

Comment Set E0003
San Diego Gas and Electric Company



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Ms. Billie Blanchard
Energy Division
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

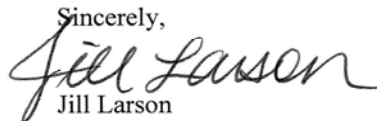
Ms. Lynda Kastoll
El Centro Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
1661 S. 4th Street
El Centro, CA 92243

Dear Ms. Blanchard & Ms. Kastoll,

SDG&E appreciates the opportunity to provide the attached comments to the California Public Utilities Commission and Bureau of Land Management (CPUC/BLM) Sunrise Powerlink Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIR/EIS). This third comment letter covers comments on Sections A, B, C, D, F, G and Appendix 12 of the Draft EIR/EIS. SDG&E will provide additional specific comments in future letters for the CPUC/BLM to consider in preparation of the Final EIR/EIS and may provide additional subsequent comments on the sections of the Draft EIR/EIS included in this submission as our review of the document continues.

Similar to SDG&E's second comment letter, these comments focus on identifying potential inaccuracies, omissions, inconsistencies and clarifications that can be fully addressed in the Final EIR/EIS. In addition, SDG&E identifies certain impacts that it believes are overstated in their significance. Similarly, certain mitigation measures are excessive because either the impact's significance is overstated or the mitigation is disproportionate to the impact. SDG&E intends to submit more substantive comments with respect to the various alternatives in its next comment letter.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of SDG&E's comments.

Sincerely,

Jill Larson

cc: Mike Niggli
Greg Barnes

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CH#	Pg#	Par#	Comment	
A	A-1	1st	Right-of-Way Grant Application was filed with BLM on November 2, 2005 for areas outside of ABDSP. Right-of-Way Grant Application was amended to include areas within ABDSP in 2007.	E0003-1
A.1, A.6.3.1	A-2	7th	Significant portion of transmission corridor in ABDSP is under jurisdiction of BLM, rather than State Parks and Recreation. Federal transmission corridor was reserved from grants of land to State for inclusion within ABDSP.	E0003-2
A.1	A-2	8th	Statement that SDG&E would have to obtain an additional 50 feet of ROW is incorrect. SDG&E has indicated that Proposed Project could be built within existing 100-foot-wide transmission corridor in ABDSP.	E0003-3

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CH#	Pg#	Par#	Comment	
B	B-10	2 and 3	Analysis regarding BLM jurisdiction of ROW needs to be clarified. In the discussion titled History and Discussion of BLM's 100-Foot ROW Grant, it should be clarified that BLM has asserted its continuing federal interest and jurisdiction in those portions of the ROW for which it granted easements previously. Revise the text to include this information.	E0003-4
B.2	B-14	2	Outside of the ABDSP but still within Grapevine Canyon, the DEIR describes and SDG&E originally proposed to remove the existing 69 kV line and underbuild it on the new 500 kV structures. The existing wood poles carry a 12 kV circuit so these poles would just be topped off. However, SDG&E could alternatively leave the 69 kV structures with the 12 kV underbuild alone and place the 500 kV structures parallel to the existing structures.	E0003-5
B.1	B-6	2	Proposed Project route near MP-50 crosses BLM parcels that are gifted lands. BLM has notified SDG&E that the Proposed Project needs to avoid these parcels. SDG&E has proposed a route modification to avoid the subject parcels. See SDG&E's GIS shape files accompanying this comment submittal. SDG&E requests that the FEIR include this modification.	E0003-6

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CH#	Pg#	Par#	Comment	
C.3	C-12	Table	States that the Modified Route D Alternative would not require an amendment of the Forest Plan to use land zones. However, the FEIR should clarify that an amendment would be required because of the incompatibility with the Scenic Integrity Objectives.	E0003-7
C.4	C-11	Table	Under ABDSP Link, the DEIR states that the Partial Under Ground SR78 to S2 Alt meets regulatory feasibility and would require a de-designation of wilderness and a GP Amendment. However, on p. C-37, under Regulatory Feasibility, it states that de-designation of wilderness and a GP amendment are regulatory infeasibilities that could delay the in-service date. This inconsistency should be reconciled in the FEIR.	E0003-8
C.4	C-37	9	It should read Central East Substation Construction.	E0003-9
C.4.3.2	C-39	3rd	Statement that Overhead 500kV ROW Alternative would cause greater impacts is conclusory and unsupported.	E0003-10
C.4	C-58	4	Text notes that I-8 Alternative Substation would be used if a conversion to 230kV is required. Since the CPUC identifies the Star Valley Road 230kV segment as part of the Environmentally Superior SWPL route, text should say that I-8 Sub is required to provide the conversion.	E0003-11
C.4	C-75	1	States that New In-Area generation meets goal of promoting renewable energy but does not describe how this translates to "more economical access" to renewables.	E0003-12
C.4	C-75	3	Text cites that there are economic, legal and technical feasibility challenges to developing individual PV solar but still finds it technically feasible as part of a larger renewables alternative. The option does not appear feasible to meet in service date given the feasibility challenges.	E0003-13
C.4	C-77	3	Text should be update to note ENPEX has not moved forward with project and that City of Santee is strongly opposed to the project.	E0003-14
C.4.10.2	C-78	5th	Feasibility of Margarita peaking plant made may be legally infeasible due to the LaderaHope petition filed on January 2, 2008 to overturn governmental approvals of Margarita peaker plant project.	E0003-15
C5.5.3	C-106	5	SDG&E has a corridor from Poway Sub to Chicarita, it is currently vacant from Pomerado Rd west to Chicarita.	E0003-16
C5.5.3	C-109	4	SDG&E has a corridor from Poway Sub to Chicarita, it is currently vacant from Pomerado Rd west to Chicarita.	E0003-17

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CH#	Pg#	Par#	Comment	
D.4.2.2	D.4-4	4th	SDG&E has proposed alternative that would allow Proposed Project to remain within existing 100-foot-wide transmission corridor.	E0003-18
D.4.2	D.4-12	2	It is misleading to state that the Proposed Project alignment would pass through the Vallecito Mountains Wilderness Area, implying that the route would impact wilderness in that area. The Vallecitos Wilderness Area is located south of and in some cases not immediately adjacent to the Proposed Project.	E0003-19
D.5	D.5-36	3rd	2nd sentence, should be "both because of the inherent value of wilderness land"	E0003-20
D.5	D.5-36	3rd	3rd sentence, delete second "as a" after EIR/EIS	E0003-21
D.5	D.5-82	1st	2nd full sentence, spell out "Pacific Crest Trail" instead of "PCT"	E0003-22
D.5	D.5-82	3rd	3rd sentence, should be "In the reasonably foreseeable case"	E0003-23
D.5	D.5-86	1st full	The analysis contains a discrepancy for the number of acres of wilderness that would be reclassified. The first sentence of Impact WR-4 says that a one-mile segment of overhead segment of the alternative would require approximately 20 acres within Grapevine Mountain Wilderness Area, then in the same paragraph, says 40 acres of wilderness would be reclassified under this alternative. The text should be revised to clarify whether the correct number is 20 or 40 acres.	E0003-24
D.6	D.6-61 to 63	Table D.6-13	The analysis makes conclusions that are unsupported by the data. In Table D.6-13, there's no Assessors Parcel Number (APN) information or other data available on amount of Williamson Act lands in certain areas, but text of the DEIR makes conclusions about numbers of acres of Williamson Act lands, where did DEIR obtain numbers? What's basis for acreage conclusions?	E0003-25
D.6	D.6-15	Table D.6-8	Estimates for permanent impact on agricultural land (especially Imperial Valley) are much greater than presented in the PEA. Impact totals for Prime Farmland, Farmland of State Importance, Unique Farmland and Farmland of Local Importance in the DEIR are 270.5 acres. The PEA had 10.3 acres for the same categories. If we use the mileposts used in the DEIR/EIS (8- 12) for Imperial Valley agricultural lands, and multiply by R/W width (200') the resulting total impact is approximately 267 acres. This seems to confirm that the DEIR/EIS analysis considers the entire R/W a permanent impact. Although easement rights will be over the 200 foot width, actual permanent impacts within the agricultural land will be limited to structure footprints and any new access roads. The majority of the right of way will still be useable for farming purposes as is the case under the existing Southwest Powerlink alignment across agricultural lands. The Final EIR/EIS needs to provide this clarification regarding permanent impacts to agricultural lands.	E0003-26
D.6	D.6-21	3	States that 18.2 acres of Williamson Act land in Imperial Valley is permanently converted due to presence of transmission structures and roads. However, it appears that calculations may be based on the entire R/W width and not just the impact from structures/roads. The Final EIR/EIS needs to clarify that within agricultural lands, other than structure footprints and any new access roads, the land will still be useable as it is today.	E0003-27

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CH#	Pg#	Par#	Comment	
D.6	D.6-25	2	States that proposed project has potential to convert a total of 254.3 acres of Williamson Act land. If conversion is the same as displacement due to permanent impacts, this is not consistent with Table D.6-8 on page D.6-15 which indicates (incorrectly) a total of 157.4 acres of permanent impact to Williamson Act land for the entire project. The Final EIR/EIS needs to reconcile this apparent inconsistency and present the actual permanent impacts from structure footprints and new access roads not the remainder of the easement which is still available for agricultural uses.	E0003-28
D.6	D.6-15	Table D.6-8	Footnote explains that the total acreage for Agricultural Resources is less than the simple sum of each type of resource. However, the 491.8 acres of total impact to agricultural resources in Imperial Valley as noted in the table will likely be the figure that stands out in the minds of most readers.	E0003-29
D.6	D.6-37	4	Assumes that 10 acres of Williamson Act Land would be converted by future 230kV expansion, but does not indicate how that assumption is justified.	E0003-30
D.7	D.7-25, 26	1, 2	In Section D.7.8.3 Impacts, the text "identifies impacts that may be unavoidable." It should also state that impact assessments (i.e., numbers of sites projected to be impacted in each link) for the Proposed Project are based on preliminary engineering data and that SDG&E intends for the final engineering design to avoid cultural resources to the greatest extent possible (CR-APM-5).	E0003-31
D.7	D.7-29; D.7-30		The number of sites impacted within links varies within and between paragraphs throughout Chapter D. Statements regarding the number and type of cultural resources impacted and/or present in each link should be double-checked against and made consistent with the table presented in Ap.9B.	E0003-32
D.7	D.7-30	1st partial	The DEIR states that CA-IMP-7857/7858 is NR-eligible; this and four (should say "three") other sites in the Imperial Valley Link contain human remains; impacts would remain Class I. In preparing final engineering plans, SDG&E intends to avoid cultural resources to the greatest extent possible. Two of the sites mentioned should be able to have the access road routed to avoid them. The existing powerline access road through one site may not be able to be rerouted because of site size; however, no human remains or important artifacts were noted in survey of this existing access road; testing would be necessary to determine whether there would be an effect on the site from use of this existing road (mitigation measure C-2a would apply). The fourth site is in a remote area that does not presently have road access. Opening the area to greater human use could result in Class I impacts. The text should state that SDG&E would investigate other means for constructing and maintaining this portion of the transmission line, other than opening a road into the area.	E0003-33

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CH#	Pg#	Par#	Comment	
D.7	D.7-35	1	The DEIR states that 36 CFR 800 considers impacts to human remains an unmitigable adverse effect. A statement to this effect is not found in 36 CFR 800, although there are several statements relating to consultation with Indian tribes regarding properties of religious and cultural significance. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation "Policy Statement Regarding Treatment of Burial Sites, Human Remains and Funerary Objects" provides relevant information, i.e., "Principle 4: Burial sites ('any natural or prepared physical location ... into which as a part of the death rite or ceremony of a culture, individual human remains are deposited'), human remains and funerary objects should not be knowingly disturbed." Statements in the DEIR pertaining to impacts to human remains and impacts to sites with human remains should be clarified.	E0003-34
D.7	D.7-39	4	The DEIR recommends that all known historic built environment resources within 0.5 miles shall be inventoried and subjected to visual analysis ... by an Architectural Historian. The DEIR states that the only known resource of this type in Imperial Link is the De Anza Trail-Southern Emigrant Road; however, this is not an architectural resource or standing structure and could be evaluated by other cultural resource and/or visual specialists.	E0003-35
D.7	D.7-39	7	DEIR mentions two sites (P-13-004244 and-004245) within the fenced area of Imperial Substation that are potentially eligible for the NR. Since this area was not surveyed by G&A, if substation improvements are part of project, then a cultural resources survey and update on site status is recommended.	E0003-36
D.7	D.7-48/49	passim	The DEIR does not include a recommendation for maintenance/upkeep of the historic adobe on the Central East Substation site (recommended eligible for NRHP and CRHR). This would probably be required by 36 CFR 800, and should be addressed in the DEIR.	E0003-37
D.7	D.7-62	6	The DEIR states that the Central East Substation to Sycamore Canyon or Penasquitos Substation future expansion would follow the proposed SRPL project route. It appears that the impacts identified are essentially a reiteration of those described for SRPL, which would presumably already have been built when a future expansion is considered. By listing them again, it gives the impression that the future expansion will have all the same impacts as the Proposed Project would. The focus here should be on identifying additional impacts and mitigation measures related to a future expansion. This should also be the focus of the other future expansion projects that follow the SRPL route. The text should be revised here and in other future expansion project discussions to only list impacts that would not have already been dealt with for the Proposed Project.	E0003-38

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CH#	Pg#	Par#	Comment	
D.7	D.7-122	5	"Angelina Springs [sic] Cultural District." Site locations are confidential, and this inclusion violates that principle. This comment should <u>not</u> be made in a manner that would place it in the public record, since this would only serve to draw more attention to the confidential location of a highly significant resource. A more general or ambiguous term such as the Grapevine Canyon Cultural District or DS-2-106 Cultural District should be used instead.	E0003-39
D.7	D.7-166 & 167	4	Although the criteria that are listed and used for establishing the paleontological sensitivity of geologic units are reasonable and acceptable, it may be beneficial to replace them with the criteria that are presented in Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-09 "Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) System for Paleontological Resources on Public Lands", as this is the most current and up-to-date guidance document in use for the purpose of classifying paleo sensitivity.	E0003-40
D.7	D.7-177 D.7-211 & 212	Table D.7-10 Table D.7-27	To say that "Construction of the project would destroy or disturb significant paleontological resources" for the Project and different alternatives shown cannot be known with the current level of information. The word "potentially" should be inserted between "would" and "destroy".	E0003-41
D.7	D.7-176	6, bullet 2	Just because a fossil illustrates a geologic principle that does not necessarily make it significant. Justification for determination of significance of a paleontological resource needs to be correctly cited.	E0003-42
D.7	D.7-176	6, bullet 4	This significance criterion is confusing and may be due to a typo. The significance criterion should be re-written. The word "or" after "type locality" should either be changed to "for" or "of".	E0003-43
D.7	D.7-179	1	The last sentence reads "...addressed here a construction-related." The word "a" should be "are"	E0003-44
D.8	D.8-17	2nd paragrap h and Table D.8-12	The statement "This means that construction noise at 200 feet from work could range up to 78 dBA, and that beyond 1,000 feet levels would not exceed 70 dBA" is not referenced. Provide a reference. It appears that the author is using Bell's doubling rule. As a general rule, noise decreases by approximately 6 dBA with every doubling of the distance from the source (Bell 1982). Using this rule and assuming a worst case 90 dBA at 50 feet, the noise level at 800 feet can be predicted at 66 dBA. The noise level at 1,000 feet would not be expected to exceed some number less than 66 dBA, not 70 dBA as stated. Re-evaluate the estimated sound level at 1,000 feet.	E0003-45

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CH#	Pg#	Par#	Comment	
D.8	D.8-22	3	The DEIR overstates the impacts for Impact N-4; Routine inspection and maintenance activities would increase ambient noise levels. The DEIR concludes Class I impact from routine inspection and maintenance activities, but earlier noted that the inspection and maintenance activities would not be expected to increase over what occurs now for existing line. Revise the analysis to include an explanation of what the difference in noise levels is, and there should be differing impacts assigned to those areas where the line will be built in or near ROW for existing line	E0003-46
D.9	D.9-16	1 and 2	Need clarification on discussion of permits State permits. Permits required by California State Parks, construction activities within existing easements of Caltrans and County of SD roadways may proceed without permit from State Parks, right of entry permit required for all construction and maintenance activities located outside of existing easements for all roadways regardless of jurisdiction, access right in writing must be obtained from State Parks for existing and future access roads. Please add this information to the discussion on Caltrans and California State Parks.	E0003-47
D.9	D.9-22	3 and 4	Impacts may be overstated. There appears to be overlap between discussions of potential disruptions to emergency services (Impact T-2) in this section versus discussion of same impacts in Sec D.14 (utilities), in some portions of Sec D.14 classifies the impact as Class III and refers to transportation section - appears to be over counting impacts. Compare impact in D.9 and D.14 to identify any overlap, and revise the text accordingly.	E0003-48
D.9	D.9-23	3 and 4	Clarification required regarding mitigation for damaged roadways. Under Impact T-5 (in several links in addition to the analysis on the referred page), the analysis of potential damage to roadways, concludes Class II impacts because no APMs are suggested by SDG&E. Indicate whether the various access and encroachment permits include provisions for fixing any damage to roads.	E0003-49
D.9	D.9-47	4	Global comment re: speculative nature of FTSE and associated impacts; just one ex here - Impact T-8, construction would conflict with planned transportation projects, future routes are hypothetical and any future transportation projects along those routes are hypothetical, but still conclude Class III (adverse) impact.	E0003-50
D.9	D.9-129, 134, 138	2,3,3	For Chuck Wagon Alternative operational impacts, first says that once permits are acquired from FAA for Airspace Obstruction Analysis, there would be no aviation impacts associated w/this alternative (note typo here as well, should be "d" at end of "associate") and no mitigation required then in next paragraph, says operation of this alt would be less than significant with appropriate permits and mitigation, so Class II - inconsistent since there's no mitigation required, should be Class III if any; same comment for Pomerado Road to Miramar North Alt on D.9-134 and Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve-Mercy Road alternative on D.9-138	E0003-51
D.10	D.10-28	2	Under Impact P-3, DEIR concludes there's no environmental contamination in an area, such as Imperial Valley substation, but then nevertheless concludes Class II impact because of very small likelihood that there might be unknown contamination, should be Class III; same comment on D.10-28 discussing ABDSP - this has been park since 1930s, likelihood of preexisting soil and/or groundwater contamination in vicinity of ROW seems very low (particularly since DEIR characterizes ABDSP elsewhere as "undeveloped land")	E0003-52