

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 83507

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of WRIGHTWOOD DEVELOPMENT  
COMPANY to deviate from mandatory  
requirements for underground extension  
in Tract No. 30747, in unincorporated  
territory of Los Angeles County.

) Application No. 54882  
) (Filed May 15, 1974;  
) amended May 28, 1974  
) and May 30, 1974)

Harry Lieb, for Wrightwood Development  
Company, applicant.  
Woodbury, Cahall & Elston, by William T.  
Elston, Attorney at Law, for  
Southern California Edison Company,  
Intervenor.  
Erwin K. Kauper, for himself; and Donald  
H. Wilson, for Erwin K. Kauper;  
Interested parties.

O P I N I O N

By this application, Wrightwood Development Company, a partnership, requests authority to deviate from the mandatory undergrounding rules of this Commission. The involved utility is Southern California Edison Company. Hearing was held before Examiner Charles E. Mattson on July 8, 1974 at Los Angeles, California.

The Subdivision - Tract No. 30747

The final map on Tract No. 30747 was filed on November 10, 1971. The subdivision consists of 37 lots on an area of 12.109 acres. The tract is located in Wrightwood, an unincorporated community in the San Gabriel Mountains. Tract No. 30747 is in Los Angeles County. The Wrightwood area is completely surrounded by national forests, and the entire south border of Tract No. 30747 is along the national forest. South and west of the tract the terrain consists of steep and rugged mountains. In short, the area is unusually scenic.

The Mandatory Undergrounding Requirement

Southern California Edison Company appeared at the hearings. As counsel for Edison explained, the applicable undergrounding rule was established by Commission Decision No. 81620 dated July 24, 1973 as amended by Decision No. 81869 dated September 12, 1973 in Case No. 8993. No significant overhead lines exist within the tract, and no agreement for electrical service has been entered into by Edison. Under the circumstances, overhead extensions cannot be constructed to serve the tract unless the Commission authorizes an exemption from its mandatory undergrounding requirements. See Decision No. 81620, Appendix B, as amended, Decision No. 81869.

The Application

The application, as twice amended, sets forth the Development Company's basic contentions. Paragraph 14 of the original application reads as follows:

"Tract No. 30747 is located in the mountains in the heart of national forests. Every lot is covered with giant trees. All roads, water and fire hydrants are completed. The rugged, mountain terrain and the bordering national forests preclude any further development, and all streets end in cul-de-sacs with no possibility of progress beyond. There is no easy access to the area by the general public. The geology of the soil is schist with substantial number of huge boulders making trenching difficult and expensive. The heavy growth of trees would effectively conceal overhead facilities. All the other developments in the area are presently serviced by overhead facilities and such facilities are immediately adjacent the tract. The tract was developed through a formal subdivision. There have been no lot splits nor can any be made in the future. The tract cannot be seen from the highway, which is several thousand feet away."

Testimony

At hearing, the district manager of Southern California Edison Company testified. His testimony may be summarized in part as follows: The costs of trenching in the area do not appear excessive. The Wrightwood area is unusually scenic. The facilities of Edison in the developed areas have all been overhead installations. Edison will be converting existing overhead facilities to underground facilities along a portion of Angeles Crest Highway, the highway which passes through Wrightwood. This conversion project has an estimated cost of approximately a quarter of a million dollars. No conversion projects are contemplated in areas away from the highway.

The owner of a lot on the southerly side of the tract testified. He did not express a clear opinion on whether the proposed overhead facilities would have a significant environmental impact. The designer of the residence to be constructed on the lot testified. He stated that contemplated overhead facilities will adversely affect the view, which is to the north. He stated that this would be an adverse environmental impact.

Discussion

Applicant has not shown that undergrounding of electric distribution facilities on Tract No. 30747 would be impractical or unjust. Nor has it shown that undergrounding would harm the land or cause damage to the root structure of the trees. Indeed, application of Rule 15.1 to Tract No. 30747, which is located in the heart of an unusually scenic area, would advance the objectives of this Commission's undergrounding policies.

Findings

1. Applicant Wrightwood Development Company requests authority to deviate from the mandatory undergrounding requirements of the Commission.

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2. The residential subdivision is Tract No. 30747 in Los Angeles County. No overhead lines exist within the tract. Tract No. 30747 is subdivided into 37 lots on 12.109 acres.

3. Tract No. 30747 is located in the mountains in the heart of a national forest. The area is unusually scenic.

4. Overhead facilities may obstruct the view of intended residential buildings.

5. Overhead facilities in and adjacent to a scenic national forest may have an adverse visual impact.

6. Undergrounding of electric distribution lines in applicant's Tract No. 30747 would not place an unreasonable economic burden upon applicant or future lot owners.

7. Undergrounding of electric distribution lines in applicant's Tract No. 30747 would not cause unreasonable damage to soil or trees.

Conclusion

Applicant has not shown sufficient cause to justify a deviation from this Commission's undergrounding rule.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that Application No. 54882 is denied. The effective date of this order is the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 15<sup>th</sup> day of OCTOBER, 1974.

Vernon L. Sturgeon  
President  
William J. Moore  
[Signature]  
[Signature]  
Commissioners

*I dissent, I would grant the deviation*  
*[Signature]*  
-4- Commissioner