



SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink Project



CPUC/BLM Notice Regarding an Additional EIR/EIS Alternative to the Proposed Sunrise Powerlink Project

Introduction. San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) proposes to construct the Sunrise Powerlink (SRPL) Project, a 150-mile transmission line between the El Centro area of Imperial County and northwestern San Diego County. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), as the lead agency under California law, and the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as the federal lead agency, to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Public Scoping and Alternatives. The initial public scoping period for the EIR/EIS was held in September/October 2006. In January 2007, a Notice entitled "Second Round of Scoping Meetings on Alternatives" was mailed, and a Second Scoping period, focusing on alternatives to the proposed Sunrise Powerlink Project, was held in January/February 2007. The January Notice requested comments on a set of alternatives that included the "Route D Alternative" and the "West of Forest Alternative." As a result of comments received during the second round of scoping, these two alternatives (with the exception of Route D north of Interstate 8) were eliminated because of the risk of wildfires causing a concurrent outage of the existing Southwest Powerlink transmission line and a second line in that same corridor.

On March 16, 2007, the Sunrise Powerlink EIR/EIS team mailed a notice announcing the conclusions on alternatives that would be fully analyzed in the EIR/EIS. The March Notice was based on the feedback received from the public and agencies, along with research conducted by the EIR/EIS team. Following the publication of this Notice, additional input was received from the Cleveland National Forest (Forest) in April 2007, including Forest's request that an alternative be fully analyzed in the EIR/EIS that would not require an amendment to the Forest's 2005 Land Management Plan. As a result, portions of the Route D Alternative that were previously considered and eliminated have been combined with new route segments, and will be analyzed in the EIR/EIS.

History of the Route D Alternative. The original Route D Alternative was developed by SDG&E in its application and would have followed existing 69 kV lines. The route was modified by the EIR/EIS team before being presented to the public in the January 2007 Second Scoping Notice, because it passed through many residential areas in which there was not adequate space for a 500 kV transmission line. During Alternatives Scoping in January/February 2007, many comments were received regarding wildfire risks in the area of the route south of I-8. Therefore, in the March 2007 Alternatives Conclusions Notice, the southern and eastern portions of the Route D Alternative were eliminated from detailed analysis due to the collocation with the existing 500 kV Southwest Powerlink (SWPL) transmission line for over 50 miles, through an area of high fire risk. This would have created a reliability risk because the two 500 kV transmission lines would be at risk for a concurrent outage during a wildfire.

In response to the January Second Scoping Notice and the March Alternatives Conclusion Notice, the Cleveland National Forest suggested consideration of a the "Modified Route D Alternative" that would follow a portion of the Route D Alternative and a portion of the Interstate 8 Alternative, diverging from the SWPL line east of the point of high fire risk (east of the community of

Boulevard). The Modified Route D Alternative would avoid the area of highest fire risk and also would be consistent with the Forest's Land Management Plan.

Description of the "Modified Route D Alternative." The "Modified Route D Alternative" that is retained for EIR/EIS analysis includes approximately 23 miles of the previously eliminated "Route D Alternative," as well as about 16 miles of a route that has not previously been considered during the alternatives screening process. The map attached to this Notice illustrates the location of this alternative (including a minor modification to the Forest's original suggestion). Much of the route follows existing SDG&E 69 kV transmission lines. The route is entirely south of Interstate 8 (I-8) and would connect at its west end with either the Interstate 8 Alternative (continuing west underground in Alpine Boulevard) or the remaining portion of the Route D Alternative (continuing north of Interstate 8), both of which have been retained for EIR/EIS analysis.

The Modified Route D Alternative, shown in pink on the attached map, would diverge from the I-8 Alternative at Milepost I8-47, cross the freeway to the south, then follow existing SDG&E transmission lines to the west and south to the Cameron Substation. West of the Cameron Substation the Modified Route D Alternative would join the previously defined Route D Alternative south of Forest, through the Barrett Substation, then north along the west side of the Japatul Valley. If the Modified Route D Alternative were to connect to the Interstate 8 Alternative, a new 40-acre substation would be required along the alternative route about 2 miles south of its western intersection with I-8 in order to allow for underground construction in Alpine Boulevard.

Public and Agency Comments on the "Modified Route D Alternative"

The CPUC and BLM are soliciting comments on the Modified Route D Alternative to the Proposed Sunrise Powerlink Project. Previous comments made on the Route D Alternative, as well as comments on segments south of Interstate 8 from this notice will be considered in preparation of the Draft EIR/EIS. The next opportunity to comment will be following the release of the Draft EIR/EIS for a 90-day comment period. The Draft EIR/EIS is scheduled for release in early August of 2007.

All comments must be received or postmarked by June 14, 2007. You may submit comments or request copies of the March 16, 2007 Notice in three ways: (1) by U.S. mail, (2) by electronic mail, or (3) by fax.

- **By Mail:** If you send comments by U.S. mail, please use first-class mail and be sure to include your name and a return address. Please send written comments on the scope and content of the EIR/EIS to:

Billie Blanchard, CPUC / Lynda Kastoll, BLM
c/o Aspen Environmental Group
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 935
San Francisco, CA 94104-3002
Fax and Voicemail: (866) 711-3106

- **By Electronic Mail:** E-mail communications are welcome; please remember to include your name and return address in the e-mail message. E-mail messages should be sent to sunrise@aspeneq.com.
- **By Fax:** You may fax your comment letter to our information line at (866) 711-3106. Please remember to include your name and return address in the fax, to write legibly, and use black or blue ink.

