

**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)

**PRE-HEARING COMMENTS OF
COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR SENSIBLE ENERGY (CASE)**

Dated: September 7, 2006

Mary Aldern
Director, CASE
36264 Montezuma Valley Rd
Ranchita, CA 92066
(760)782-9036
(559)323-6750
Hikermomma1@yahoo.com

**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)

**PRE-HEARING COMMENTS OF
COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR SENSIBLE ENERGY (CASE)**

Community Alliance for Sensible Energy (CASE) files these comments in preparation for the Pre-hearing Conference.

Part 1: Our region

My name is Mary Aldern. I am a 26 year resident of San Diego County, and the leader of Community Alliance for Sensible Energy, or CASE, based in Warner Springs. We represent communities in and around the Warner/Lake Henshaw Valley, near the greatest State Park in California, the Anza Borrego Desert. Here, the land is insanely beautiful, peaceful and quiet, and all of nature is alive. Ours is a BIG part of this "most diverse county in the USA." On SDG&E's maps, our area is called "Central San Diego."

Simply stated, the people who live out here are patriotic, quiet-loving, sometimes reclusive people, whose main information superhighway is still, to a large extent, the grapevine.

Part 2: Impacts To Our Region

When news of the Sunrise Powerlink (SPL) first hit our area last November, more than 100 people came out to learn as much as they could about the situation.

Unlike Roger Hedgecock, who said he knew of no opponents to the Sunrise Powerlink, I have since met thousands of other citizens, community group members and ratepayers across San Diego County and beyond who, after almost a year of proceedings, are more convinced than ever that we can live without the Sunrise Powerlink.

Our concerns are great, because we believe that the Sunrise Powerlink threatens our rural livelihoods in this already depressed backcountry economy, while the returns do not appear to significantly benefit us or the eventual end-users of this proposed energy pathway.

We appreciate the opportunity for our group and constituents to share with the CPUC evidence in upcoming hearings supporting our views:

We believe that the Sunrise Powerlink

- *decreases rural property values by ruining views and property character,

- *threatens long-term health of children, adults, and other living things with as-yet not fully characterized “electromagnetic frequencies,

- *destroys community and cooperative functions within the community, by cutting through residential neighborhoods and roadways(many of these communities contain refugees from other eminent domain takings)
- *contributes to global warming, which has serious negative forecasts on our rural region,
- *adds risk to already high fire danger,
- *adds risk to residents re. low overhead military and small craft flight,
- *adds light pollution to scientifically regulated dark zones,
- *adds risk to residents re. rural transportation and emergency evacuation systems,
- *destroys surrounding wildlife and habitat that is protected by taxpayer dollars,
- *creates severe ecological “border-effect” damage,
- *adds major risk of terrorist attack on energy infrastructure and National Security through obvious design flaws,
- *adds very significant transmission dollars to our energy bills statewide, without fully addressing San Diego’s regional capabilities, and includes hidden costs which make its true price far greater than that advertised – perhaps even tripled,
- *adds dollars to our energy bills as the fluctuating costs of imported LNG reflect the world’s peaked supply and increased demand of this expensive, imported fuel,

- *adds dependence on outside energy sources which goes against our regional energy strategy of a self sufficient energy future,
- *burdens the public by continued deviance from and violation of CPUC Procedures, including inappropriate notification and disclosure, inappropriate surveying, leaving of trash, and exclusion from public meetings,
- *burdens San Diego's residents and ratepayers to give up their assets and livelihoods through inappropriate use of eminent domain
- *appears to do benefit SDG&E's parent company, SEMPRA, which can quietly do all that SDG&E promises it won't do itself.
- *appears to be a backwards design of the failed Valley Rainbow Transmission Project of a few years ago which was denied by the CPUC.
- *does not fully consider the reduction of energy consumption through conservation and localized energy production alternatives,
- *does not reasonable benefit the California ratepayer economically.

In addition, the Sunrise Powerlink does not guarantee the San Diego purchase of alternative energy from secured alternative energy contracts in Imperial County, specifically from Stirling Energy Systems, due to manipulated contract terms regarding the purchase price of that energy, which is not expected to be the cheapest energy supply when (and if ever) it comes on line.

Along this subject, SPL also does not guarantee that we will meet our Renewable Portfolio Standards, as contracted imports have been known to fail. The only way we can guarantee that we will comply is to control the production of renewable and alternative energy ourselves.

In fact, we understand that according to the CAISO, the Sunrise Powerlink is not necessary to meet San Diego's Renewable Energy Portfolio. We would also like to know if and how the CAISO calculated the impact of the Greenpath Phase I in Imperial Valley on the projected need for this project.

Part 3: Summary to Impacts

Much of this community's task has been to examine the need of the line versus the route of the line. This is essentially examining community vs. personal needs. Eventually, we have come to realize is that this also about the security and wealth of Sempra and SDG&E, versus our own as ratepayers and citizens. Accordingly, we have formed our own evaluation of alternatives, and CAISO's calculations, while also evaluating a variety of comments on the route, including ours, energy experts, and CPUC officials.

Nine months ago, I started to notice really extravagant expenditures of energy surrounding me, eating away at the chances for our rural and natural communities to survive. I learned that Americans used more energy than ever on electronic devices that until just a few decades ago we didn't need at all. I learned of places where the air conditioning is on 24/7, even in monstrous dwellings that only house a couple people. I saw bridges that were lit up every night of the year, because they looked prettier like that. Indeed, we Americans have been accused around the globe of being wasteful and shortsighted. We are energy over-consumers.

As Americans, one of our greatest collective dreams is to live a life free from want. This is why it is our utility's responsibility to provide just a bit more energy than what we use on the hottest day of the year, so that there are no shortages.

But when we base our intake on that unbudgeted freedom, we lose our freedom of independence. We become reliant on other places, and other times, to supply our desires. We use up someone else's livelihood, and this time, it is also our own right here in San Diego.

Part 4: Roles

It is not the responsibility of the utility to limit or reduce consumption, to make consumption more efficient, or to encourage conservation. The investor owned utility (IOU) is responsible not to the ratepayer, but to the stockholders. This is reflected in the long list of supporters and the SPL's well-funded pr campaign asserting itself at every turn. In fact, as said by one community leader in Del Mar, "It is the goal of profit making entities to maximize shareholder value, not ratepayer value. We cannot and should not entrust investor owned utilities to offer the best possible solution for ratepayers and our future energy security."

These responsibilities fall on the shoulders of the community, and the government.

I am grateful for all the grants that Sempra/SDG&E have given to the employers that I have had, to the public programming that I enjoy, and to the parks and other places I go. I appreciate the energy too... we all know that we all really need that energy...and monetary support.

But in this company town, I am also a taxpayer. I am a community member and leader. I am a voter. I have needs, wants, values, opinions.

We are HUMANS, so we can and do on occasion rise above our creature comforts... to reason...to consider our consumption carefully. There are healthy alternatives to over-consumption and resource depletion, and the time is now.

This CPUC process actually DEPENDS on people like me to help bring up the issues for them, and for this opportunity, I say thank you again, and thank goodness.

Part 5: Our Response and Suggestions

We do not accept the Sunrise Powerlink as the most reasonable solution to our perceived needs.

Meanwhile, we, like SDG&E and Sempra, have joined in the years-long County process of identifying the product we want, and then design backwards from. Our main concerns as ratepayers and citizens are based in long term, whole system economics. In general, we observe that all the criteria in the Regional Energy Strategy 2030 should be upheld and met in projects of this scope.

**AMERICA CAN LIVE A LIFE FREE FROM WANT, AS LONG AS WE CAN
ADJUST OUR WANTS TO BETTER FIT OUR SITUATION.**

There is a difference between being “early” to embrace such philosophies here, in America, and being “early” around the world. We are not “early” when compared to other countries around the world.

Our values are reflected in our comments:

*Local in-county jobs are better than out-of county, or “regional” jobs, that drift to Imperial Valley or Mexico.

* Approve long-lasting infrastructure investments that are modern, diverse, clean, and with high rates of long-term return. Shift our energy supply toward renewable and self-sufficient.

*Make and endorse partnerships for acquiring land for projects and easing costs on ratepayers.

*Replace old technology on a timely schedule with new, when it comes to power-plants, cars, and other machinery, and wonders if the government will mandate these sort of actions, as other countries have already done.

*Endorse Strong use of Solar Energy and Energy Efficiency Planning.

*Conserve inspirational assets, and develop new ones.

*Conserve capital county-wide, and try to live off of investment interests by employing human ingenuity and forward thinking.

*We pursue positive campaigns and actively oppose destructive ones.

*We look to our elected representatives to represent us and do the same.

Part 6:

Cooperating With Other Communities Toward a Common Goal

Because of the great losses we stand to suffer, we and other community groups have accepted our civic responsibility by coming together under an umbrella called “CUSP: Communities United for Sensible Power,” to analyze related published materials in this proceeding and check for accuracy, rally county-wide public concern and interest, and communicate with our political elected officials. Coalition activities include review of the SDGE application, CAISO, SDREG, SANDAG, CPUC.

Until last year, I didn't know how to send emails, work computers, or create attachments. Now I do... and soon, now, I will also be able to create and present power point presentations, skills I had to acquire to defend my community. In my spare time, I've been going to the library and reading and watching movies on energy. This process of staying involved has been a huge journey in itself.

What we have seen through this period is some amazing and encouraging dialogue...displays of brave, honest and true American spirit.

Part 7:

Government Process

As Americans, we grant our government the responsibility to uphold the will of the people.

As I understand it, the history of the Sunrise Powerlink reaches back to the failed Valley Rainbow proposal, turned down a few years ago, after the CPUC found that there was no need for it. Now, it seems that through “backwards planning,” the designers of the Sunrise Powerlink continue to pursue all of those unnecessary investor owned utility goals of Valley Rainbow while appearing to meet other non-urgent needs for the county and ratepayers, at our great expense.

We do not want to see elected public servants who have not held public meetings on the subject lending undue public support prematurely. We hope the activities at the CPUC will guide public office holders as they struggle to represent both their own interests and those of their constituents in this proceeding.

Part 8:

Continued Motivation

While participation by small grass roots groups in a proceeding of this size is a bit overwhelming, giving up never did anyone any good either. Public participation is mandated, and is a necessary check and balance. As in other high profile issues...Tobacco, fast food...the public either accepts or challenges... it is a given and ongoing process. Participating in the process is not the actual issue, it is the designated way we examine the issue as the larger community.

We continue because we believe that companies should do all they can before asking other Americans to sacrifice their livelihoods.

So-called NIMBYs are actually the silent energy users: to find one, veer into silent territory, or look to supporters of route which is not through their own neighborhood.

Over 6 months ago, more than 800 people crammed the senior center in Ramona to show the CPUC that they cared. And we still care very much.

With energy we didn't know we had, even as we recover from some horrible and tragic wildfire seasons and have loved ones at war around the globe, we have

explored how the Sunrise Powerlink relates to the regional energy supply, global natural resources, our future and our freedom.

I ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION FROM ALL SECTORS OF THE COUNTY DURING THE UPCOMING CPUC PROCESS, AS IT WILL NOT ONLY AFFECT YOUR BILL, BUT YOUR FUTURE BILLS FOR THE REST OF TIME.

We believe that this problem needs to be examined by all communities together. the cities and rural resource rich areas are inextricably linked, and keep each other going. “Any object that hooks you into noticing what is beautiful and what moves you is worth its weight in relationship gold.” Eric Stromers, “do it yourself family.”

Part 9:

The Utility Track Record:

The CEO of Sempra recently admitted that he doesn't believe in Global Warming, while the rest of the world scrambles to prepare for such a thing. Despite each individual's personal right to opinion, we feel that we must consider seriously the sobering effects that global warming could have on our region (CEC) when evaluating a possibly related harmful effect like fossil fuel technologies.

Reflections of this philosophy are apparent in the current SDG&E "helpful" Flex-Your-Power" devices; electric powered desk globes in the public library that tell of energy supply emergencies, electric highway signs that tell us when to conserve.

We discovered this year that the 2001 energy crisis which burned so many of us, some even died...was manipulated by the utilities, for which they paid fines.

The support list for the SPL includes largely investors and utility affiliates.

Part 10:

Change is not easy.

Only in tragedy does change seem to come more quickly or easily; when it is out of our control.

Personally, I do feel bad about all of the energy I have wasted in the past, but that is out of my own present control. We need to reduce our “carbon footprint,” so that it is no longer “super-sized.”

We can control our present and future energy consumption, and we deserve for these measures to be counted in the analysis of the need for the SPL. For instance, we look to see how the “Million Solar Rooftop” (Bill 87) will be accounted for in the report.

I believe that we should strive at every level to become more energy independent as soon as possible to avoid more future ongoing utility or terrorist controlled energy outages.

We do this work to conserve freedom, community and the natural world.

Part 11:

Further Requests:

Through these proceedings, we hope to learn the true purpose of SPL.

We respectfully request that all hearings on this matter be held in San Diego.

We would like more time to review the massive document; please consider another 30 day extension of protests, given the very recent filing of the additional economic data (received just days ago).

Part 12:

IN CLOSING

We know that we defend our right to freedom from want, and have in our ranks the good examples of people like John Muir and Margaret Mead, who both upheld the right, duty, and effectiveness of small numbers of concerned citizens. In the end, we can only hope that all of our efforts will result in a well-loved energy solution that best fits this special region on Earth- a just reward.

Again, we thank the CPUC for allowing us to participate in these proceedings, and I thank the constituents of CASE for allowing me to represent them. We hope that our work with SDG&E and Sempra helps our utilities to define the unique and valuable characteristics of this region and we, the people.