

Comment Set C.166: Marcy Watton

From: HorsingRound@aol.com [mailto:HorsingRound@aol.com]

Sent: Tue 10/3/2006 10:00 AM

To: jbx@cpuc.ca.gov; lau@cpuc.ca.gov; jmh@cpuc.ca.gov; Antelope-Pardee Project

Subject: Comments to DEIR/DEIS - Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project - Segment 1

Attached is my letter response to the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Draft Environmental Impact Report for Segment 1 of the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project.

Marcy Watton
P.O. Box 816
Leona Valley, CA 93551

Marcy A. Watton
P.O. Box 816
Leona Valley, CA 93551

October 3, 2006

VIA EMAIL and U.S. MAIL

John Boccio Calif Public Utilities Commission Transmission Permitting & Reliability Br. Area 4-A 505 Van Ness Avenue San Francisco, CA 94102-3214 jbx@cpuc.ca.gov	Laurence Chaset Calif Public Utilities Commission Legal Division Room 5131 505 Van Ness Ave. San Francisco, CA 94102-3214 lau@cpuc.ca.gov
Julie Halligan Calif Public Utilities Commission Division of Administrative Law Judges Room 5101 505 Van Ness Avenue San Francisco, CA 94102-3214 jmh@cpuc.ca.gov	Marian Kadota CPUC/USDA Forest Service c/o Aspen Environmental Group 30423 Canwood Street, Suite 215 Agoura Hills, CA 91301 Antelope-pardee@aspeneq.com

**Re: Comments on the
Draft Environmental Impact Report/
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
For the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project
And specifically Alternative 5 – Sierra-Pelona Re-Route**

Dear Madams Halligan and Kadota, and Messrs. Boccio and Chaset:

Following are my comments, in addition to those contained in the response prepared on my behalf by Jackson DeMarco Titus Peckenpaugh, on Alternative 5 (“Alt. 5”) to the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (“DEIR/DEIS”) for the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project (“the Project”) proposed by Southern California Edison (“SCE”).

1. Lack of adequate or timely notice.

The Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project has been in the draft planning stage for about two years, yet Alternative 5 was proposed only in the spring of this year, 2006, in response to a requirement by the USDA/Forest Service that an alternative to the corridor through the Angeles National Forest be considered. This is despite the fact that the routes proposed in Alternatives 1 through 4 mostly follow existing routes, where utility corridors already have existed for 50 years. Alt. 5 proposes removing an existing transmission line, from a corridor through the Angeles National Forest that would continue to be used by other utilities, and place it

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mostly through private properties containing homes and families. Throughout this letter, “corridor” shall mean the corridor on the ground and/or the transmission lines and towers to be placed upon the corridor.

I first learned of Alternative 5 by receiving a notice of “informational meeting” regarding the DEIR from Aspen Environmental Group (“Aspen”) which was postmarked July 21, 2006. This date was well past the scoping meetings and deadlines to intervene as a party of interest in the Project. Alt. 5 was proposed at a later date, and therefore I did not have the benefit of the proper timeline for opportunities to learn of Alt. 5, nor make substantive comments on Alt. 5, nor make a motion to intervene as a stakeholder in the Project.

Furthermore, my requests from Aspen on August 1, 2006, and on another occasion subsequent, for a hardcopy of the DEIR went ignored. Instead, I was referred to the DEIR on the website. I found it unwieldy and impractical to review the online version of the DEIR, and also the CD version which I was sent at a later date. Since Alt. 5 proposes taking my property, or a portion of my property, I feel I should have been entitled to a hard copy of the nearly 1,000 page DEIR, with its numerous color exhibits.

The property owners along Alt. 5 have not had the benefit of time and opportunity to comment on the Project through scoping meetings or comment periods before the DEIR, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), and as afforded to all parties affected by the other four alternatives.

Additionally, because of the last-minute inclusion of Alt. 5 in the DEIR, the various impacts of Alt. 5 received only a cursory study, and significant impacts were either omitted or minimized.

Another important aspect of the Project, intentional or not, is the fact that Segment 1 of SCE’s transmission project is part of a *larger series of projects*, including Segment 2 & 3, which have been split into smaller separate parts. These “segments” contain proposed routes which have nearly identical impacts to Leona Valley. In fact, Alt. 5 of Segment 1 and Alt. 4 of Segments 2 & 3 within the two separate DEIRs run side by side in Leona Valley along Lost Valley Ranch Road, but the cumulative impact of BOTH 500-kV corridors is not addressed in either DEIR.

C.166-2

My comments herein are intended to pertain to ALL transmission corridors proposed through Leona Valley, whether or not I have been notified! I intend to comment on all the DEIRs I know about, but since notice from Aspen has been insufficient for the most part, I reserve the right to append these comments to those unknown DEIRs.

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2. Disruption to Leona Valley, and the impact on its residents.

a. Foremost among the negative impacts of Alt. 5 is the proposal to make a corridor through 103 properties, with “one or more” homes being demolished. It appears from the “tentative” route that certainly more than one home would have to be demolished in order to effect Alt. 5. My property is on the route, and because of the hilly terrain, and the likely need for access roads to towers, my home would probably be torn down. If it wasn’t torn down my home would be about 80 feet from a 220’ tower, looming 20 stories above my home!

The proposed Alternative 5 route could displace up to 30 families in Leona Valley. The impact of rendering approximately 120 people homeless has not been considered in the Project. Most of the properties affected are single family residences. Leona Valley has about 1,800 residents. Potentially 15 percent of the total population of Leona Valley would be displaced. There are not enough homes available for sale in the area to accommodate the relocation of this many people. The idea of uprooting this many people is ludicrous; by comparison, imagine the disruption and uproar that would occur if SCE proposed removing 15 percent of the City of Los Angeles from their homes!

b. The Leona Valley School could be faced with closure due to a drop in enrolment, causing a burden on the remaining residents and the school district if children had to be transported to the next closest school more than 8 miles away.

c. Leona Valley residents would be exposed to electromagnetic fields (EMFs), and the health hazards that have been associated with EMFs, including various cancers and other illness.

d. The normally very quiet valley and its residents would be disrupted by corona noise and whistling noises from wind through the lines and towers.

e. Residents would be exposed to dust and other air quality hazards resulting from the corridor during and after construction.

f. Residents would be exposed to traffic disruptions during construction and maintenance.

g. Residents could be exposed to increased illegal off highway vehicle (“OHV”) trespass due to the access roads created for maintaining the corridor. This OHV trespass could expose property owners to liability for accidents or other incidents resulting from the trespass.

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h. Residents and property owners would have increased danger due to wild fire since fire suppression would be hampered by the corridor. Additionally, property insurance may be difficult, or impossible, to obtain because of the hindrance to fire suppression. C.166-9

i. Instead of the premium views that increase the values of the properties in Leona Valley, the viewscape would be dominated from all vantage points by the corridor, resulting in property devaluation. C.166-10

j. Residents, their livestock and pets, and wildlife could be in direct physical danger by coming in contact with the corridor, either directly or through arcing or other processes. C.166-11

k. Ground and surface water quality could be affected by the construction and maintenance of the corridor. Ground and surface water could be polluted by run off, or unintentionally rerouted by the placement of the towers. Surface water could be unintentionally or otherwise rerouted causing damage to structures or roads or previously undisturbed land. C.166-12

l. The failure of the towers and lines along the corridor could cause losses to property and lives if they failed during an earthquake or other disaster, natural or otherwise. Terrorists have targeted corridors in the past, and having a corridor through Leona Valley raises the prospect that acts of terrorism could occur in Leona Valley. Furthermore, if the towers or lines failed and/or fell, residents on more than 30 properties could be trapped without an exit. C.166-13

m. The corridor would cause the disruption, loss or relocation of wildlife, including many endangered species now thriving along the proposed corridor. C.166-14

n. The corridor creates new undesirable impacts to trails, including the Pacific Crest Trail (in Agua Dulce near Vasquez Rocks County Park), and along many Los Angeles County trails, including the Leona Loop Trail. These trails now have undisturbed vistas, quiet and solitude that would be destroyed by the corridor. C.166-15

o. Local businesses, including stores, real estate offices, restaurants, farms, orchards, a feed store, contractors, among others including many home-based businesses, could be negatively impacted by the disruption caused by the corridor during and after construction, and due to the drop in population displaced by the corridor. C.166-16

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3. Compensation for losses.

In the event that the Alt. 5 corridor is chosen as the preferred route, I ask that I be compensated for the devaluation of my property; the ongoing devaluation of my property into the future; the suppression in value of my property in the event the corridor is delayed; compensation for potential health hazards; compensation for increased homeowners insurance premiums due to hazards posed by the corridor; any relocation fees associated with having to move temporarily or permanently; compensation for any losses or injury to livestock or pets or crops; any losses resulting from any rezoning of my property from the current zoning including any potential losses due to restriction on currently allowed agricultural enterprises including but not limited to horse boarding, farming, livestock raising; any losses real or potential from denial of permits for conditional use permits, construction of granny homes, second homes, studios, garages, etc. due to the corridor; compensation for temporary and ongoing disruptions to the enjoyment of my property due to construction and maintenance of the corridor; compensation for the difference in property taxes between what is paid on my property now and what I end up paying at any future home I may be forced to relocate to; compensation for access to through property via my private road; compensation for repair or maintenance to my private road caused one time or ongoing problems associated with the corridor; compensation for any problems arising from dust or noise; compensation for health issues (including mental health); compensation for repairs to my house for damages caused by the corridor; and any other damage or inconvenience which may arise out of the construction or maintenance of the corridor on my property. The corridor will cause major anxiety to me and the residents of my house, and hamper the enjoyment of our property; this cannot be minimized or ignored!

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Furthermore, I demand that because Southern California Edison (or whichever company may end up using the corridor) is a privately held for-profit company that it pay me on a yearly basis a portion of their profits from its use of the corridor through my property, to be determined at a later date, for the ongoing use of my property or the eventual future owners of my property, in addition to a price for the easement or corridor.

4. The cost of Alt. 5 would be exponentially higher.

Compensation for every private property owner along Alt. 5 for just their loss of property value could run into the tens of millions of dollars. By example: 103 homes in the path of the corridor times a 33% decrease in value on the average sales price of \$600,000 equals \$20,600,000. These figures are conservative; losses might be proven in excess of 33% and in excess of the average home price since the corridor runs through larger more expensive parcels than average. The total amount of compensation could double or triple if demands by adjacent

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property owners for devaluation are paid. It is unreasonable to place this burden on ratepayers of SCE when more economical alternatives exist.

5. I request detailed and adequate responses to the issues raised above.

I love living in Leona Valley because of its beauty, the access to trails and public lands, and the healthful, natural environment it provides for my daughter and me and our animals. When I was shopping for a home on an agriculturally zoned property, I researched the history of the areas I was interested in, eliminating those areas with ground water problems or pollution; nearby aerospace or industrial uses; agricultural use requiring aerial spraying; areas close to landfills or freeways; *and areas with transmission corridors*. I paid a premium for my property in order to be free of these hazards; I expect to be justly compensated if the powers that be persist in installing a hazardous transmission corridor on or anywhere near my property.

On moonlit nights, my daughter and I ride our horses to the top of the chaparral covered ridge overlooking Leona Valley—right along where the corridor is proposed—listening for the coos of the burrowing owls, and gazing upon the scattered lights of town, and feel grateful to be able to live in such a beautiful place. I would hope that you decide to not destroy another endangered species: the rural town.

Sincerely,



Marcy Watton

cc: Michael Antonovich, Supervisor, 5th District, Los Angeles County Supervisors
Sharon Runner, 36th District, California State Assembly
George Runner, 17th District, California State Senate
Howard “Buck” McKeon, 25th District, U.S. Congress

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- C.166-1 Please see General Response GR-5 regarding the Project's noticing procedures and review period. On September 13, the CPUC and the Forest Service formally extended the public review period for the Draft EIR/EIS to October 3, 2006.
- C.166-2 Please see the response to Comment B.12-2 regarding the Antelope Transmission Project, Segments 2 and 3 being a separate project from the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project (Segment 1). This comment presumes that Alternative 5 would be chosen by the Lead Agencies (USDA Forest Service and CPUC) for the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project and Alternative 4 would be chosen by the CPUC (Lead Agency) for the ATP 2 and 3 Project, which is unknown at this time.
- C.166-3 As discussed in Section C.9.10.2, the majority of land uses that would be restricted as a result of Alternative 5 would be the erection of new structures within the alternative ROW. However, given that SCE has not conducted construction or final alignment and design studies for Alternative 5, the EIR/EIS has assumed that the removal of one or more homes may occur. Alternative 5 would not result in the displacement of a significant portion of the families in the Leona Valley or Agua Dulce communities.
- C.166-4 Please see General Response GR-3 regarding potential EMF impacts.
- C.166-5 As discussed in Section C.10.10.2, corona noise would result in identical less than significant noise impacts for Alternative 5 as the proposed Project.
- C.166-6 As discussed in Draft EIR/EIS Section C.2.10.2, construction of the proposed Project would result in short-term construction related air quality impacts that are considered a significant and unavoidable impact of Alternative.5. Your concerns will be shared with the decision-makers who are reviewing the Project and alternatives at the USDA Forest Service and the CPUC.
- C.166-7 As discussed in Draft EIR/EIS Section C.13.10.2, temporary closure of roads along the proposed Alternative 5 route would be less than significant with proposed mitigation measures.
- C.166-8 As discussed in Draft EIR/EIS Section B.4.5, Alternative 5 would not create permitted recreational facilities. As described for Impact R-4 in Section C.9, Mitigation Measure R-4 (Permanent Closure and Re-vegetation of Construction Roads) would be implemented to prevent unmanaged recreation (e.g., illegal OHV use). This mitigation measure states that "access roads built and re-opened for construction of the Project, which are not part of the Forest System roads, shall be blocked from vehicle access and rehabilitated to a near natural condition."
- C.166-9 We recognize that Alternative 5 would constrain the ability to aggressively fight a wildland fire in the vicinity of the route, and would create additional fire risks to inhabited areas such as Leona Valley and Agua Dulce (see discussion in Section D.5). Your concerns will be shared with the decision-makers who are reviewing the Project and alternatives at the USDA Forest Service and the CPUC.
- C.166-10 Please see General Response GR-1 regarding potential effects on property values.

- C.166-11 As discussed in Draft EIR/EIS Section C.3.10.2, the construction and operation of Alternative 5 would result in less than significant impacts with mitigation incorporated to both wildlife habitat and species along the Alternative 5 route.
- C.166-12 As discussed in Draft EIR/EIS Section C.8.10, the construction and operation of Alternative 5 would result in less than significant impacts to water quality and available groundwater.
- C.166-13 As discussed in Section C.5.10.2, damage related to earthquake induced phenomena would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.
- C.166-14 As discussed in Draft EIR/EIS Section C.3.10.2, the construction and operation of Alternative 5 would result in less than significant impacts with mitigation incorporated to both wildlife habitat and species along the Alternative 5 route.
- C.166-15 As discussed in Draft EIR/EIS Section C.9.10.2, Alternative 5 would result in a permanent loss of recreational areas. Your concerns will be shared with the decision-makers who are reviewing the Project and alternatives at the USDA Forest Service and the CPUC.
- C.166-16 As discussed in Section C.9.10.2, the majority of land uses that would be restricted as a result of Alternative 5 would be the erection of new structures within the alternative ROW. However, given that SCE has not conducted construction or final alignment and design studies for Alternative 5, the EIR/EIS has assumed that the removal of one or more homes may occur. Alternative 5 would not result in the displacement of a significant portion of the families in the Leona Valley or Agua Dulce communities.
- C.166-17 Please see General Response GR-1 regarding potential effects on property values.