



Michelle Earnshaw
Ramona, Ca.

D0138

No need has been demonstrated for the Sun Rise Power Link. If that were not true, why would SDG&E be planning to close the South Bay Power Plant, and sell the property? If it was needed, it would be foolish to demolish it, a waste.

If need could be established, then that would be the time to begin anew with alternatives to fossil fuels, especially since they do not plan on using any existing power lines or corridors. There are good alternatives, available now. But, SDG&E has imposed a limit on the number of some of those alternatives which can be installed in the county.

If this fairly inefficient method of electrical transmission is going to be installed, then every inch of it should be underground. Even though cost is a major concern of under grounding, it doesn't compare to the cost of wild fires. It seems that for other than a very few areas, most of the sections that SDG&E have agreed to underground, are in the more urban, city areas, where wild fires are not as big a concern as they are here in the back country. SDG&E seems to make it appear that the outcry is mostly about the visual pollution. And, although that is somewhat true, because those of us who live in the country, ~~do~~ so partly for the open space and country atmosphere, one of the major reasons we don't want it anymore than anyone else does, is due to fire danger. For us, it's not just how ugly it looks, it's a matter of our LIVES and our homes.

It has been determined that the Witch Creek fire (as well as a couple of the other fires last Fall) was started by improperly maintained above-ground SDG&E electrical transmission lines. These lines did not have the protective spacers which could have prevented the arcing. The fire was then fueled further by Santa Ana winds and dried brush. Santa Ana conditions are natural occurrences each and every year and seem to be increasing both in number and intensity. I attended a recent meeting where the chairman of the electrical engineering department at UCSD spoke. Prior to joining UCSD, he had retired from SDG&E in 2003, just before the Cedar Falls fire. He spent 35 years in this career. Earlier in the morning, before the meeting, he had gone out to inspect the origin of this latest fire, where he found the wires in the very same condition that they were in last October, when the fire broke out. He said that nothing had been corrected and that if the weather conditions were just right, that the same thing could happen again. As a matter of fact, I understand by way of the property owners out there, that it HAS happened before, but that they were able to put the fires out before they became a problem.

You may not hear from a lot of other people, who are also concerned about this power line, but, are too busy trying to rebuild and put their lives back together again. I am here, because, although my home and property escaped this fire, others, including my family were not so fortunate. My sister's home and all of its contents burned to the ground. My parents' home narrowly escaped, with some damage, They lost their tile roofed barn, 32' motor home, and new tractor. Their solar pool heating equipment was destroyed and they lost many items which were stored in the barn, such as a walnut table brought from Ohio to Kansas, in a covered wagon by my father's great, great, grandparents. Their Arabian horses were injured, but their lives were spared because my sister risked her own life pulling them out of the barn to let them loose, so that they would at least stand a chance to survive. They are still recuperating. All of this happened while a fire engine and crew stood by because they had no water and were unable to put the fire out. After spending the night in the high school parking lot, as my family made their way home, at six o'clock in the morning, they observed other power lines sparking, as they hung down along the roadways.

So, it seems to me that SDG&E is a long, long time away from being able to implement this plan. Many upgrades need to be in place first.

1. They need to properly maintain the wires that already exist. I understand that the CPUC has protocol for the maintenance of power lines, which calls for two people on the job. One person drives the car and the other spots the wires, but that they are not doing this, as they have only one person in the car, acting as both driver and spotter.
2. Spacers need to be placed on all lines with the possibility of arcing.
3. We need a reliable water supply in Ramona, because we know there will be more fires.
4. We need more than two evacuation routes out of town . One of the roads, hwy. 78, is often closed due to rockslides and washouts.