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Billie Blanchard
Sunrise Powerlink Project Manager
California Public Utilities Commission
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Lynda Kastoll, Realty Specialist
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Also transmitted electronically to sunrise@speneg.com

Dear Ms. Blanchard and Ms. Kastoll: Sunrise PowerLink Modified Route D Alternative

I was born and raised in Campo and have lived here for 30 years. After college I returned to teach in local schools. I have been teaching first and third grade in Boulevard and Jacumba. I now teach at Jacumba Elementary. I plan to live here and raise my family here. My family also lives in the Campo area. I care very deeply for my community and for the Mountain Empire area.

I was very distressed recently to learn of the plans of the Public Utilities Commission and San Diego Gas and Electric Co. to build a gigantic transmission power line in this area. All that I had heard about were discussions last year regarding a line in North County that would be serving North County and Los Angeles with power. Little did I know that there was a route that would be going through Jacumba, where I teach, and through Campo, where I live. This would affect me dramatically.

My inquiries with my neighbors and with others in the community produced little information. However, those inquiries did reveal the fact that there were no scoping sessions in our community and there was notice only to a few people whose properties would be directly affected by these massive transmission towers. Everyone I asked believed that there was no way the route would go anywhere close to this area. They were told that SDG&E had fostered that opinion in some general information meetings held at the local planning group. Long after those local meetings were held and input to the process was closed, the Public Utilities Commission opened the comments briefly for the affected local property owners to make their input. I heard nothing of this. Imagine my surprise to find out that the route is now coming within a mile of my home and will also be impacting Jacumba and I have no opportunity to examine the details of the routing and learn what is proposed. All I can do is submit this letter to voice my opinions and my opposition to the Modified Route D Alternative.

Did you assume we are so dumb as to not recognize that you are trying to slip an objectionable project past us without giving us the opportunity to comment? What happened to freedom of information and open government and full disclosure and detailing the benefits and drawbacks of the proposal. This is not my understanding of how the process is supposed to work and you must - at a minimum - be violating the intent of the law. Before anything is decided, before an Environmental Impact Report is prepared, before any route goes to the Public Utilities Commission for approval. We need to have hearings, and explanations, and discussions, and input and revisions in our community. We demand that you provide this to us because it is our right as taxpayers and as citizens and as ratepayers.

How do you justify the manner in which this was handled? It seems that you decided to find the most rural area with the lowest income demographics and put the route there with no regard for the residents and land owners and for the environment. Rich land owners in North County complain and the route is moved. Well we are not wealthy land owners in East County but we are complaining and we want the route moved too.

Your Route D makes no sense. You are proposing to move energy from Imperial County (and I might add that the energy is not even available at this time) to northern San Diego County and beyond to Los Angeles. And yet you want to put a route through Campo. This will add many extra miles to the route which can only result in greatly increased costs and a much higher rate the utility will charge us for our electricity. What is justified about that? You should be trying to do what ever will produce the maximum benefit for the lowest possible cost. And that certainly is not a route through Campo.

Every morning when I leave my home and drive to my school I look 3 miles south and see the Southwest PowerLink marching down the border. We already have a PowerLink in our area, and why would you put a second one in this area? Is it because we are the poor folk in the Backcountry that nobody cares? Do you think that if you put it out here, no one will make any noise? Campo and Lake Marina are not a dumping ground for all projects that no one else in the County wants. Your placement of Modified Route D. Alternative should not be the path of least resistance and the path of minimum citizen opposition. It should be the best route to serve the purposes, if in fact, the route is even needed.

The newspapers are full of articles about how Sunrise PowerLink is not needed. We have also heard how SDG&E has misrepresented the supposed savings on this route. With all the problems in SDG&E's testimony and in their public statements about energy in San Diego, we are all very suspicious of your proposals. The obvious lack of analysis and understanding of our area, evidenced by the Route D selection and the failure to involve the local community in the discussions, is further proof of the poor manner in which SDG&E is handling this process. Why should we believe that either Sunrise or Route D is the right thing to do?

Other alternatives seem to provide a reduced environmental impact and would be less prone to the large-scale fires that we have here in the Backcountry. While we have not had a big fire recently, we are part of the county that has not burned but will burn on a large scale some time in the next few years. With climate change and a seven-year drought, which appears to be ongoing for at least two or three more years, the fire problem will be even worse. Yet, you want to put an additional transmission line in the middle of this tinderbox. What is sensible about that?

I would recommend that you put the line, if it is needed, along Interstate 8 and underground. Bury the entire link. This would minimize many of the problems inherent in such a line. It would reduce possible exposure to terrorist threats. It would minimize impacts on wildlife corridors. It would minimize impacts on recreation of the citizens in the Backcountry areas which are being preserved and conserved for the purposes recreation and enjoyment of nature. Use of the I-8 route would eliminate a labyrinth of roads crossing the Backcountry and much additional institutional and industrial traffic going out to service, maintain, and watch over these lines.

There has to be better alternatives than modified Route D. You should go back and start this process at the beginning and come up with viable alternatives. When you do that make certain to include all the affected communities in the discussions and evaluate all the various alternatives for supplying San Diego's energy needs, including those that do not include transmission line. We need and want solar, and that is a much more sensible way to approach this problem. There are numerous alternatives that do not use a massive transmission line. Yet it seems obvious from everything I have been reading that you are fixated on the transmission line at the cost of all other alternatives. Please reconsider and please remove Modified Route D as an alternative. Before you make any decisions consider all the alternatives and include in your analysis the options that do not require a transmission line.

Sincerely yours,

Tamoura Inman