

From: [Steve Baker](#)
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Subject: Letter of Protest re: Estrella Substation and 70kV Transmission Line Project
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 5:06:02 PM
Attachments: [Letter to CPUC re PG&E.docx](#)
[Letter to PG&E re Proposed Alternate Routes.docx](#)

To all concerned,


Please see the attached letters regarding the previous protests we have filed with PG&E, Horizon Water and Environment, and the CPUC regarding the current selection of the proposed routing of the 70kV transmission lines. Most specifically the portion proposed to run along the northern section of Golden Hill Road north of Highway 46. As the process for this selection has not changed, these letters are still credible documentation for our reasons to protest.

As the Chairman of the Circle B Springs Homeowners Association, we have addressed PG&E and the CPUC multiple times (see the aforementioned attached letters plus other previous communications) protesting the selection process used by PG&E and it's contractors for the proposed routing and the substantial impact it will have on our surrounding community. To date, PG&E has not produced viable evidence as to why this proposed routing has been recommended over any of the other seven (7) routes that were part of the original proposal of eight (8) routes.

Of those other seven proposed routes, there are shorter ones, there are ones that run through open land with little or no housing or industrial elements, there was the potential "battery farm", and a proposal to improve the existing Templeton substation plus more. Yet no response has been given by PG&E as to why any of these other seemingly more viable, less expensive routes with less impact on the community were not selected or recommended? With PG&E as a public utility and the CPUC as a public entity, where is the transparency to the public of the selection process?

As such, we must once again vehemently protest the current proposed routing as it is one that is detrimental to our community's health and welfare!

Sincerely,
Steve Baker
Chairman
CBS HOA

Owner
Circle B Vineyard & Cellars
Paso Robles, Ca.


CC:

Assemblyman Jordan Cunningham
SLOC Supervisor John Pschong
PR City Mayor Steve Martin
PR City Public Works Director Dick McKinley
PR City Planning Commissioner Leo Castillo
Cava RV Resort Jim Dawson
Cava RV Resort Kaitlyn Butler
Riboli Family Wines Anthony Riboli
AMMC&G Allen Bowman
CBS HOA Members

Mr. Robert Petersen

August, 18, 2018

California Public Utilities Commission
C/O Horizon Water and Environment
400 Capitol Mall, Ste. 2500
Sacramento, Ca. 95814

Re: **PG&E Proposed Project**
Estrella Substation and 70kV Transmission Line

Dear sir,

In response to your request made at the August 7th CPUC Scoping Meeting, we are writing this letter to you in protest of the proposed routing of PG&E's 70kV Transmission Line and Estrella Substation Project. The "Union" route that has been presented to the CPUC for approval is not in the best interest of the City of Paso Robles, the San Luis Obispo County or our community. The reasons for making this claim are the impacts that are listed as follows:

- Aesthetics:

The original proposal indicated *70' steel towers* of which are now shown as 105' Steel Towers, a 30% increase in size that will tower over all the adjacent properties, businesses and residences. This will serve to disrupt our views, property values and our overall "rural lifestyle".

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources:

Electrical Magnetic Field long range effect on oak trees and other adjacent flora and fauna is not well documented. Most runs of high voltage transmission lines have the areas below them cleared for fire prevention and maintenance access. None of this is to the benefit of the surrounding areas.

- Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

The proposed construction will utilize heavy equipment and helicopters to construct the foundations and install the towers for 6-days per week, 10-hour days for a duration of 7-9 months. The amount of pollution created by all the above has not been calculated into the overall construction package EIR. Also, not included is the amount of dust that will be created by this heavy equipment and especially the helicopters that will contaminate the air with dust known to contain "Valley Fever" spores that are present in the soils. San Luis Obispo County is already experiencing an epidemic number of cases reported of which more than 400 cases were reported in 2017 alone and this year is already at 283

cases reported in the first six months of 2018! I personally came down with Valley Fever in December of 2017 from dust and others in our community will be needlessly exposed.

- Biological Resources:

Our community and more specifically our lake and surrounding riparian habitat is a known refuge for American Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, Snowy white egrets, migratory waterfowl, foxes, deer, bobcats, mountain lions, coyotes and many more species. The noise and commotion created by the construction alone will serve to drive away all these native species and push them further towards extinction.

- Cultural, Archaeological, Paleontological and Tribal Resources:

The area in question is rich in archaeological findings such as whale vertebrae, fossils and Salinan Tribal grounds of which artifacts from villages and camps have been found. Disturbing these areas will serve to further desecrate these resources.

- Geology and Soils:

The comments indicated in the “Hydrology and Water Quality” paragraph below will have the same impact for this topic and therefore does not necessitate further discussion.

- Hazards and Hazardous Materials:

The aforementioned “Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emission” mentions the increased exposure to Valley Fever spores that are present in our soil but also to be considered is the effects of “Electrical Magnetic Fields” (EMF) on persons in close proximity to the proposed lines. Compliance with CPUC’s General Order 95 is not enough as case studies continue to illustrate the consequences of continued exposure to EMF and the medical community has not agreed that any type of exposure is not hazardous to one’s health.

- Hydrology and Water Quality:

The impact of the proposed construction to be conducted during what will likely be the rainy season will serve to endanger critical watershed areas along with opening the possibility of “tainted water” running into our HOA lake. We have had numerous problems with the construction adjacent to our properties despite Storm Water Prevention Plans (SWPP’s) being in place. The company

responsible is still trying to mitigate the pollution that ran into our lake and we feel that PG&E will do no better.

- Land Use and Planning:

Access and egress for the construction vehicles will be along private roads (CBS HOA and Cava RV Resort) that are not meant for heavy construction vehicles such as concrete trucks (in excess of 80,000 pounds).

- Mineral Resources:

See “Geology and Soils” along with “Hydrology and Water Quality for our concern and comments.

- Noise:

The sound of “electricity” flowing through the lines would present a constant source of noise increasing in high humidity and /or rain.

Also, of concern regarding noise would be the actual construction of the proposed line. The schedule has been indicated to be 10-hours per day, six days per week for a time of 7-9 months.

- Population and Housing:

The proposed route of the 70kV line will impact future development of all areas in the vicinity of the transmission lines. Per the City of Paso Robles General Plan, the east side of Paso Robles is the last major area to be developed for both residential and commercial. The installation of these lines in the proposed route will preclude developers and homeowners from considering the adjacent properties and within sight of the lines.

- Public Services (fire, police, schools, parks):

The installation of the proposed 105’ towers along the eastern and northern property lines of the Circle B Springs Home Owner’s Association will preclude Cal Fire’s ability to utilize the lake located within our HOA to put out fires. The most recent fire that utilized our lake was on June 13, 2018 at which they entered the lake from the north and exited to the east. This was done so to avoid flying over homes in our community and to take advantage of our prevailing winds. With the installation of the 105’ towers in the proposed locations, Cal Fire would no

longer be able to access the lake safely and as such, we would lose an important water source for firefighting.

- Recreation:

Recreation will be impacted by the installation of the towers by limiting the planned usage within the EMF zones. Why is it that wherever high-powered transmission lines (both PG&E and SCE) are installed, the land usage below is restricted to nurseries and other uses prohibiting inhabitation?

- Transportation and Traffic:

The proposed route for the lines will be across Highway 46 East and serve as an eyesore to the Gateway to our City. This will only serve to contradict attempts by the Chamber of Commerce and other businesses from promoting tourism.

The greatest impact of traffic associated with the installation of the proposed 70kV line will be during construction. Access and egress to the proposed route will impact the neighborhoods that they will run through with heavy equipment, lane shutdowns and other inconveniences of which we do not want.

Also, subsequent maintenance of the lines will be required and again, the only access to most of the line will be on private property and therefore impact the landowners.

- Utilities and Service Systems (water, wastewater, solid waste):

The two recent power outages to parts of Templeton and Paso Robles seem to coincidental to have just “happened”. How better to sway the community into approving the installation of a parallel route to prevent such occurrences?

To reiterate the stance of the residents of Circle B Springs Home Owner’s Association, this is not a project that will benefit us in any way, shape or form but only impact us and as such, we ask that the CPUC reconsider the proposed route of the 70kV transmission lines along the “Union Route”. There are better choices that may either be shorter and less expensive to PG&E and therefore its constituents and rate payers.

Thank you for your consideration,
Steven Baker
Chairman
Circle B Springs Home Owner’s Association



April 27, 2019

Mr. Rob Peterson

c/o Tom Engels
Horizon Water and Environment, LLC
266 Grand Ave., Ste #210
Oakland, CA. 94610

Re: Estrella Substation and Paso Robles Area Reinforcement Project (A.17.01-0230) Draft Alternatives Screening Report

Mr. Peterson,

I previously wrote to you on August 18, 2018 in response to the August 7, 2018 “*CPUC Scoping Meeting*” at which time we were present to protest the proposed “*PG&E 70kV Transmission Line and Estrella Substation Project*”. The proposed “*Union Route*” was to run northerly along Golden Hill Road adjacent to the east side properties of the Circle B Springs Home Owners Association of which I am the chairman. In that letter I addressed why the proposed route was not the best selection based on the sixteen criteria points that the CPUC would judge the merits of the project.

We are now in receipt of your “*Draft Alternatives Screening Report*” dated March 2019 and after reviewing, we would like to offer the following comments:

- All eight (8) of the proposed alternatives were deemed “*Potentially Feasible*” in Table 3-1. “*Summary of Alternative Screening Analysis Results*” therefore all should be considered.
- The merits of each proposed alternate route should be reviewed by criteria including public, environmental, economic and aesthetic impacts along with public safety, constructability, community perception, long-term maintenance, sustainability and long-term usability including the amortization of the cost to build and operate over a determined length of time.
- As noted in the March 2019 report, paragraph 2.1.2 “*Public and Stakeholder Scoping*”, the CPUC staff received numerous letters from the General Public, Public Agencies and others at the August 7, 2018 Scoping Meeting protesting the proposed “*Union*” route.
- As mentioned further in paragraph 2.1.2, the “*One of the most common generalized comments received was that the proposed overhead power lines should be placed underground*” (Alternative PLR-3). As a retired Project Superintendent and Project Manager for a very large nation-wide construction company, the running of utilities of this nature underground would be a large, lengthy, messy and noisy proposition that would impact adjacent property owners

even more so than the construction of steel towers and as such, should be eliminated from consideration. There are not enough benefits to run the transmission lines underground to offset the negative effect on the surrounding neighborhoods.

- In paragraph 2.1.3, the consideration for “*Battery Storage*” in meeting AB2514

This bill (AB2514) would require the CPUC, by March 1, 2012, to open a proceeding to determine appropriate targets, if any, for each load-serving entity to procure viable and cost-effective energy storage systems and, by October 1, 2013, to adopt an energy storage system procurement target, if determined to be appropriate, to be achieved by each load-serving entity by December 31, 2015, and a 2nd target to be achieved by December 31, 2020.

and the “*Energy Storage Procurement Framework*” with subsequent implementation by 2020 and installation required by the end of 2024 would seem to be an even more viable option (BS-1, BS-2 or BS-3) given that this is an option already mandated to be developed and constructed, for which plans and/or budget should already be in development in order to meet the prescribed deadlines. Couple that with the continuing advancement of batteries in usability, sustainability, cost and safety, this should be one of the top considerations.

- In the consideration of each of the proposed alternatives, which criteria is going to be most heavily “weighted”?
 - If cost, then shorter routes “*SE-1 Templeton Substation Expansion*” or “*SE-PLR-2 Templeton-Paso Robles South River Road Route*” would appear to be favored.
 - If less public impact i.e. aesthetics and agricultural resource, then “*SS-1 McDonald Ranch Substation Site*” along with either “*PLR-1C Estrella Route to McDonald Ranch Option 1*” or “*PLR-1D Estrella Route to McDonald Ranch Option 2*” would seem to be more desirable.
 - As stated in paragraph 2.2 “*Alternative Screening Methodology*”, the process for evaluation is one that takes into consideration the following primary criteria:
 - *Does the alternative accomplish all or most of the basic project objectives?*
 - *Is the alternative potentially feasible (e.g., from economic, environmental, legal, social and technical standpoints?)*
 - *Does the alternative avoid or substantially lessen any significant effects of the Proposed Project?*
 - As indicated in Table 3-1, the eight proposed alternative routes adequately address each of the criteria albeit some more so than others.

- It is our opinion, that the proposed “Union Route” was rushed to judgement to meet deadlines to present a “proposed route” and was not given the same due diligence in respect to the criteria now being used to evaluate the Alternative Routes and as such would not stand up to this same criteria and scrutiny that are being used to judge the Alternative Routes.
- It is also our belief that any and all further consideration of the proposed “Union Route” should be dropped in favor of a more universally accepted alternative.
- In addressing paragraph 2.2.2 “*Feasibility*”, CEQA Guidelines Section 15364 defines feasibility as ...”*capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.*”
 - It goes further to state “*According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[f][1], the factors that may be considered when addressing the potential feasibility of alternatives include site suitability, economic viability, availability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or other regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and the project proponent’s control over alternative sites.*”
 - Again, it is our opinion that these same considerations were not given in PG&E’s determination and/or selection of the proposed “Union Route” given that the complaints from the general public, public agencies and community organizations mirror the guidelines quoted above and as such, is an inferior recommendation.

In closing, we would ask that the CPUC use their established guidelines within the “*Draft Alternatives Screening Report*” (ASR) to review and determine the best possible Alternative to the current proposed “70kV Transmission line: Union Route” so as to better meet the needs of our community, now and in the long term.

Please contact us if you have further questions that we may respond to.

Thank you,

Steve Baker
Chairman
Circle B Springs HOA

