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Mr. Jensen Uchida
CPUC Project Manager
505 Van Ness Avenue
Energy Division, Room 4A
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mr. Uchida:

I am a resident and farmer of 40 acres of olives on land adjacent to Routes 2 and 6 in the Antelope Valley. After examining the Environmental Impact Report for the San Joaquin Cross Valley Loop project routes, I discovered three biological and cultural factors not addressed which have a direct and profound impact on my family, the residents of the Woodlake / Elderwood area, and the citizens of California.

To begin, property owners and residents along Routes 2 and 6 are very concerned about the effect this project will have on the underground water supply. Nowhere in the Environmental Impact Report did I find mention of this alarming concern! Historically, finding water in the Antelope and Elderwood valleys has been difficult at best. One cannot just drill a new well or deepen an old one to get more water. In these valleys the only underground water available comes from narrow fractures and stratas which are extremely difficult to find. One does not have the luxury of simply lowering a well deep enough to reach the water level as is the case in much of the Central Valley. In our situation, it is a matter of hope and prayer that the well drilled just happens to drop into a small underground stream or aquifer. It is expensive and often futile. I speak with first-hand experience. In the 32 years I have resided here, I have drilled for water over 24 times on my 40 acres with very few successes and at a cost I do not even want to try and remember! At least I have 40 acres of land on which to conduct my water exploration. Many of the small farmers and residents in this area do not. They may have no options for new places to drill.

Indeed it is a blessing to locate such an underground strata, and it is not something one wants to tamper with. Many locals have heard the sad stories of how deepening an existing well resulted in the landowner destroying his water source. Once a hole is poked through a crevice containing an underground stream, the underground water often finds a new crack or crevice in which to flow. It is easy to understand how the drilling of the deep holes needed for foundations for the placement of Edison's towers and poles for this power project may have a serious and irreversible effect on the water on which some of the farmers and residents in this area depend. Orchards may be left withering in the sun and homes without water to flush a toilet or fill a sink! And how will property owners be compensated for that?

Next, I am concerned that Routes 2 and 6 will threaten a very unique early pioneer historical sight. This, also, was not mentioned in the Environmental Impact Report. In 1926, the historic Sentinel Butte Ranch was the sight for the "Valley of the Sun" pageant, the largest pageant ever held in California at that time. When the population of Woodlake was only about 1,000 and Visalia's was only around 7,500, Woodlake boasted upwards of 10,000 guests! People came from far and near. The pageant portrayed the history of the San Joaquin Valley from a mythical time, before the Indians came, down to the time of its presentation, May 1, 1926. Newspapers near and far announced every aspect of this event from the early planning stages through its completion. There is no question about it... this was an historic event of grand proportion! Both Fox News and Pathe News filmed the event. According to the Feb. 6, 1926, article in the Woodlake Echo, *"Nothing is being overlooked..."* and Fox News and Pathe News are *"...clicking the various scenes of the big '49 doings with two cameras."*

Motion pictures started the newsreel with the '49er event that Three Rivers sponsored. This was an authentic wagon train trail drive to Woodlake to help with fundraising for the pageant. Later the pageant itself took place and what a history-making affair it was! The motion pictures were later shown to millions of movie goers in theaters all over our nation! This film included Native Americans living in the area along with the early pioneers (including the first white man born in Tulare County). The setting for this pageant was located about two miles north of Woodlake in a picture-perfect valley that provided its own natural amphitheater. The proposed Routes 2 and 6 will go **directly** through the idyllic valley that hosted this sacred event in the history of the people of this part of the Central Valley.

Finally, the EIR report fails to make mention that Routes 2 and 6 threaten the destruction of sites important to the local history of the Native Americans. In fact, if Routes 2 or 6 are developed for this project, power lines and towers will be built over, on, or within just a few hundred feet of local Native American villages and burial sites. Evidence of the communities of our first Americans abounds and includes

- The sacred land the local Yokuts believed to be the creation site for all life
- Holy pictographs and paintings
- Large rocks used as stones for grinding acorns to make bread
- Artifacts of jewelry, weapons, and day-to-day possessions
- Sacred Indian burial grounds

A May 12, 1961, COS archaeological survey provides a verifiable record of Native American life in the Sentinel Butte area along these routes. The record includes bountiful scientific evidence of local early American tribes; evidence of life and death! This site is directly along the path of the power lines as they would traverse the west side of Antelope Valley (the very same area referred to as the location of the "Valley of the Sun." pageant above).

The reports lists the findings of

- Petroglyphs and pictographs
- Indian grinding stones
- Obsidian pieces
- Pestle pieces
- Steatite pendant

- Charm stone
- Clam and abalone shell pieces
- Pottery pieces
- Human burial
- Etc.

Truly, the Environmental Impact Report is not complete. The potential loss of ground water threatens the destruction of agriculture, individual's livelihoods, a local population's economy, and its identity. This impact on the environment will be devastating to those affected. In addition, the Environmental Impact Report pays no regard to the destruction of the historical sites of the early pioneers and the Native Americans. The impact on these sites would be overwhelming and would forever rob our prodigy of a view of their past. We cannot let this happen!

A very appealing option still remains by developing Route 3 with a minor deviation around the identified vernal pools. With the issue of the vernal pools mitigated, this route is clearly the best choice. It affects very few land owners, makes better use of the existing right of ways, and has almost no adverse effects on agriculture or residential use. Please consider these points in your final decision. Our children's children will one day thank you for making the most thoughtful and important local decision of our time.

Sincerely,



Randy Redfield