



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

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

Dear Dr. Engels,

We strongly oppose the South River Route Alternative.

My wife and I, along with several other neighbors, live at the very top of the Santa Ysabel Ranch (the “Ranch”) on the hill containing the Blue Oak Forest. The Ranch is wholly located within a High Fire Hazard Zone. Transmission Lines in a wildfire area will greatly increase our risk of a devastating fire. Such a fire would race up the steep hills through our dry grasslands and oaks, taking every home in its path. High-voltage transmission lines were the cause of the November 2018 Camp Fire, which completely destroyed Paradise, California, and the October 2019 Kincade Fire. My childhood friend lost his home and all of his belongings in Paradise and his and his family’s life has not been the same since. Luckily, they survived and were not injured. Would we and all those who live on the Ranch be so lucky?

In the event of a fire along South River Road, evacuation would be nearly impossible because two of three exits from the Ranch feed onto South River Road. There are nearly 150 home on the Ranch and, on a daily basis, about 100 visitors. The only evacuation would be through the Hanging Tree Lane gate. Evacuation would take a long time and emergency vehicles coming onto the Ranch would further slow the process. Can you imagine the chaotic line of cars descending down the steep hill that is Hanging Tree Lane? I can, and the thought of it feels like another Paradise disaster.

I am informed that the energy required for our area ([REDACTED]) is small and could be provided with battery or thermal storage. The Templeton area does not have the capacity for much more residential growth, and certainly not for any large-scale commercial growth. Any future growth is expected to be to the north and east near the Paso Robles Airport. It seems to us that the proposed substation should be located in that region. Why is this route even being considered? Also, as a matter of policy, underground or non-wire alternatives should be the focus. This project should be progressive and an example of what can be done to effectively solve California’s energy needs.

The Ranch is home to Golden Eagles and many varieties of hawks, along with migratory Bald Eagles. There are many eagles' nests on the Ranch. The long construction time to install these high-voltage towers would unnecessarily expose this wildlife to deadly electrocution or collision.

The idyllic beauty of South River Road and the Ranch would be hugely affected if this project is permitted to proceed. This is one of the last pastoral routes entering Paso Robles. We drive it daily by choice and are always amazed by the beauty. We moved here in May 2020 from the beach in Cayucos. We willingly traded the blue Pacific for the jaw-dropping splendor that is the South River Road and this Ranch. The proposed project is not consistent with the County's current General Plan which identifies aesthetics as one of the important factors contributing to the County's community character.

Please do not put us, our wildlife, and the beauty of our community at further risk by moving forward with this route. It should be obvious that the South River Route Alternative would be a bad choice.

Sincerely,

