

Comment Set C.210: Patrisha Hodgman Heller and Steven Heller

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BY:.....

October 1, 2006

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Honorable Julie Halligan
Administrative Law Judge
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue, Room 5101
San Francisco, CA 94103
jmh@cpuc.ca.gov

RE: Antelope-Pardee 500 kV Transmission Project

We have lived in Leona Valley since June 2002. We own a small two-acre ranch nestled against the hillside and national forest. We own and maintain dogs, cats, horses and other livestock. We chose Leona Valley because we wanted a rural, animal and wildlife friendly community. That is what we have and enjoy here as residents.

We find the Antelope-Pardee 500 KV Transmission Project DIER to be flawed from the outset. We will set forth the reasons below and ask for a response to our concerns for the flagrant disregard for private property, proper notification, rights of citizens, fire prevention, public health, water and erosion issues.

1. We learned of this project because of an email received from our neighbors inquiring if we were aware of it in late August 2006. We do not recall ever receiving a mailer dated July 2006, as other Leona Valley residents did. We had the opportunity to hear an overview of the DEIR from Aspen Environmental, the USDA, etc. at a public meeting in late August. We were aware of the original deadline for comments of September 18, 2006, and the extension to October 2, 2006. For many of us in Leona Valley, our whole way of life is in jeopardy if Alternative 5 is selected. We are aware that other groups were notified during the scoping period in 2004. Why wasn't the community of Leona Valley notified at this time? The inadequate comment period provided us hampers our ability to adequately respond. We believe that the agencies involved have violated the California Environmental Quality Act by not allowing us adequate response time.
2. The DEIR characterizes the Leona Valley area as having scattered rural residences implying that the impact of Alternative 5 would not be that great. The DEIR attempts to mislead any reader by that statement which they support with inaccurate, doctored and incomplete pictures showing only pasturelands. A more accurate assessment of Leona Valley would be a community that is considered one of the more pristine areas with many horse/cattle ranches and farms, 20 plus U Pick cherry orchards, pear/apple orchards,

C.210-1

C.210-2

- vineyards, a historic one room school house, etc. The properties generally range in size from 1-40+ acres. We have high performing students, a fine elementary school, a very low crime rate and a community of citizens who are active in maintaining Leona's rural way of life. We do not believe that our community standards were considered when the DEIR report was done or that the preparers of the report even knew that we had community standards. We have a viable Leona Valley Town Council and Leona Valley Improvement Association. As far as we know, neither of these groups were consulted or notified to determine if there was any adverse impact on the community. Why weren't these groups notified?
3. The DEIR implies Alt. route 5 will not be a major impact because of the rural nature of Leona Valley. Yet it would traverse 103 privately owned properties and possibly remove one or more homes. Our home is on 107th Street West, abutting the national forest and would be seriously impacted. If we have to sell due to the extreme proximity to these towers, who will compensate us for the fair market value of our home before the towers are put in? It is a well-known fact that home values decrease dramatically once towers are proposed or built. Our home provides us with some of the most beautiful views and quiet solitude in Southern California. Who will pay to relocate us to a similar environment that is accessible to our businesses, and that will afford us with barns and corrals for our livestock? Additionally, how will we be compensated for the potential increase in tax basis if we are forced to relocate?
4. Alternate route 5 is the longest and impacts the most private property. It also exposes the greatest number of residences to noise generated by the towers.
5. Interference with disaster/emergency preparedness would be devastating. Water dropping helicopters would not be able to reach some areas, including our ranch, due to the positioning of the towers. Additionally, there will be increased fire hazard due to location of transmission lines along the fault line. Alternative route 5 puts the greatest demand on public services due to the extended route length. Residents will be exposed to increased insurance premiums due to increased fire risk.
6. The DEIR addresses the potential for soil erosion from the erection of the towers due to the bases being so large, etc. We have pictures of the destruction that occurred in Leona Valley to our primary entry road in January 2005. The road was impassable and became a canyon about 4-5 feet deep. If a heavy storm can cause this much damage without soil erosion, what can we anticipate post the erection of the towers? This road is privately maintained, as are many roads in Leona Valley. The \$10,000 plus required to return this road to its usable state was done by ourselves and one other property owner along with other volunteer neighbors. Will the SCE/USDA or another agency compensate us or repair our roads in a timely manner when the inevitable destruction occurs? Additionally, this same road leads to the California Water Company water tank. This tank stores and provides water to some of the residents of Leona Valley. The towers and lines are scheduled to go almost immediately behind this tank. Was the California Water Company contacted about the potential impact to their tank? Other residents in Leona Valley rely on wells for their water. If the drilling, construction and digging cause damage to the fissures and aquifer and ruin wells, who will compensate these owners?
7. There are health and safety concerns associated with tower lines conducting the 500kV lines. Childhood leukemia and spontaneous abortions have been associated with EMF's. There will be increased traffic (demolition and construction vehicle) traveling through our local school zone. According to the report, there will be an estimated 4,605 tons of waste created by the project. This alternative causes the second highest air pollution according to the report.
8. Alternative route 5 is the most costly, longest and impacts the most private property of any of the proposed routes. Edison has a proposed route along an existing ROW
- C.210-2
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- C.210-3
- C.210-4
- C.210-5
- C.210-6
- C.210-7
- C.210-8

corridor. This route will only consume 227 new acres of land. The Alternate 5 Re-Route will consume/destroy over 698 acres of new, pristine, virgin land. Plus it will destroy and displace people from the homes and land they love. Why would Alt. Route 5 be considered at all when there are alternatives that are less intrusive?

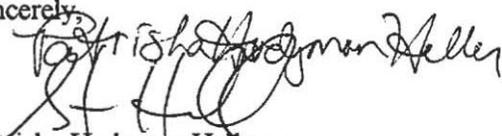
9. We have an excellent elementary school, which would face potential closure due to loss of families in Leona Valley if construction of the towers is permitted.
10. Since the DEIR is full of inaccuracies and omissions, the community of Leona Valley has been forced to hire legal representation and will move forward to challenge Alt. Route 5. Hence, our community has already been impacted financially and Alt. Route 5 has not even been approved!

C.210-9

NO! TO EDISON'S PROPOSED ALTERNATE 5 RE-ROUTE!!!

Thank you for your attention to this comment letter. We look forward to your response. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



~~Patrishia Hodgman Heller~~
Steven Heller

cc: Jody Noiron, Supervisor, Angeles National Forest jnoiron@fs.fed.us
The Honorable Michael Antonovich, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors,
113 W. Ave. M-4, Ste. A, Palmdale, CA 93551
The Honorable George Runner, State Senator, 848 W. Lancaster Blvd., Ste. 101,
Lancaster, CA 93534
The Honorable Sharon Runner, State Assembly District 36, 747 W. Lancaster Blvd.,
Lancaster, CA 93534
Mr. John Boccio, CPUC, EIR Project Manager, Aspen Environmental Group
30423 Canwood Street, Suite 215, Agoura Hills, CA 91301 ✓
Marian Kadota, USDA Forest Service, NEPA Project Manager, c/o Aspen
Environmental Group, 30423 Canwood Street, Suite 215, Agoura Hills, CA 91301
Terry Kenney, Alternate 5 Committee Chair, Leona Valley Town Council, P.O.
Box 795, Leona Valley, CA 93551

Response to Comment Set C.210: Patrisha Hodgman Heller and Steven Heller

- C.210-1 Please see General Response GR-5 regarding noticing procedures and the review period for the Draft EIR/EIS. 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.210-2 No existing homes were deleted out of photographs of existing landscape conditions. In all photographs of existing conditions, no landscape features were removed or altered in any way. If photographs of existing landscape conditions show vacant lands, it is because the view across these existing vacant lands provided excellent observation of landscapes that would be affected by construction and operation of a new 500-kV transmission line. As described in Section C.15.1.1, photographs used in the EIR/EIS were taken from vantage points called key observation positions (KOPs). Each KOP was carefully selected to display the typical or worst-case view from major travel routes or use areas that provide visual access to affected landscapes. From dozens of potential observer positions and in consultation with CPUC and Forest Service personnel, 14 locations were selected as KOPs for detailed analysis of the proposed Project, and 14 additional KOPs were selected for detailed analysis of alternatives. Please see General Response GR-5 regarding the noticing procedures for the EIR/EIS.
- C.210-3 As discussed in Section C.9.10.2, the alternative alignment would be constructed across 103 privately owned parcels. 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. As such, Section C.9.10.2 (Impact L-3) concluded that potential impacts to residential land uses as a result of Alternative 5 would be significant and unavoidable. Please see General Response GR-1 regarding potential effects on property values and General Response GR-2 regarding property acquisition.
- C.210-4 Your comment is consistent with the findings of the Draft EIR/EIS.
- C.210-5 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.210-6 Soil erosion is discussed in both Draft EIR/EIS Section C.5, Geology, Soils, and Paleontology, and in Section C.9, Hydrology and Water Quality. Specifically, soil erosion and sedimentation caused by construction activities and the potential to degrade water quality are addressed under Impact H-1. Applicant-Proposed Measures (APMs) HYD-2 and HYD-3 would be implemented to address the potential impacts to water quality from construction-related soil erosion and sedimentation, as well as GEO-2 and GEO-3, to facilitate understanding of site-specific geologic conditions and minimize erosion from construction. Furthermore, Mitigation Measures G-1 (Protect Against Slope Instability), G-2 (Minimization of Soil Erosion), R-4 (Permanent Closure and Re-vegetation of Construction Roads), H-1a (Implementation of Erosion and Sediment Best Management Practices), H-1b (Timing of Construction Activities), H-1c (Maximum Road Gradient), H-1d (Road Surface Treatment), H-1e (Dispersion of Subsurface Drainage from Slope Construction Areas), and H-1f

(Control of Sidecast Material, Right-of-Way Debris and Roadway Debris) would be required to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level (Class II).

Furthermore, in Draft EIR/EIS Section C.13, Traffic and Transportation, Impact T-7 addresses damage to road ROWs resulting from construction vehicles and equipment. In addition to APM TRA-5, which would require repairing damage to local streets, Mitigation Measure T-7 (Repair Damaged Road ROWs) would provide for repair of roads, sidewalks, and/or medians (including irrigation systems for landscaped medians) reducing this impact to a less-than-significant level (Class II).

C.210-7 Please see General Response GR-3 regarding EMF concerns.

C.210-8 Thank you for your opinion regarding the proposed Project and alternatives. Although project cost is not discussed in the Draft EIR/EIS, we agree that due to the increased length of Alternative 5, it would cost substantially more than the proposed Project. Your comments will be shared with the decision-makers who are reviewing the Project and alternatives at the USDA Forest Service and the CPUC. A number of alternative routes were identified during the Scoping process to avoid the impacts of SCE's proposed Project. Also, SCE's proposed Project and several of the alternatives analyzed in the EIR/EIS include the use of existing transmission rights-of-way. Please see General Response GR-4 regarding the alternatives identification process for the Project.

C.210-9 See the response to Comment C.12-2. Alternative 5 would not result in the displacement of a significant portion of the families in the Leona Valley, nor would it necessitate the closure of local schools.