

MORETTI FAMILY  
CARRISTO RANCH  
25580 HWY 79  
SANTA YSABEL, CA 92070

February 23, 2007

Billie Blanchard/Lynda Kastall  
CPUC/BLM  
c/o Aspin Environmental  
235 Montgomery Street #935  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Re: Sunrise Powerlink

Ms. Blanchard and Ms. Kastall,

I am writing on behalf of my family, the Morettis who own a Ranch being impacted by the Sunrise Powerlink in the Central Link. Our Ranch is part of the original Santa Ysabel Spanish Land Grant. Part of the same Land Grant is now the Santa Ysabel County Preserve, our Ranch has the same sensitive environmental issues as the Preserve.

The "Proposed Project Double Circuit 230 kV line to Parallel and relocated 69 kV line" would be constructed on a very remote area of the ranch. Parts of which have only been accessed by foot and by horseback.

The "Santa Ysabel Existing ROW and Santa Ysabel Overhead Portion" virtually cut the Ranch in half. This route is extremely close to the house and barn, within approximately 150 feet of the structures.

We have the following concerns:

**HEALTH:**

Even though research claims that cancer and other health issues caused by exposure to these lines is "inconclusive". That is not good enough to have our family and animals exposed to something that may or may not cause health issues. It needs to be appreciated that our animals are part of our ranching livelihood and to have these animals exposed to something that possibly may cause them to have health issues and not be able to produce offspring, is unacceptable.

## **ARCING:**

National Ag Safety Data Base - Summary Case 193-488-01 as reported by Cal-Osha Cotton Harvester Operator was on top of the machine to clean a basket, parked under a high voltage power line when it began to rain. 14,000 volts of electricity from the power line arced to the machine and killed the operator. This is a particular concern with the lines being so close to the house and barns.

## **LINE MAINTENANCE**

We understand that maintenance will include clear cutting for the concrete pads, tower sites and under the live wires. The clear cutting and brush removal will cause a great amount of erosion and property damage. If SDG&E will not be able to clear the area around the towers for fire protection we understand as allowed pursuant to Section 18 of the San Diego County Fire Code, the maintenance of these lines will be done by low flying helicopters including the washing of the insulators.

Low flying helicopters have many risks, including crashing and snagging lines, as was the case of the Pines Fire. A particular concern also, is the spooking of the livestock. Should this happen and cause the cattle to run through fences, we are faced with the job of gathering and sorting livestock and fixing fences.

Should the route be located where vehicle travel is possible to maintain, we have had numerous problems at our ranch. Including SDG&E employees and their subcontractors leaving gates open, which allowed cattle to go out. Driving their vehicles off the ranch roads, causing damage to the fields. Leaving trash on our property and taking items off our property.

We have strived to disturb the sensitive environmental aspects of our ranch as little as possible. We have a minimal amount of ranch roads and rarely travel off them by vehicle. The construction of the maintenance roads by SDG&E for these towers will adversely impact the grass lands we have maintained for the past 100 years. The construction of new roads on the ranch would also cause erosion issues.

## **FIRE AND WIND**

Some of the major fires in recent history are

La Jolla Fire 1999 - 8,000 acres

Pines Fire 2002 - 60,000 acres - started by helicopter struck power line in Julian

Cedar Fire - 2003 - 273,000 acres - 32.5 million dollars to FIGHT the fire, average fire

speed 3,600 acres per hour, fastest 40,000 acres per hour 2,232 homes lost - 14 fatalities

Paradise Fire - 56,700 acres , 2 fatalities 176 residences destroyed \$11.3 million to fight

Mataguay Fire, 2004 - 8,867 acres

Volcan Fire - 2005 685 acres

Laguna Fire 1970 started by power line 170,000 acres - clocked at 3,000 acres per hour

CDF acknowledges that they can work around the high voltage towers and lines to fight fires, but they would prefer them to not be there. They will not send a crew where lines are active and arcing the will not dump retardant directly on a line or in an area where it can be carried to the line.

In Santa Ysabel with the type of terrain and access the most effective way to fight fires is with air support. There should not be anything hampering the pilots ability to get low enough in altitude to make an effective drop.

It is our understanding that these transmission lines cannot be easily de-energized, that this is a process and the electricity has to be "rerouted" and can take many hours. This particular scenario was one of the contributing factors that caused delay in controlling the Pinnacle Peak Fire in Flagstaff Arizona. The fire started June 21, 2005 and the high voltage lines were not de-energized until June 26, 2005. The fire was not contained until July 3<sup>rd</sup> - 13 days later, the biggest factor - High Voltage Lines. Putting these lines overhead will put not only our Ranch at risk, but also the entire County

NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) minimum requirement for distance away from downed lines for firefighters equal to the span between two poles. Should a line be down near our home or barns, firefighters would not be able to save our property.

In the canyons the line is proposed to be constructed during a brush fire they would carry a risk of a "flashover". Inaja was the fire in which a "flashover" occurred killing 11 men. The disastrous flare-up of the Inaja fire was caused by a critical combination of highly flammable fuels, steep topography and adverse weather. These same conditions remain today in much of the area of the proposed lines. We are concerned with the consequences of a flashover would have on the lines especially if they have not been de-energized.

The "Open Fire" on the Farkash property in Santa Ysabel on November 30, 2006 was caused by a downed power line. Winds that day were clocked at 35 to 40 miles per hour. The Santa Ana winds occur here on a regular basis, and they can be extremely strong. In one particular instance the metal roof of our 80 foot by 140 foot pole barn was blown off in one piece. It is estimated that the winds on that particular day were

clocking 85 miles per hour with gusts in excess of 100 mph.

The possibility of a tower going down is a big concern. We have confirmed the following incidents.

- 1) 31 Steel Power Towers crumpled in South Dakota July 1, 2005 - winds 80-100 miles per hour
- 2) Heavy winds and thunderstorms toppled 500kv giant transmission tower in Elk River MN, August 9, 2001
- 3) Lincoln IL = March 14, 2006 - 100 mile per hour winds 4 Large Power Towers toppled
- 4) 500 KV Powerline downed in Riverside County July 1, 2006 by severe weather and wind
- 6) December 1, 2006 winds knocked over a Utility Tower in Charleston Virginia
- 7) June 1999 wind storms knock down 41 structures on a 345 KV line north of Steele North Dakota
- 8) July 1, 1999 high winds heavily damage four towers in Fargo, North Dakota
- 9) December 22, 1982 winds in excess of 100 miles per hour toppled six 500KV lines in PG&E's territory east of San Francisco
- 10) Redwood City California - December 28, 2006 winds knocked down three 160 foot High Voltage Transmission towers

With winds in excess of 100 miles per hour, this is a possibility that towers may be downed. It is our understanding that on our Ranch, the construction of these lines will be done by helicopter. In the event one is knocked down, it would be a major environmental impact to get equipment and men to them in order to demolish and rebuild.

#### **PROPERTY VALUES:**

This lines will cause our property values to decrease. According to Arthur Gimmey, MAI, as presented a seminar before the EMF Regulations and Litigation Institute, in a matched sale analysis in indicated properties abutting power line easements diminished in value from 18% to 53.8%.

HUD (Housing and Urban Development) handbook states has the following guide line for HUD loans:

“No Dwelling or related property improvement may be located within the engineering

(designed) fall distance of any pole, tower or support structure of a high-voltage transmission line, radio/TV transmission tower, microwave relay dish or tower or satellite dish (radio, TV, cable etc.) For field analysis, the appraiser may use tower height as the fall distance.

For the purpose of this Handbook, a High Voltage Electric Transmission Line is a power line that carries high voltage between a generating plant and a substation. These lines are usually 60 kilovolts and greater and considered hazardous. Lines with a capacity of 12-60 kv and above are considered high voltage for the purpose of this handbook. High Voltage lines do not include local distribution and service lines.”

The placement of this line on the 69 kV existing right of way would make it with fall distance of the house and barns.

The overhead lines would significantly diminish the value of our real estate. The diminished value of our property would be a substantial adverse economic impact.

## **LOSS OF USE**

Every inch of ground used to construct these towers and maintenance roads takes away from the ranching operation. Every inch is a loss of use for the grazing of our cattle. The loss of use will be forever. The adverse economical impact to our Ranching operation would be devastating.

## **VISUAL**

We have chosen to leave our property in the Ag Preserve, also known as the Williamson Act. The placement of this line would compromise what this family as been striving for. As stated in the Williamson Act.

**“THE USE OR MAINTENANCE OF THE LAND WITHIN SAID AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO PRESERVE ITS NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS, BEAUTY AND OPENNESS FOR THE BENEFIT AND ENJOYMENT OF THE PUBLIC, TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE”.**

We would urge that the this line be avoided where it would compromise the purpose of the Agricultural Preserve.

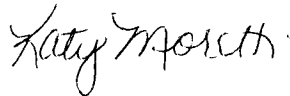
In conclusion, we have conveyed to SDG&E that the best placement of the line on our property to avoid adverse impacts is to go underground along Highway 79.

The newest scoping indicates that there is an earthquake fault line along State Highway 70 contiguous to our property and that it would not be possible to place the line underground. We find it very suspicious that this is not the case where the line would be visible to the San Diego County Preserve and is proposed to be placed underground.

Should this line not be able to be placed underground on our Ranch, there is really no place that the adverse impact would not be significant to our livelihood, property values and personal safety. We would urge that other alternatives be used.

After hearing so much regarding this line, our family is not convinced that the Sunrise Powerlink is necessary. We encourage the CPUC to carefully consider alternatives, that would allow SDG&E to meet there goals which would not include the construction of these towers which would be devastating to San Diego County for generations to come.

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katy Moretti".

Katy Moretti