments in the final EIS/EIR.

3 The EIS stands for Environmental Impact
4 Statement. EIR is Environmental Impact Report. Western
5 as a federal agency has an obligation under the National
6 Environmental Quality Act to ensure that we consider the
7 environmental impacts in the proposed federal action.
8 And the state has a similar obligation under the
9 California Environmental Quality Act.

10 And so the San Luis Transmission Project is a
11 project to replace an existing Pacific Gas & Electric
12 company contract. The Bureau of Reclamation had a
13 long-term contract with Pacific Gas & Electric company
14 to wheel energy to and from the San Luis project -- of
15 the Central Valley project to and from Tracy. That
16 contract is expiring next year.

17 As part of the expiration of that contract,
18 Reclamation evaluated proposed -- evaluated
19 cost-effective alternatives. And to ensure cost
20 certainty on a going forward basis, Reclamation came to
21 Western and sought a long-term transmission contract
22 with Western to build the San Luis Transmission Project.

23 Again, this is a proposed project. Nothing is
24 final at this point in time. The players here are
25 Western Area Power Administration, which is a federal

1 agency. We are marketing federal power from federal
2 trans- -- from federal projects including the Central
3 Valley project. Reclamation, the Bureau of Reclamation,
4 operates the Central Valley project. And the San Luis
5 Mendota -- San Luis Mendota -- Delta-Mendota Water
6 Authority is a partner in this project as well.

7 Now as part of the long-term project, Aspen -- as
8 part of the San Luis Transmission Project, we have
9 contracted with Aspen to do a lot of the environmental
10 work. And Tom Murphy will do a presentation of the
11 draft EIS/EIR, and after he finishes his presentation
12 we'll open up the floor for questions.

13 And then after we finish the formal presentation,
14 we will open up the floor for public comments. And like
15 I said, if you don't have comments today, you have until
16 August 31st to submit comments. And I will provide the
17 address at the end of the presentation.

18 And so with that, I am going to turn it over to
19 Tom Murphy from Aspen Environmental and he will provide
20 the formal presentation.

21 MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Koji. Like Koji said, my
22 name is Tom Murphy from Aspen Environmental Group. We
23 are the consultant that provided Western Area Power
24 Administration and the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water
25 Authority with technical support in the preparation of

1 the environmental impact statement and impact report for
2 the San Luis Transmission Project.

3 We wanted to share with you information tonight
4 on the San Luis Transmission Project. Three things we
5 wanted to describe -- describe the proposed project, we
6 wanted to share why the proposed project is proposed at
7 this time. We wanted to summarize what we found in the
8 EIS and the EIR process.

9 As you can see, this is a project overview.
10 Western would construct and own and maintain and operate
11 approximately 95 miles of new transition line. A
12 majority of those miles are adjacent to existing
13 transmission lines and they would be located in four
14 counties: Alameda, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced
15 counties.

16 I wanted to pointed out the project to you on
17 this map up here. This is where the project starts up
18 here in the Tracy substation. And it will travel down
19 just west of Interstate 5 down to the O'Neill, Los
20 Banos, San Luis, and Dos Amigos substations.

21 As Koji said, over the last 50 years Reclamation
22 has had a contract with PG&E to transmit power to
23 Reclamation, the San Luis unit water systems. That
24 contract will expire in March of 2016. As a result
25 Reclamation has been looking at options to transmit

1 power to the SLU or San Luis units that are reliable and
2 in a cost-effective manner. Reclamation believes that
3 new transmission lines meets those goals, and as a
4 result Reclamation submitted a transmission service
5 request to Western to facilitate Reclamation's continued
6 delivery of federal water. This SLTP would minimize
7 increases to Reclamation's electricity costs. And we've
8 been planning this project for several years.

9 During that time, also an eligible transmission
10 customer submitted a separate transmission service
11 request in the same area, and the SLTP would address
12 both service requests.

13 As described earlier, Western, Reclamation, the
14 Authority has spent a great deal of time designing the
15 San Luis Transmission Project. Western designed this
16 project to meet these five following objectives. And
17 I'm going just to read them because they're very
18 important to this project.

19 Obtain durable long-term cost certain and
20 efficient transmission delivery of CVP power from
21 federal power generation sites to the major pumping
22 stations of the San Luis units to reliably deliver water
23 to Reclamation and the Authority's member agencies.

24 Second, to locate and install transmission
25 facilities in a safe, efficient, and cost-effective

1 manner that meets project needs while minimizing
2 environmental impacts.

3 Third, locate facilities to minimize a potential
4 environmental impact resulting from damage by external
5 sources.

6 The fourth one is to maximize the use of existing
7 transmission corridors and rights-of-way in order to
8 minimize effects on previously undisturbed land and
9 resources.

10 And the fifth one is to obtain stable and
11 reliable transmission that meets the project needs in a
12 cost-effective and timely manner. We use those five
13 objectives to craft the San Luis Transmission Project.

14 I wanted to describe the project in a little
15 greater detail. And I broke the project down into a
16 number of components. The first one is the 500 kV
17 components. It's a new 500 kV transmission line
18 approximately 65 miles in length between Tracy and the
19 Los Banos area. Now in order to do that, they need to
20 build two new 500 kV substations, the Tracy east
21 substation as well as the Los Banos West Substation.

22 In addition as part of this component, Western
23 would like to interconnect with the existing Western 500
24 kV Los Banos gates number 3 transmission line into the
25 new Los Banos West Substation. And let me show you that

1 500 kV system that we're talking about. Here's the
2 Tracy substation up here, and here's the Tracy east --
3 the new Tracy east substation. This red line coming
4 down here would be a 500 kV line. It would be just west
5 of Interstate 5 which is right there, but it would be on
6 the east side of the existing transmission lines as you
7 travel down Interstate 5.

8 One of the things to point out here is the Los
9 Banos -- the new Los Banos West Substation right in
10 here. So from this point down into here would be a 500
11 kV line.

12 The next component I would like to talk about is
13 the new 230 kV transmission line. There's two parts to
14 that. One is a three mile in length line between Los
15 Banos West Substation and the existing San Luis
16 substation. I'll show you that in a second. The other
17 part is a new 230 kV transmission line between San Luis
18 and Dos Amigos.

19 There's two options there. One would be a 230 kV
20 between San Luis and Dos Amigos or the other option is a
21 230 kV line between the existing or the new Los Banos
22 substation and Dos Amigos substation. In the first
23 option from San Luis to Dos Amigos, about 20 miles in
24 length. And the second option is about 18 miles in
25 length.

1 Let me show you where that's located. The first
2 three-mile section is here. Los Banos west to San Luis
3 right in here. And the second part of that 230 kV
4 component is either a San Luis -- a 230 line coming from
5 San Luis down to Dos Amigos here or from Los Banos west
6 down to Dos Amigos here.

7 A couple other components associated with this
8 project. There's a new 70 kV transmission line that's
9 approximately seven miles in length between existing San
10 Luis and O'Neill substations, and that would be on the
11 east side of the O'Neill Forebay. There would be
12 modifications to the San Luis and Dos Amigos
13 substations. There would be upgrades to communication
14 facilities, improvements to existing access roads, and
15 new permanent access roads, as well as temporary access
16 roads to facilitate construction.

17 Let me show you where that 70 kV line is. Here's
18 the San Luis substation right here. It would be this
19 yellow line coming up here and tying into the O'Neill
20 substation at 70 kV.

21 Besides the different transmission structures and
22 transmission lines that they're proposing, they're also
23 proposing a variety of different voltage options based
24 on the participation of the eligible transmission
25 customer. One option is to still construct the 500 kV

1 transmission line from Tracy down to San Luis, but it
2 would be operated at 230 kV.

3 The second option is if the eligible transmission
4 customer was not to go forward with this project, then
5 the 500 kV component of this project would be
6 constructed at 230 between Tracy and San Luis. And as
7 you can see, if the project is constructed at 230
8 between Tracy and the Los Banos area, then there would
9 be no need to build a new -- two substations, the Tracy
10 east and the Los Banos west.

11 At the beginning of the EIS/EIR process we
12 developed 13 alternatives that meet the project
13 objectives, technical feasible, and reduce the potential
14 for impacts. The information was based on public
15 comment during the scoping period that we went through
16 and our analysts evaluating the proposed project.

17 During that screening process the 13 were
18 screened down to seven based on those three criteria I
19 just talked about. And we brought through the EIS/EIR
20 process a total of six corridor alternatives along with
21 the no action/no project alternative. In order to keep
22 it fair and compare the proposed project to the
23 alternatives in an equal way, we broke the SLTP project
24 up into four segments: the north segment, the central
25 segment, the San Luis segment, and the south segment.

1 In the north segment we didn't find a viable
2 alternative that would reduce potential impacts from
3 what the proposed project -- or the anticipation of the
4 potential impacts of the proposed project.

5 In the central segment we identified one
6 potential alternative. That's a Patterson Pass Road
7 alternative, and that's located between Patterson Pass
8 Road and Butts Road. And as we talked about in the
9 central segment, the project is west of Interstate 5 and
10 east of the existing transmission lines. This Patterson
11 Pass alternative would be on the west side of the
12 existing transmission line as you head down Interstate
13 5.

14 We also looked at and identified and brought
15 through two alternatives around the San Luis area. And
16 as you note -- as we talked about it earlier, the
17 proposed project in that area is east of the O'Neill
18 Forebay. These two alternatives, Butts Road and west of
19 cemetery, are both west of the O'Neill Forebay.

20 And then the south segment we also identified two
21 alternatives there as well. Again in that project, the
22 proposed project follows the east side of existing
23 transmission lines from the Los Banos area basically
24 down to Dos Amigos. The San Luis to Dos Amigos
25 alternative would be on the west side of the

1 transmission lines in that area. Very similar to the
2 proposed project, but just on the west side. There's
3 also one other alternative we developed and it was
4 brought to our attention in the public scoping period as
5 well is the Billy Wright Road alternative. And that
6 would parallel Billy Wright Road south of Los Banos and
7 then head in towards the existing proposed project and
8 then into Dos Amigos.

9 With regard to the 70 kV line, we described that
10 as being on the east side of the O'Neill Forebay. We
11 identified a potential alternative that's on the west
12 side of the O'Neill Forebay. And we'll show you --
13 we'll show you a map of all of these. So all six
14 alternatives were brought through including the no
15 action/no project alternative which would be that the
16 San Luis Transmission Project would not be built.

17 So let me describe those alternatives to you which
18 we just looked at the last slide. In the north segment
19 there is no alternatives, viable alternatives we
20 identified. This is the central segment. The proposed
21 project is this blue line right here. Just to the west
22 of it is those existing transmission lines that you see
23 on Interstate 5. And then the alternative to that,
24 which is Patterson Pass Road, will be just west of -- on
25 the west side of those existing transmission lines.

1 In the O'Neill or the San Luis area, the San Luis
2 segment, we had the existing line or proposed project
3 would be on the east side of the O'Neill Forebay. We
4 identified two alternatives on the west side of the
5 O'Neill Forebay. And you can see them right here in
6 dark gray. This is Butts Road right here and this is
7 west of cemetery.

8 And the other two alternatives we looked at in
9 the south, this is the proposed project going down with
10 the blue line that -- the San Luis to Dos Amigos would
11 be the -- the proposed project is on the west side of
12 the existing transmission lines. The alternative to
13 that is San Luis to Dos Amigos, would be on the west
14 side just parallel to that blue line. And the Billy
15 Wright Road is this dark gray line right here that's
16 shown on this figure.

17 So the draft EIS/EIR analyzed 15 resource areas
18 including air quality, geology, land use, noise,
19 recreation, socioeconomics. We looked at all those
20 resource areas for all -- for the proposed project and
21 all the alternatives. We also conducted detailed field
22 studies, biological resource surveys, cultural resource
23 surveys, and conducted visual assessments from key
24 observation points. And those were generally around the
25 National Cemetery if you look in the EIS and EIR in the

1 back of the room.

2 So in conclusion, we found a number of -- we
3 found three impacts in three resource areas. We found
4 impacts in three resource areas. One is the
5 recreational area, and basically these first two have to
6 do with the Los Banos West Substation. They're
7 proposing to use 50 acres of the Jasper Sears OHV use
8 area. And because of that, it would result in conflicts
9 with physical alterations of and decreased accessibility
10 to the Jasper Sears OHV use area.

11 With regards to land use, same thing. It has to
12 do with the Los Banos West Substation. It conflicts
13 with the San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area
14 Resource Management Plan/General Plan as it pertains to
15 the Jasper Sears OHV use area.

16 The third area we -- the third resource area we
17 identified potential impacts in is noise. Construction
18 would result in more than a five decibel increase
19 intermittently at sensitive receptors near the project
20 which would temporarily exceed local noise standards
21 near residents throughout the project area.

22 The first two, the land use and recreation, we
23 are still working on mitigation to identify ways to
24 reduce the potential impacts. Noise would be a
25 temporary impact during construction. And then all the

1 other impacts determined would be less than significant
2 either with or without mitigation measures.

3 So after we went through, looked at all the
4 resource areas for potential impacts associated with the
5 proposed project and the alternatives, we compared the
6 proposed project to the alternatives based on each
7 segment to identify the environmentally preferred
8 alternative. In the north we found that the proposed
9 project was the environmentally preferred alternative.

10 In the central segment we identified Patterson
11 Pass Road as the alternative that is the environmentally
12 preferred alternative. Again, that one is further away
13 from Interstate 5 and further away from the blue sheds
14 along Interstate 5.

15 In the San Luis segment we identified the
16 proposed project as the environmentally preferred
17 alternative. And in the south we identified the San
18 Luis to Dos Amigos alternative as the environmentally
19 preferred alternative. Again that one, just like the
20 Patterson Pass one, is on the west side of the existing
21 transmission lines.

22 And lastly the 70 kV transmission line, we
23 identified the proposed project which is on the east
24 side of the O'Neill Forebay. And at this time both
25 Western and the Authority have decided not to identify

1 the agency preferred alternative. They really want to
2 get the document out in the street, have it reviewed by
3 the public, provide comments back, identify issues
4 before the agency would identify their preferred
5 alternative. They would be doing that in the final
6 EIS/EIR.

7 And with that, I turn it back over to Koji to
8 move into the more formal public comment period of the
9 San Luis Transmission Project.

10 MR. KAWAMURA: Thank you, Tom. Let me ask if
11 there are any questions to Tom's presentation.

12 (No response.)

13 MR. KAWAMURA: All right. Hearing no comments --
14 I'm sorry -- no questions, I'm going to go ahead and
15 open up the floor to comments. If you do have comments,
16 please make sure you state your name for the record.
17 That way the court reporter will be able to identify who
18 you are.

19 And if you don't have any comments ready today,
20 like I said, you can submit those comments to Western by
21 August 31st at the following address. You can send them
22 to Donald Lash, 114 Parkshore Drive, Folsom, California,
23 95630 or you can email them to SLTPEIS-EIR@wapa.gov or
24 you can send them to fax (916) 353-4772. And there are
25 also comment cards as you came in that you can fill one

1 of those out and you can just hand it to a Western
2 representative and we'll make sure that that comment
3 becomes part of the record. All comments that you
4 submit will become part of the official record. Western
5 will evaluate those comments as part of its decision
6 making process. And we really value those comments that
7 you are going to provide and we look forward to hearing
8 them and addressing them.

9 So with that, I am going to go ahead and open up
10 the floor to anyone that may have some comments this
11 evening.

12 (No response.)

13 MR. KAWAMURA: All right. I don't see any
14 comments right now, and so we'll go on ahead -- if you
15 guys do have some comments during the course of the
16 evening, we'll go on ahead and leave the floor open for
17 another few hours. So if you guys want to make some
18 formal comments and you want to submit those verbally,
19 we'll have the floor open for another few hours this
20 evening.

21 Tomorrow evening we will also have another formal
22 presentation and another comment period available in
23 Santa Nella I believe. Is that correct? I'm sorry?

24 MS. TURNER: Los Banos.

25 MR. KAWAMURA: Los Banos. Okay. So again, you

1 can either provide them tonight, you can send them via
2 mail, you can email them, you can fax them, or you can
3 fill out a comment form.

4 All right. And so with that, let's go on ahead
5 and just quickly take a recess. And if you guys change
6 your mind and you want to give some verbal comments, we
7 will give you an opportunity again in a little bit.

8 Thanks.

9 (Time noted: 5:59 p.m.)
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1 STATE OF CALIFORNIA,)
2)
3 COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN.)
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5 I, KAREN A. ANDASOLA, a Certified Shorthand
6 Reporter in and for the County of San Joaquin, State of
7 California, do hereby certify;

8 That on August 10, 2015, thereof, I reported
9 verbatim in shorthand writing the foregoing proceedings;

10 That I thereafter caused my shorthand writing to
11 be reduced to typewriting, and that the foregoing
12 transcript constitutes a full, true, and correct
13 transcription of all proceedings had and given.

14 IN WITNESS HEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
15 and affixed my Official Seal this 24th day of August,
16 2015.

17
18
19 _____
20 KAREN A. ANDASOLA, CSR #10919
21 Certified Shorthand Reporter
22
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24
25