

Alpine Community Planning Group
P.O. Box 1419
Alpine, CA 91903

January 27, 2017

Robert Peterson, CPUC
C/o Tom Engles
Horizon Water and Environment
180 Grand Avenue, Suite 1405
Oakland, CA 94612
Sent Via Electronic Mail - suncrestproject@horizonh2o.com

Dear Mr. Peterson,

At the January 26th 2017 public meeting, the Alpine Community Planning Group voted 12-0 (2 absent, 1 vacant) in favor of making the following comments regarding the draft environmental impact report regarding the Proposed Suncrest Dynamic Reactive Power Support Project located within the community of Alpine, California.

Background & Primary Recommendation:

The community of Alpine was greatly affected by the construction of the Sunrise Powerlink Project. It is not hyperbole to state that Alpine was more affected by the project than any other community along the 117 mile transmission line. Overhead transmission lines crossed private property and affected cultural and biological resources on the South, East, and West edges of our community. The existing Suncrest substation was constructed at its current location by blasting, grading, and paving over almost 100 acres of land within the Cleveland National Forest and within our community boundaries. The greatest impact was due to the fact that the decision was made to underground approximately 6 miles of the line right through our village core along Alpine Blvd.

This decision was by far the most destructive. Rather than face opposition of environmental groups opposed to the Northern route through barren desert lands, or enter into negotiations with Cal-Trans to locate this 6 mile underground stretch of the transmission line in the median of Interstate-8, the CPUC allowed SDG&E to run a high voltage transmission line right through the heart of an established community in close proximity to schools, businesses, & residences. This decision caused major disruption to our community during the lengthy and hastily planned construction. All our local businesses along Alpine Blvd. were negatively affected and many closed their doors due to the economic losses as a result of the disruption. The hasty planning forced the County of San Diego Public Works Department to scrap plans for improvements to our storm drainage network along Alpine Blvd.

which means our village core may never be improved to handle significant storm events.

Worst of all, the effects of this decision linger to this day. These twin circuit 230-kV underground transmission lines bring measurably high levels of Electromagnetic Field radiation (EMF). The potential health risks associated with prolonged exposure to EMF has raised significant concern for the health and safety of our residents, especially our children who attend classes at elementary schools and preschools along Alpine Blvd. This new dynamic reactive power support project will result in increased transmission along these lines, and increased risks associated with even higher levels of EMF. For this reason our primary position on this project is complete support for the No Project Alternative.

Primary Project Concerns and Alternative Recommendation:

The community of Alpine voiced three primary concerns with the project:

1. A new substation creates an unmitigable increased fire risk.
2. The increased transmission of power through the lines enabled by the project increases potential risks associate with prolonged exposure to EMF's.
3. The new substation would require significant grading and construction that would have affects on biological resources, cultural resources, geology, hydrology, and water quality.

In the event that the No Project Alternative is not considered by the CPUC, the Alpine Community Planning Group strongly recommends that the CPUC consider the Suncrest Substation Alternative (20.3.3). Locating the SVC within the Suncrest Substation avoids virtually all environmental impacts and still achieves all other goals of the project. From the draft EIR:

The Suncrest Substation Alternative would avoid virtually all of the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project. Under the Suncrest Substation Alternative, there would be no land disturbance, trenching, or installation of new structures outside of the existing substation. As such, there would be no potential for impacts to aesthetics, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, or hydrology and water quality. The Suncrest Substation Alternative would require use of some construction equipment and therefore would generate some air emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise; however, these would all be substantially less than under the Proposed Project. Earth-moving construction equipment would not be required under the Suncrest Substation Alternative.

Our community has been confounded since day one why this option was not chosen by default. We have asked the question of why would a new facility be built when there is excess capacity within the existing facility. The only determination we can make is that all the stakeholders (CPUC, SDG&E, et al) realized the Sunrise Powerlink was a public relations disaster for SDG&E by any measure. We have to assume that the stake holders realized that the mere suggestion of more work and additional facilities to support the Sunrise Powerlink by SDG&E would cause

significant public opposition. So this project was proposed under the guise of a different contractor in NextEra Energy. Folks in our community have a saying for this - "same horse, different jockey".

We believe this project has been presented under the pretense of the work being completed and operated by a new energy partner to minimize public opposition. We find absolutely no reason why this project should not be co-located within the existing Suncrest Substation. The draft EIR clearly states that this is feasible and, although it would not alleviate all concerns about the affects of the project, it would likely avoid virtually all environmental impacts. For these reasons the Alpine Community Planning Group strongly recommends the CPUC consider the Suncrest Substation Alternative (20.3.3).

Additional Requests:

If the project does move forward, either in the Suncrest Substation Alternative, or in the new location the Alpine Community Planning Group makes the following two requests:

1. Fires originating or affecting substations such as these with high voltage transmission lines require additional and specialized fire support equipment and training. For this reason we request that this training be provided to the responsible fire authority for this project and the equipment be located on site. These were measures that were put in place for the original Suncrest substation and we feel that this should be an absolute requirement of the project.
2. As previously detailed, the community of Alpine has borne the brunt of negative impacts for a transmission line that benefits an entire region. Therefore we believe it is only fair to consider some equitable form of mitigation for this approximately \$80,000,000.00 project. Suggestions include monetary contributions to be used for public safety projects within our community or for the benefit of our local schools.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments and we are hopeful our recommendations will be given significant consideration.

Regards,



Travis Lyon | Chairman
Alpine Community Planning Group



cc:

San Diego County Supervisor Dianne Jacob
County of San Diego Planning and Development Services