

Sunrise “Drip-Torch”

The backcountry of San Diego County is considered to be at high risk for wildfires. The promotion of overhead power lines through such fire prone wildlands poses an unacceptable risk to human lives.

The McCoy Fire, suspected to be power line caused, ignited during Santa Ana wind conditions with wind gusts exceeding 100 miles per hour. Within a matter of minutes, this fire burned 3 houses and 13 residents narrowly escaped with their lives.

- My neighbor to the East (upwind) was securing items from the wind with the help of two friends. They saw smoke and looked up to see a “rolling ball of fire” coming directly at them. She jumped into her truck and escaped with singed eyebrows and hair and a melted “Jack-in-Box” antenna ball.
- When my wife and I saw the smoke, we went outside to see the neighbors friends driving frantically and shouting to “get out now”. We looked up to see her house totally engulfed in flames and disintegrating with fire and blowing fire brands and embers coming directly at us. We escaped by driving directly through this with minor heat damage to the car windows. My house, recently rebuilt, after the Cedar Fire, to all updated fire codes and required clearances, was in flames within minutes.
- My neighbor to the West, at nearly 80 years of age, fortunately left 30 minutes earlier when she saw flames from the Witch Creek Fire. Her house burned minutes after mine.
- My neighbors to the Northeast, across a road and a small ravine, were dragged out of bed by their son, who lives in an adjacent house, after securing his wife and son in the family root cellar. As they dashed for the root cellar, they looked back to see a “forty foot wall of flame” just yards from their house. This “sheet of fire” miraculously diverted into the ravine and by-passed them and their houses by less than 100 feet.
- Their neighbors to the West managed to out flank the fire as it diverted, but lost 2 car windows in the process. Their house was spared.
- I read in the San Diego Union-Tribune of a family escaping either the Guejito or the Rice Fires in their two family cars. The wife had to abandon her car when it caught fire but was able to jump into her husbands car and escape.
- The risks of wildland fires are very close and personal to my wife and I, as in addition to losing two houses, our two youngest, of four, children are U.S. Forest Service Firefighters.

Of the 2007 Wildfires, the Witch Creek, Guejito, Rice, and McCoy Fires are all suspected to be power line caused. A factor unreported and/or under-reported in the EIR/EIS due to study parameters and available data. Additionally, their reported fire

potential models estimate the number of homes at risk, under specific fire conditions, but do not address the lives associated with these homes.

When evaluating a proposal for overhead power lines through fire-prone wildlands, the risks to lives from fire cannot be statistically minimized, any additional source of fire ignition is unacceptable.

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In reviewing the recent Executive Summary of the Draft for the Sunrise Powerlink Project, I would like to see some additions to the Fire and Fuels Management sections D-15 and E-15. Figures depicting Fire Behavior Trend Models, for each established fire-shed, illustrate fire potential during extreme fire weather conditions (typically Santa Ana wind conditions) shown as Map B in each figure.

- Fire potential in several of these figures appears to extend well beyond the scale of the maps presented.
- Historically, the Witch Creek, Cedar, Laguna (1970), and Harris Fires actually burned well beyond or extended through multiple fire-sheds depicted in the models.

I feel that the parameters, or map scale, need to be expanded to include the full extent of modeled and historical fire potential, as well as extended into the many coastal canyons where wild-land urban interface exists. The estimates of homes at risk need to be expanded accordingly, and human lives associated with these homes need to be emphasized.

Additionally, Figures E.1.15-_, illustrating Reported 13 Year Wildfire Ignition History within each depicted fire-shed, indicate a relatively small percentage of fires caused by power lines.

- However, the Witch Creek, McCoy, Guejito and Rice Fires, all believed to be power line related, were not included as their cause is still under investigation.
- In October, 2006, the Boulder Fire, initially reported as two acres with a potential of 200,000 acres, in reference to it's location relative to the Cedar Fire of 2003, and confirmed as power pole caused, was not included due to acreage size constraints established by the investigation.

While possibly beyond the scope or parameters established for this report, I feel this information is critical to an accurate and comprehensive evaluation of fire potential from overhead power lines through fire prone wild-lands. The risks to human life and property, as well as to wildlife and wild-lands, should not be minimized regardless of the perceived needs of future development.

A Backcountry Perspective

People live in cities and suburbs for security and the conveniences provided by continued development. They live in houses surrounded by walled in yards with all their material possessions; and this is their home.

People choose to live in the backcountry, despite certain risks and inconveniences, for a variety of reasons; natural surroundings, views, and the absence of major development.

My house was destroyed in the 2003 Cedar Fire and again, after just being rebuilt, in the 2007 Wildfires. To me, a house is essentially just a shelter which can be rebuilt. My home is the location and the natural surroundings which would be destroyed by the installation of giant towers and power lines.

I feel that this distinction must be understood to fully appreciate the passion people in the backcountry have for our homeland. This is the reason for our National Forests, State Parks, Wildlife Preserves, and Wilderness Areas.

Houses can be rebuilt, vegetation will recover, but monstrous steel towers, by design, will persist well into the future.

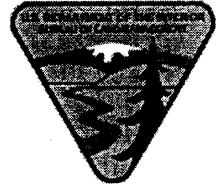
Skip Miller

Backcountry resident for 30 years.



California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

D0083



Comments on the EIR/EIS Proposed Sunrise Powerlink Project

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I would like to complement you on the volume and detail of the material in your evaluation. Given the project goals and parameters for evaluation, I agree with your conclusions. However, I would favor the No Project/No Action Alternative with the hope that an amended "New In-Area Renewable Generation Alternative" would be implemented. Such amendment would require renewable generation for new development at the community, or even individual level.

*Please print. Your name, address, and comments become public information and may be released to interested parties if requested.

Please either deposit this sheet at the sign-in table before you leave today, or fold, stamp, and mail. Insert additional sheets if needed. Comments must be received by April 11, 2008. Comments may also be faxed to the project hotline at (866) 711-3106 or emailed to sunrise@aspenerg.com.



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and Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

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Comments on the EIR/EIS

Proposed Sunrise Powerlink Project

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Given the limited time frame for examining
Biological Resources, it is understandable that
your data would not be all inclusive. I hope
that this fact is qualified in your report. I have
the following concerns:

- Vegetation, in the process of recovery from the 2003 Cedar
Fire, may have been missed.
- Seasonal species ...
- Migratory species ...
- Wide ranging species ... (mountain lion)
- Species daily habits ... (morning, mid-day, evening)
- Nocturnal species ... (specifically the burrowing owl,
seen frequently after dark between mileposts D-8 + D-10,
reported in section E.3.2-11 as "not observed in this
area.)

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CPUC/BLM
Comments on the EIR/EIS
Proposed Sunrise Powerlink Project

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I have concerns regarding SDG&E's ability to maintain the safety of its facilities and operations and consequently adherence to proposed mitigation measures.

- Reports, in the San Diego Union-Tribune, of vegetation around power lines at the site of 2007 wildfires.
- Cables, "pirating" power from distribution poles, are suspected to be the cause of the 2007 McCoy Fire. These cables had been reported to the County of San Diego and to SDG&E for several years by local residents, but apparently not by SDG&E's meter readers. SDG&E claims that they are not responsible for activity beyond their meters.
- In their haste to restore power, through the 69KV transmission line from Descanso to Santa Ysabel, SDG&E repair crews ignored four distribution lines downed by the McCoy Fire. This fire burned through ten private properties clustered within the Cleveland National Forest. One line was down within a foot from a chain link fence, along Tule Springs Road, near a Cal-Fire and U.S. Forest Service staging area for deploying hand crews to "mop-up" remnants of the McCoy and Witch Creek Fires. This line was kicked by a local resident and arced severely when disturbed. A second downed line was kicked by another resident a few days later and also arced severely. The third line was seen on the ground by residents, about two weeks later, and wisely was reported to SDG&E without touching it. The fourth was located near the ignition site of the fire and hopefully was taken care of by the fire investigators in the area. The lives of local residents and several firefighters were placed at risk from this oversight and/or negligence by SDG&E.