

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
P.O. Box 5310
128 Market Street
Stateline, NV 89449
Phone: 775-588-4547
Fax: 775-588-4527
www.trpa.org

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service**
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
35 College Drive
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
Phone: 530-543-2600
Fax: 530-543-2693
www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/

**California Public Utilities
Commission**
505 Van Ness Avenue, 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
Phone: 415-703-2579
Fax: 415-703-2200
www.cpuc.ca.gov

NOTICE OF PREPARATION / NOTICE OF INTENT

To: California State Clearinghouse
Nevada State Clearinghouse
Cooperating Agencies
California Responsible and Trustee Agencies
Other Interested Public Agencies
Interested Parties and Organizations
Affected Property Owners (within 300 feet of the project boundaries)

Subject: Notice of Preparation and Notice of Intent of a joint Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/EIS/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the California Pacific Electric Company 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project

Lead Agencies:

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
P.O. Box 5310
128 Market Street
Stateline, NV 89449
Contact: Wendy Jepson
Senior Planner
Phone: (775) 589-5269
Fax: (775) 588-4527
Email: wjepson@trpa.org

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service**
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
35 College Drive
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
Contact: Robert Rodman
Planning Lands Officer
Phone: (530) 543-2613
Fax: (530) 543-2869
Email: rrodmanjr@fs.fed.us

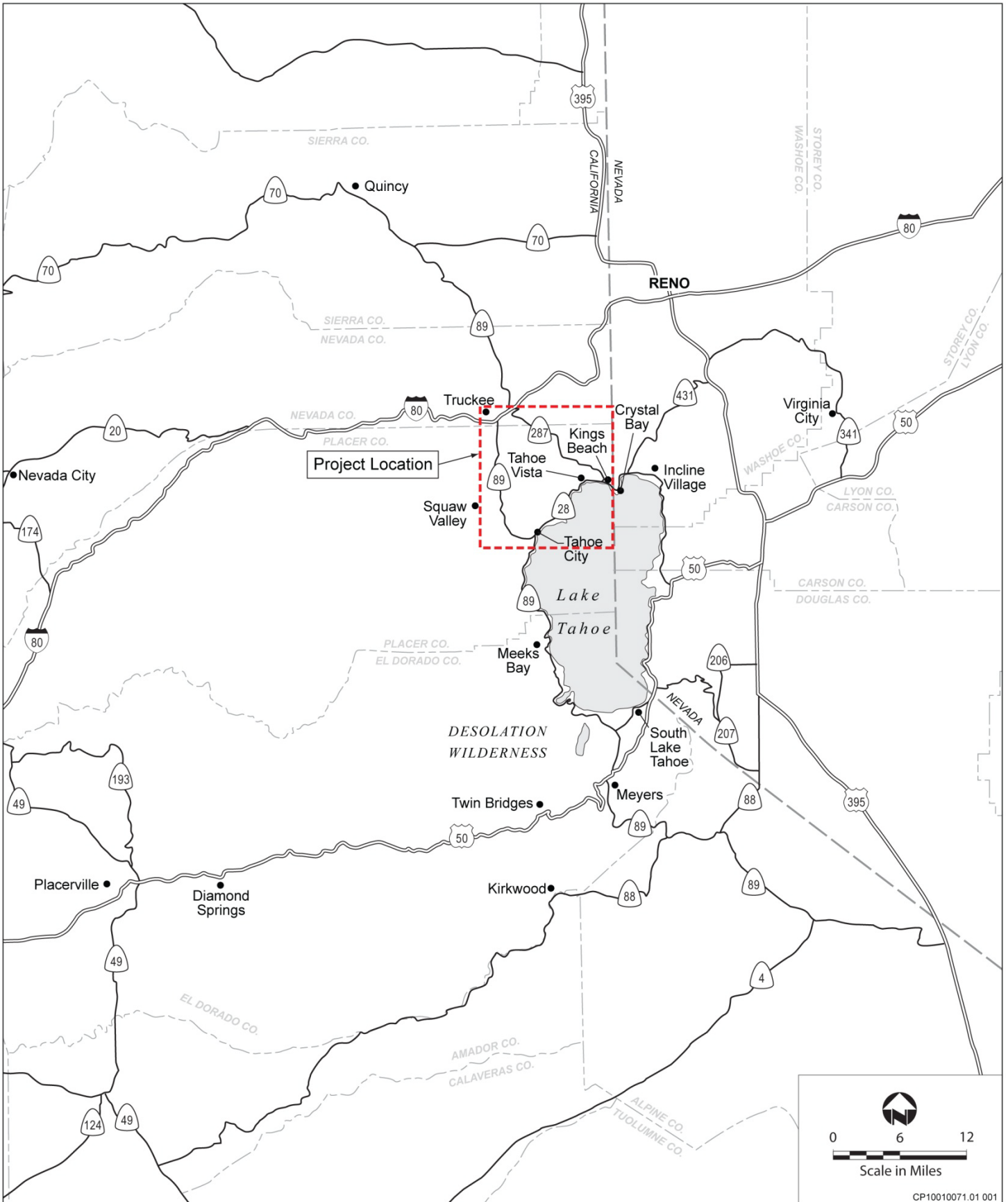
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue, 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
Contact: Michael Rosauer
CPUC Project Manager
Phone: 415-703-2579
Fax: 415-703-2200
Email: michael.rosauer@cpuc.ca.gov

Project Title: California Pacific Electric (Calpeco) 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project

Project Location: The proposed 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project is located in northeastern Placer County and southeastern Nevada County, California (Exhibits 1 and 2). The proposed action consists primarily of an upgrade of the 625 and 650 Lines and associated substations from 60 kilovolt (kV) to 120 kV to allow the entire transmission loop to operate at 120 kV. The electrical lines and associated infrastructure are owned by the California Pacific Electric Company (Calpeco), the project proponent. The project consists of six primary components: 1) removal of the existing 625 Line and construction of a new, rerouted 625 Line; 2) rebuild of the existing 650 Line; 3) realignment of two short segments of the 650 Line and removal of the re-routed segments; 4) rebuild of the Northstar Tap into a Fold (a "fold" allows for service to be maintained at a substation in the event of an interruption in service on either side of the transmission line feeding it); 5) rebuild a 1.6-mile long section of the existing 132 Line; and 6) upgrade, modification, and/or decommissioning of six substations and/or switching stations.

The existing 625 Line and the new 625 Line alignment generally run in a northeast-southwest direction between the communities of Kings Beach and Tahoe City. The 650 Line runs from the Town of Truckee to Kings Beach in a predominantly northwest-southeast direction, paralleling California State Route (SR) 267 for much of its length.

The Northstar Tap runs in a southwest-northeast direction, paralleling Northstar Drive, and serves the Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort. The section of the 132 Line that would be reconfigured is located in Truckee between the North Truckee Switching Station and Brockway Road, and runs in a generally northwest-southeast direction (Exhibit 3).

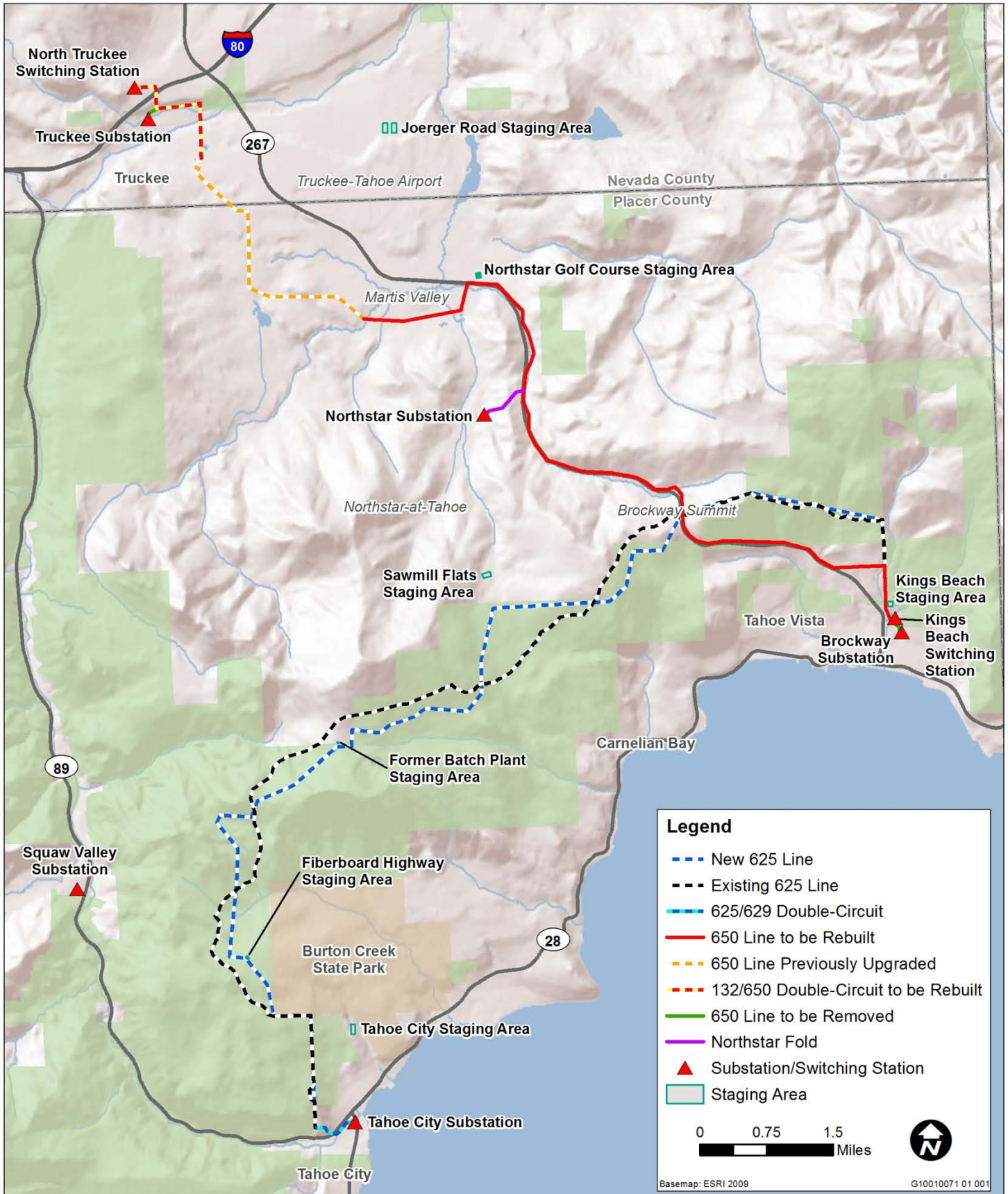


Source: Adapted by Ascent in 2012

Regional Location Map

Exhibit 1





Source: Adapted by Ascent in 2012

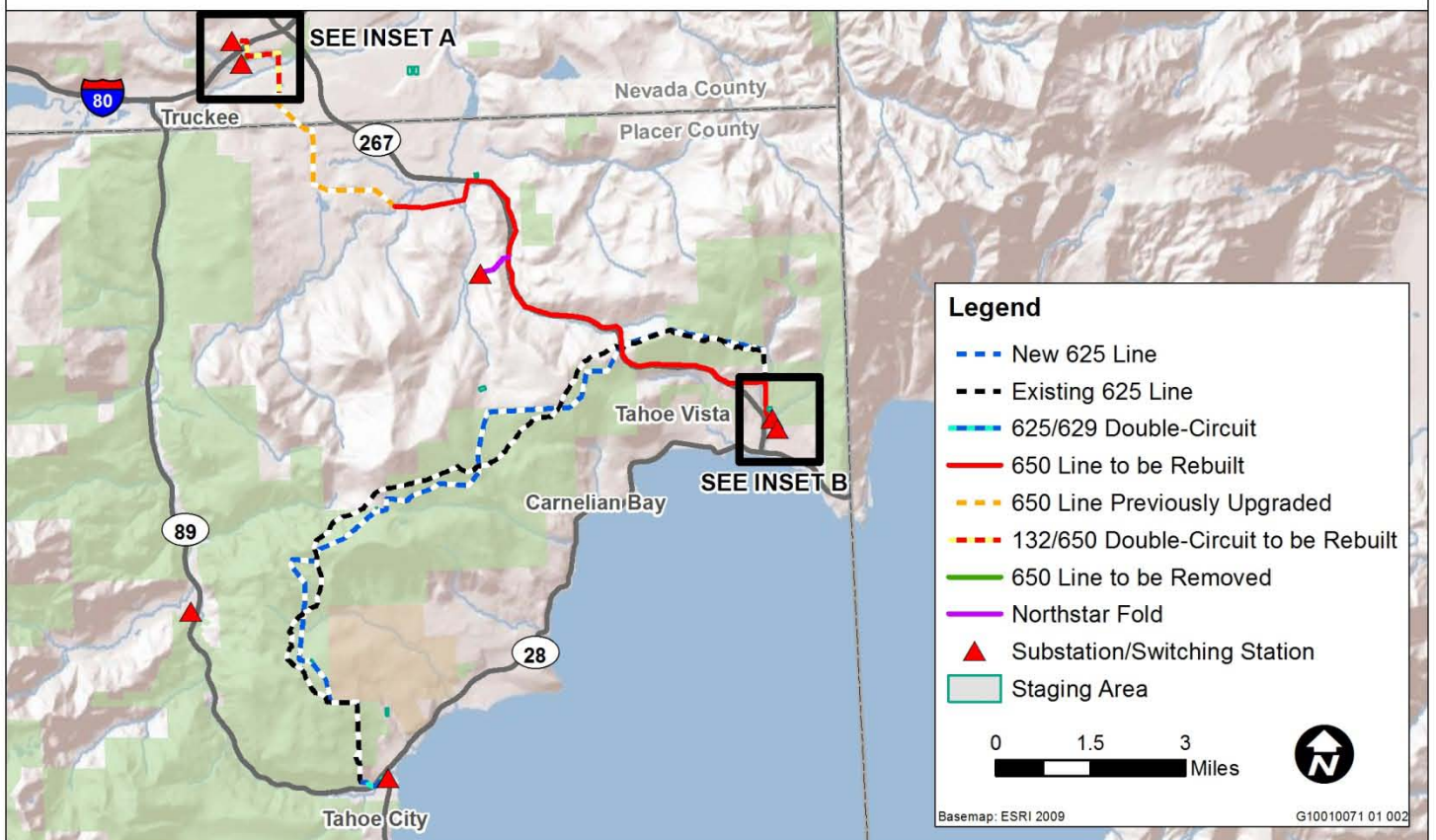
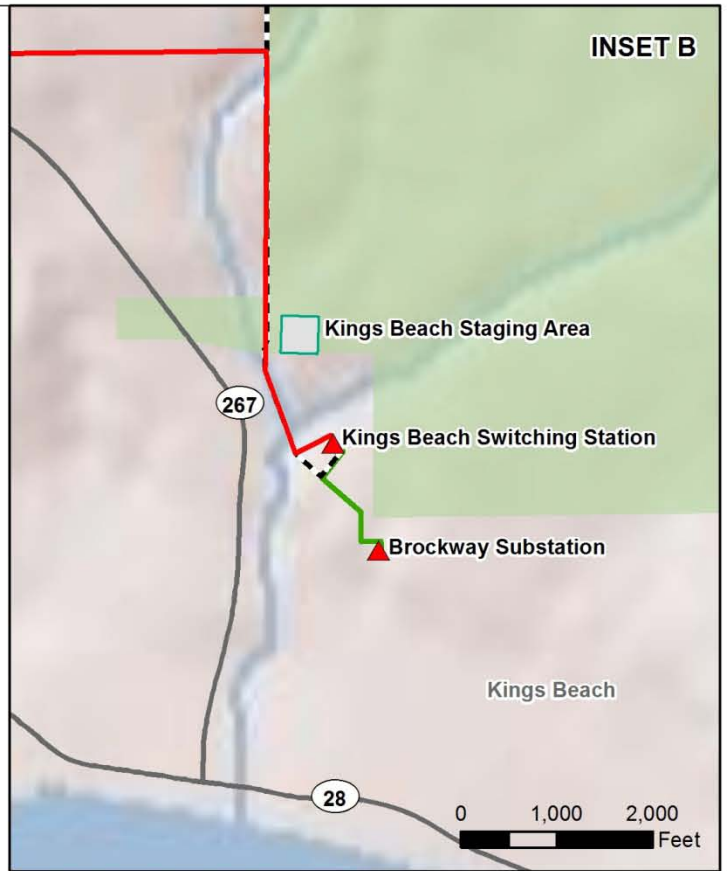
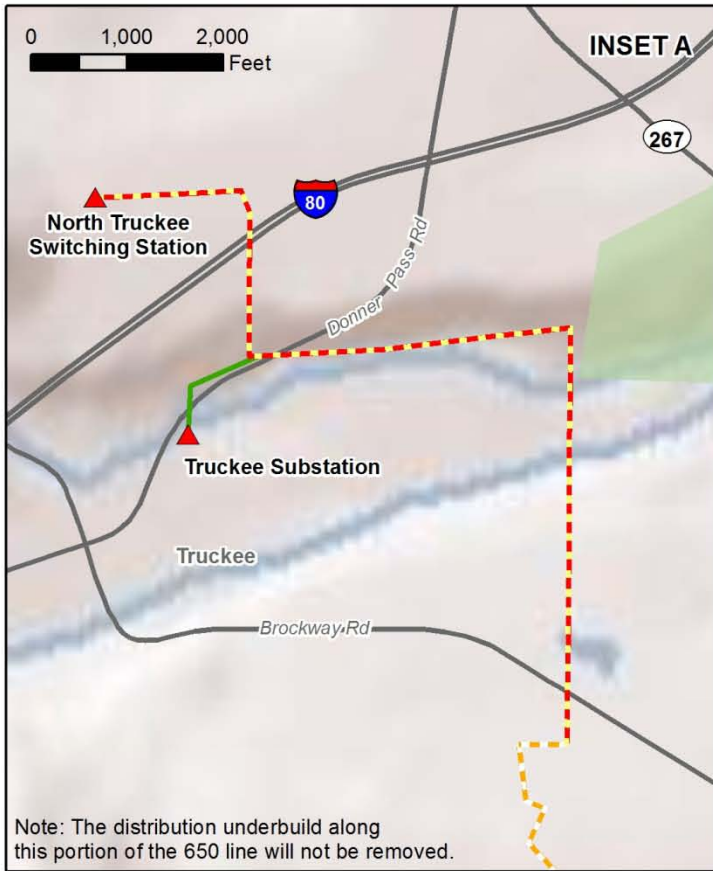
Project Location

Exhibit 2



Basemap: ESRI 2009

G10010071 01 001



Source: Adapted by Ascent in 2012

Exhibit 3

Project Location Detail



The project components are predominantly located on lands managed by the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS); these lands are located in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and Tahoe National Forest. Portions of the project are also located in the Town of Truckee and the unincorporated communities of Kings Beach and Tahoe City, and on lands within the Martis Creek Lake Recreation Area, managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Work would generally occur within the existing Calpeco right of way (ROW), or on Calpeco-owned property. However, the realignment of the 625 Line would require Calpeco to secure a new 40-foot wide permanent ROW (with provisions for additional anchor easements outside the ROW for guy-wire anchors that help support power poles) on private land and land managed by the USFS.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), the USFS-Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU), and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) are preparing a joint EIS/EIS/EIR for Calpeco's proposed 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project. This joint document will be an EIS prepared by TRPA pursuant to the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact (Public Law 96-551), Code of Ordinances, and Rules of Procedure; an EIS prepared by the USFS-LTBMU pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S. Code 4321 – 4347), the Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations Implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500 – 1508), Forest Service Manual 1950, and Forest Service Handbook 1909.15; and an EIR prepared by CPUC pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.). This notice meets the TRPA and CEQA noticing requirements for an NOP, and provides local notice of an NOI for NEPA purposes. The NOI will also be published in the Federal Register in accordance with NEPA requirements.

A brief description of the project, location, and alternatives likely to be evaluated in the EIS/EIS/EIR, and a summary of the potential environmental effects of the proposed action (to the extent known) are attached hereto, or are available for review on the TRPA website at: www.trpa.org.

PUBLIC SCOPING

The purpose of this NOP/NOI is to solicit views of interested persons, organizations, and agencies as they relate to the scope and content of the information to be included and analyzed in the EIS/EIS/EIR. Agencies should comment on the elements of the environmental information that are relevant to their legal authority and statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed action.

The designated public scoping period will extend for 30 calendar days beginning on March 26, 2012 and concluding on April 25, 2012. Comments would be most helpful if received within the designated scoping period. Please send your written responses to: Calpeco 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project, TRPA, P.O. Box 5310, Stateline, NV 89449, Attention: Wendy Jepson, or email: wjepson@trpa.org. Responses should include the name of a contact person at your agency or organization.

Two public scoping meetings are being conducted to provide you with the opportunity to learn more about the proposed action and to express oral comments about the content of the EIS/EIS/EIR, in addition to providing another opportunity to submit written comments. The scoping meetings will be held at the following times and locations:

April 17, 2012, Beginning at 6:00 p.m.
North Tahoe Event Center
8318 North Lake Boulevard
Kings Beach, CA 96143

April 19, 2012, Beginning at 6:00 p.m.
Truckee Ranger District
10811 Stockrest Springs Road
Truckee, CA 96161

The meeting on April 17, 2012 will be held before the TRPA Hearings Officer.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

On January 1, 2011, Calpeco purchased the California electric service territory from Sierra Pacific Power Company. The physical boundaries of the service territory include the California portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin and extend north to Portola and Loyaltan and south to Walker in Mono County. The service territory includes the north Lake Tahoe electric transmission and distribution system.

The existing north Lake Tahoe transmission system is a loop comprised of a series of 60 kV and 120 kV transmission lines running from Truckee to Squaw Valley to Tahoe City to Kings Beach and then back to Truckee. The following lines comprise this loop:

- ▲ One 60 kV transmission line (609 Line) and one 120 kV transmission line (132 Line) from Truckee to Squaw Valley
- ▲ One 60 kV transmission line from Tahoe City to Squaw Valley (629 Line)
- ▲ One 60 kV transmission line from Kings Beach to Tahoe City (625 Line)
- ▲ One 60 kV transmission line from Truckee to Kings Beach (650 Line)

The 60 kV loop serves four substations, and the single 120 kV circuit serves two substations. The 60 kV loop is fed from the Truckee Substation and the 120 kV circuit is fed from North Truckee Switching Station (Exhibit 2). Electrical demand in the area served by Calpeco's north Lake Tahoe system is the greatest during the winter months, and typically peaks during the week between Christmas and the New Year holidays as a result of electric heating and ski resort loads. During power outages in the north Lake Tahoe area additional, or back-up power, is provided by the Kings Beach Diesel Generation Station, which is capable of providing 11 MVA (mega volt-amperes¹) of additional capacity. It is currently the only source of the system's ability to maintain the current maximum system loads while experiencing an outage on any one of the four legs of the system (single-contingency reliability).

PURPOSE AND NEED

The north Lake Tahoe electric system must be able to supply the maximum load at adequate voltage levels and without overloading the system components ("normal capacity"). Even though the system will not incur maximum load levels at all times, it must be capable of supplying peak loads whenever they occur. The non-coincident peak levels are the maximum loads incurred for this particular area. Industry-accepted criteria also require the system to supply peak loads with any one component out of service. This situation is referred to as "reliable capacity" and is why non-coincident peak levels are used to determine capacity needs.

Calpeco is proposing the 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project for the purpose of maintaining a safe and reliable transmission system for the north Lake Tahoe area, while accommodating currently-expected normal growth in the area. Presently, the north Lake Tahoe transmission system does not have adequate single-contingency reliability, meaning, if one of several critical lines is lost as a result of an intense storm event, fire, or downed trees, a severe and sustained power outage could occur in the system service area.

Currently, the 625 Line experiences the most outages in the north Lake Tahoe transmission system due to snow loading and downed trees. Single-contingency reliability can be achieved by upgrading the 625 Line and the

¹ A **volt-ampere (VA)** is a unit used to express the power in an electrical circuit and is very similar to a watt.

650 Line to 120 kV conductors and insulators to allow greater capacity in each line. If one of the critical lines is lost, adequate capacity would be available in the remaining lines to continue providing service to the system. Utilizing steel poles to replace the existing wood poles would enhance the reliability of the lines because they are more resistant to damage, including from wildfire. Increasing the reliability and resilience of the north Lake Tahoe system would reduce the need to activate the Kings Beach Diesel Generation Station. Due to limited total annual operating hours imposed by the facility's permit to operate issued by the Placer County Air Pollution Control District, the preferred use of the Kings Beach Diesel Generation Station is to reserve the operating hours for multiple-contingency events (outages on multiple legs of the system).

Additionally, substantial portions of the 625 Line alignment have no established roads allowing ready access to the poles and conductor. As a result, it is a challenge to repair and maintain much of the 625 Line, especially in the winter when heavy snow can further complicate access.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The following objectives have been identified for the proposed action:

1. To provide reliable capacity during single-contingency outages.
2. To provide additional normal capacity for projected future loads in the north Lake Tahoe area.
3. To reduce dependence on the Kings Beach Diesel Generation Station.
4. To enhance fire safety and reduce the expected duration of outages due to damage from fire.
5. Provide reliable access to the 625 Line for operation and maintenance activities.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action consists primarily of an upgrade of the 625 and 650 Lines and associated substations to 120 kV to allow the entire transmission loop to operate at 120 kV, allowing for a total capacity of 114 MVA. However, there are supporting elements to this primary activity. The six primary components of the proposed project are described below, followed by additional information on further elements of project implementation.

PRIMARY PROJECT COMPONENTS

1. **Removal and Reconstruction of the Existing 625 Line.** As part of the upgrade to 120 kV for the north Lake Tahoe system, Calpeco is proposing to reconductor (i.e., old electrical line is replaced with new line) and reroute the 625 Line with the objective that the new conductor (i.e., wire along the towers) can accommodate 120 kV capacity and to align more closely with the existing roadways in the Project area. The removal of the existing 625 Line would involve approximately 15 miles of conductor and 341 wooden poles. The new 120 kV 625 Line would consist of approximately 300 steel poles and 16 miles of new 397.5 thousand circular mil (MCM) all aluminum (AA) conductor within a new 40-foot-wide permanent ROW. An approximately 10-mile portion would generally parallel Mount Watson Road, a National Forest System road also known as the Fiberboard Highway. This change is intended to increase access for construction and maintenance activities.
2. **Rebuild of the Existing 650 Line.** Approximately 10 miles of existing 650 Line would be rebuilt in its existing ROW and alignment. This section would consist of approximately 225 steel poles and 21 span-guy poles (these poles allow guy wires to span objects such as roads and water features). Poles would

generally be placed 10 feet from the existing poles (which would be removed as part of the project), but in some areas new poles could be further from existing poles to best support the system design. The 650 Line would be reconducted with 397.5 MCM AA conductor to allow transmission at a 120 kV capacity. Although the new conductor would be installed, it would not be operated at 120 kV levels until all elements of the system are completed.

3. **Realignment of 650 Line Segments.** Two minor segments of the 650 Line would be removed; the segment originating at the Truckee Substation and the segment that currently connects the Brockway Substation with the Kings Beach Switching Station (which would be rebuilt as the Kings Beach Substation). Existing co-located telecommunications and/or cable lines at the Truckee Substation would be transferred to the new poles. At the Kings Beach/Brockway Substations the existing poles with telecommunications/cable lines would be left in place and poles would be topped (the extra height that accommodated the 60 kV line would no longer be needed).
4. **Rebuild of the Northstar Tap into a Fold.** A “fold” allows for electrical service to be maintained at a substation in the event of an interruption in service on either side of the transmission line feeding it. The existing 60 kV Northstar Tap would be rebuilt into a line fold tying into the existing terminals. This activity would require replacement of approximately 14 wood poles with steel poles and approximately 0.5 miles of 397.5 MCM AA conductor to allow for the line tap reconfiguration to a fold.
5. **Rebuild a 1.6-mile section of the Existing 132 Line.** The 132 Line is an existing 120 kV line that extends from Truckee to Squaw Valley. In the Town of Truckee, approximately 32 poles would be replaced and the line would be reconfigured to allow a double-circuit configuration with the 650 Line and allow operation at 120 kV. The new steel poles would generally be placed 10 feet from the current wood pole locations.
6. **Upgrade, modification, and/or decommissioning of six substations and/or switching stations.** The Northstar Substation and the Squaw Valley Substation, and the North Truckee Switching Station would be modified to accommodate the new 120 kV loop system. The Tahoe City Substation would be reconstructed to operate at 120 kV. The Kings Beach Switching Station would be rebuilt into a 120 kV substation, which would become the Kings Beach Substation. Additionally, the Brockway Substation would be decommissioned, equipment removed, and the land reclaimed. The future use of this land is unknown at this time. All substation and switching station improvements would take place within parcels owned by Calpeco, and except for the Kings Beach Substation, all work would occur within the existing fence lines of the facilities.

OTHER PROJECT COMPONENTS

CONDUCTOR

In most areas where reconductoring is proposed, the new conductor (i.e., electrical transmission cable) would be of the same type as the existing conductor; specifically, 397.5 thousand circular mil (MCM²) all aluminum (AA³) conductor. Therefore, the new conductor would have the same appearance as the existing conductor. An

² **MCM** stands for “thousand circular mil”, a unit of measurement use to express large conductor sizes. The acronym Kcmil is also frequently used. The first “M” in MCM stands for the Roman numeral for 1,000, the “C” stands for “circular”, and the second “M” stands for “mil”. A mil is a unit of measurement equal to 0.001 inches (i.e., one one-thousandth of an inch). MCM or Kcmil is an area measurement and expresses the area of a cross section of a cable (not a linear diameter or radius measurement). 1 MCM = 0.5067 square millimeters. Therefore, the 397.5 MCM AA conductor used for the proposed project has a cross sectional area of 201.4 square millimeters. The diameter of this conductor is approximately 0.72 inch.

³ The term “all aluminum conductor” (**AA**) indicates that the wire/cable carrying electricity in the conductor is made entirely of aluminum, as opposed to copper or some other material.

approximately 8.8-mile section of the 650 line between Kings Beach and Martis Valley currently has aluminum core steel reinforced (ACSR) conductor. However, the new 397.5 MCM AA conductor installed as part of the project would not look appreciably different from the existing ACSR conductor.

TRANSMISSION POLES

Calpeco would remove approximately 610 wood poles and replace them with approximately 569 new steel poles. The new poles along the 650 Line and 132 Line would generally be located within approximately 10 feet of the locations of existing wooden poles. However, some poles may be situated farther than 10 feet from the existing poles in order to maximize the efficiency of pole placement and to avoid sensitive resources or geological impediments. Some poles along the Northstar Fold would be relocated south of the existing Northstar Tap at a distance of 50 feet.

The new steel poles would be approximately 7 to 12 feet taller than the existing wooden poles, which are approximately 52 feet above ground level. On average, pole spacing would be 300 feet apart. In areas where poles need additional stability, guy wires may be connected to the poles. Diameter of the poles would vary between 15 inches to 19 inches at the base for poles buried in the ground, and 3 feet to 6 feet at the base for self-supporting poles that would be mounted on concrete foundations. For the most part, telecommunication/cable lines that are currently co-located on the existing wooden poles would be relocated onto the new poles.

RIGHT OF WAY REQUIREMENTS

To accommodate construction, temporary ROWs would be required for the new 625 Line, 650 Line, Northstar Fold, and 132 Line. The total temporary ROW needed would be approximately 221 acres. Calpeco would negotiate with landowners for right-of-way.

Calpeco currently holds easements from the USFS, USACE, Placer County, and various public and private landowners whose properties are crossed by the existing 625 Line, 650 Line, 132 Line, and Northstar Fold. The existing easements are on average 30 feet wide, but would need to be expanded to 40 feet for the 625 Line and 650 Line for operation and maintenance purposes. Calpeco would negotiate with the existing landowners in order to obtain a permanent easement of 40 feet for the new 625 Line and 650 Line. No land acquisition would be needed for the substation and switching station facilities because all new facilities would remain on existing Calpeco-owned parcels.

CONSTRUCTION

Project construction would require access, staging areas, temporary workspace, and involve various construction methods to install new poles and string and tension new conductor.

STAGING AREAS

Up to seven staging areas, ranging from 0.2 acre to 3.4 acres, would be required (see Exhibit 2 and Exhibit 3). The proposed staging areas are generally located in areas with pre-existing soil disturbance; however, some would require grading and vegetation removal. All locations would be fenced. Staging areas would be placed in the Joerger Road area near Truckee; Northstar Golf Course near SR 267; Kings Beach north of the Kings Beach Switching Station; Sawmill Flats accessed from Mount Watson Road; the Former Batch Plant accessed from Mount Watson Road; Fiberboard Highway accessed from Mount Watson Road; and Tahoe City accessed from Jackpine Street. Tree clearing would be required at the Kings Beach, Former Batch Plant, and Fiberboard Highway sites. The Tahoe City and the Joerger Road sites would also be used for helicopter landing areas (see discussion of helicopter access below).

TEMPORARY WORK AREAS

Transmission line construction would require numerous work areas for pole work, stringing sites, and crossing structures (wood poles with netting placed over utilities and roadways for protection during cable pulling). An estimated total of approximately 426 acres of temporary disturbance for work areas would be required including roughly 910 work areas for pole installation, 20 work areas for crossing structures, and 78 work areas for stringing sites. Each pole work area would require approximately 0.25 to 0.5 acre, each crossing structure work area would require approximately 0.25 acre, and each stringing site would require a partial 300-foot diameter circle.

Grading and vegetation clearing would be required at most sites. Work areas would typically be accessed by truck using existing roads or new spur roads and the transmission line ROW; however in areas where terrain limits access, use of all-terrain vehicles or approach on foot may be required. Construction at the Tahoe City Substation would require a temporary work area outside of the substation fence line on a USFS-managed parcel.

ACCESS AND SPUR ROADS

Approximately six new spur roads ranging between 40 feet and 1,790 feet in length would be required for access from existing roads to the transmission lines' ROW. Access roads requiring improvement would be graded level and would generally be 12 feet to 25 feet wide.

HELICOPTER ACCESS

Calpeco is proposing to remove the existing 625 Line by helicopter if overland access is not feasible. Helicopters would also be used to deliver and remove construction material from areas with rugged terrain or environmentally sensitive areas. Helicopter landing areas have been proposed at the Joeger Road Staging Area and Kings Beach Staging Area.

PHASING AND SCHEDULE

The proposed action would be constructed in three phases as follows:

- ▲ **Phase 1: 650 Line Rebuild.** Phase 1 includes rebuilding/reconductoring the 650 Line to support 120 kV capacity from Truckee to Kings Beach. Phase 1 also involves rebuilding the existing 60 kV Northstar tap into a line fold tying into the existing terminals, and the installation of a transfer trip on the 609 Line and the installation of capacitor banks at the Tahoe City Substation to address the immediate issue of low-voltage conditions. This phase is the most critical for system reliability and construction of elements of this phase could begin as early as fall of 2013 with the improvements completed and in operation in 2014.
- ▲ **Phase 2: Upgrade the 650 Line Terminations to 120 kV Operation.** The purpose of Phase 2 is to enable the upgraded 650 Line to operate at 120 kV. Phase 2 includes improvements to the North Truckee, Northstar and Kings Beach substations. This phase would also include the decommissioning of the Brockway Substation with a re-routing of the 14.4 kV distribution feeders to the Kings Beach Substation. Construction of this phase is planned for completion in 2016.
- ▲ **Phase 3: 625 Line Reconductor and Relocation.** Phase 3 involves the rebuild of the 625 Line and improvements to complete the 120 kV loop. Phase 3 also includes improvements to the Tahoe City, Kings Beach, and Squaw Valley substations and creating the 132/650 Line Double-Circuit. Completion of Phase 3 would allow for the entire loop to operate at 120 kV, including the 629 Line between Truckee and Tahoe City that had previously been upgraded with 120 kV facilities. Construction of this phase is planned to begin in 2016 with completion and operation planned for 2019.

ALTERNATIVES

The EIS/EIS/EIR will evaluate alternatives at an equal level of detail. The alternatives likely to be evaluated generally include: (1) a No Action Alternative; (2) the Proposed Action (described above); (3) the Proposed Action, but rebuilding the 625 Line in its current location with a 40-foot access road; and (4) the Proposed Action, but use of a double-circuit line for the 625 and 650 Lines east of SR 267. Additional alternatives may be identified that address significant issues brought forward by agencies or the public during the scoping process.

The EIS/EIS/EIR will also include a discussion of alternatives considered but dismissed from further evaluation and the rationale for their dismissal.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The potential impacts of each alternative will be assessed in the context of: TRPA's Initial Environmental Checklist (IEC); the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Initial Study Checklist; and the Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines. A copy of the TRPA IEC completed for the project is available for review at TRPA's offices at 125 Market Street in Stateline, Nevada during normal business hours. The following subject areas will be analyzed in the EIS/EIS/EIR; each resource section will include an assessment of direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the alternatives evaluated:

LAND USE

The proposed project crosses land under the jurisdiction of TRPA, USFS, USACE, Placer County, the Town of Truckee, and some private parcels. Land use impacts will address changes to uses associated with the action alternatives, land use compatibility, and necessary acquisitions or easements needed for implementation. For land use compatibility, the environmental document will focus on the integration of the proposed transmission system components with existing and planned surrounding land uses, including proximity to residential areas and a public use airport. The compatibility analysis will also discuss whether the taller transmission lines in Martis Valley would be consistent with the Tahoe Truckee Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan and whether the increased height would result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.

Consistency with applicable federal, state, and local land use plans, including the TRPA Regional Goals and Policies, relevant TRPA Plan Area Statements (PAS) and Community Plans, Placer County General Plan and the Martis Valley Community Plan, and the USFS planning guidance (Land and Resource Management Plans) will be assessed. At the present time it is not expected any plan amendments would be required for these plans.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Project construction would result in changes to natural elements that contribute to the scenic quality of the study area (e.g., tree removal, hillside cuts, vegetation disturbance) as well as visual changes related to the substation modifications, the new 625 Line with taller poles, and new, taller poles that would be installed along the existing 650 Line, the 132 Line, and the Northstar Fold. Scenic impacts will be evaluated in accordance with the TRPA Code of Ordinances and Regional Plan, and the Forest Plans for the LTBMU and Tahoe National Forest. Consistency with local plans and policies regarding scenic and visual resources including those of Placer County, the Town of Truckee, and the Martis Valley Community Plan will be assessed. Effects on views from the Martis Creek Wildlife Area located west of SR 267 will also be evaluated.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

The project would involve varying levels of tree removal within the temporary construction ROW areas required for construction of the proposed transmission line improvements. Early estimates are that approximately 365 acres of vegetation would be removed within the overall project ROW. The number of trees to be removed for project construction will be determined based on the project's final design and during the construction process as in many cases very site specific conditions would determine whether particular trees must be removed or may remain in place. Tree clearing would occur primarily along the new 625 Line route, and along new access roads and where existing ROWs require widening. The environmental document will evaluate project effects on forest resources, including tree removal and forest conversion impacts.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The environmental document will address temporary and permanent impacts to biological resources, including impacts to sensitive species and habitats as a result of construction activities and operational activities. Resource issues will include potential effects on northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) and California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*), and attainment with TRPA's environmental threshold carrying capacity for northern goshawk populations. Alternative project alignments occur along documented spotted owl nesting territories, and within and adjacent to spotted owl protected activity centers (PACs) and home range core areas (HRCAs). Alternative alignments also pass adjacent to historic northern goshawk nest sites and a PAC, and within TRPA-designated nondegradation zones around goshawk nest sites.

Project implementation would result in the removal of native vegetation and trees. Tree removal and impacts to forest and other vegetation resources will be analyzed for consistency with TRPA's Code of Ordinances, TRPA environmental threshold carrying capacities for vegetation, and other local ordinances. The potential for spread of noxious weeds along the transmission line corridor will also be evaluated.

RECREATION

Recreation facilities and opportunities in the project area include Northstar; the Tahoe Rim Trail; the North Tahoe Regional Park; the Tompkins Memorial Trail; and various hiking/biking trails, camping, and day use areas. Mount Watson Road (Fiberboard Highway) is a popular mountain biking, hiking, and snowmobiling trail. The environmental document will address short-term and long-term impacts of project construction and operation on existing recreation facilities and recreation opportunities, including effects on access for recreationists as a result of trail closures and other access restrictions during construction.

EARTH RESOURCES: GEOLOGY, SOILS, SEISMICITY, LAND CAPABILITY AND COVERAGE

Potential adverse environmental effects of the project on earth resources, including impacts related to the local geology, soils, seismic conditions, and land capability and coverage that may result from implementation of the route alternatives will be evaluated. Potential construction impacts that will be addressed include removal of vegetation, grading, and excavation that would have the potential to result in temporary impacts such as soil erosion and slope failure.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The proposed transmission system upgrade would traverse variable terrain, including forested slopes, mountain ridge tops, riparian zones and wet meadows. The proposed new and replacement utility alignments span several jurisdictions, two watersheds, two groundwater basins, and cross or impinge upon several creeks, drainages and

stream environment zones. Much of the site topography is steep and earth disturbance will likely occur during installation and use of temporary access roads and trenching for utility pole installations. The ability of applicant-proposed Best Management Practices (BMPs) and project features (e.g., strategic placement of access roads and staging areas) to avoid sensitive areas and minimize river crossings to the extent feasible in order to avoid short-term water quality and hydrology impacts will be examined. The environmental document will address drainage, flooding, changes in peak flows, and water quality impacts that may result from construction and maintenance of the proposed transmission system upgrade and alternatives. Temporary and permanent impacts to aquatic resources such as waters of the U.S. (including wetlands), groundwater, streams, and riparian areas will be addressed.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The environmental document will address archaeological sites, historic structures, and traditional cultural properties and other resources of specific concern to Native Americans that would potentially be affected by the proposed action or action alternatives. Both direct (e.g., physical disturbance, visual changes in setting) and indirect (e.g., changes in access) will be addressed.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND HAZARDS

The environmental document will address potential to encounter contamination during construction, and potential exposure to and use of hazardous materials/conditions during construction and on-going operation and maintenance of project components. The environmental document will address temporary impacts associated with the transport of hazardous materials, the potential release of hazardous materials resulting from decommissioning, removal of equipment and structures from the Brockway Substation, and potential for increased wildfire risk as a result of construction activities. Discussion of electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure will follow CPUC guidelines.

TRANSPORTATION, PARKING AND CIRCULATION

The environmental document will address the project's effects on the forest roadway network and potential direct and indirect impacts related to the construction of the proposed transmission system upgrade, including construction within roadway ROW (e.g., SRs 89 and 267) and the need for encroachment permits.

AIR QUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The proposed project is located in areas that are under the local air quality jurisdiction of the Placer County Air Pollution District and the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD). The environmental document will analyze potential short-term construction source (e.g., use of heavy-duty equipment and helicopters for line and substation upgrades) and long-term operational source (e.g., mobile emissions from maintenance-related activities). Emissions of both criteria pollutants and greenhouse gases (GHGs) will be addressed. The total sequestered amount of GHGs in the forest removed will also be assessed. Odor and toxic air contaminant (TAC) exposure will be qualitatively addressed. Increases in criteria air pollutants, precursors, GHGs, and exposure to TACs and odors will be compared to applicable thresholds (e.g., PCAPCD, NSAQMD, TRPA, and General Conformity Applicability levels).

NOISE AND VIBRATION

The environmental document will analyze potential short-term construction source (e.g., use of heavy-duty equipment and helicopters for line and substation upgrades) and long-term operational source (e.g., maintenance-related activities and transformers and corona noise) impacts of the proposed action alternatives. The environmental document will address temporary construction related noise generation near sensitive noise receptors, such as schools, churches, and residences, and will address the potential exposure to noise and vibration.

SOCIOECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The EIS/EIS/EIR will identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including the interrelated social and economic effects on minority and low-income populations.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

The environmental consequences analysis will address public service demands and effects on service ratios, response times, and other performance measures for public service providers, and will determine whether the project would result in new or altered government facilities. Effects on existing utilities as a result of construction-related disturbances will be addressed. The environmental document will address the need for new or expanded utilities to serve the project.

GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

The proposed project and action alternatives would increase the number of jobs available in the region on a temporary basis during construction. Growth-inducing impacts of the action alternatives will be evaluated in light of the growth restrictions that exist in the Lake Tahoe Basin (limited commodities and restrictions on development).

INTENDED USES OF THE EIS/EIS/EIR

On May 18, 2011, the CPUC, the TRPA, the USFS LTBMU and Tahoe National Forest, and the USACE entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the preparation of this EIS/EIS/EIR. TRPA, USFS, and CPUC will use the EIS/EIS/EIR to consider the environmental effects, mitigation measures, and alternatives, when reviewing the proposed action for approval. The EIS/EIS/EIR will serve as TRPA's compliance document with respect to its Compact, Code of Ordinances, and Rules of Procedure, as the USFS's NEPA compliance document, and as CPUC's CEQA compliance document. Federal cooperating agencies, including the USACE, and state responsible and trustee agencies may also use this EIS/EIS/EIR, as needed for subsequent discretionary actions.