

Statement in opposition to Sunrise Powerlink, submitted February 25, 2008

I don't need to tell you that the Sunrise Powerlink is a bad idea, the draft EIR/EIS has done that far better than I could. Just noting that there are at least 50 significant unmitigable impacts should be reason for concern. It is not your responsibility to please the shareholders of SDGE or to make life easier for the developers in Chula Vista, who seem to believe that imported power can replace locally generated power.

You are tasked with judging whether this is a cost effective method for providing reliable power to San Diego County. Renewable power would be a bonus but is not guaranteed with this project. The Southwest Powerline already runs through the southern portion of San Diego County and Sempra Energy has indicated an intention to tie into that line with wind-generated energy, which it wants to import from La Rumorosa, Mexico. Additional renewable energy, if it becomes available in the Imperial Valley, could also flow through that existing line as current contracts for coal-generated energy terminate. Personally, I cannot afford the Sunrise Powerlink and if it were built, I would be forced to pay for it with each and every electric bill.

The major remedy proposed for biological impacts is to monitor the affected species. I've been monitoring my bank balance for quite some time, but it doesn't seem to be helping. The preferred remedy for reducing the visual impact is to reduce the contrast between lines of huge towers strung with thick wires and the natural countryside. It's a bit difficult to see how that could be done, especially with the extensive vegetation clearance required for fire suppression. The suggestion for responding to complaints about the very loud buzzing noise in the vicinity of these power lines is "respond to the complaint". And then what? Will they turn off the transmission line when enough people complain?

We've heard numerous concerns about fire but I haven't heard how many people will be killed, how many homes lost because firefighting will be compromised in the vicinity of the powerline. Firefighters cannot work under it, aircraft cannot safely make drops around it. I've heard nothing about the impact to private property owners when off-road vehicle users inevitably start using the power line service roads as playgrounds, crossing both public and private land and increasing the fire risk. Of course, power reliability will be totally gone if any of the southern alternative routes were to be chosen, since the next wildland fire that causes the Southwest Powerline to be shut down would also require the Sunrise to be de-energized.

I'd like to thank you for holding this hearing and making it more convenient for the people likely to be most affected to speak to you. I'd also like to thank everyone involved in the preparation and distribution of the Draft EIR/EIS, which has taken a difficult proposal and made thoughtful recommendations. I hope we can soon move forward with modern in-basin generation, which will be the best option for increasing reliability and making energy more affordable by utilizing combinations of renewable energy in many forms and peaker plants to provide additional power when it is needed.

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