



Communities United
for Sensible Power

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May 17, 2007

Ms. Poonum Agrawal
Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, OE-20
U.S. Department of Energy
Forestell Building, Room 6H-050
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585
Tel: (202) 586 – 1411

HAND DELIVERED AND BY EMAIL

**Re: Attn: Docket No. 2007-OE-02
Opposition to U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Federal Designation of San
Diego Gas & Electric/SEMPRA Energy's Proposed Sunrise Powerlink 500
kV Transmission Line as a National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor
(NIETC) and Request that this Project Not Be So Designated**

Dear Ms. Agrawal,

We are writing to inform you that we oppose the request for DOE designation of SDG&E's mis-named proposal, the "Sunrise Powerlink" (SRPL), as an NIETC. We ask that you carefully examine the factual background to this proposed corridor.

If the involvement of the federal government in this particular proposed transmission project involves national security questions it appears to us – the communities on the ground – that our national security would not be increased by this proposed line due to the fact that this line may be used to import electricity generated in a

foreign country, Mexico, and therefore would increase national security risks rather than decrease them.

The ill-conceived transmission line promises to be a very bad idea. Beyond community and environmental issues, this line will cost rate-payers some \$1.3 billion, lock our region into an expensive (and for SEMPRRA expansive) energy boondoggle that will work against new ideas and soak up ratepayer assets to implement new energy solutions in the bargain. The line will not guarantee the elimination of another high-cost energy crisis in the future because we understand that the California 2000-2001 “energy crisis” was not due to a lack of energy but manipulation of energy markets, including by SEMPRRA, and could happen again.

Communities United for Sensible Power (CUSP) is a broad coalition of community groups spanning the County of San Diego from the Anza Borrego Desert to the Pacific Ocean organized to protect our communities and surrounding natural world from the destructive transmission line project proposed by San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). We especially object to the federal government interference with the State of California process already in place to decide issues of transmission lines; we also object to the potential use of eminent domain on the part of the federal government in connection with a federalization of the proposed transmission line corridor. These issues hit hard on the people who live in San Diego County as we will suffer the consequences of having our voices and our objections silenced by a federalization of the process and project.

CUSP, formed in San Diego a year ago, is made up of community representatives from Ocotillo Wells, Canebrake, Borrego Springs, Ranchita, Julian, Wynola, Santa Ysabel, Ramona, Rancho Penasquitos, Torrey Hills and Carmel Valley. Our organization also includes community representatives who are intervening with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) proceedings on this project. CUSP is also part of the Protect Our Communities initiative organized to protect communities and their collective environments from this destructive line, which would slice through dozens of communities and permanently mar the Anza Borrego Desert State Park as well as a dozen open space preserves in San Diego County

We collectively support modern energy solutions to our regional energy needs in line with the San Diego 2030 Regional Energy Strategy produced by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). We are concerned that the DOE would be overreaching its jurisdiction to designate the proposed line (or vast areas of Southern California counties) as federal corridors. It would be, in our eyes, unwise for the federal government to align itself with outdated, expensive, destructive modes of energy that will increase CO₂ emissions and work against the need for new energy solutions for the balance of the 21st century.

We suspect that the DOE may be influenced by arguments to secure energy for military installations in the region. We understand that the Department of Defense is the highest energy consumer in the United States. We would encourage the federal

government to reduce its energy consumption, thereby acting as a role model for every day Americans who no doubt will be called upon to do the same in this global warming era.

We know that the proposed line, the most massive infrastructure project ever envisioned for San Diego County, will be generating energy using the LNG gas imports of SDG&E's parent company SEMPRA, which is building the Ensenada LNG facility with Shell Oil in Mexico. The transmission line project is essentially a long distance cord to the LNG sites in Indonesia and around the Pacific rim and as such is directly connected to the community and environmental destruction associated with LNG mining operations in other countries. This does not seem to be the most prudent course to take when a worldwide movement is growing to decrease dependence on fossil fuels and to acknowledge and repair damage done in the production of these fuels

We are concerned that the profits of our local utility will increase while our energy security, community cohesion, environmental protection and innovative energy solutions decrease. This is not a good bargain for San Diego or the region.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that you reject the nomination and designation of the "Sunrise PowerLink" as a National Energy Corridor.

Sincerely,

/S/ Diane Conklin

Diane Conklin
CUSP Coordinator

CUSP Member Organizations:

Citizens United for Responsible Energy (CURE) – Borrego Springs
Canebrake Citizens Group (CCG) – Canebrake
Carmel Valley Concerned Citizens (CVCC) – San Diego
Peoples Powerlink (PPL) – Julian
Back Country Coalition – Wynola
Ocotillo Wells Citizens Alliance for Responsible Energy (OWCARE) – Ocotillo Wells
Mussey Grade Road Alliance – Ramona
Community Alliance for Sensible Energy (CASE) – Ranchita, San Felipe, Warner Springs, Mesa Grande, Santa Ysabel
Rancho Penasquitos Concerned Citizens (RPCC) – San Diego
Torrey Hills Concerned Citizens - San Diego

cc: San Diego County Congressional Delegation, State Delegation, California Electricity Commission, San Diego City Government, San Diego Board of Supervisors