

January 5, 2021

Rob Peterson, CPUC
c/o Tom Engels
Horizon Water and Environment, LLC
266 Grand Avenue, Suite 210
Oakland, CA 94610

Re: We oppose the SE-PLR-2 Templeton-S. River Route Alternative

Dear Dr. Engels,

We are writing this letter in opposition to the S. River Route Alternative. It is our belief and concern that the placement of these power lines would create a significant fire danger, potentially cause health concerns for local residents, impact the health and safety of our local wildlife, cause damage or loss to the oak trees, and impact the beauty of our neighborhood.

High Fire Hazard Zone: The proposed transmission lines would be located along River Road, inside Santa Ysabel Ranch (SYR), which is a documented High Fire Hazard Zone being an area dense with brush and trees, and frequent high winds and low humidity. Our hot summer afternoon winds could blow a wildfire through the entirety of SYR within minutes. The steep hill of the Blue Oak forest would mean that the fire would climb very quickly, spreading to more homes and impacting evacuation. Should the River Road escape route be impacted by fire, all residents, and visiting/working non-residents, would be required to evacuate through the single-lane Hanging Tree gate, likely as emergency vehicles are attempting to come in! Please consider the residents of Santa Ysabel Ranch as SYR is home to many aging residents, some with mobility issues, who may have difficulty escaping their home in the case of a wildfire.

An additional concern as it relates to fire danger, is specific to our location on Warm Springs Lane (WSL). WSL is a single entrance, dead-end road with 15 homesites on which 11 have completed homes. If a fire should impact access to the entrance to our street near the main gate, the residents of WSL would have no outlet through which to escape. Consider also, several homes on WSL, not unlike several other streets in SYR, have long driveways surrounded by brush and trees. Many lots, including ours, are completely surrounded by brush, trees, and drainage ravines, and we literally have no other way to leave our homes if our street or driveway is blocked by fire. The risk of a fire being ignited by equipment or a live power line during a several-month construction period is too great. Both the Camp Fire in Nov. 2018 (that burned Paradise) and the Kincade Fire in Oct. 2019 were determined to have been caused by PG&E transmission lines, and we implore you not to put us at this same risk by allowing this route to proceed.

Wildlife: Santa Ysabel Ranch is home to several Golden Eagles with an occasional sighting of Bald Eagles who would be endangered by high power lines on S. River Rd. as it is a known wildlife migration path. We are concerned for these protected birds as they could be killed in a collision with the power lines or possibly electrocuted since the power lines would be within their flight paths and flight elevation. In addition to the eagles, SYR is home to hawks, owls, egrets, herons, ducks, geese, and cormorants, all of

whom fly around South River Road and through SYR to our acres of trees and brush, and to our lake. The power lines may be difficult to for the birds to see, especially in the darkness of night as there are no street lights in our neighborhood.

Environment, Oak Trees and Heritage: The beauty of South River Road and SYR would be destroyed by the massive steel poles. This road is lined with large Heritage Oak trees, and installing the poles would require removal of some of those trees. The loss of trees of that age, size and stature would be devastating and irreplaceable. This is one of the last pastoral routes entering Paso. To destroy this scenic route would be a tragedy and the proposed alignment is not consistent with SLO County's current General Plan which identifies aesthetics as one of the important factors contributing to the County's "community character."

Santa Ysabel Ranch has been deemed sensitive for cultural resources. Several sites on SYR are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places due to [REDACTED]. One of those sites is within the proposed pole locations. Disturbing this sight would be tragic and unnecessary,

Growth for Paso Robles is expected to happen north and east, near the Paso Robles Airport, which is the most appropriate placement of the substation. Templeton has no capacity for substantial residential or commercial growth, and we should not have to shoulder the burden for the growth in developing areas. Additionally, this project should be forward-thinking, and an example of what can be done to solve energy needs in California. Why would the CPUC consider using 19th century technology when the 21st century technology of energy storage would solve the problem? The energy required for our area, [REDACTED] is small enough that it can be accomplished with battery or thermal storage. This is such a high cost to our neighborhood, our wildlife and our fire safety, for the local need being so small at .53MW.

For the sake of public safety, environmental, historical, and wildlife preservation, please do not put a transmission line along S. River Road.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]