

January 11, 2021

Rob Peterson, CPUC  
c/o Tom Engels  
Horizon Water and Environment, LLC  
266 Grand Avenue, Suite 210  
Oakland, CA 94610

Re: Opposition to SE-PLR-2, Templeton – S. River Route Alternative

Dear Dr. Engels:

I live at 2925 Warm Springs Lane, Templeton, CA 93465, which is located in Santa Ysabel Ranch, and I am writing in opposition to the South River Route Alternative for a number of reasons.

The most important reason is fire hazard. As you know, the South River Route runs for a significant portion along South River Road, a narrow two-lane road with numerous houses on either side of it. The City of Paso Robles developed a lengthy risk assessment of potential local hazards and mitigation strategies for same in its February 2016 "Local Hazard Mitigation Plan" (the "City Plan"). The City Plan designated the land on either side of South River Road as being a "high" fire danger. Significantly, this same level of fire threat is not present along other proposed routes for the new transmission lines. Our house, like those of at least a dozen of our neighbors, is located on a small dead-end road (Warm Springs Lane) that parallels South River Road, and to leave our lot we must use Warm Springs Lane. Under the South River Route proposal, transmission poles would be located between the small area between Warm Springs Lane and South River Road. Our house, again like those of at least a dozen of our neighbor, backs up onto a steep multiacre canyon which is full of hundreds of oak trees and brush. There is no way to access this canyon in a vehicle other than by driving on Warm Springs Lane. Our house, again like those of at least a dozen of our neighbors, also frequently experiences high winds, as we are at the edge of the Templeton Gap. If transmission lines were routed along South River Road, the CPUC would be placing transmission lines in a high-fire zone, with significant fuel a couple hundred yards away, and in the event of downed transmission lines and a transmission-line caused fire, cutting off access to the only escape route—South River Road—thereby trapping the residents of Warm Springs Lane between the fire and an enormous fuel source. And once a fire reached the canyon behind our houses, many, many other homes would also be likely to burn. Given the fires of the past few years and our continuing climate challenges, this seems like an incredible risk that the CPUC would be incredibly foolish to run. The fact that the City of Paso Robles has explicitly recognized the high risk of fire in this area, that PB&E made Santa Ysabel Ranch bury its lines when the

community was being built, and that residents of Santa Ysabel Ranch are forced to buy additional fire insurance under the California FAIR Plan makes it clear that the risk of fire along South River Road is significant and well-known, and for the CPUC to disregard such a risk is unthinkable.

Secondly, the South River Route alternative would run poles and lines in a location far from the actual power need, and in violation of “non-wire” policy. It is my understanding that the additional power is needed for anticipated growth in North Paso Robles. It is also my understanding that California policy promotes “non-wire” alternatives. To build enormous poles and lines for power needed in another part of town—which is closer to other alternatives—and to violate the “non-wire” policy in such a clearly dangerous location makes no sense.

Lastly, the South River Route alternative would pose a tremendous threat to local wildlife. Santa Ysabel Ranch is home to Golden Eagles, who have nested for a number of years on the property, and is visited by Bald Eagles and other migratory birds. The deleterious impact of transmission line construction and of charged lines to such wildlife is well known.

For the sake of public safety—to avoid creating a threat that could result in the loss of hundreds of lives and millions of dollars of property—please do not put a transmission line along South River Road.

