

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

In the Matter of the Application of
San Diego Gas & Electric Company
(U-902) for a Certificate of Public
Convenience and Necessity for the
Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Project

Application No. 06-08-010
(filed August 4, 2006)

Application No. 05-12-014
(Filed December 14, 2005)

**PROTEST AMENDMENT OF
COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR SENSIBLE ENERGY (CASE)**

Dated: September 21, 2006

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Pursuant to Administrative Law Judge Steven A. Weissman's Ruling Setting Date for Prehearing Conference Statements and Extending Time for Filing Protests dated August 25, 2006, the Community Alliance for Sensible Energy (CASE), a rural San Diego County grass-roots community group ("the community group") submits this timely Protest Amendment (which expands upon and refers to our February 17, 2006 protest in this matter), maintaining our objection and protest to the granting on whole of the authority sought by San Diego Gas & Electric ("SDG&E") pursuant to Applications No. 06-08-010 / 05-12-014 (the Applications) before the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California ("the Commission").

1. CASE is represented by Mary Aldern, Carolyn Morrow, and Joe Rauh, P.O. Box 321, Warner Springs, California, 92086.¹ As stated in our previous protest, CASE is “a group of citizens residing in communities throughout San Diego County, including but not limited to Ranchita, San Felipe, Warner Springs, Santa Ysabel, Lake Henshaw, Mesa Grande, Sunshine Summit, Julian, Borrego Springs, and Chihuahua Valley, with support from many of the areas’ civic organizations, including but not limited to the Montezuma Valley Historical Society, the Montezuma Valley Community Center, The Montezuma Valley Volunteer Fire Department, and the Warner Community Resource Center.” These communities all fall within the “Central Link” portion of the Sunrise proposal.²

2. In the amended application A.06-08-010, we notice some changes in the preferred proposed route as it travels to and through our rural “Central Link.”³ The most curious of our observations includes sections of “underbuilt” proposed project, between “N10A” (east of Tamarisk Grove, ABDSP) and “N16C,” at the top of the residential section, perhaps just outside of Grapevine Canyon.⁴ We also notice an “under-grounding” of the consolidated 92kV and 69 kV lines in the Road ROW, (with no mention of a 500kV), just east of Tamarisk Grove.⁵ Why would the application suggest such a mottled preferred route, which skips from being “built” to “underbuilt”? Functionally and economically, it doesn’t make sense. This proposal seems reminiscent of the time-consuming winning strategy which developers used to install Freeway 56 from Del Mar to Poway; they built the two ends, and eventually the highly contested middle materialized, at the cost of tax payers and homeowners, some 15 years later. We believe that the Sunrise Powerlink proposal makes clear the possible intent of the utility or parent utility to build as much as it can, now, and then destroy the Anza Borrego Desert State Park and the rest of the “underbuilt” zone later, at ratepayer cost, should the laws that protect the park change later. This is not a cooperative plan that intends to protect the park or meet the concerns of the area communities in the long run.

¹ Revised CASE address submitted September 13, 2006 at the Prehearing Conference in Ramona, CA.

² Page 2, section 1, CPUC document: Protest of the Community Alliance for Sensible Energy, February 17, 2006

³ Maps Figure 1, 2, 3, 4A, 4B prepared by Aspen Environmental Group, attached to SDG&E Notice of Preparation/Notice of Public Scoping Meetings for an EIR/EIS

⁴ Maps Figure 3, 4A, same as above

⁵ Map Figure 3

3. Along those lines, interestingly, as the vision of the preferred route of the Sunrise Powerlink becomes revealed, it is still the start and end terminals that continue to appear more important than the route itself.⁶ When the project was reviewed and approved by the California Independent System Operator, these maps did not detail any “on” or “off” ramps, or scale drawings of the links, indicating an apparent disconnect between the communities its designers intend for it to travel through.⁷ In addition, the description of the expandable design and the step-down in voltage from 500kV to 230kV at the proposed Central East Link Substation leads us to believe that further connections will be pursued by the utility, indeed, as other published maps indicate (Arizona). We would like to see the rest of the intended linkages for the Sunrise Powerlink, to show evaluators the whole picture, the “whole loop” that it ultimately intends to connect with, and the total number of communities it eventually intends to destroy, and for what.

These omissions lead us to believe that any use of eminent domain in this case would be inappropriate, as the true purpose of this line has yet to be accurately described in the application, for the review by everyone, from CPUC commissioners all the way to the hundreds of affected landowners and ratepayers.

4. In this case, the CPUC has also outlined a procedure for dealing with the public, involving court orders for surveying properties should a land owner refuse permission.⁸ The utility has chosen not to honor this procedure, but to follow only part of the California Professional Business Code instead, bypassing private property rights.⁹ The unrelieved frustration of the numerous homeowners in the Central Link, grown from this

⁶ North County Times, “State orders SDG&E to explore route around park; Hundreds attend hearing on Sunrise power line in Ramona,” Sept. 14, 2006, Dave Downey: “Avery said the [only] ways to avoid the park are to ... loop north of San Diego County and go through Riverside County.”

⁷ As seen at a CAISO open house in Penasquitos, CA earlier this year in the proceedings.

⁸ Letters received by numerous landowners in the Central Link, sent by SDG&E and their agents, outlining the process by which landowners would be taken to court.

⁹ Letters received by numerous landowners in the Central Link, sent by SDG&E and their agents, citing incomplete portions of the CPBC, and negating previously received letters and announcing their intent to enter properties without property owner permission, in the presence of law enforcement.

kind of aggressive disregard from the utility and their agents, has cumulated in a year-long testimony of ongoing struggle, and does not appear to be losing steam.^{10 11 12 13 14}

In fact, the utility attempts to hasten the CPUC process along at every turn, as was evident in the Prehearing Conference September 13, 2006, when Greg Barnes, Sempra's lawyer, stated that this is a well know case, and the public has had more than enough time to review the materials. The utility does not wish to afford those people in newly impacted areas like San Felipe the time it takes to understand how their homes, and lives, will be deeply affected by this person-eating, hap-hazard, tsunami-sized project.

5. At the March 20 presentation by SDG&E at Warner Springs, the utility was informed that they failed to provide a detailed map of the proposed route as it makes its transition from the upper elevations of Grapevine Canyon to the next map to the west, in the vicinity of the intersection of county roads S-22 and S-2. This is once again the case, and we feel that this is an important transition which deserves to be delineated, as it involves many issues including traffic and public safety. We would like to see this unpublished part of the detailed route, as is required by the CPUC.

6. This new proposed route does not appear to cross over the main roads in the "Central Link," as much as the previously suggested preferred route, however, it continues to devastate the Grapevine Canyon neighborhood of Ranchita, it goes dangerously close to a well-established family daycare center in Santa Ysabel, and continues to threaten the life-supporting businesses near Dudley's Bakery, a backcountry institution in the town of Santa Ysabel. Also, it is now sited unfavorably close to two BLM Wilderness Study

¹⁰ Appendix A: San Diego Union-Tribune, Sept. 21, 2006, "Owners just say 'no' as power lines loom", by J. Harry Jones

¹¹ Appendix B: The Julian News, January 4, 2006, "SDG&E Powerlink Meeting Finally Makes Its Way to Warner Springs," submitted by Mary Aldern

¹² The Julian News, January 18, 2006, "Why Did You Miss Us? Warners, Ranchita and Other Backcountry Residents Protest 500kV Power Link Proposal," by Michael Hart.

¹³ The San Diego Union-Tribune, January 11, 2006, "Power line plan energizes opponents," by J. Harry Jones

¹⁴ Borrego Sun, January 12, 2006, "Sponsor Group opposes SDG&E's 500-kV line across state park land," by Tom Gorton

Areas (San Ysidro and San Felipe). We do not notice consolidation of the 15kV in the vicinity of the homes in the Grapevine Canyon area. How many rows of poles would there eventually be in this area? In the Notice of Preparation – Notice of Public Scoping Meetings document, the Central Link is described as an unlivable place consisting of a tangle of poles, wires, and structures requiring hundreds of acres of community losses.¹⁵ We do not notice any offers to soften these takings, such as the installation of an underground transmission in the Grapevine Canyon area, or the tourist areas along “Central Link” road ROWs, though we notice a new offer to underground the “underbuilt” line in a non-residential area of Highway 78 through the Anza Borrego Desert.

7. In the amended application A.06-08-010, we notice the addition of a new substation with no deletion of the substation at the intersection of S-2 and State Route 79, more than doubling the environmental impact on the earth, and furthering our protest of this outrageous proposal.¹⁶ This new site for the “Central East Substation” is a devastating suggestion to the historic town of San Felipe, which is only involved in the proposed route because the Sunrise Powerlink goes out of its way to go there, to deposit a huge 106-acre substation in the heart of the historic district, only to double back again to leave, bringing no local use to this atrocity. This plan will ensure San Felipe’s demise as an enclave of significant historic buildings associated with California’s Butterfield Stagecoach route.
8. The proposed placement of this substation is directly behind San Felipe’s only restaurant and community gathering spot, “RD’s Log Cabin.” The many tourists and locals that currently stop here and bring valuable dollars to this region may not want to if there are possibly hazardous, looming poles overhead and in the distance. In the future, we believe that the CPUC should require utilities like SDG&E to prove why such permanent destruction is warranted before even a map is drawn with such an atrocious suggestion.

¹⁵ P. 5-6

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 5-6

This substation is incorrectly labeled in the CAISO studies as being only 10 miles from the Imperial Valley Substation.¹⁷ Indeed, this San Felipe Substation is about 6 miles from the existing Warner Substation, however it is a significant distance to the Imperial County line from the San Felipe near Ranchita, taking perhaps an hour to drive there by car. We wonder if this confusing word play and mistaken fact on the place name “San Felipe” would make any difference in the CAISO calculations on need, and request that the CAISO re-analyse its statements to correct its mistake.

9. Also, the addition of another substation or the expansion of the original increases the impact on the scientific work done at the world famous Palomar Observatory, which, as we stated in our previous protest, restricts all light-producing activity in this zone.¹⁸

10. No payment for damages, outside of insufficient tokens of mitigation, have been suggested, as has been done in Imperial County, where air-quality damages are acknowledged and citizens can at least expect some sort of value payment for the degradation of their lives and surroundings.¹⁹ It is sufficiently documented how homeowners have often been left stranded with worthless properties, when a powerline proposal comes in, drains property owners of their time and energy, is eventually built, taking land, does not re-pay enough to move across town, and then remains as a symbol of the power to destroy the unfortunate property-owner to feed the extravagant desires of others.

11. We would like to know how many actual acres in the highly impacted Central Link would either be spoiled or degraded from the view of these massive towers, so that we could eventually calculate the exact value of our community view-shed degradation.

¹⁷ CAISO statement of need in the Proponent’s Amended Application

¹⁸ Quote from Scot Kardel, public relations director of the Palomar Observatory, Palomar Mountain, CA, and employees of the Warner Unified School District, which have their football game lights limited at night.

¹⁹ Citizen’s Energy Corporation statement in Proponent’s Amended Application, MOA

12. To make this little-understood area of the map more well-known, we would like to offer the commissioners of the CPUC and the judge in this case, Judge Weissman, a personal tour of the area, which could include:

- a. the historically significant locations in the “Central Link” vicinity, including the community of San Felipe, the Warner Springs Resort (where American soldiers stayed before going on to win California for the United States), Butterfield Stage Coach Route (where some of America’s first Gold Miners reached this land), and archaeological sites in Grapevine Canyon (birthplace of the Santa Ysabel Diegueno Indians),
- b. visual inspection of the impacts to this rural vacation zone, the “Central Link” communities of Warner Springs, Ranchita, San Felipe, Lake Henshaw, Santa Ysabel, Julian, Sunshine Summit, and Chihuahua Valley.
- c. the proximity of the Ranchita BLM wilderness preserves to the proposed route,
- d. the historic ranch house and resort at Warner Springs.

13. The Sunrise Powerlink continues to display weakness in the realm of reliability and national security in the county, state, national and international arena:

- a. The Sunrise Powerlink originates at the Imperial Valley (IV) Substation, the same station that the Southwest Powerlink originates. We asked the question at the Warner Route Announcement Meeting (March 22, 2006), “What would happen in the event of a catastrophe at the IV substation?” and the SDG&E representatives admitted that “it would be a bad day... yup, a really bad day.” In other words, the region’s main line and back-up line could both go out, in a catastrophic or terrorist event.
- b. The two long lines would also be simple terrorist or vandalism targets, due to their unusually long length and rural, “unguardable” nature.
- c. The Sunrise Powerlink would be connecting to a binational energy and fuel supply system at the Imperial Valley Substation, which would increase our energy dependence on international political relations and the fluctuating price of fuel, while guaranteeing only that our chances to be alternative and renewable energy

self-sufficient would be reduced. The energy supply would be more available, but its cost could be as high or higher than during the energy crisis of 2001.²⁰

- d. We also know that the utility has full knowledge of the special low-fly zone of the US Military as it crosses the Pacific Divide, in Ranchita, right in the vicinity of Grapevine Canyon.²¹ Military pilots fly low and fast through this zone, as part of their training. We residents know that our tax-fed airplanes fly so low that they are actually BELOW people standing on small area hills.²² The utility responded that they cannot be responsible for these protectors of our National Security if these pilots fly below specified range or in “no-fly” zones. Conversely, we feel that turning a blind eye to reality is unsafe and unwise; we do not feel that we can or should restrict the traditional military use of this zone, in this case.
- e. There is a downdraft in the vicinity of Volcan Mountain (where San Felipe is),²³ which is a cause for small aircraft concern during inclement weather in the mountains. We, as the residents of this air zone, protest any interference with this natural condition that would increase the already high hazards and dangers for local pilots and residents in these conditions.
- f. Neither the utility, the military, or the public can afford to pay for more expensive blunders, especially when they are completely avoidable (the DEA claimed responsibility for Pines Fire, at taxpayers expense).

14. Along those lines, we continue to question the placement of a fire-creating structure in country where significant “fire stories” precede the written word.^{24 25}

15. We question the placement of a land-anchored structure on a route that follows the major earthquake faults of the county, which, by the way, are active, and as recently as last year

²⁰ CorpWatch: May 27, 2002, “Sempra: Exporting Pollution,” by J.P. Ross, <http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=2588>

²¹ Planning Advisory Handbook, Appendix A, page A-10 November 30, 2005

²² Testimony of several area residents

²³ Karen Willat, pilot, and owner, Warner Springs Glider Port

²⁴ Native American stories, Diegueno and Cahuilla, San Diego County

²⁵ Fresno Bee, Sept. 20, 2006, “Power Firm Settles Forest Fire Lawsuit for \$14 million.”

were predicted to suffer “a big one” any time within the next 10 years, and could cause severe damage to the infrastructure of the proposed transmission line.²⁶

16. We agree with the Imperial Valley County Board of Supervisors, that the approval of one atrocity will just lead to further development.
17. Other counties in California, such as Fresno and Alameda, have created municipal buildings and parking structures which incorporate highly efficient energy saving and solar-energy producing designs using renewable and alternative technology. These concrete local conservation and clean-generation projects easily guarantee the use of clean energy, unlike the Sunrise Powerlink, which only alludes to the remote possibilities. We believe that the cities and communities of San Diego County should participate in similar progressive programs to conserve energy and replace old technology with new, at a highly aggressive rate, before there is any loss of livelihood in the county due to increased importation of energy.
18. These progressive-type projects will also ensure our local contribution to state-wide global warming gas reduction plans. Contrarily, the Sunrise Powerlink only opens up yet another huge avenue for fossil-fuel powered energy to enter the United States, along with the pollution it creates.^{27 28 29}
19. The San Diego Regional Energy Report 2030 should be adhered to on all points.
20. Despite the many reasons why this proposal should be wholly rejected, we have noticed that the utility has gathered support for the Sunrise Powerlink from several mayors from around the county. Why not route the Sunrise Powerlink through those communities that

²⁶ Jared Aldern, environmental historian

²⁷ CorpWatch, May 27, 2002, “Sempra: Exporting Pollution”

²⁸ CEC-300-2006-004: January 2006, “Building a ‘Margin of Safety’ into Renewable Energy Procurements: A review of experience with Contract Failure.”

²⁹ Los Angeles Times, September 22, 2006, “PUC Clears Way for Liquefied Gas Imports,” by Elizabeth Douglas

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APPENDIX A

Owners just say 'no' as power lines loom

San Diego Union Tribune

By J. Harry Jones

UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

September 21, 2006

RANCHITA – A small skirmish in what has become a war over San Diego Gas & Electric's proposed Sunrise Powerlink played out yesterday morning at a remote ranch in Grapevine Canyon .

It involved sheriff's deputies, a Sempra corporate security official, two surveyors and Glynn and Carolyn Morrow, who felt their land was about to be invaded.

On the edge of the Morrow's 160-acre property off Grapevine Canyon Road is a sign depicting al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden holding an assault rifle. On bin Laden's shirt is an SDG&E label. He is saying, "Law. What law. We take what we want and don't care."

The issue: the utility's proposed \$1.3 billion project, a 150-mile 500-kilovolt transmission line that will likely run within 700 feet of the Morrows' home. Where there are now 40-foot-tall poles supporting a 67-kilovolt line will be towers at least three times as tall, if the state approves the project and the route.

The Morrows were informed last week that a subcontractor for SDG&E would be visiting their horse ranch, Golightly Farms, yesterday to conduct land surveying for the line. Four times before, surveyors had tried to gain access, but each time they were chased off by one of the Morrows, who told them they were trespassing.

This time, three sheriff's deputies came along as escorts.

Glynn Morrow, 52, had been saying all morning he was prepared to go to jail before he would let them on his property.

"I'll be the martyr. I don't care," he said.

About 8:45 a.m., Mark Meyer, a Sempra security official, approached in the company of the deputies and told the Morrows that the law allows them access to the property for surveying. The Morrows told them no, the surveyors either had to have their permission or a court order.

The Morrows then demanded that the surveyors, who were waiting hundreds of feet down the road, provide documents, including copies of a workman's compensation and liability insurance policies.

Glynn Morrow, a former New Yorker who purchased the ranch 2½ years ago, told Meyer the surveyors were like "New York cockroaches" who come out into the open when no one is looking, then scurry away when they're spotted.

The day before, he had gone to Vista Superior Court seeking an injunction barring the surveying, but he was told it couldn't be issued on such short notice and for other reasons.

Sheriff's Sgt. Darrell Carr, who was clearly uncomfortable with the situation, huddled with Meyer, then told the Morrows that although he understood their concerns, he wasn't going to stop anything because of paperwork he was sure existed.

Surveyors Keith Moll and Mike Shortt waited patiently. Told that Glynn Morrow often practiced target shooting from his front porch, using the bin Laden posters as targets, Shortt said jokingly that his orange vest was made of Kevlar, a material used for bulletproofing. All they were there to do, Moll said, was to quickly map property lines.

About 90 minutes after the confrontation began, Moll, Shortt and Meyer, accompanied by the deputies, walked onto the property with a GPS surveying device. Less than a minute later they were finished and left. Moll said it was just the beginning of the surveying project and that they would be back.

Carolyn Morrow said in the meantime, she was going to figure out just what her rights are and how to get an injunction. She maintains that since the power line has not yet been approved, there is no reason for the surveyors to be on their land.

SDG&E spokeswoman Stephanie Donovan said the surveying is required as part of the application process. She also said the Sheriff's Department was asked to get involved yesterday because in June, Glynn Morrow confronted surveyors while holding a gun. She said the company wanted to make sure its employees and contractors were safe.

Numerous community groups from Carmel Valley to Imperial County have joined forces with environmental groups in opposing the line, which SDG&E maintains is needed by 2010 to ensure a reliable supply of electricity for the county.

Perhaps nowhere is the opposition stronger than in the county's rural backcountry. Along state Route 79 about a half mile north of Santa Ysabel, near the proposed route, property owners Glenda Kimmerly and her husband, Denis Trafecanty, have erected two signs. One reads "Blue Sky or Cold Steel." The other: "Enjoy the view before it's gone." Kimmerly and Trafecanty were with the Morrows yesterday for moral support.

Opponents contend the line is not needed and is motivated by greed. The state's Public Utilities Commission has begun what will likely be a yearlong process of evaluating the utility's application. Last week at a meeting in Ramona, the panel told SDG&E to provide an alternative route that does not cross Anza-Borrego State Park. The directive did not indicate the commission wants the line elsewhere, only that it wants an alternative to consider.

SDG&E has said the line must cross the park, along an existing right-of-way, for the proposal to be feasible. Should the commission order a route that doesn't go through the park, portions of the line proposed near Ranchita and the Morrow home most likely would also be altered.

■ J. Harry Jones: (760) 737-7579; jharry.jones@uniontrib.com

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/northcounty/20060921-9999-7m21link.html>

APPENDIX B

Public Service Announcement: THE SDGE SUNRISE POWERLINK

Printed word for word in The Julian News, January 4, 2006, "SDG&E Powerlink Meeting Finally Makes Its Way to Warner Springs."

"Powerlink Power Meeting Finally Makes Its Way to Warner Springs"

Contact: Mary Aldern, Ranchita Community Resident, San Diego, CA
(760)782-9036 or c. (760)415-0741 (author)

Who: The residents of Ranchita, Lake Henshaw, Warner Springs School District, and other communities affected by the SDGE Powerlink proposal

What: Presentation by SDGE representative Scot Crider, Bill Powers, from the Border Power Plant Working Group, and Jim Bell, an internationally recognized expert on life sustaining development, and consultant on renewable energy self sustainability.

The main points of the presentations will include examining the stated need for the project, the cost, the process, the time-line, the routes, serious constraints on our routes (see p. 5 of this PSA), and community participation opportunities.

This meeting was organized by Mary Aldern, community member.

When: January 11, 2006, 4-7:30pm Open House, 5-6pm Speaker's presentation

Where: Warner School Cafeteria, Hwy 79, Warner Springs, CA

- Residents of Ranchita/San Felipe/Warner Springs (communities which lie at the heart of the SDGE's Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Line Proposal) will hold a community meeting, to review the proposal. Residents from other communities affected by the proposal and members of the press are welcome to attend.
- The meeting will be on January 11, 2006, at the Warner School Cafeteria, on Hwy 79 in Warner Springs, from 4pm-7:30pm. The room will be open from 4-5pm, for people to review posters, articles and other materials. From 5-6pm, there will be a speakers' presentation to the community:

- Scot Crider, Director of PR for SDGE, who will speak about the proposed routes of the Sunrise Powerlink Proposal
- Bill Powers, of the Border Power Plant Working Group, who will speak about other viable alternatives to this proposed transmission line that meet the needs and requirements of the CPUC, but do not directly benefit SDGE or Sempra Energy. The benefit of these alternatives is that they do not affect California's largest state park, or the backcountry.
- Jim Bell, an internationally recognized expert on life-sustaining development, from Ocean Beach, who will speak of the feasibility of county-wide renewable energy self sufficiency through the use of solar power. Jim is currently doing a feasibility to explore the possibility of independence and energy self sufficiency for the city of Chula Vista

This program will be followed by Q & A, and more open house. Visuals will include:

1. maps from SDGE, regarding the 3 proposed routes
2. newspaper and internet articles on different subjects, such as property values, safety issues, and how to file a comment with the Public Utilities Commission
3. articles from different communities such as Julian, Borrego, Ramona, North County and San Diego
4. information from Bill Powers, from Border Power Plants Working Group, and Jim Bell, from OB, regarding alternative options to meet our energy supply needs.

Speakers will be on hand to answer questions during the open house periods.

- This meeting, like the Julian meeting, was not coordinated by SDGE, but rather, by a concerned area resident, Mary Aldern, who wanted her community to be fully informed and for its voice to be heard. Aldern, a mother of 2, is an outdoor education specialist, as well as a long-time backcountry resident. She felt that the meeting was necessary because she knew that many area residents were unaware of the facts:

“A friend told us about the Borrego meeting, before Thanksgiving, and my husband Jared went. There, he was shown that our community was under investigation. Then I saw the story in the Ramona paper. After that, I started calling around to see what neighbors might have heard. I called friends and neighbors from all over, and in the Ranchita, San Felipe and Warner communities. I spent a whole day trying to find information; I went to both the Ranchita/San Felipe and Warner community centers, the Ranchita Store, I went to the Warner Springs Airport, the Warner Springs Resort, I called the superintendent of the Warner School District, the Indian Reservations at Los Coyotes and Santa Ysabel, even the Ranchita Fire Department and the Sheriff. I only found two individuals who had even heard about it.

“I asked SDGE why our community was not included, seeing as it we are such a large district, and represented two of the three high voltage pathways, in addition to the 80-acre substation, and their representative told me that we had been sent postcards about the other community meetings. Later, I found a postcard, and many people in Borrego also found the same postcard, in the mail, which arrived after the Borrego and Ramona meetings had already passed.

“I told SDGE that Warner Unified School District is one of the largest school districts in the county, with two community centers, one in Ranchita and one in Warner Springs. I informed them that there were no meetings held here. I stressed that we were a fire-ravaged community that has so far evacuated the last three seasons in a row, and that many people here don't have the time or money to travel 45 minutes to an hour to another community after work, and many don't even drive. Still, I got nothing but open reluctance on their part to come to this area. It began to feel like some kind of information blackout for this community. So, I started calling representatives. And I began to arrange a community meeting anyway. Eventually, SDGE came around.

“This was definitely turning in to a situation where we were not going to be represented in the process- not just now, but during all of the meetings down the line as well. I'm still not sure if SDGE really wants our input, but with help from

some of our elected representatives, I now know that we will get a fair chance to give it. Input is great. We have all kinds of people out here; lots of ranching and agriculture, horse and nature lovers, retirees, fixed income, commuters, simple folks, hermits... even some SDGE company families. We too want to know how this project could change the economic health of our area. Now we will all get a chance to understand the whole story.

“Also, residents wanted to know what the white crosses SDGE surveyors recently left on their properties were all about. SDGE began an aerial survey, and the road down Grapevine Canyon, from Ranchita into the Anza-Borrego State Park, was graded, before residents had even learned what the Powerlink even was.

The main points of the presentations will include examining the stated need for the project, the cost, the process, the time-line, the routes, constraints on routes, and community participation opportunities.

- “So first, we need to ask SDGE why this proposal is happening. What is the sudden need for this line, which carries 20 times more electricity than what we are using now? Exactly who would use it, and who would pay for it?
- That is the \$1.4 billion dollar question, the projected cost of the project. This figure is quite extravagant for the San Diego rate-payers. It seems a bit like buying a Hummer when you’re broke. What else can we get for that much money? Can we meet our needs in a less expensive plan? Our speakers, our specialists, will weigh-in, with their opinions, and we will get a chance to ask questions. At stake are our homes, and the largest, most serene and treasured state park in California, and local scenic rural canyons and valleys, and perhaps our own ability to stay calm during fire season. These are costs we will pay as well. Yet, some say that our energy will be cheaper, once Powerlink can bring it to us. Where are these “cheaper energy markets” that SDGE speaks of? What kind of energy is it? One of today’s internet stories tell of folks in Imperial Valley worrying that Powerlink might give rise to more powerplants being built across the Mexican border.

- Not only the cost, but the size, is reminiscent of “The Titanic--,” and elicits similar worries.
- The real process that is going on is already in full swing. We have some serious catching up to do. SDGE already filed the application with the Public Utilities Commission, on December 14, regarding the “need for energy reliability and to relieve congestion and to give access to renewables.” The comment period only lasts until January 18th, three days after our meeting. So, participants at the meeting wishing to file comments with the PUC will be given the necessary assistance. We hope that SDGE adds our comments to their report to the PUC, although they are not obligated to.
- The routes are an interesting point. “The public is being led to believe that there are three routes, and the bickering is entertaining, but SDGE has been negotiating with the Anza Borrego Desert State Park since last year to follow the route along the existing 69kV route which goes up Grapevine Canyon, Ranchita, and then up S2 to a substation at the corner of S2 and Hwy79. This is currently “the path of least resistance.”

As it appears to be the pathway with the fewest “constraints,” there would be many who would beg to differ. “At another one of the previous meetings (was it Julian?), a SDGE representative was quoted as saying, ‘the communities know what’s special about their place, not us, and that’s what we need to know- we need you to tell us.’ Well, this is finally our turn. We get to be the squeaky wheel, I guess. We hope to add some constraints to the Grapevine Canyon column:

1. For one, it is a wilderness area, where the appropriateness of even the existing line is debatable. And the Santa Ysabel Band of Diegueno Indians can tell you about the ancient Village, there, since it is a very significant place to them; it is the birthplace of their people, where all the plants and animals come out of the desert- it is the home of their creation story. A 500kV transmission line really does not belong in a place of such cultural significance. Really, at least for them, it is a very, very Holy place. We would never string a line like that through the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC, or any place like that.

2. And then there are more general questions: Will concerns over excessive dust near such high voltage restrict recreational ORV, horse or 4WD uses? What about precipitation like snow, ice, and hail? Do they pose dangers of arc-ing?
3. Is it safe for local kids to be at bus stops near the route? According to SDGE, the Warner Valley could be home to an 80-acre High Voltage Power Substation, with one 150 ft. tower per acre, situated at the corner of HWY 79 and S-2, the intersection of two Warner Unified School District bus routes, and a very very busy rest stop, for desert and local motorists and tourists. This does not seem appropriate; facilities like this should be located away from places where children and tourists frequent.
4. How will the military jets and helicopters flying very low overhead in this area fare with such tall towers and wires bisecting their flight patterns? A representative from Darryl Issa's Vista office, "Rex," told us "We're meeting with the military and SDGE about this very issue in January."
5. How can it be safe if there is brush and extremely rough terrain underneath it, being only cleared near the poles? Who will be the first-responders for the line and keep it safe- our volunteer fire departments?! Like the many Julian residents chanting, "SDGE, DON'T BURN US OUT," the Aldern family is also skeptical of the safety aspects of any of Powerlink's three routes. In July of 2002, they watched in disbelief as the Pines fire came over from Julian and jumped a firebreak five 'dozers wide and S-2, and burned down the whole town of Ranchita, including their property. So, when Julian folks cried, "Not in my backyard," Aldern thought, "We ARE Julian's backyard; when they burn we burn... and vice versa. The whole backcountry is inextricably tied together when it comes to fire. We had to wait for rain to put out the Cedar and Paradise fires. It is an undeniable risk. "This is the first in four years that we did not evacuate. After the Pines Fire, there were the Cedar and

Paradise Fires threatening us, and then the Mataguay Fire, which caused all the terrible mud slides and accidents last winter.

6. Tourism is also a very big deal here: The Warner Valley is where the locals take their own vacation. In fact, the Volcan Mountain Preserve Foundation, of Julian, has their annual fundraiser in Warner Springs. Teachers and Business people from all around the backcountry come here for their annual meetings, planning meetings, seminars and retreats. People from across southern California, from La Jolla to Los Angeles, come to recreate here. We have a world class glider port. The hot springs had been a destination throughout history; Stephen Kearny stopped here with his Army of the West in 1849. We, like Julian, are a recreation district worth protecting. A huge unsightly substation and high voltage power line do not belong anywhere out here. Articles from the internet show a loss of property value of up to as much as 50%, documented in rural, agricultural, vacation and tourism based communities where people go to “get away from it all.” Meanwhile, SDGE’s property assessment team claims property losses on nearby properties is questionable. Especially for fire victims who have not rebuilt yet, their property value may drop quite significantly. This could prove to be a bad situation for the local economy.
7. The 500kV line would travel down the historic Butterfield Stagecoach Route of 1849, perhaps our most historic road in the county, near the Warner Ranch House and the Old Kimball’s Store. These are quaint historic highlights for the many, many roadsters and car clubs who tour this part of the county. Thousands of school children from around the county also come, each year, along this route, during county outdoor school camp outings, and learn about nature, wildlife and California and local history. The imposing and unsightly 150 foot towers would greatly impact the rural nature of these historical experiences.
8. The Cal-Tech Palomar Observatory, which sits atop Palomar Mountain and faces Warner and Ranchita, demands a certain darkness for its world

class Astronomy Research Program. Would the substation and powerline change the dark and quiet nature of the whole area? Would possible future development threaten this unique member of the community?

- And once there are major constraints in all three columns, what then? There are a growing number of people, from all of the different backcountry communities, who oppose the whole line. One such person has written a “main points” and a “What you can do” summary for people interested in further participation, which will be available at the meeting (for press, upon request)

“Well we all need energy, right? We all use it. But Jim Bell says that we can meet all of our energy needs using ‘roof-top solar,’ and be self sufficient as well. He also suggested that San Diego could pursue conservation more seriously. So, I guess that idea is what started me on this quest to see if all that were true, which eventually led to this meeting, and getting so involved. This is exactly what Suze Orman, from the KPBS TV show, “Young, Fabulous, and Broke,” speaks of. She said in certain situations, the wisest thing to do is invest in yourself, so you don’t have to keep living in debt, living out of control. Certain debt is valid, if it leads to self-sufficiency in the end. When we give up that control, we remain at the mercy of others. I look at my kids, and all of the wonderful kids I know, and think how they deserve a good world to live in- a fantastic, safe, yet adventuresome, rich and self-sustaining world. A non-polluting world. We have so much creative technology-why not put it to work? In the end, the kids are perhaps our most special asset. They carry on our work. How much easier it will be for them if our world is self sustaining! I hope people will come and explore the options at the meeting.

“I guess there have been generations of people who have faced similar heart-breaking difficult decisions. We must do what we can, in hopes that it will make some kind of difference, so that the world will be better for it. I think particularly of John Muir, the Scottish man on our state quarter. He was from a

very rugged and sublime place- much like the chaparral. I have a particular affinity for him, since I lived in Scotland for a year during college. But he ended up in California, and he became our nation's star naturalist. He helped to establish the national park system, and surely saw the good in trying to protect the world's natural wonders for generations to come. I often think about losses, and the O'Shaughnessy Dam on the Hetch Hetchy River in Yosemite comes to mind. If we allow Powerlink to go through our nature preserves, we might regret our sacrifice. San Diego is the most biologically diverse county in the nation, with more different kinds of plants and animals, and different kinds of habitats, than anywhere else in the United States. I feel it is an honor and our duty to protect them, as county, state, and national treasures, for the generations to come.

“While the Sunrise Powerlink may represent the possibility of a new dawning of power for SDGE and Sempra Energy, to me, it represents a threat; a darkness, a SUNSET, of sorts, on our quiet, natural, joyful and backcountry rural way of life. For the many quiet folks who thought they had found paradise, who may be forced to leave their homes, or the many who may see the intrusive poles each and every day for the rest of their days here, the magnificent beautiful and natural sunrises and sunsets will never be quite the same.(Mary Aldern, 12-28-06)

“I don't know, Linus, for some reason, I just don't feel like celebrating.”

— Charlie Brown, from “Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown”

“Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you got, till it's gone....”

—Joni Mitchell, “Big Yellow Taxi”

This is the Sept. 20 updated CPUC email service list for

CASE's Protest Addendum

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