

SAN JOAQUIN CROSS VALLEY LOOP PROJECT PERSPECTIVE

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My name is Linda Hengst and I grew up west of Farmersville under the power lines just north of the Visalia Rector Sub-station. Our daughter and her husband bought my childhood home from my mom, allowing her to stay in her home as long as she wanted to do so.

Bob and I have been married 45 years. I fell in love with the area after I fell in love with him. Never in my wildest dreams would I ever have thought that our beautiful Elderwood property would be threatened by the same Edison lines from my childhood, especially since we are in P.G. and E. territory.

The thought of Edison lines coming thru one of the most pristine areas of our ranch known as Sentinel Butte is hard to stomach. This area has long been a source of pleasure for our family. Many church picnics have taken place there as well as family gatherings at Easter time to celebrate our two sons' birthdays. Native Americans from the past must have loved it as well, evidenced by their deep mortar grinding stones, petroglyph drawings on rocks, and the burial ground which was confirmed by a dig from the College of Sequoias. A huge pageant called "The Valley of the Sun" also took place as thousands sat on the hillsides and viewed it back in the 1920s. Bob's mom and dad were a part of that unprecedented production. I can only imagine their sadness and anger over such a proposal if they were alive today.

We are one of many family farms that would lose valuable farm land. It is also land that would make beautiful home sites. Our daughter's family, who currently live in my childhood -home, just north of the Visalia Rector Sub-Station, would love to move back to the farm and build a home. They too never dreamed they might have to still look at power lines as well as hear their buzz as they drive under them each day. They have tried to sell their thirty acres, only to be told it could only be sold as fifteen because there is no value to the acreage under the power lines.

My family once experienced the loss of a horse when one of these lines broke. Not long ago, I was baby-sitting when I heard a huge bang followed by the electricity going out. These lines scare me and I think that it would be pro-active to replace as many lines as possible making it safer for all living nearby, as they would be doing as part of proposed Route #3.

My father planted walnuts from the nut itself and he was so proud of his orchards. I remember when Edison made him take the trees down that were under the lines. I don't think he ever got over the hurt of losing something he had worked so hard to produce.

Farming hasn't been easy for us in the past years and we too have worked hard to produce our crops. I don't want to see my family go through this again. By choosing the more northern Route Three, using the existing lines and going over foothill cattle country, much valuable farm land can be preserved. Thank you for listening.