

**SDG&E'S PROPOSED SUNRISE POWERLINK PROJECT
Reporter's Transcript of the CPUC/BLM Scoping Meeting
for Preparation of a Draft EIR/EIS**

Held 2:00 p.m. October 4, 2006
At Borrego Springs, California

Reported by:
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Lewis Michaelson - Katz & Associates, Public Facilitator
Tom Zale & Lynda Kastoll - Bureau of Land Management
Billie Blanchard - California Public Utilities Commission
Susan Lee - Aspen Environmental Group

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STAFF PRESENTATION

MR. MICHAELSON: Good afternoon. My name is Lewis Michaelson. I work for a firm called Katz & Associates, and we've been hired to help support these public meetings and for my services as a neutral meeting moderator to make all of it run smoothly and efficiently and make sure everyone gets a fair and equal chance to offer their comments.

As you may know, we've already held three of these meetings between El Centro and Ramona. Today and this evening, we're in Borrego Springs, and tomorrow we have two different meetings in San Diego County, in the Mission Valley and Rancho Penasquitos area.

This meeting is a scoping meeting being held to satisfy two regulations — or two laws, one state law, the California Environmental Quality Act, and the other a federal law, the National Environmental Policy Act.

Up here on the screen, we'll be going through a series of slides just to give you some orientation. What to expect today: I will briefly explain the purpose of scoping. Following that, Susan Lee with Aspen Environmental Group, seated immediately to my right, will go through a description of the proposed project, then Billie Blanchard of the California Public Utilities Commission, next to her, will go through their process and schedule for the Environmental Impact Report.

Next to her is Lynda Kastoll and Tom Zale with the Bureau of Land Management. They're the lead agency for the EIS process under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Then we'll go back to Susan Lee briefly just to give you some more details on how the whole EIR/EIS process works and how the documents are prepared.

Then we'll get to what is really the heart of a scoping meeting which is your opportunity, the public and agencies, to provide input to the people who are seated up here.

I want to make it clear that this is very early in the environmental impact review process. That's why it's called scoping, so no decision is going to be made today or in the near future. This is an input-, data-gathering phase. But they did want to be here. Part of it is so they can hear your comments firsthand.

Now, while that's very important to some people, I want to make it also very clear that there's ample opportunity to provide written comments, and written comments are given the same weight and consideration as oral comments. So if you're like most Americans, uncomfortable with public speaking, please don't feel like you've been left out. The people representing the Bureau of Land Management and the California Public Utilities Commission would very much like to have any and all written comments that you would like to provide as well.

To reiterate, the purpose of scoping is first to inform the public and responsible agencies about an upcoming project for which an EIR and an EIS is being prepared, to inform you about the review process so that you can understand how to participate, and then, importantly, to solicit — during the scoping period — input.

And I want to put the emphasis on these two things: Potential alternatives to the proposed project and the appropriate scope of environmental issues to be studied in the EIR/EIS.

Additionally, they are able to identify issues of concern and areas of potential controversy from your input, and, finally, a scoping report will be prepared which will summarize all of the comments received orally and in writing from all of the meetings, and it will be distributed to the information repositories and put on the project website so that you can, if you want to, see what were the comments that came from different people in different areas. So all of the comments will be available to you after the scoping period is over.

I've already mentioned — alluded a little bit to this, but there are some key players that you need to be aware of. One is the California Public Utilities Commission, who is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act. The Bureau of Land Management is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act. They are not a part of this proceeding, but, obviously, one of the other key players is the San Diego Gas & Electric Company, which is the applicant.

Sometimes I've noticed there is confusion, even after the meeting, talking with people. They want to know if we're with SDG&E. We're not. This is an independent review process that follows after an application is made by somebody like SDG&E.

And finally, Aspen Environmental Group is the consulting firm that's been hired by the CPUC and the BLM to be the main workhorse in providing all of the subject matter experts and all of the environmental subjects in order to do the analysis and the independent review of the potential impact.

So those are the key players.

With that, I'd like to turn it over to Susan Lee to do our description of the proposed project.

MS. LEE: Thanks, Lewis.

The Notice of Preparation that you all have a copy of includes a fairly detailed description of the project as it's been proposed by SDG&E. The text description is on Pages 4 through 8, and then there's a large series of maps in the back; I'll just point you to a few maps. Maybe you had the opportunity earlier to look at them around the back of the room.

Figure 1 is the overview of the entire project, but the area where we are today is most visible on Figure 2, which is the Desert Link. That figure shows the proposed project that would pass through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. It also shows Borrego Springs just to the north.

The other map you probably want to take a look at is the one in the very back that shows alternatives because you may have noticed that SDG&E has suggested a possible alternative that goes through Borrego Springs. I'll talk in more detail about alternatives.

We wanted to make sure you understand what information you have in this package. The project that SDG&E has proposed is a 150-mile long transmission line with a 500-kilovolt portion that would cover the first 90 miles. That's the portion that would go through the desert ending up at a substation near Warner Springs, and at that point, the transmission line would convert to a 230-kV transmission line continuing down through Santa Ysabel, the Ramona area, and on out to coastal San Diego.

The Imperial County portion has one different aspect, which is that despite the fact that it's been proposed at this point by San Diego Gas & Electric, the line ultimately would be built and owned, if it's approved, by the Imperial Irrigation District up to the Narrows Substation. Narrows is the small substation just within Anza-Borrego on the east side, and that's being addressed. There's a memorandum of agreement between SDG&E and Imperial Irrigation District that addresses the details of their cooperation.

This next slide shows SDG&E's three main purposes for building this line. The first one is to maintain reliability of service into the San Diego area.

The second one is for renewables, and I'm sure you've heard about this. The renewable energy resources out in this area are geothermal resources around the south end of the Salton Sea and a fairly large proposed solar plant, the Stirling Plant, as well as possibly other solar facilities out here that would be down closer to Imperial Valley Substation.

The third reason that SDG&E has proposed the project is that it would reduce energy costs overall within San Diego.

Here we've listed the objectives, and these are, again, SDG&E's objectives. These are the reasons they say the project is required. These mainly mirror the three goals that they've defined. The last two, however, define their land use process in siting a power line, which basically is to avoid dense residential areas.

We will now turn this to Billie Blanchard.

MS. BLANCHARD: Good afternoon. I'm Billie Blanchard, and I am the project manager at the CPUC for the environmental document. I just want to go over briefly the CPUC review process and the schedule that we have at this point in time.

Under the CPUC, there are two review processes that are ongoing for this application for the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, known as a CPCN. There's the general proceeding, and then there is the environmental review process with the CEQA/NEPA document which I am mostly involved in.

The general proceeding will be led by the Assigned Commissioner Dian Grueneich and the Administrative Law Judge Steve Weissman.

The scope of the CPCN proceeding is determined by the Public Utility Code Section 1002, and the scope of that includes determining the need for the project. That's a very important part. Also under the CPCN, we consider community values, recreational, historic, and aesthetic values, and then, of course, the environmental impacts under CEQA.

The schedule that we have so far for the general proceeding is that we've had several pre-hearing conferences. One was held in January, and then the second one was held on September 13th in Ramona.

Now, the scoping memo for the general proceeding will be prepared by the administrative law judge, and that is expected to be done within the first part of October 2006. In that scoping memo, they

will outline all of the issues to be addressed in the proceeding as well as the scheduling for all of the activities in the proceeding, which will also include our environmental schedule.

So the aspects that are listed here right now are yet to be determined, but hopefully that will be coming out in the next couple of weeks. The environmental review schedule is: The application was originally filed in December, and then there was an amended application along with the actual Proponent's Environmental Assessment, known as the PEA, and that was filed on August 4th. The Notice of Preparation, which Susan was talking about, was issued on September 15th, and so our scoping process schedule will continue until October 20th, 2006.

We have not yet determined the start date of the public review of the draft EIR/EIS, which will be a 90-day comment period. However, we should be doing that pretty soon, and when we do, we will go ahead and send out a card to everybody on the CEQA and NEPA mailing list to tell you what those dates are.

Now I'll take this over to BLM.

MR. ZALE: Thank you.

My name is Tom Zale. Lynda Kastoll and I are here representing the BLM's El Centro field office. We're here because the right-of-way application that San Diego Gas & Electric filed involves a proposed right-of-way that would cross about 33 miles of BLM land, primarily in Imperial County. As you can see from the slide, there's a small piece in San Diego County that's also administered by BLM.

In addition to that, when the patent was issued for Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, it included a reservation for the existing right-of-way grant, and we're still working in our office to determine exactly what role BLM would have in administering that reservation.

As part of this process, we will be evaluating a proposed amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan, which is the land-use plan that covers the public lands in the vicinity of the proposed right-of-way application.

The plan amendment would be required because the proposed right-of-way would deviate from existing designated utility quarters, so we'll need to make a decision about whether or not a new designation for a utility quarter should be made in the area that's proposed for this project as part of the environmental review and decision-making process.

Because there's a plan amendment involved, the public review period for the draft EIS/EIR will be 90 days as opposed to a normally shorter review process associated with the EIRs and EISs. In addition to working on the federal side, the NEPA side, BLM will also be responsible for conducting government-to-government consultation with interested tribes, and we will also be the lead agency conducting the Section 7 with the Fish and Wildlife Service in accordance with the Endangered Species Act.

MS. LEE: One of the really important roles that an EIR/EIS plays, in addition to helping these two lead agencies to make their decisions, is to provide information to a range of other agencies that also have to make decisions and issue permits to allow a project to proceed. We will be coordinating with lots of other agencies and will expect input from these agencies, especially where we are right now, Borrego Springs. Of course the most important agency is the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

With more than 22 miles of this project proposed through there, it's the largest individual landowner after BLM, which has 33 miles.

So the agencies listed on here are some of the many agencies that we will be working with throughout this process.

This is a flow chart you may have seen in the back of the room that, again, just reiterates the fact that we are at the very beginning of this process. This shows the whole EIR/EIS process, and we are in that yellow square that says EIR/EIS scoping. It's basically the first step of the process, when we come out and talk to the public and find out what concerns you have and what impacts might exist.

Concurrently, we are starting to work on our project description. We are doing a lot of work on alternatives, and I'll talk about that in a minute. Ultimately we'll be back here after the draft EIR/EIS comes out, and we'll hear your public comments during the comment review period.

I'm going to briefly describe the contents of an EIR/EIS, mainly so you can get a feel for the kinds of comments that would help us. As we are thinking about preparing this document, it would be very helpful for us to hear input from you on some of the components and specific issues of the EIR.

Usually the most voluminous parts of a document like this is a description of the environmental setting, which means a description of what is here now, what's in the area (e.g. biological resources and cultural resources), and what are the land uses, and population centers.

We describe the impacts of the project, and in an equal level of detail, we describe the impacts of alternatives. We present mitigation measures, and the purpose of all of this is to pull information together for the decision makers to be able to understand the impacts of what's being proposed and also for the public to be able to comment on the proposal and the alternatives.

The major elements of an EIR are listed here so you can get a feel for the major sections that will be included. Again, the project description is essentially provided to us by SDG&E because we don't control the project that was proposed, but we do have a lot of input into the rest of it.

This next slide shows all of the environmental disciplines that we cover in a project such as this. There are a couple of others in addition. For example, Tom mentioned the other day that we haven't listed wilderness here, and certainly wilderness is a huge issue on this project given that the project would pass through wilderness areas within Anza-Borrego. So any comments related to the issues you see up here would be welcome tonight.

I'll talk in just a little more detail about alternatives because alternatives is a very high-profile issue and very important to this analysis. It's always important in an EIR/EIS, but if you attended the pre-hearing conference a couple of weeks ago, Commissioner Grueneich from the CPUC made a point of requiring SDG&E to submit its preference for an alternative that would not pass through Anza-Borrego. They submitted that just earlier this week.

We are working very carefully on alternatives and looking at a huge range of alternatives. This slide here explains to you the process we use to evaluate each alternative. It has to meet, essentially, all three of these bullet points. It has to meet most of the project objectives, but not all of them. It has to have the ability to reduce or avoid the impacts of the proposed project by going around certain areas, and an alternative must be feasible, which means you have to be able to construct it technically, and it

has to be regulatively feasible in that it has to be able to be permitted. So those are the criteria we use to look at alternatives.

In this project in particular, we're looking at a wide range of alternatives, and this is something in particular we would love to hear from you about. We are looking at routing alternatives, and that's the issue most people think about especially when you see a linear project like this that goes through an area you don't want it to go through. We would love to hear your thoughts about where else it could go, and obviously we're looking at alternatives that do avoid Anza-Borrego.

But in this case, we're also looking at generation alternatives that could replace the need for this project. Examples are the South Bay Power Plant repowering within San Diego, to what extent that project and other power plants that have been addressed for repowering possibilities in the future. Non-wired alternatives, in terms of things that would reduce demand within the service area, energy efficiency.

We are looking at the alternatives that were suggested by San Diego Gas & Electric, and you'll see those on one of the maps in the back. One of them we thought would get a fair amount of attention here is an alternative that SDG&E suggested that would go through Borrego Springs. We would love to hear from you about that.

We are also looking at the alternatives that SDG&E considered but did not carry forward, that they decided to eliminate. We start at square one with alternatives, so we would love to have your thoughts on this.

Just a note on this last bullet, there is an alternatives workshop being held through the CPUC's general proceeding that Billie described a little earlier next Friday. It's focused especially on parties to the formal proceeding, who can participate in that workshop. Other people are able to go and listen, but they won't be able to participate. We would love to have your alternatives comments here, and they will carry the same weight if you give them to us as if you attend that other workshop.

This slide shows what happens after the EIR is done, just so you understand the proceedings in terms of what would happen if the project is approved or when the Final EIR is finally issued. The CPUC, which is a five-member board appointed by the governor, will vote on the project. They will base part of their decision, as Billie mentioned, on the EIR itself. They will also base their decision on need.

If the project is approved by the CPUC, they will require mitigation measures, which mitigation measures are included, and require that those measures be monitored to ensure they're actually implemented.

BLM has a different process after the finish of the EIR/EIS. It has a 30-day comment period on the Final, which does not apply in the State world. They have a 60-day governor's consistence review, and then they prepare a Record of Decision.

I'll turn this back to Lewis for comments.

MR. EMERY: I have one question on what you just said.

MR. MICHAELSON: The procedure we're going to do here is we're going to take comments and then Q and A, so I think we can get answers to the questions on that later, if that's okay with you.

MR. EMERY: It's directly related to what's being said.

MR. MICHAELSON: Let me explain something. I'm going to have to ask you to come up to the microphone. I'll have to ask you to give your name. We're recording this for a transcript, and she can't hear you. So if this is directly relevant, go ahead and come up here if it can't wait.

MR. EMERY: I apologize for interfering in this early stage. My name is Fred Emery. The lady Susan Lee — you said that SDG&E had put forward an alternative avoiding the park this week. Where is that? Is it anywhere on display here?

MS. LEE: Yes. Tom can show you in the back. There is a series of maps actually in the handout. If you have your NOP handout here, the very last map is Figure 8, and that's called "SDG&E Alternatives Considered and Eliminated." So when you find that one, the route that SDG&E focused on in the filing they submitted the day before yesterday is what is labeled on here as the B, C, and D groups.

Alternative D, which goes basically through the Cleveland National Forest from the vicinity of Barrett, down along the Southwest Powerlink, past Descanso, and up into the Santa Ysabel area, is the route that SDG&E identified as the route it would prefer if the park route were not pursued.

MR. MICHAELSON: What I'd like to do now — I have approximately ten cards of people who have filled them out. Daniel is going to bring me up a couple more. We have established a three-minute time limit for each person to offer their comments, but depending upon how long we go with that, we have had the opportunity at other meetings to have what I call second helpings.

So if you'll speak at a rate that the court reporter can record, we'd appreciate it. If you have additional comments that you want to make after that, after everyone has had at least one turn, then we can have time for you to come up and do that as well.

I have an extremely sophisticated way of indicating times to you. When you have one minute left, I'll put up my index finger like this. That will give you a chance to wrap up your comments. When your three minutes are up, I'll put my closed hand up such as this. Again, after we've run through and everyone has had at least one chance, we should have more time for you to come back up and complete those comments.

I'll also mention that one gentleman Bill Collins is representing two completely different organizations. He's filled out two cards, so I'm actually going to call him up twice to give comments for those, just so you know that's why that's going to occur.

My last slide up here — I think Susan Lee covered this quite well, but, again, we're at the scoping stage. We're not at the decision-making stage. In particular, the most useful comments at this stage are ones that identify location, extent of potential environmental impacts, as well as alternatives that you believe would avoid or reduce impact.

I'm going to read several names out in advance. That way you'll know about when you're coming up, so you'll be ready to come forward. I won't catch you off guard. Particularly if you're in the back of the room, it just helps us keep things moving more efficiently.

The first speaker cards that I have are Linda Carson, Sam Webb, Lori Paul, Rebecca Falk, and Bill Collins.

All I need you to do, again, is start with your name, and speak at a rate that is reasonable enough for the court reporter to keep up with. Okay.

PUBLIC COMMENT

MS. CARSON: Thank you.

My name is Linda Carson. I'm executive director of the Anza-Borrego Foundation and Institute, a cooperating association of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Our main mission is conservation of park lands. Our concerns regarding the Sunrise Powerlink Project are as follows: Number 1, we do not believe the project as now proposed adequately explores the alternatives that avoid state park lands. This project is completely at odds with the objectives, goals, and mandates of state parks. Alternatives, regardless of cost, must be thoroughly explored.

Number 2, the EIR/EIS should thoroughly analyze impacts on existing and future land uses. State parks should not be viewed as a place where lands are stored for some future non-park use. If so, perhaps we should create a new category of state parks, temporary parks until they're needed for some other use.

The EIR/EIS should fully evaluate the effects of declassifying wilderness. To our knowledge, the California State Park and Recreation Commission has never removed land from state wilderness. To do so would set a dangerous precedent that could well reverberate across this nation.

Number four, the EIR/EIS should include a complete analysis of the visual impacts of the Powerlink Project. It is estimated that upwards of 90,000 acres, much of it park wilderness, would be in the Powerlink view shed. Also visual impacts of the Powerlink along the state scenic Highway 78 need to be addressed.

Number 5, the EIR/EIS should evaluate project impacts on not only federally and state endangered species, including the endangered peninsular bighorn sheep, but also species included in the Regional Multiple-Species Conservation Program.

We would further request that the issue of wildfire, which does happen in the desert, be fully evaluated along the proposed route.

Number 6, the EIR/EIS should fully evaluate impacts the project could have on the recreational activities of park visitors. One of the major attractions of this park is the unspoiled scenic vistas. The EIR/EIS should evaluate impacts of placing the Powerlink in the immediate vicinity of the Tamarisk Grove Campground and Yaqui Wells Primitive Camp, as the close proximity of towers could cause a significant decline in the use of those campgrounds and thus a loss of revenue to those state parks.

And 7, the EIR/EIS should include complete and thorough surveys of the cultural resources along all of the power line alignment alternatives. Participation of the local Native American community is critical to this analysis.

Thank you.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you very much.

Sam Webb.

MR. WEBB: My name is Sam Webb, and I'm a park volunteer at the visitors' center. I'm also the immediate past chairman of the Colorado Desert Archeology Society, which is a group of

volunteers that assists the state archeology staff in doing their work of preserving the archeological features in the park.

My concerns are not so much the archeological sites that could be impacted because, you know, if there's something there, they'll make some concession for that, but the view shed of our park.

You know, our park was formed in 1932, and this existing right-of-way that San Diego Gas & Electric is wanting to put the route over is currently used by wooden poles, and it provides electricity for the back country. It doesn't send any electricity into the metropolitan area. I think that's an important note to make.

Secondly, I'm a little disturbed when San Diego Gas & Electric put an alternate route now through Borrego Springs because I figure that they did that as kind of a way to incite people to fight harder to keep it out of the town of Borrego Springs and rather have it go somewhere else rather than Borrego Springs, so I think that was a ploy on the part of San Diego Gas & Electric when they did that.

Where the power lines belong is to the south out of the park. There was a recent news story about — and I don't know which newspaper it was, so this is kind of secondhand information, but that, you know, one of the alternate routes out of the park would be impacted, and 50 people would have to be moved out of their homes.

That's not good, but that's better than destroying a park. The park is owned by the whole — every resident in the state of California owns the park, so, you know, I think these — what concerns me is that San Diego Gas & Electric — how do we know that they're not deliberately taking an alternate route that is really not the optimum alternate route? I guess that's some of the issues that you people have to address, but that concerns me a lot.

So I'm just going to end it by saying, to me and a lot of people at this meeting today, the only route that's acceptable is a route that does not destroy the most beautiful desert state park in the nation, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Take the power lines and run them out of our park, not through it.

Thank you.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

Lori Paul, next speaker.

MS. PAUL: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm Lori, L-o-r-i, Paul, P-a-u-l. My husband and I will be speaking about our own property at your session this evening. However, at this time I was asked by a neighbor who could not be here to read a letter into the record. It's Dr. David Garmon, and it is as follows:

"I am a homeowner in both San Diego and Borrego Springs, and I am writing to register my most vehement opposition to the placement of the proposed Sunrise Powerlink through the Anza-Borrego State Park. I oppose the Powerlink project 1) because of the devastating environmental impact"

—

MR. MICHAELSON: Excuse me for interrupting. This is when we usually have our problem, people trying to read stuff into the record, so they just read it really fast instead of at a normal —

MS. PAUL: Slow down? Okay.

MR. MICHAELSON: So if you could slow down, I'd appreciate it.

MS. PAUL: Of course.

"I oppose the Powerlink project 1) because of the devastating environmental impact the project would have if sited through the State Park, 2) because of fiscal concerns I have as a rate payer and a taxpayer, and 3) because of technological concerns about SDG&E's proposed reliance on unproven methods of power generation.

"As the wisdom of the Powerlink project is debated, there will undoubtedly be many individuals who will provide detailed information to substantiate the environmental, fiscal, and technological concerns noted above. I am therefore writing as an individual who has come to appreciate the incomparable beauty of the Anza-Borrego desert, its wild life, the majesty of its hundred mile vistas, its unbroken silences. There are few, if any, such places left in San Diego County. If we sacrifice this one in the name of power and progress, we as a community will have sacrificed one of our last, and greatest, natural treasures.

"The sine qua non of the treasure that is our 'back country' is its unbroken vastness. The proposed Powerlink project would be a scar of unimaginable proportions that would irrevocably destroy that vastness with an inescapable ugliness spreading for countless miles on either side of the 120 mile course of the 10 story towers. It is inconceivable to me how anyone could propose placing a scar of such magnitude through such an environmentally and aesthetically sensitive location as the Anza-Borrego State Park when multiple alternatives exist.

"As a homeowner and business owner in San Diego, I am aware of our need for plentiful, dependable power. As with virtually any problem, however, I believe there are multiple ways of achieving this goal, particularly given the enormous budget proposed by SDG&E to address this issue. My hope is that we as a community will find a way to provide for our energy needs without destroying our irreplaceable heritage.

"Because of its fiduciary responsibility to its shareholders" —

MR. MICHAELSON: You're trying to fit it all in, aren't you?

MS. PAUL: Yes.

MR. MICHAELSON: It looks like it's a pretty long letter.

MS. PAUL: No. It's just one paragraph left.

MR. MICHAELSON: If you slow down, I'll let you finish it. Okay?

MS. PAUL: Thank you.

"As an owner of such equities, I believe SDG&E would be derelict as a publicly held corporation to do otherwise. However, my deeper concern is that the maximization of shareholder value is, in this case, at odds with the greater good of maintaining the beauty of a pristine horizon and protecting the habitat of a few dwindling species of desert flora and fauna. In short, preserving beauty

and habitat does not maximize shareholder value. I believe in this case maximizing shareholder value would provide a short-term gain for the relatively few shareholders of SDG&E equities at the expense of current and future generations who would forever be deprived of the awe-inspiring beauty of the vast, uninterrupted Anza-Borrego State Park.

"It is my fervent prayer that this time San Diego will act wisely... that it will realize and protect the treasure it possesses... that it will not be asleep at a time of great decision... that it will not be herded like fearful sheep by those whose motives are necessarily about maximizing shareholder value.

"Sincerely, David Garmon, MD, Distinguished Fellow, American Psychiatric Association, Clinical Professor, University of California San Diego."

And I'll give this copy to you.

MR. MICHAELSON: Yes, please.

I just want to mention that — Lori just mentioned wanting to have it read into the record. I just want to clarify again that a written comment is read by the people on the team. It's in the record, so a written comment handed in or mailed in is just as much, quote, unquote, in the record as anything spoken here. I just want you to be assured of that.

MS. PAUL: David wanted to share it with his community and the people here.

MR. MICHAELSON: I understand.

Rebecca Falk.

MS. FALK: Thank you.

My name is Rebecca Falk. I'm a full-time resident of Borrego Springs. I live here because the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park surrounds Borrego Springs and is a rare wilderness refuge in a country and world that has been developed in a way that does not preserve open spaces of this kind and doesn't respect how important they are for life, including human life.

My primary point is that as we realize the catastrophic effects of global warming, it becomes impossible to ignore our responsibility to do two things. The first is to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels so that we do not contribute to the load of carbon emissions that create the greenhouse effect on our planet.

The second is to keep our few remaining wild areas intact to create zones of refuge and balance as life itself becomes more challenging for all life forms.

SDG&E, also parent company Sempra Energy, has already proven itself to be unworthy of the public's trust as its unethical conduct cost us all dearly in 2000 and 2001. Here as I'm complaining about the name Sunrise Powerlink and the so-called Sunrise Powerlink, we are being asked to trust SDG&E/Sempra once again in a very expensive publicly funded project that would put them in a position of greater dominance in the energy market.

The timing is terrible. Just when the need for solar and alternative energy is clear and has resulted in a major project initiated by the California legislature and the governor, we are being asked

to invest in old-style transmission from afar, of promised but nonexistent solar production that just happens to be located conveniently close and online with Sempra's dirty power plants across the border.

We are being asked to sacrifice wildlife habitats, wilderness areas, open back country areas, and lifestyles that are what we should be protecting as we face the ecological hardships that have already begun.

For what purpose? I think it is to further profit and dominance of a market for a company that has a bad reputation in California.

If we want to further the production of clean energy, let's talk about supporting, initiating, and funding projects that are local to the area where the power is needed. Let's pay attention to our increasingly and desperately stressed environment.

This isn't about being able to say that we supported a project that we thought at the time was going to be green. This is about making darn sure that we do the smart, ethical, and environmentally right projects to create the energy we want and need.

Thank you.

MR. MICHAELSON: Let me read ahead the next few speakers again so you can be prepared. Bill Collins followed by Jim — it looks like Lendemahn. I apologize if I mispronounce any of the names — followed by Bill Collins' twin Bill Collins, followed by Mark Jorgensen, and Fred Emery.

MR. COLLINS: My name is Bill Collins. I'm chair of the Borrego Springs Community Sponsor Group. We're a planning and land-use advisory board appointed by County Supervisor Bill Horn. I want to thank you for traveling to Borrego Springs to see and hear firsthand from the people on the environment that would be affected by the Borrego Springs alternative power line. We value our peaceful, rural way of life and our dark skies.

Borrego Springs was voted to be one of the top ten places in the country to view the night sky. I would suggest tonight before you go to bed, walk outside, and you will be amazed.

16-story transmission towers with red blinking lights are not in keeping with the character of this community. They also plan on a 500-kilovolt/12-kilovolt substation near the mouth of Gloriette Canyon. This area has a wonderful secluded campground. The red lights and noise would destroy this area.

We also want to make it clear that no transmission line should go through any part of a state park in this country. If San Diego Gas & Electric is successful, then this opens the door for other lines through this park and other parks.

We feel that San Diego Gas & Electric hasn't explored all of the alternatives. The renewable energy industry is growing and rooftop solar should be explored. We have a lot of sunshine in the back country that could generate a lot of power. It could upgrade and re-power plants in Carlsbad, Escondido, and Otay Mesa.

They could put in peaker plants used at times when a lot of energy is needed. These peaker plants could be run on natural gas. Can we think out of the box and work together to find a less costly, less intrusive alternative? We believe this can be done, and we must try to achieve this goal.

Thank you in advance for your help.

MR. MICHAELSON: Jim Lendemahn.

MR. LENDEMAHN: Hi. I'm Jim Lendemahn. I am a homeowner and a person who, for years, has enjoyed the wonders of the desert and, as a park volunteer, have helped to introduce many people to those wonders. I stand in opposition to SDG&E's Sunrise Line.

I noted in the media recently that SDG&E has begun recently to try to characterize the opposition to this as public land versus private land. I believe that is entirely beside the point. In fact, I believe it is a red herring designed to divide the opposition to the project.

Opposition to the project arises from the many, many citizens, such as myself, who believe that a line should not be built through an area which is a sensitive habitat for endangered species, has been designated wilderness, and has been reserved for people to enjoy the peace and tranquility of the desert.

These objections pertain both to the primary line that has been proposed and the alternative line that has been proposed, the one through Borrego Springs. I believe that SDG&E has an acceptable alternative to build the line on its present right-of-away along Interstate 8.

I would like to just take a moment to underline one of the points just made by Bill Collins. I just recently learned about the blinking lights on top of the high towers, and it should be noted that this area is nationally and internationally renowned by astronomers as a place which has open sky and a minimum of ambient light, and such a parade of little red lights on the horizon would devastate that.

Thank you.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

Bill Collins.

MR. COLLINS: My family has owned 320 acres in Tubb Canyon since 1952. This includes a 60-acre subdivision where only five homes are built, and no more will be built. We acquired an additional 412 acres in 1962. We own from the valley floor at 800 feet to 2,000 feet in elevation.

The property goes up to and includes the viewpoint on S-22. We have two miles of water lines of which three-quarters of the line runs on top of the surface. We have three storage tanks in line to break up the pressure from 600 feet of fall. We have a small road up the hill to service the pipeline and water tanks.

My fear would be that SDG&E would need a much bigger road, and thus the chance of rocks falling onto and destroying our pipeline is high. The same small road is used by the state park to count the 40 or so endangered bighorn sheep. We have mountain lions, bobcats, deer, coyotes, rabbits, you name it who enjoy our backyard in peace. We have a gate that is kept closed so the animals are free to roam and live as they will.

The proposed 160-foot towers and roads would be a permanent visual blight. My property is so quiet; I can hear the wings of ravens as they fly over my house.

The potential exposure to electric and magnetic fields generated by their towers is unacceptable. The light pollution from the red lights on the 160-foot towers would destroy our night sky.

The Tubb Canyon approach being considered would be a negative impact and likely destroy a population of 40 bighorn sheep that use this privately owned land and water guzzler that Superintendent Mark Jorgensen installed 25 years ago. This is the only water supply for many miles, and I believe the construction alone would drive them away.

The spring from which we receive our water has supplied water for thousands of years. Thus we have areas that we call native kitchens. These archeological resources contain grinding and milling features and artifacts. These kitchens and sleeping areas are connected by trails marked with the original guide marks called Ducs.

We allowed a GPS plate boundary observation station to be installed on our hill. Gloriette Canyon that runs through our property is a major fault that would be running right through the property.

May I walk over and just point out — our property is from here to here, here, here, and here. This is our little road going up the hill. This GPS station is up here on Jackass Flats. This is Gloriette Canyon, which is the (inaudible).

MR. MICHAELSON: Mr. Collins, after the meeting, if you would stay for a few minutes and maybe go over this in more detail, they would be happy to stay and do that with you. If I could get you to wrap up your comments, I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

MR. COLLINS: Thank you.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thanks.

The next speakers are going to be Mark Jorgensen, Fred Emery, Judy Haldeman, Betsy — it's either Knaak or Knaak — Jeanette Hartman, followed by Kurt Levens.

Yes, sir.

MR. JORGENSEN: My name is Mark Jorgensen. I'm the superintendent of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. I sincerely appreciate the CPUC and Aspen and BLM coming out to Borrego Springs and listening to comments, and I get the feeling in discussions with you that you're very open to listening to alternatives, and I think there are plenty of good ideas that have come out of this room.

The official comments of California State Parks Colorado Desert District will be forthcoming in writing. There will be quite a few pages that have been put together by our specialists, and it will be signed by our district superintendent Dr. Michael Wells.

It will reiterate to you the comments from our director Ruth Coleman in Sacramento that the proposed plan for Sunrise Powerlink through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is totally unacceptable to state parks; that despite meeting with SDG&E and Greystone representatives for about a year and a half to two years challenging them to be creative in their planning, I think the resulting proposal is very uncreative, is highly impactful to the park, and I think that the group has totally failed in coming up with a creative way to bring a power source through a state park.

We talked early on with the proponents of this project about some of the guidelines that state parks would hold tight to. One of them that is dearest to our heart is preservation of wilderness. Wilderness, by its very definition, is forever. It's not for some future time when it's convenient to use it for development.

Another was that we didn't feel that Eiffel Towers coming through the park were acceptable at all, and the project that we see is Eiffel Towers and violation of wilderness.

We sincerely believe that there are alternatives. There are alternatives to move around the southern area of the park. Having two lines together up through the desert mountain areas through the rocks does not pose a fire hazard. When you get to the area up around Jacumba, the line would be split, and that would be an area where you enter some fuels and chaparral, so the concept that wildfires would endanger this joint line I don't think have any justification whatsoever.

I think there are other creative alternatives, too. Splitting the 500 into two 230's, probably undergrounding along causeways that are already impacting the area such as the interstates and state highway I think are viable alternatives.

Thank you again for coming to Borrego Springs and listening to our concerns.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you very much.

Fred Emery.

MR. EMERY: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for this opportunity to speak.

The fact that I'm a foreigner is irrelevant. I'm a homeowner in Borrego Springs, relatively recently, but one of the reasons I came here was the phenomenal beauty of this area and this park, and I want to stress that it's not just an asset for the state of California, though of course you own it, and as a California taxpayer, I support that, but it's also an international asset as Jim Lendemahn stated with regard to its clear skies but also its unique beauty. It's something that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

We all know about Death Valley. We know about the south Arabian deserts, but fewer go these days. But these are different, and this is very special and something that should be treated with utter sanctity.

Others much more eloquent than I have spoken to you today about all the disadvantages and horrors that would await it. I wanted to address the issues here that you've asked us to bring up, specifically the inadequate, in my view, examination of alternatives by the power company.

I read all of their information going back to last year, and they do not seem even to have considered the northern route. I'm well aware there could be objections to the northern route, too, but there is a possible northern route that would avoid the park by going up Route 86, crossing over the back, and coming out towards Oceanside.

I'm not a technician. I just point out to you that I think you ought to ask why the northern route has not been examined because that would avoid the park completely.

The gentleman in charge of the park, Mr. Jorgensen, just noted the underground options. It's an interesting point. I raised this issue at the earlier meeting in January with Greystone, and they sent me the following answer which I think is of great interest.

They said the problem with underground wires is that the ones in Japan, which have had a 500-kilovolt line, run for less — or fewer than 25 miles.

Well, you've seen on your charts here today that the line that goes through the park is actually only 22 miles, so it would seem that that is certainly a candidate for complete burial of the line right through the park on the basis of Greystone's own document.

I raised earlier — thank you very much for allowing me to — the question of where this new line, suddenly that's been agreed on this week, would go, and you pointed out that it was the former Alternatives B, C, and D, which they now said should be considered.

Let's just read what they say in this document you all have in front of you of why they excluded it.

They said this was eliminated by SDG&E due to reliability concerns of locating a new 500-kilovolt line near the lower powerlink, but now suddenly they can do it. It seems to me that they are extremely inconsequential in their examining of alternatives and dismissing them. So I urge that even that alternative that they have suddenly come up with again be looked at to see what impacts it has. Lastly —

MR. MICHAELSON: We're going to do second helpings.

MR. EMERY: Can I have one little impact? It will take ten seconds.

MR. MICHAELSON: Ten seconds.

MR. EMERY: Electromagnetic impulses — these have been studied across the world to see whether power lines impact on people's health. There is contradictory evidence, but it's not for us as non-scientists just to dismiss it.

If you are going to introduce 500-volt lines across animals and people, we ought to know what the impact is.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you, Mr. Emery.

Judy Haldeman.

Some of the speaker cards I have now were turned in perhaps later in the process, so if you weren't here when I was going over it, I have a very simple way to indicate the three-minute limit. When you have one minute left, I'll put up one finger and then my closed hand when you're at three minutes. I appreciate everybody paying attention to that.

Thank you.

MS. HALDEMAN: My name is Judy Haldeman. I agree with Fred Emery that there have been lots of very — more eloquent comments made today than I'm going to make, but I still want to speak my small piece.

This is a quote from an author, Terry Tempest Williams, who wrote a book called "Refuge" which doesn't address deserts but certainly does address protected areas. She said "May you recall the transformative power of wilderness and remember it survives now only through vigilance." There are two points here that I think are important. There is transformative power in wilderness. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park provides that transformation to those of us who live within its boundaries. It provides solace and stress relief for our many weekend guests from San Diego and Los Angeles and the awesome sense of discovery for visitors from out of state or foreign countries.

Secondly and more important is the point that wilderness survives only through vigilance. The proposal by San Diego Gas & Electric to invade and forever alter this precious wilderness of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park calls on all of us to be not only vigilant but passionate about defending our community and our pristine natural resource.

Thank you.

MR. MICHAELSON: Betsy Knaak.

MS. KNAAK: Good afternoon. My name is Betsy Knaak. I am the executive director of the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association and a long-time member of the Borrego Springs community. I would like to speak to the socioeconomic aspect of the EIR today, as a member of the community.

I feel that the latest alternative route being proposed, that is through Borrego Springs and Gloriette Canyon and Tubb Canyon, would have an extremely serious negative economic impact on this community.

Borrego Springs depends, to a very large extent, on the sole industry of tourism. Most of our local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, retail, real estate companies, developments, are dependant upon tourists, snow birds, retirees, and second-home buyers who are attracted to the Borrego Valley because of its extraordinary natural and scenic beauty.

That beauty is comprised of the elements of broad mountain vistas, vast swabs of mature growth, native vegetation that supports a diversity of wildlife, clean air, quietness, and dark night skies.

The power line project as proposed through the Borrego Valley would affect every one of these natural elements to the degree of redefining the Borrego Valley and seriously jeopardizing the economic viability of this community.

Thank you very much.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

Jeanette Hartman.

MS. HARTMAN: My name is Jeanette Hartman, and I'm a member of the People's Powerlink and the Sustainable Julian Group whose mission is to take Julian off the SDG&E power grid. We will be submitting detailed written comments for this scoping process.

Today, however, we want to go on the record with the following request of CPUC: SDG&E has a hidden agenda of which the Sunrise Powerlink is only one small part. The real project being

proposed here includes a power plant in Mexico that pollutes air in the Imperial Valley, a transmission system that will have severe and irreversible environmental impacts regardless of where it is constructed in San Diego County, the true cost for which is closer to 4 billion than 1 billion, and that will end with distribution lines into and out of the Southern California Edison system in the LA basin.

The cost of need for impacts from and alternatives to the Sunrise Powerlink cannot be evaluated in isolation from the cumulative cost impacts and alternatives associated with this massive and hidden plan for a generation and transmission system.

The evidence for this plan is ample. We refer you to the People's Powerlink website at Peoplespowerlink.org, where you can see a documentary using Google Earth that shows the very large generating plants in Mexico and the equally large transmission system connecting to the El Centro Substation, the point of origin for the Sunrise Powerlink. Also of evidence is SDG&E's numerous previous attempts to route a south-to-north transmission line through San Diego County.

Therefore, we ask the CPUC to reject the Sunrise Powerlink application on the grounds that it cannot be evaluated in isolation from the complete and interdependent electric production and transmission plan that stretches from Mexico to Los Angeles.

Thank you.

MR. MICHAELSON: Kurt Levens is our next speaker.

MR. LEVENS: Hi. I'm not going to speak. I'm just going to present a written document. I may speak later.

So give it to you?

MR. MICHAELSON: That would be fine. Thank you.

Daniel, have you had any more speaker cards handed in to you?

Okay. This would be the point in time where we could ask people that have additional comments — first of all, is there anyone who hasn't turned in a card who maybe still would like to speak?

Why don't you come up here? I'll have you fill out a card kind of after the fact, if that's okay. All I need you to do is state your name for me. Okay? And pull the mike toward you.

MS. GRANQUIST: My name is Laurel Granquist. I live in Julian. The Santa Ysabel area where the proposed new plan of the transmission line will go through is composed of ranches dating back to the Spanish land grants as well as extensive Native American archeological sites.

The Cleveland National Forest should also be protected from transmission lines and ensuing probability of fires, just as in Anza-Borrego State Park. The quality of life for those in Santa Ysabel would be greatly compromised by health, visual, and cultural effects from this massive transmission line.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you very much.

I think I saw someone else's hand back there. Please come forward.

MS. WARREN: Yes. My name is Cristina Warren, and I'm a property owner here in Borrego Springs. I just wanted to touch on a few things, especially something that hasn't been talked about is that a lot of people out here in Borrego have moved out here because of environmental sensitivities, myself and my son included, and for us to face this type of electromagnetic radiation is quite daunting.

Also I lived in Julian during the Pines and Cedar fires, and the Pines fire was started, as you know, by a National Guard helicopter hitting a power line about 200 yards from my property. Anybody who's lived through the devastation of fire knows why this is a great concern to us, as well as the fact that a lot of us go through the inconvenience of living away from towns, away from big stores, summers that we go through here specifically because we care so much about the beauty. That's why we live out here, and to ask us to put up with that kind of a scar is really more than most of us can stand.

I also have the good fortune to have solar — a 5-kilowatt solar system on my house. It cost \$23,000 and makes enough electricity for probably two homes. If I'm doing my math correctly, you could put 40,000 of those 5-kilowatt solar displays on top of houses in San Diego and not be confronted with the expense of a huge power line to get the electricity back to San Diego.

Thank you very much for your time.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

Is there anyone else?

Yes, sir. Please come forward.

MR. WEBB: My name is Sam Webb, and I'm on the list already. I just think it's important that you're made aware of the fact that this is really not a good time to be having this hearing because we're missing probably two-thirds of the people that come into the community and spend the winter months here, but they have a vested interest in it as much as we do, the full-time residents. So somewhere in your calendaring, I think it's very important that you have some type of meeting that allows these snow birds to be able to give you some input in the process. That's all I had.

MR. MICHAELSON: Sir, can I just ask real quick, when do they start arriving?

MR. WEBB: Most of them come after the holidays.

MR. MICHAELSON: Okay. So January?

MR. WEBB: Right towards Christmas, so I would say you'd want to have it — the best time would be sometime end of February, I would think.

MR. MICHAELSON: All right.

Yes, sir. Come forward.

MR. HIPCHEN: How are you doing? My name is Bob Hipchen. I am here to represent the offroaders over in Ocotillo Wells. What he said just kind of brought something to light to me. Thanksgiving weekends or holiday weekends, there's going to be 100,000 people out here to use that desert, and they would be very disappointed to come out and see these towers and stuff that weren't

there two months ago, and they didn't know about it or something like that, so I feel like these people should be made aware of this also so they can have a say-so.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you very much.

As you can come up, if you haven't already spoken, Daniel is going to try to intercept you and get you to fill out one of those cards, if that's okay.

Thanks.

Anyone else? If you've already spoken and you would like to come up and add to your comments, we have time to do that as well, and then after that we're going to have like a Q and A, so you can come up and maybe get some other things clarified.

So anyone want to add to their comments?

Yes. Please come on up. All I need is your name again.

MS. HARTMAN: Jeanette Hartman.

I wanted to add a postscript to the comment that I made about true costs being closer to 4 billion than the 1.3 billion that's in the SDG&E application, and those costs include the debt-servicing costs, operation costs, and maintenance in addition to construction. The Sierra Club San Diego and Imperial County Chapter developed those costs, and it will be included in those Sierra Club comments and ours.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you. Thank you for that clarification.

All right. Obviously, where we are in the stage of the process at scoping, there are some questions that can't be answered. For example, if your question is what will be the impact of this to that, they haven't done that analysis yet. But to a degree to which you may have additional questions about the proposed project or the type of analysis that will be done or the type of resources that will be looked at, this would be an opportunity for you to come up, particularly if they are of general interest that you think other people would like to know the answer to. I think if you have specific comments or questions about — you know, very focused on a very specific area, perhaps your own backyard literally, those may be better off at the maps afterwards. But if it's something you think other people would like to know the answer to, this would be your time to come up and ask the question.

If you would, come up to the mike, please, and as always state your name first. Thank you.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

MS. FALK: Hi. My name is Rebecca Falk. I guess I just want some clarification about whether it's within your perception of your power, doing this report to just say "No. This does not pass as an environmentally do-able project and as an environmentally friendly project." The reason I ask that is that all of the points about mitigation — once you talk mitigation, you're talking "Yeah. We're going to do it. Here's what you do to compensate for the damage," so anything having to do with mitigation is already saying "Yes. We're going to approve this." So I would just like some reassurance that you are each willing to say "No. This project can't go forward," if that's what your finding is.

MR. MICHAELSON: I think we need to clarify who the decision makers are and where the environmental review fits into the general proceeding.

Do you want to do that?

MS. BLANCHARD: Yes.

As Susan spoke earlier about our process, we will be addressing all of the impacts of the proposed project, but we will also be looking at alternatives to the project. One of the major things about alternatives is that they lessen significant impacts, so we will be looking at those alternatives.

Under CEQA/NEPA, there is a point during our alternatives analysis where we will identify an Environmentally Superior Alternative from the alternatives we carry forward. We also will be looking at the No-Project Alternative as well.

MR. MICHAELSON: Tom Zale would like to add on, I think.

MR. ZALE: Similarly, in the NEPA process, we are required to evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives, and among those alternatives would be the no-action alternative, so we'll include that in the answer.

MR. MICHAELSON: Other questions?

Yes, sir. Please come up and ask it at the mike.

MR. RAFFETTO: Thank you.

My name is Joe Raffetto. I own California Overland Desert Excursions, so we would certainly be impacted because we try to bring people away from 500-kilovolt towers, not take them to them.

My question is: Sempra's answer to the alternative route — basically, they — as expected, oh, it's a terrible thing. It means 53 houses are going to be destroyed, and I'm sure a couple of churches and two hospitals and Mother Teresa's grave, but aside from that, do we know — it seems to me the most obvious route that this power line should take, if even indeed it should be built, is along the I-8 corridor, and I still don't know exactly why that hasn't been seriously considered, both in ease of construction, less environmental damage, less impact on private rights, and ease of maintenance. I just don't understand why it's not being seriously considered, and my question is: Do you know?

MR. MICHAELSON: Well, I think what they can answer is whether they're going to consider it in their alternatives. I don't know that they can speak for SDG&E.

MS. BLANCHARD: I'll just say one thing. This is the point where we're getting input from people for alternatives, so this is probably, I guess, the second time I've heard that comment about the I-8 corridor, so we'll take that into consideration in terms of our alternative analysis and run it through the CEQA/NEPA criteria for alternatives.

Susan, do you want to say anything more?

MS. LEE: I guess the other thing is the caveat we've told other people, which is the challenge of using Caltrans' right-of-way. Caltrans is very, very possessive of anything within its right-of-way, so the option we would be looking at is — Talk to them.

MR. MICHAELSON: We were doing so well up to now. That's why I hesitate to speak for why SDG&E might — MS. BLANCHARD: Now, Caltrans does have certain restrictions within its right-of-way for interstates and certain restricted highways. We know that, and we've dealt with that before in other projects, so obviously if we were looking at something like that, we would have to work with Caltrans in terms of being outside of that restricted area.

MR. MICHAELSON: Other questions? If you have a question, I need you to come up to the mike and ask it.

Sir? Please.

MR. JEE: My name is Fred Jee. I'm a 31-year resident here in Borrego Springs, and I've been involved in this community for quite a long time and grown to basically try to share the beauty of what this place has with people on my job as well as my family.

I have a question. In regard to the EIR process, would past projects that have a similar flavor be considered? And I'm talking about the Sun Desert Project, which was in the '70s. That was a nuclear power plant that was being proposed to run through three corridors of Anza-Borrego at that time east to west, and they didn't build it.

MR. MICHAELSON: What is the question?

MR. Jee: It's called Sun —

MR. MICHAELSON: I know.

What is the question?

MR. JEE: Would something of that nature — because it seems to have a similar flavor, power generation from somewhere else, power lines being brought through the state park, and that was almost 30 years ago. Here it sounds like Sun Desert is really Sunrise.

MS. PAUL: It's using the same data.

MR. JEE: Without the similar concerns about — objections and —

MR. MICHAELSON: I'm going to see if they have a response, if they've been able to define a question. It sounded a little more like a comment.

MS. BLANCHARD: We can check it.

MR. MICHAELSON: They can check it, is what they said.

MR. JEE: I just want to make sure all the different things are out there.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

Yes. Come on up.

MS. PAUL: I would like to echo —

MR. MICHAELSON: Your name?

MS. PAUL: Lori Paul, L-o-r-i, P-a-u-l.

I would like to echo the same comment because there is probably a precedent set at that time for not siting the corridor through the park, and that precedent might have some legal as well as, you know, practical value.

Also in addition to Highway 8, it's interesting to me that Caltrans has more sway with their hard-lined policies than obviously the respect of the state park does here, or they wouldn't have proposed it.

It seems to me there's also in this last map, Figure 8 — you've got the existing 500-kilovolt transmission line. You can see that it runs basically along the Mexico border — to the Mexican border near where Sunrise Powerlink wants to be located, at that orange line. This stuff about fire reliability has been proven somewhat bogus, and I think it should be examined compared to all of the other adverse impacts and then weigh them on a scale, and then also I'd be interested in not only adding that alternative for that reason, but also someone was mentioning, at the other meeting in Ramona, reliability for seismic concerns and terrorist attacks and homeland security.

It sure seems to me that on existing corridors where you have security that — you're doubling up your security in one location instead of dividing it — not that terrorists could bomb two different places at once like they did the Pentagon and World Trade Center — but also you have a situation where the seismic activity in this area, as I think someone else mentioned — this is one of the most seismically active places on the planet in terms of shifting fault lines, and it would seem to me that that should be an issue of concern. We haven't had an event in a while, but that could be a bad thing.

I don't know what this corridor is called, so my last question — or my question is: What is that orange line? They just say existing 500-kilovolt transmission line. Is there a name or something we can cite on that to ask that that be considered?

MS. LEE: That's the 500-kV Southwest Powerlink.

MR. MICHAELSON: So if you would like to make the suggestion that the new one just follow that same route, you would reference the Southwest Powerlink, and I believe that's already been suggested.

MS. PAUL: Because when I tried to pull this up on the website — which is the last comment. The PDF files are so large. I have a huge iMac with a massive amount of, you know, memory, and I could die of old age before that thing loads, and the reporter, in fact, from San Diego Channel 10 got the blue screen of death when she tried to load these things up. It's like you can't pull data up on that Sunlink — Powerlink website.

Go to your home computer and try to do it, and then picture people in the back country on dial-up. I think CEQA/NEPA and all of your regulations require that people have access to the data.

MR. MICHAELSON: Are you speaking of SDG&E's site or the State's site?

MS. PAUL: SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink website that has these maps — I mean, these routes seem to pop up like mushrooms, and suddenly you've got this Tubb Canyon route, and I went to pull it up when I got a call from a neighboring landowner because we had not been notified by SDG&E. We

suddenly had a surveyor's truck showing up on our land, and, quite frankly, I'd like to know who's trespassing and why. Bill Collins gives me a call. I go to the computer. I go to Sunrise Powerlink to look at these maps —

MR. MICHAELSON: You're going way too fast for the court reporter, just so you know.

Can I just clarify that they have — at this point, I would encourage you for the proceedings related to the EIR/EIS that you reference the State's website for the information. If you have problems with that website, then we would like to know that.

MS. PAUL: However, the only —

MR. MICHAELSON: If I could just finish. So far through the meetings we've had — so far, we haven't had anyone indicate that they've had any trouble with that website, so if we are, we'd like to know that.

MS. PAUL: There's a problem with that, and the problem with that is when you type in Sunrise Powerlink — what I'm trying to explain is when I get told about this for the first time and I go to a website and I type in Sunrise Powerlink into Google, your state site is not what comes up. What comes up is SDG&E's site with these maps, these exact maps they provided to you. You can't load, can't get them to load. You can't get the info. That's my point. I didn't even know about the state site.

MR. MICHAELSON: Did you get the NOP? Do you have a copy of the Note of Operation?

MS. PAUL: I got it today.

MR. MICHAELSON: If you look at that on Page 15-J, that's the website I would like to encourage you to reference.

MS. PAUL: But the point is the public at large with whom this process is supposed to reach, they are not getting to your website through Google, which is probably the best search engine that most people use, so there's an issue of accessibility. When they do get to an informative site, they can't pull that site up.

I know I'm not the only one who's brought this up. I think that public access needs to be an issue. Putting a hard copy at the library just doesn't do it anymore.

MR. MICHAELSON: Well, just so you know, this is the first we've heard of it, so we've got the comment, and we'll look into it. I would encourage you to help others — obviously, you're very plugged in — MS. PAUL: Sure.

MR. MICHAELSON: — to let other people know about this website.

MS. PAUL: I don't know about "plugged in." I live up in Alta Dena, California.

Thank you.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

Are there other questions?

Yes. Please come forward.

MS. HURLEY: My name is Peggy Hurley. I'm a property owner and a business owner. I just have a question about the scoping comments being postmarked by October 20th. Are you going to discuss that? I guess, is that the final opportunity to put in information? And how far out there — I mean, do people know of —

MR. MICHAELSON: Yes. October 20th is the deadline for scoping comments to ensure that they are considered in the analysis that's being done by the EIR/EIS team. However, I'm going to let Billie answer how firm they are on that.

MS. HURLEY: Can you explain scoping comments and if there's going to be more information that's going to be taken from the public at a later date, or is this it?

MR. MICHAELSON: Were you here for the introduction that they did?

MS. HURLEY: Uh-huh.

MR. MICHAELSON: The next step in the process, using the scoping comments, is that a Draft Environmental Impact Report and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared. Those will be put up for review, and that's the next opportunity for the public to comment on the actual analysis that's been done and presented in a document, so at this date, the deadline is October 20th.

MS. HURLEY: But changes can still be made in the future, I guess is what I'm asking?

MR. MICHAELSON: Yes, because those are comments on a Draft document before it becomes Final.

As a matter of fact, since you asked that question, let me go through these last two slides. This information is also available in the handout, but there are multiple ways of getting your written comments to the California Public Utilities Commission and the Bureau of Land Management.

You can send them to this — I don't know what to call it anymore — snail mail address, that's what everyone calls it — US postal address. There's also an e-mail address that you can send to. There's also a fax number, so there are multiple ways for you to get your written comments in by October 20th.

Just go to the next one, if we could.

There's the website address. Again, if you just want to have a copy of the NOP, you can pick it up from there. We did get a comment in one of the earlier meetings about some people having some lack of access, period, to the Internet, and so Billie Blanchard has already committed to putting more information, hard copy information, into the information repositories, of which there are 18 throughout the project site.

There's also a toll-free number you can call for project information. So the lines of communication are definitely as open as they possibly can be given the technology of our time.

Are there any other questions that anyone has?

Yes, sir. Come forward.

MR. SWIGGERS: My name is Gus Swiggers. The route that's proposed down through Santa Ysabel, Number 9, was an alternate route. That route is not brought up in the PEA. It skips right from 8 to 10. I don't know if you're aware of that or not.

MR. MICHAELSON: So do you want them to check first and see about Route 9?

MR. SWIGGERS: Well, I'm curious as to why that one was abandoned and if you happen to know why.

MR. MICHAELSON: They'll have to get back to you on that one. Thank you.

MR. SWIGGERS: Also are agricultural reserve lands being considered on this route?

MR. MICHAELSON: Yes.

MS. BLANCHARD: And the agricultural impacts, too.

MR. SWIGGERS: Okay. Because most of the new route they propose up through Mesa Grande, which is like a snake trail up through there, instead of going a direct route, is crossing almost all agricultural preserve lands in that area.

MR. MICHAELSON: That is one of the areas they would look at, one of the resources. Yes.

MR. SWIGGERS: Okay. That's my concern.

MR. MICHAELSON: Let me see if they've figured it out.

MS. LEE: I see what your question is, but I'll have to look it up afterwards. I see that it that skips from 6 to 8. These are the numbers that were given by SDG&E. It's not necessarily easy to track where they came from, but we'll look it up as soon as we're done here, and if you're still here, we'll let you know.

MR. SWIGGERS: It looks like they conveniently left something out.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you, sir.

Anyone else?

Yes. Come forward.

MS. CARSON: Linda Carson.

I just was concerned about the whole issue of undergrounding. I hear various stories about what can and cannot be underground, and it would be nice to get some sort of clear, concise information that's understandable by the general public about what can and cannot be underground and where. We've heard various stories about that. I don't know if you have an answer for that now or not.

MR. MICHAELSON: There may not be a definitive answer, but we'll see what we can do.

MS. LEE: On previous projects, we have presented a fairly detailed description of the undergrounding of a 230 kV line versus a 500 kV line, and we have a fair amount of text.

Unfortunately, we don't have it here, but I can point you to it, and we will certainly include it in this document as we prepare it.

Just in an overview, 230 kV lines are easy to underground these days. It costs quite a bit more than an overhead line, but it's done regularly by the major utilities including SDG&E. SDG&E is just in the process of undergrounding a line downtown past Petco Park and the Otay Mesa Project, so that technology is definitely accepted.

Undergrounding a 500 kV line is much more complicated because of the heat generated by lines of that voltage, and there are a few examples, and, in fact, the one that was referenced in that Greystone letter — the 25-mile line in Japan is, to our knowledge, the longest kV underground.

The question that we need to look at in the alternatives for this project is: At what point can the 230 kV and the 500 kV conversion occur? Can it be 500 kV up to a point, for example, maybe east of the Park and underground 230 kV through the Park — is one alternative we're thinking about.

500 kV underground you really wouldn't want to do in an open-space area because the disturbance along the surface in the Park, for example, would be so extensive that you'd have much, much greater environmental impacts than you would by having isolated towers, so the environmental impacts of the disturbance for an underground corridor, if you can't underground within a road, are really extensive. So that's one of the things we look at in comparing the two options.

MR. MICHAELSON: I thought I saw another hand for a question. Either of you come forward. Thank you.

MR. RAFFETTO: It's Joe Raffetto again. I'm just curious. It's the EIR and the EIS process, and then both of your agencies come up with the final decision, but then it goes to decision makers, correct?

MR. MICHAELSON: Yes.

MR. RAFFETTO: Who are the decision makers, and if they make their final decision, can SDG&E appeal it? How final is final, and who makes the very final decision?

MS. BLANCHARD: I can go over that briefly. The final decision would be made by the commissioners of the California Public Utilities Commission. Then there is a process where they take a vote on the decision. SDG&E can go through a re-hearing request process, and the commission can decide to hear its application again or not, but there are certain rules about what legal aspects can be reheard or not, and then there is an appeal process to uphold the appellate court, I believe.

I'm not totally sure about that, we could get more information for you, but there is an appeals process. I know we enter re-hearing request processes fairly often. But as far as appealing from there, that is not a regular thing.

MR. ZALE: On the federal side, decisions that need to be made by the Bureau of Land Management would be the Plan Amendment that I mentioned before. That decision has a protest period associated with it. Then the other decision that BLM would have to make is whether or not to issue a right-of-way, and that decision could be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals by parties that thought that they were adversely affected by the decision.

MR. MICHAELSON: At what level? Where within the BLM structure is that Record of Decision made? Who signs that?

MR. ZALE: Well, I think the Record of Decision is signed by our field manager Vicky Wood in the El Centro field office.

MR. MICHAELSON: Come forward.

MR. WEBB: My name is Sam Webb, and I promise this is the last time I will approach. Mike Wells, our district superintendent, wrote a really great article on what impact this transmission line would have to the park, and he talked about the view shed and how do you place a value upon it. I think an example he used is, you know, people talk about "Well, that's a million-dollar view." Well, the view shed we have in our park is priceless. I mean, you can't place a dollar amount on it, and I guess my question is: How do you mitigate the destruction of that view shed?

MS. LEE: I guess the answer to that, and maybe to other impact questions here, is there are a lot of impacts that cannot be mitigated, and we haven't started any analysis on this project yet, so we can't say which those would be, but we have, on previous projects, identified visual impacts that literally cannot be mitigated. We call them out as being significant impacts that cannot be mitigated. Those are factors that are high-priority issues that the decision makers really will pay a lot of attention to.

MS. HARTMAN: Jeanette Hartman.

Can you tell us what you know about the fairly new federal — I believe it's Department of Energy law that allows the federal government to declare an energy emergency? In the event that the CPUC denies this application, it could go to a federal decision.

MR. MICHAELSON: Anybody have any information on that?

MS. BLANCHARD: I'm not very familiar with that.

MS. LEE: I don't think FERC has actually defined the procedures. It is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission part of DOE that's responsible for promulgating regulations related to the Energy Policy Act. They haven't really gotten very far in defining. We have asked these questions as well because a lot of people in California are concerned, and the last time I asked the DOE person the status of the action on that, they said they had not yet figured out how that will be implemented.

MS. BLANCHARD: That's about it. She's referring to Section 1221 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

MR. MICHAELSON: That has not been worked out yet.

Anyone else with a question?

MR. RAFFETTO: Joe Raffetto again.

I was just curious if any of you have visited, say, Font's Point, which is really like Ground Zero, the most intense focal point of what's at stake in this park, and it's basically the overlook that is really California's Grand Canyon and would be tremendously impacted by these power lines. Basically,

we go from showing people the majesty of this incredible view to an advertisement for Sempra Energy, so I think it's very important that you folks, yourselves, see that vista point, and it would even be my honor to be able to take you there and show you what that looks like.

MR. MICHAELSON: There have already been a lot of people on the team who have been throughout the entire area, and the transmission core is looking at those, but I know there's a lot more to come, so I'm going to let Susan respond to that.

MS. LEE: I don't actually know where that point is, but maybe when we're done here, you can show it to us because I don't know if we've been there or not. I don't know the names of the places we've been. If it's the overlook right above us on S-22, we've been there.

MR. MICHAELSON: Let's take that offline after the meeting and see where that is.

Yes. Come forward.

MS. PEQUINA: My name is Linda Pequina. I'm a part-time resident in Borrego Springs. I would like to invite people to think outside of the box. One of the previous speakers mentioned that she had solar panels on her roof, and she suggested this alternative form of energy might be what we're all aiming to go towards in this day and age. She talked about putting solar panels on all of those homes that need the power. Don't forget what she said. I don't know how practical that is, but it sounds good to me. I just wanted to reinforce what she said earlier.

Thanks.

MR. MICHAELSON: Yes, sir. If you've got a question, come forward.

MS. PRINCE: Katalina Prince, with a K, and I'm a resident of Borrego Springs. I would like to make a comment, not only on the previous speaker regarding alternative energy, but to utilize this time, perhaps, to consider utilizing this opportunity to encourage the approach for alternative energy and renewable resources here in San Diego County.

This very well may be an opportunity for San Diego to become a leader in the area of alternative energy and support for other areas of the community. I know that one of the aspects of SDG&E's proposal is the need to have some run-off energy for supporting our community, such as to the north. We have Los Angeles. Should they have any energy problems, we need to be able to support within the network grid of our nation.

If this area can be a representative, in terms of the power of — literally power from what we have, clean energy from the sun, then I think that that would be a stronghold and something to build upon in this corner of the United States to be known for, grow upon its own industry, which we are at a precipice for the need in this country and, therefore, self-sufficiency within our country.

Thank you.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

I think we've collected a few things where some individuals maybe have some specific things they want to point out to the staff here, and as you probably well know, we have another meeting this

evening for those people who would prefer to come at that time. Someone is going to remind me of what time that's at -- 6:00 to 8:30.

So if you want to come back for like triple or quadruple helpings, you can do that, too, if you want to sign up to speak here this evening.

I do want to let you know that all of this does become a part of this meeting, and whether it's said once or whether it's said ten times, if it's a comment and it has merit, they're going to look at it regardless of how many times they hear it. So one person saying it one time is a good thing. It gets into the record and is something that will be taken seriously.

Did you have a last question? I have to ask you to come up to the mike.

MS. GRANQUIST: Laurel Granquist from Julian.

I think everybody will remember when Dick Cheney had a private, closed energy meeting with the big energy industrial people of this nation. We still do not know what went on there, and that could very well be a problem if the PUC approves the Sunrise Power transmission line. How do we know what the federal government has already initiated or instigated?

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

Thank you very much. We appreciate very much — Sir, yes. Do you have one more? Come forward, please.

MR. LENDEMAHN: Just a final comment. I want to thank you for doing an excellent job in setting up and conducting this meeting. I think it's been fruitful.

MR. MICHAELSON: And your name is?

MR. LENDEMAHN: Jim Lendemahn.

MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you very much for that feedback. We appreciate it.

We are adjourned. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:00 p.m.)