**ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

**Southern California Edison Western Joshua Tree Emergency Vegetation Management Project**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has approved an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) for Southern California Edison (SCE) vegetation management for western Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*). SCE has requested the Western Joshua Tree Emergency Vegetation Management project ITP to reduce fire risk from falling trees and breaking branches which could impact SCE power lines and poles. The ITP authorizes the trimming of four (4) western Joshua trees and removal of five (5) dead/dying western Joshua trees that have fallen or are about to fall within the SCE transmission and distribution lines and facilities creating an imminent threat to public safety by creating an electrical and fire hazard, provided SCE complies with all avoidance, minimization and mitigation requirements.

CDFW approved the Western Joshua Tree Emergency Vegetation Management project ITP relying on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) statutory exemption for emergency actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency. (Cal. Pub. Res. Code, § 21080(b)(4); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15269.) For the purposes of CEQA, “’Emergency’ means 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. “Emergency’ includes such occurrences as fire, flood, earthquake, or other soil or geologic movements, as well as such occurrences as riot, accident, or sabotage.” (Cal. Pub. Res. Code, §21060.3.) The Western Joshua Tree Emergency Vegetation Management project falls within the class because the amendment will allow SCE to conduct important fire risk reduction activities. Fallen western Joshua trees and their branches, can pose a significant risk when in close proximity to SCE power poles and lines. SCE’s ability to trim and remove hazardous trees prior to line or pole damage reduces the threat of fire to habitat and residential structures. Delaying these activities would create a risk to public health, safety, and welfare through increased risk of catastrophic fire. Many recent catastrophic wildfires have been ignited by utility infrastructure, including downed powerlines and vegetation coming into contact with powerlines. SCE conducts fire risk reduction activities, including strategic undergrounding, wood to steel pole replacements, pole brushing and inspections, and vegetation management near powerlines, to mitigate the short-term and long-term risk of wildfires.