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February 18, 2003

Billie Blanchard
California Public Utilities Commission
c/o Aspen Environmental Group
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94114-22906

Dear Ms. Blanchard:

A very short segment of the Jefferson-Martin transmission line traverses a small corner of Redwood City, and this is undeveloped open space area. However, this area is in the vicinity of the Edgewood Road/I-280 interchange which is a "gateway" area for Redwood City. Consequently, the proposal by PG&E to upgrade this line from 60kv to 230kv will have some visual impact. This is due in part to replacing the existing transmission towers with larger towers of a similar design that will be more visually obtrusive than the existing structures.

Undergrounding this portion of the line would be costly and increase the likelihood of potential seismic damage, so it would appear that a rebuilt overhead transmission line is the only realistic option. However, the proposed voltage upgrade provides an opportunity to use different tower designs that would create less of a visual impact than the conventional steel lattice towers being proposed

One example of an alternative design is the Collierville-Bellota transmission line, owned by the Northern California Power Agency. Attached are a series of photos of portions of the line for your review. This is a double-circuit 230kv line approximately 40 miles long, which traverses a rural area that includes some fairly rugged topography. The transmission cables are supported on tubular steel poles along the line's entire length. These poles have a dark reddish-brown color, the result of a special metal treatment that creates a self-rusting surface. This allows the poles to blend in with their rural surroundings much better than gray galvanized steel. In addition, the pole and crossarm configuration of the towers themselves create a simple profile. Please review these photos, and consider possible application of this tower design, particularly the self-rusting surface, for the Jefferson-Martin upgrade.

Sincerely,

Gary Bonte
Associate Planner



