

Comment Set 13



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Pacific West Region
Pacific Great Basin Support Office
600 Harrison Street, Suite 600
San Francisco, California 94107-1172

IN REPLY REFER TO:

D18(PGSO-PP)

July 27, 2000

Judith Iklé
California Public Utilities Commission
c/o Aspen Environmental Group
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, California 94104

Dear Ms. Iklé:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Northeast San Jose Transmission Reinforcement project. We appreciate the summary of the purpose and route of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail included in the document.

We are disappointed that more consideration was not given to undergrounding transmission facilities. Although the visual analysis is quite elaborate, the visual simulations make it quite clear that the proposal will have significant visual impacts. While it may be possible to screen and soften with planting many of the urban facilities to which the report compares the impact of the transmission towers, it is absolutely impossible to screen large transmission towers marching across the bay margin. From our standpoint, visual intrusions into the more natural landscape of the bay margin and Coyote Creek compromise the historical and recreational value of the experience of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. We would appreciate your giving more consideration to this aspect of the project in the final EIR.

We note for the record that in the project area the National Park Service proposes to mark the San Francisco Bay Trail as the recreational alignment of the historic route. Therefore, the description of the Anza Trail provided in section C 7.1.3.1, while accurate at the time the DEIR was written, may change as the Bay Trail Master Plan of the City of San Jose develops. It appears that for some alternatives there are potential conflicts in the areas where the Bay Trail and the transmission line coincide. For this reason, we recommend that Pacific Gas and Electric coordinate closely with the Bay Trail Project and the City of San Jose as it selects the preferred transmission line alignment.

13-1

13-2

Judith Iklé
July 27, 2000
Page 2 of 2

In spite of the fact that we find the project as proposed would compromise the experience of the Anza Trail, we request that the alignment you do chose allow public access for trail use. Linear corridors for trail recreation are difficult to come by in urban areas. Sharing the transmission line right of way can benefit the public with a recreational amenity.

We look forward to reviewing your final environmental document.

Sincerely,

Meredith Kaplan, Superintendent
Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail

Enclosure

- cc: David Mitchell, City of San Jose Planning Manager
- Joel Slavit, City of San Jose Park Planner
- Arlene Nagakawara, City of San Jose Bay Trail Project Manager
- Janet McBride, ABAG Bay Trail Project Manager
- Niko Letunic, Bay Trail Planner
- Paul Romero, Acting Director, Environmental Resources Agency, Santa Clara County
- Mark Frederick, Planning and Development Manager, Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department
- Paul Bernal, Santa Clara County Amigos de Anza
- Steven Haze, Santa Clara County Amigos de Anza

13-3