

To whom it may concern:

1. As a former Park Ranger for California State Parks (now retired) and having served as the State Park's Pilot for over 10 years at Anza-Borrego I feel that I am in a unique position to lend some perspective on the upcoming decision about the prospective power lines that are slated to essentially bisect the park and become a blight on that land. In my estimation, they would absolutely ruin the pristine visual quality of one of California's landmarks and best State Parks. Frankly, I am saddened to hear that this is even being debated. A lifelong republican, my opinions here may seem a bit out of character, but I make them never-the-less. The issues of park preservation, conservation and quality of life in general is in the best interests of all people irregardless of political affiliation. We have set aside some places in this ever changing world to be left alone for the posterity of future generations that should be considered sacrosanct. Anyone concerned about the future of our planet should throw away suborn preconcieved notions about practicality and take heed. The proposed power lines would destroy the park and it's scenic beauty.

How many times in the ten years of my service as a pilot did I overfly the Anza-Borrego desert area? A few thousand times, I would guess. It is truly a beautiful world, one that always seemed to me, belonged on the cover of a National Geographic magazine. The natural landscapes and painted desert colors and geological features look as exquisite from the air as they do from the ground. Once, I flew over the Carrizon Impact Area of Anza-Borrego with the very first astronaut that had circled the moon, Bill Anders. I asked him if he saw any similarities between the scene below and what he had seen on the moon. He smiled and said that he did. He told me that he loved flying over the park or camping there with his family to enjoy the park's natural beauty. From the air over the "Impact Area" , as you gaze down on the scenery below you can also see craters, just like on the moon. But here they are bomb craters left over from world war II that have permanently scarred part of Anze Borrego desert. A legacy of war, I suppose. A reminder of what we stand to lose. One of the most pristine places left in California, still, it was used extensively for target practice by the military in a by-gone day. I always wondered why they hadn't bothered to find a better place to drop those bombs that would have had less impact on some of these very important geological features. Alas, that was a day and age when conservation did not seem as significant as it does today. The result is that priorities at the time outweighed the desire for protection and the park was changed forever.

We should not let this happen again. Despite the growing need for new sources of power to growing and expanding populations, there is no excuse for politics, governments or private industry to interfere with the will of the people and the betterment of society. The majority of the people in California want to preserve parks and our natural heritage. For that matter, people from all over the world come to Anza-Borrego Desert State park for rest and relaxation. It is in all of our best interests to have remote places on earth set aside their natural splendor for ourselves and our future generations. Anza-Borrego has been set aside as a place of beauty. I believe that it would be morally criminal to put in huge power lines that will scar it's surface and spoil the natural beauty there. We need to find a better place to put them. There are other possibilites that can and should be implemented. In my estimation, it doesn't matter if it costs more to re-route these power lines, or find other solutions, I urge reconsideration of this plan before it is too late.

Sincerely,

Jon Muench


Retired State park Pilot