

INTRODUCTION

Western Area Power Administration (Western), under the U.S. Department of Energy, has a contract with PG&E to transmit power between Western's Tracy Substation and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) San Luis Unit facilities near Santa Nella and Los Banos. Western's transmission contract with PG&E will end in spring 2016. Upon contract termination, power transmission costs to the San Luis Unit will increase.



Reclamation submitted a request to Western to interconnect several key San Luis Unit facilities to Western's Central Valley Project transmission system. In response to the request, Western is investigating power delivery options. These options directly impact the costs of Reclamation's delivery of federal water through the San Luis Unit. The San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (Authority), under agreement with Reclamation, operates and maintains a part of the San Luis Unit and has a direct interest in the requested transmission service.

Western is required to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposal to construct the transmission project. Western is the lead federal agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Authority is the lead agency for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Western and the Authority will prepare a joint EIS/EIR. Reclamation is a cooperating agency in preparation of the EIS.

WHY PERFORM AN ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW?

The EIS/EIR will evaluate Western's proposed federal action to construct, own, operate and maintain transmission lines and modify Western and PG&E facilities to accommodate the proposed transmission lines.

AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Three agencies are involved in preparing the San Luis Transmission Project EIS/EIR:

AGENCY PROPOSING THE PROJECT

- **Western:** A power marketing administration within the U.S. Department of Energy tasked with the delivery of federal power to federally-authorized projects, including the Central Valley Project.

WESTERN'S PARTNERS

- **Reclamation:** Owns, operates and manages the dams, power plants and canals of the Central Valley Project.
- **Authority:** A California joint powers agency that operates and maintains South of the Delta Central Valley Project facilities, including the San Luis Unit, and is comprised of water agencies representing about 28 federal and exchange water service contractors within the western San Joaquin Valley, San Benito and Santa Clara counties.



WHAT IS THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT?

The Central Valley Project is a series of dams, power plants and canals in Northern California that serves municipal and industrial water customers, and promotes greater agricultural productivity in California. It is one of the largest water delivery systems in the world.



WHAT IS THE SAN LUIS UNIT?

Developed as part of the Central Valley Project and the State of California Water Project, the San Luis Unit furnishes more than 1.25 million acre-feet of water as a supplemental municipal, industrial and irrigation supply to water users in Fresno, Kings, Merced, Santa Clara and San Benito counties.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Western proposes to construct, own, operate and maintain new transmission lines between Western's Tracy Substation and several key pumping and generating facilities of the Central Valley Project San Luis Unit.

NEPA and CEQA require federal and state agencies to evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives to achieve the purpose of and need for the proposed project. Western and the Authority will evaluate a range of alternatives that include transmission lines, connection of various substations, additional project features and a no action/no project option. Project features may include one or more of the following:

TRANSMISSION LINE VOLTAGE	APPROXIMATE TRANSMISSION LINE LENGTH (IN MILES)	SUBSTATION CONNECTIONS
230-kilovolt (kV)	62	Western's Tracy and San Luis Substations
70-kV	5	Western's San Luis and O'Neill Substations
500-kV (230-kV)*	62	Western's Tracy and San Luis Substations
500-kV	62	Western's Tracy and PG&E's Los Banos Substations
230-kV	18	Western's San Luis and Dos Amigos Substations

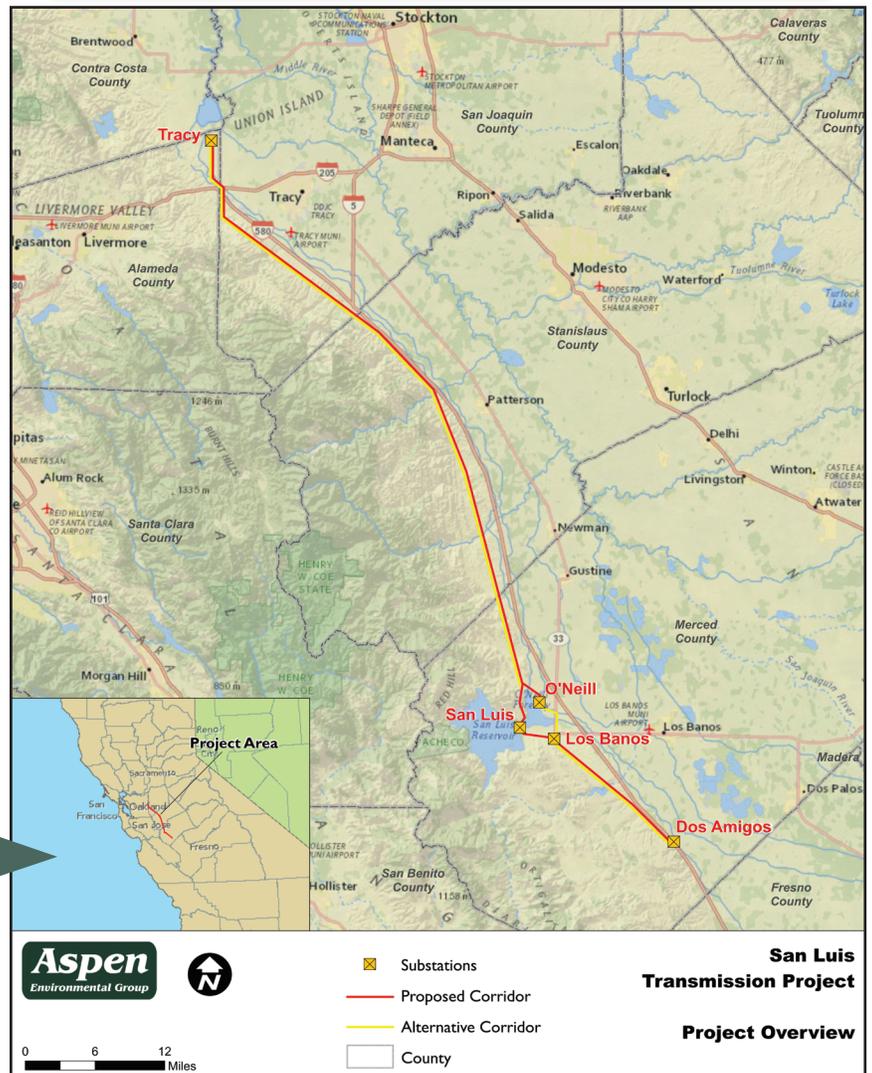
*This option would install a 500-kV transmission line that operates at 230-kV.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT MAY ALSO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Construction of breaker terminal bays at various substations
- Construction of transformer bank and interconnection facilities at the San Luis Substation
- Right-of-way easements for the transmission lines with widths of 125 to 175 feet for 230-kV lines and 200 to 250 feet for the 500-kV line
- Tubular or lattice steel structures used to support the transmission lines
 - For 230-kV line: structures would be between 100 and 200 feet tall depending on site-specific conditions
 - Taller structures may be required to address engineering constraints
- Access roads, including improvements to existing roads, new overland access and new unpaved temporary roads, to access the proposed project facilities and work areas during construction and operation phases
- Ancillary facilities, such as communications facilities, for access control and protection

WHAT IS A WESTERN RIGHT-OF-WAY?
 A Western right-of-way or ROW is an easement on property owned by others that establishes Western's right to construct, operate and maintain transmission line facilities.

Figure 1. Proposed corridors would be located in Alameda, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties. Western proposes the project follow existing transmission rights-of-way.



NO ACTION/NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

The No Action/No Project Alternative serves as a baseline against which to measure the potential environmental effects of the alternatives. Under the No Action/No Project Alternative, Western will continue to receive transmission service for the San Luis Unit under contract with PG&E.

PROJECT NEED

The San Luis Unit is a key component in delivering water to central valley agricultural companies and farmers. The transmission lines, if constructed, would minimize expected power delivery cost increases for operating the San Luis Unit.



THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT AND CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the potential impacts on the human and natural environment before making a decision on a proposed project. CEQA was enacted to address concerns about environmental quality in the State of California. With the development of an EIS/EIR, Western and the Authority will:



- Identify potential environmental effects of the proposed project and alternatives
- Evaluate reasonable alternatives that could avoid or minimize adverse impacts
- Identify mitigation measures
- Provide information and environmental analyses for public review and comment
- Disclose to decision makers the environmental impacts, proposed mitigation measures and public comments

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Western and the Authority will analyze the potential effects on environmental resources from the proposed project. Some resource areas to be analyzed in the EIS/EIR may include, but are not limited to:

- Land use, recreation and visual resources
- Water use and water quality
- Surface water features including rivers, floodplains and wetlands
- Fish, wildlife and vegetation, including critical habitat
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental justice
- Historic and cultural resources
- Geology, soil and mineral resources
- Human health and electric and magnetic fields
- Construction-related impacts, including access, traffic and noise

Other resource areas will be identified by the public during the scoping period, the first phase of the environmental review process. If you have a suggestion on resource areas to analyze, share your comments and thoughts by January 21, 2014.



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Public involvement is a fundamental part of the development of an EIS/EIR. Public and agency comments provide decision makers with local knowledge before making a decision. The public participates in the process by:

- Helping to identify environmental issues and potential alternatives during the scoping period
- Evaluating and commenting on the analysis of the proposed project during the Draft EIS/EIR public comment period

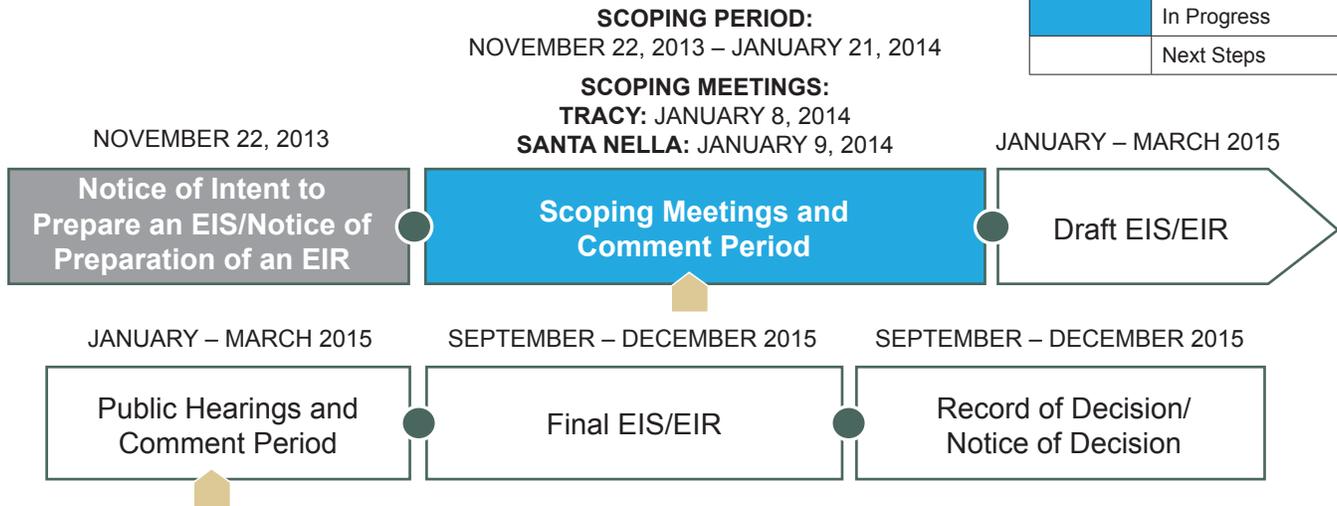


NEXT STEPS

After the close of the scoping period on January 21, 2014, Western and the Authority will consider all comments received, and will begin the environmental analysis and prepare the Draft EIS/EIR. Below is an overview of the EIR/EIS development process and opportunities for public participation.

NEPA/CEQA PROCESS AND TIMELINE

	Opportunities for Public Review and Comment
	Complete
	In Progress
	Next Steps



HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

The 60-day public comment period for the scoping phase is from **November 22, 2013**, through **January 21, 2014**. Government agencies, elected officials, federally-recognized tribes, organizations and individuals are encouraged to participate and submit comments in any of the following ways:

- By attending public scoping meetings
- By emailing SLTPEIS-EIR@wapa.gov
- By faxing **916-353-4772**
- By mailing comments to:
Mr. Donald Lash
NEPA Document Manager
Western Area Power Administration, Sierra Nevada Region
114 Parkshore Drive
Folsom, CA 95630



All comments must be postmarked by **January 21, 2014**, to be considered in the development of the Draft EIS/EIR. Western and the Authority welcome and appreciate your comments.