

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
95814

March 6, 2008

Commissioner Dian Grueneich
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Commissioner Grueneich:

We write to express our opposition to the proposed path of the Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Project through 22 miles of the heart of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

Although additional electrical transmission may be necessary for this region, we cannot support the addition of any path which goes through the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. We recognize that there is a decades-old existing transmission through this area with some degree of easement for San Diego Gas & Electric. However, the proposed Sunrise Powerlink line would dramatically increase the scope of the easement and size of the transmission towers with significant and adverse impacts on the park – its wilderness, habitat, historic resources and millions of yearly visitors.

This park is not just recreational. Twelve areas of this pristine desert environment were long ago legally designated as “state wilderness” but Sunrise would require more than 50 acres of designated wilderness to be “de-designated.” The wilderness designation carries with it the mandate that it be “untrammeled by man and where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” (Public Resources Code Section 5019.68) With this designation goes the mandate to the State Park and Recreation Commission that the park be “maintained and used in a manner compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment.” Transmission, and its permanent structures, can never be consistent with this mandate.

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is also the site of unique Native American cultural and sacred sites, including areas with Native American human remains including at least one large prehistoric site complex that is of extremely high value.

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Too often, state parks have been considered to be the path of least resistance when it comes to major infrastructure projects. We're saying, not this time. Not through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

Thank you for your critical work on this issue.

Sincerely,

Senator Christine Kehoe
Senator Don Perata
Senator Denise Ducheny
Senator Sheila Kuehl
Senator Alan Lowenthal
Senator Alex Padilla
Senator Darrell Steinberg
Senator Joe Simitian
Senator Patricia Wiggins

Assemblymember Fabian Núñez
Assemblymember Jim Beall Jr.
Assemblymember Patty Berg
Assemblymember Julia Brownley
Assemblymember Hector De La Torre
Assemblymember Mark DeSaulnier
Assemblymember Mervyn Dymally
Assemblymember Noreen Evans
Assemblymember Warren Furutani
Assemblymember Loni Hancock
Assemblymember John Laird
Assemblymember Mark Leno
Assemblymember Fiona Ma
Assemblymember Gene Mullins
Assemblymember Lori Saldaña
Assemblymember Lois Wolk