

Comment Set C.179: Gary and Beth Warford

Gary and Beth Warford

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VIA EMAIL, FAX & FIRST CLASS MAIL

October 3, 2006

John Boccio / Marian Kadota
CPUC/USDA Forest Service
C/O: Aspen Environmental Group
30423 Canwood Street, Suite 215
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Re: Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project, Application No: A.04-12-007, SCH No:
2005061161

Dear Sir or Madam:

Our community's health and safety are in great danger and we are requesting your assistance in this matter. The danger we are speaking of is the Antelope-Pardee 500-kv Transmission Project (AFTP). We are writing this letter to inform you of our STRONG OPPOSITION to AFTP, with Alternate Route 5 in the Draft Environmental Impact Report /Statement (EIRS) needing to be ELIMINATED as an option at ALL costs. We are urging you to review the facts (<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/>) and join us in taking a stand in ensuring that the above project never happens. Our community's health and safety is in great danger with seemingly underhanded tactics and total disregard by the CPUC.

We first learned of the above project by a letter mailed by the Leona Valley Town Council on August 18, 2006, which informed us of the informational meeting on Monday, August 28, 2006, at George Lane Park Auditorium in Quartz Hill, California. With our home less than 500 yards from Alternate Route 5, we demanded why the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) had failed to inform us directly or anyone else we knew. During the meeting, we discovered that the majority of the attendees had NOT been informed by the CPUC either, some of which were actually going to lose their homes.

On August 28th the meeting commenced at a location that was in no way large enough to house all attendees and many, including us, were forced to stand outside the building looking through doors and windows trying to piece together what was happening to our homes, lives and community. The mere number of residents attending the meeting astounded the officials, and they were visibly uncomfortable and ill-prepared, evidenced by their words and the significant shortage of handouts available.

At this meeting, we, the attendees, were given a verbal and poster-sized photo presentation of the above project by Chester Britt, John Boccio of the CPUC, Jon Davidson, and Negar Vahidi. During this presentation, many of the attendees noticed that their homes had been DIGITALLY REMOVED from the photos, thereby making the path of the electrical

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transmission lines appear to be traversing VACANT land. When outcries were made by the attendees, the officials looked visibly uncomfortable for the SECOND time that evening and didn't have any reasonable answer as to why HOMES, RANCHES and LIVES were DIGITALLY REMOVED. It was as if they didn't believe any of the residents would actually attend and notice that their houses were digitally removed.

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These photos were obviously not created for the benefit of the attendees of that meeting, but for the other public and governmental meetings, whereby using vacant land, over residentially-populated land, would appear more palatable and rally more support for APTP. At first glance, even our impression was "vacant land" was being used.

By the end of the meeting, not one attendee was found to be in favor of the above project. In fact, when a poll by hand was taken, ALL attendees were strongly opposed to the project. We have attached an article published in the Antelope Valley Press that reported on the meeting as well as an article on the Santa Clarita meeting.

Although we are only one family in Leona Valley, we feel we have spoken to enough of our neighbors, friends and residents to speak for many of them. It was a very hard pill to swallow when we learned in the eleventh hour that our lives were about to change; and worse than that, unnecessarily. Because we have friends and family members employed by Southern California Edison, we were able to glean a lot more facts and more quickly than our friends. We found out that this project isn't even mandatory and that SCE does NOT recommend Alternative 5 as a viable option for ANYONE involved. In fact, the power could be transmitted on other utilities transmission systems thereby eliminating the project completely. On page ES-12 of the EIRS, it states: "It should be noted that connection to the transmission systems of other power utilities (such as PG&E or LADWP) is possible..."

As I'm sitting here writing this letter, I'm remembering 5 YEARS ago buying this land with the dreams of raising my children in a safe and healthy atmosphere in Leona Valley. After drawing plans for 1 YEAR, wading through the county for 3 YEARS and 1 YEAR of construction, I'm realizing that before we finish the last nail in this house, we will have failed our children in making that dream a reality. Leaving San Diego for a life in Leona Valley might have just been a pipe dream. It's devastating to realize that money, careless corporations, and ignorant government agencies can ruin lives, when there are viable alternatives that suit all parties affected.

Below is a list of specific reasons why we oppose this project (not in any order of importance):

First, health concerns:

1. Childhood leukemia and spontaneous abortions associated with electromagnetic fields, EMF. (EMF is just a scientific term for RADIATION.) Would you want to raise YOUR children next to 500-kV transmission lines blasting radiation 24 hours a day?! These can be 10-18 stories high!
2. 4,605 tons of waste created by the project (according to the EIRS)
3. Increased air pollution (Alternate Route 5 causes the second highest air pollution according to the EIRS.)

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4. Interference and damage of water sources, due to construction, demolition and erosion.
5. Threat to existing wildlife on private lands.

Second, safety concerns:

1. Increased traffic (demolition and construction vehicles traveling through local school zone)
2. Interference with disaster and emergency preparedness (The EIRS states that wildfire-fighting capability would be greatly HINDERED by the transmission lines on Forest Service Lands. Why wouldn't home protection, large animal evacuation, and saving lives during a wildfire be also greatly hindered by transmission lines on private property?)
3. Increased fire hazard due the projection construction and location of the transmission lines along the San Andrea's Fault.

Third, public nuisances:

1. Increased noise pollution due to the high 500-kV capacity. (We invite you to listen to the crackling and popping of 66-kv lines west of Leona Valley.)
2. Alternate Route 5 would expose the greatest number of residences to the noise.

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(Cont)

Fourth, cost:

1. Alternate Route 5 would place the greatest demand on public services due to the extended route length.
2. Devaluation of property due to viewscape interference and health risks associated with EMFs.
3. Potential loss of Leona Elementary School closure due to loss of families in Leona Valley.
4. Increased insurance premiums due to increased fire risk (ours being one surety that will cancel our policy upon transmission line completion).
5. Increased tax base, if one is forced to relocate.
6. Loss of tax revenue for California and Los Angeles County.
7. Alternate Route 5 would lose 5% of the total energy due to the additional length required to circumvent Forest Service Land.

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Please take the time to review the facts and possibly drive through our community and see how this is a little valley that would be virtually destroyed with transmission lines of that great magnitude running down the center of it. Even our family members working for Edison are shocked that such a large transmission line would be placed in such a tiny, boxed-in community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our desperate need of your assistance in solving this horrific nightmare.

Sincerely,



Gary and Beth Warford

Cc: Honorable Julie Halligan
Administrative Law Judge
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue, Room 5101
San Francisco, CA 94103

Jody Noiron
Supervisor Angeles National Forest
701 North Santa Anita Avenue, Mailroom R5
Arcadia, CA 91006

Honorable Mayor Michael Antonovich
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
113 West Avenue M4, Suite A
Palmdale, CA 93551

Honorable Howard "Buck" McKeon
United States Representative 25th District

Honorable George Runner
State Senator
848 West Lancaster Boulevard, Suite 101
Lancaster, CA 93534

Honorable Sharon Runner
State Assembly District 36
747 West Lancaster Boulevard
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Honorable Audra Strickland
State Assembly District 37

Honorable Dr. Keith Richman
State Assembly District 38

Honorable Mayor Laurene Weste
City of Santa Clarita

Terry Kenney
Alternate Route 5 Committee Chair
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Gary Warford

Subject: Power to the people causes problems

Power to the people causes problems
Edison line proposal received badly
This story appeared in the Antelope Valley Press on Wednesday, August 30, 2006.
By ALISHA SEMCHUCK
Valley Press Staff Writer

QUARTZ HILL - Potential construction of power lines through Leona Valley sparked fireworks among community residents during a public hearing at George Lane County Park. More than 250 property owners packed the community room wall-to-wall Monday night and flowed into the parking lot to protest at least one of six options proposed for new Southern California Edison electrical towers and transmission lines that would follow a path from Lancaster to Santa Clarita.

The lines and towers would cut across portions of land belonging to many of those who attended.

The residents told representatives from the California Public Utilities Commission, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service and Aspen Environmental Group, a consulting firm, that their position was "No way;" not in their backyard.

The hearing was scheduled to provide residents with an overview of the project initially proposed by Edison in December 2004 in response to an order from the Public Utilities Commission to increase the amount of renewable and nonpolluting energy from sources like wind or solar power in compliance with state policy, said Aspen spokesman Jon Davidson.

Davidson and PUC project manager John Boccio presented an overview of the draft environmental impact reports concerning the proposed upgrade from 66-kilovolt lines to equipment that carries 500 kilovolts.

The project would rely on wind farms in the Tehachapi area to produce electricity for a power operating station near Santa Clarita, which serves surrounding areas.

Boccio, Davidson and Alis Clausen, SCE's region manager for public affairs, stressed the need for more power in the grid.

Clausen, who remained silent during the meeting, said at the end that Edison administrators think their "original proposal is a viable one, using the existing corridor."

PUC "can approve or deny" Edison's proposal, Boccio told the crowd, pointing out the environmental review process takes "a year or so" to complete before releasing the EIR draft for the required 45-day public comment period.

That was the first sticking point with Leona Valley residents, who contended they didn't get anywhere near 45 days' notice before the public comment deadline ends Sept. 18.

"We were not given enough notice on this project," resident Marcy Watton said.

She asserted that residents most affected by the plan had been excluded from participation at the beginning when project "scoping meetings" occurred.

She said she was only one of three residents on Lost Valley Ranch Road who received notification of roughly 15 homes on her street.

"I was shocked when I saw what they had afoot. I canvassed the neighborhood, handed out

fliers," she said.

She said she contacted residents on other streets and found they first heard about the project from her.

"I handed out 100 flyers. About 40 houses in Agua Dulce (are) affected too, along Anthony Road. None got notice. Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy was not notified."

Leona Valley resident Vance Kirkpatrick called it absurd that the agencies involved in this project "only notified people within 300 feet of the (proposed) line that virtually destroys our community."

Residents feared the utility could exercise eminent domain to take over their property, or a portion of it, in order to construct mammoth towers that support the transmission lines. Some feared losing their homes.

Matthew Fitzgerald, math teacher at Eastside High School, said he moved to Leona Valley in 1995, originally on the "main road." When he and wife Chris decided to start a family, they relocated to a home on 107th Street West.

Now he envisions "this power line going through the backside of this property - within 200 feet. "Am I going to get fair market value?" he asked. "What determines who gets displaced? All our properties are on wells. What if you cause damage? What are we supposed to do if we don't have water for our houses?"

Chris Fitzgerald, vice principal at the school where her husband teaches, wanted to know why if a fire burns down a home "it's called a horrific loss, yet I can lose my home to a public utility and it's called progress."

Boccio and Davidson identified routes of the initial Edison proposal. The five options were created by the Public Utilities Commission, the Forest Service and consultants with participation from city or county agencies.

Edison's proposal follows nearly a straight line from the company's operating station on the northwest side of Lancaster, crossing about 12.6 miles of Angeles National Forest land and passing Lake Elizabeth Road west of Bouquet Canyon Road and across the southern portion of San Francisquito Canyon Road on its way to the facility in Santa Clarita, near Interstate 5 - a route that traverses 25.6 miles.

The planning terms for the proposals are "alternatives."

Agency representatives at the public hearing said Santa Clarita officials requested that the Vlzat Motion Picture Ranch movie ranch not be disturbed, a comment that elicited groans from the crowd.

But the crowd responded with skepticism. Some, like Watton, believe the decision already has been made and the public hearing is mere formality.

"They've already made up their mind," Watton said. "They're going for Alternative 5 because the Forest Service is opposed to any more transmission lines in the corridor that already exists."

Mary Ann Floyd agreed.

"It's a done deal as far as the planning goes," Floyd said. "We can fight hard, though."

Watton told the crowd she already has contacted an attorney in Orange County if anyone wanted to join her fight against Alternative 5. That route would run along the eastern edge of the national forest and cross the forest for a distance of only a half-mile. But it requires land in Leona Valley that runs adjacent to that area, affecting residents on 107th Street West, Bouquet Canyon, Lost Valley Ranch Road and other parts.

Residents raised health issues from the electromagnetic fields emitted by the power lines into surrounding areas - especially the potential for brain tumors in children, spontaneous abortions in pregnant women, leukemia in children and adults, and breast

cancer in women.

"The thing is on two sides of our house," resident Guyla Clayton said. "If you've been near those towers, they pop, crackle, make so much noise. I know there are horses that will not cross those areas."

State Sen. George Runner and Assemblywoman Sharon Runner, both R-Lancaster, each sent letters to Boccio, Kadota and Aspen opposing Alternative 5.

Donna Termeer, district director for the senator, read a copy of his letter to the crowd.

He acknowledged the need to improve and enhance the power grid but pushed for Edison's original proposal, making use of "existing right-of-ways. It is reasonably shorter than the CPUC proposed alternative, making it much less likely to cause negative environmental impacts."

The senator's letter also addressed the fear expressed by some property owners that the utility company can take away their land and homes.

"Eminent domain is a governmental power that should be used only as a last resort, especially when we are dealing with personal property and homes," he wrote. "There is absolutely no justification to take away 30-plus homes when existing right-of-ways are sufficient. My office and I will continue to monitor the approval process, and I look forward to working with you to ensure that eminent domain is not abused in the completion of this project."

Kirkpatrick urged everyone in the community to "band together - get Alternative 5 off the books."

"Why even consider Alternative 5? Why not follow existing power lines? I don't understand," said Rolf Linden, who lives on 107th Street West, directly in the path of that option. "The new power line will dominate our view and continue down Lost Valley Ranch Road."

One resident from Lost Valley Ranch Road said she was upset having to attend the meeting while her horse lay dying.

"How will you compensate us justly for ruining our lives?" She said structures are prohibited from being built beneath electrical towers. "So why are you building a tower over our structures?"

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Gary Warford

Subject: Residents raise ruckus over Edison power ploy

Residents raise ruckus over Edison power ploy

This story appeared in the Antelope Valley Press on Friday, September 8, 2006.

By ALISHA SEMCHUCK
Valley Press Staff Writer

AGUA DULCE - People power might spark more energy than any electrical force.

Folks in Agua Dulce bank on that. They intend to stop a utility dynamo and a couple of governmental agencies from steamrolling their way through town.

Upward of 80 residents, mainly from Agua Dulce, attended a brainstorming session Wednesday night to fight a plan that would bring transmission lines carrying 500 kilovolts of electricity right past their homes, bisecting some back yards.

The Agua Dulce Town Council organized the special meeting at Shepherd of the Hills Church to pick the brains of their friends and neighbors, and find some solution to a situation that has the community fired up.

The Agua Dulce residents are not alone. Their meeting closely mimicked a gathering on Aug. 28, in Quartz Hill, when throngs of Leona Valley residents turned out to protest plans by the California Public Utilities Commission, or CPUC, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service to bring Southern California Edison power lines straight through the unincorporated hamlet.

Objections in both communities were the same - insufficient notice, or complete lack of notice, by the project planners to allow residents a fair amount of time for public comment, which ends Sept. 18; lack of information for residents to make an educated decision; concern about potential health and safety risks; worry that property values will decline; loss of a pristine, picturesque panorama; and possible loss of land or homes if the government agencies exercise the use of eminent domain, a legal tool the government may use to take possession of private property.

"This Town Council received nothing," Town Council member Peg Spry said, in reference to notification. "We called this meeting to alert as many of you as possible.

"Basically, Southern California Edison has applied to the Public Utilities Commission to bring power from wind farms in Tehachapi to (an Edison) substation in Santa Clarita, mainly for homes we've been reading about," Spry said. She said she had heard some scuttlebutt "from Leona Valley people."

When Spry searched the CPUC's Web site, she found information about the proposed project sorely lacking. She described the maps as vague, and no mention of the one option that has hundreds of people fuming.

Option five, also known as the Antelope-Pardee-Sierra Pelona Reroute, drew the most wrath. One of six possible routes that Edison can follow, it is also the plan that has the least impact on forest service land, skirting around the eastern perimeter of Angeles National Forest, and meandering along private property instead.

Since Spry first checked the commission's Web site, she said it has been updated to include option five - the one that would cut through residential turf, impacting or possibly destroying up to 103 parcels of land between Leona Valley and Agua Dulce.

"Many of us spent the last week glued to the Internet," Spry said.

Option five would connect the Edison substation near Avenue J in west Lancaster with the electric company's Santa Clarita facility, near Interstate 5. But, along the way it intersects Leona Valley, affecting residents on 107th Street West, Bouquet Canyon and Lost Valley Ranch Roads and other parts of town.

In Agua Dulce, it would run along Anthony Road and across Sierra Highway, Spry said. "It dog-legs - goes to Big Springs Road, crosses Agua Dulce Canyon Road behind Davenport Estates."

"It crosses Escondido (Canyon Road) at Old Stage Road," realtor Jim Duzick said. "It's not just about bringing wind power. It's about upgrading the power grid for future growth."

However, Duzick contended, "It's going to be the most prominent backdrop looking at (Vasquez Rocks). It's going to condemn a lot of property."

"That's a thumbnail sketch," Spry told the crowd.

Town Council treasurer Mary Johnson pointed out that the initial route, proposed by Edison in December 2004, followed the existing utility corridor, thereby causing the least impact to residents. Of the five other options, four run through forest land, she noted. Option five would have the least amount of impact on forest land, making it the preferred option for the National Forest Service.

Option five isn't the only one that impacts property owners, Ron Howell said. He lives on Bouquet Canyon Road, straddling Leona Valley and the Agua Dulce area.

"Some of us don't have town councils," Howell said. "We're in no-man's land. We're people, too."

He said "a few hundred" property owners in his area would suffer the impact of option two, which traverses Bouquet Canyon Road.

"We don't think 'get it out of our back yard, into someone else's back yard' is the optimal solution," Howell told the Agua Dulce Town Council. "Is that OK? Is that honorable?"

Yet another point of contention: The path proposed in option five "will be about a mile from the end of the runway" for Agua Dulce Airport, Spry said.

That makes it hazardous for aviators, according to Diane Terito, vice president of membership for the Agua Dulce Civic Association board, who pointed out the towers needed to support those transmission lines will stand about 220 feet tall, and will be in line with the flight path.

Agua Dulce resident Jerry Jacobson, who lives at Anthony and Hierba roads, questioned whether Navy and Marine officials knew about these plans.

"The course they've flown for many years (will) become very dangerous," Jacobson said. "Maybe we should bring them into the fight. When they come through, they dip their wings."

Attorney Melissa Harnett, also an area resident, said it seems the agencies involved violated certain requirements such as providing sufficient public notice and allowing enough time for public comment. Furthermore, she added, running the transmission lines along Vasquez Rocks possibly poses another violation because that is a "protected area."

She recommended the Town Council and residents contact all governmental officials - county, state and federal - and "raise a protest. But then, we need to go beyond that - demand another public hearing. I think we need to put the fear of God into them. If they choose (option) five, they will have lawsuit after lawsuit."

The board voted to contact the Public Utilities Commission legislative judge and demand an extension of time on the public comment period, plus another public hearing. Their desire: To delete option five.

Response to Comment Set C.179: Gary and Beth Warford

- C.179-1 Please see General Response GR-5 regarding noticing procedures and the Draft EIR/EIS review period.
- C.179-2 No existing homes were deleted out of photographs of existing landscape conditions. In all photographs of existing conditions, no landscape features were removed or altered in any way. If photographs of existing landscape conditions show vacant lands, it is because the view across these existing vacant lands provided excellent observation of landscapes that would be affected by construction and operation of a new 500-kV transmission line. As described in Section C.15.1.1, photographs used in the EIR/EIS were taken from vantage points called key observation positions (KOPs). Each KOP was carefully selected to display the typical or worst-case view from major travel routes or use areas that provide visual access to affected landscapes. From dozens of potential observer positions and in consultation with CPUC and Forest Service personnel, 14 locations were selected as KOPs for detailed analysis of the proposed Project, and 14 additional KOPs were selected for detailed analysis of alternatives.
- C.179-3 Thank you for your opinion and concerns regarding Alternative 5.