



PREHEARING CONFERENCE STATEMENT OF

DIANNE JACOB
SAN DIEGO COUNTY SUPERVISOR

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I am Dianne Jacob, Supervisor of San Diego County's Second District, representing communities affected by the proposed Sunrise Powerlink including Ramona, Wynola, Santa Ysabel and the greater Julian area.

A sincere thank you to Commissioner Dian Grueneich and Administrative Law Judge Steven Weissman for traveling to San Diego County to see firsthand the people and landscape impacted by the proposed line.

Today marks your second visit to our region with regard to the Sunrise proposal. I acknowledge and appreciate the State's notable efforts to gather public input.

The County of San Diego County is preparing formal comments to the Proponent's Environmental Assessment and those comments will be submitted later this month.

I too am reviewing the lengthy PEA and will narrow my comments today to the expectations I have as the Commission begins processing the application.

I would like to recognize that the applicant, San Diego Gas and Electric, has met and conferred with many individuals and entities whose lands are in the path of the preferred route, including the County. As a result, SDG&E, to its credit, has made some changes.

The applicant was receptive to the idea of undergrounding a stretch of the 230 kilovolt Inland Valley Link; specifically, the portion of the line which traverses Mount Gower located east of the existing Creelman substation in southeastern Ramona. I request that this undergrounding be including by the CPUC as a part of this process.

I wish, however, that SDG&E was as receptive to discussing more creative and innovative alternatives to Sunrise on the whole. The debate would represent true due diligence on the part of the utility.

I must remain opposed to the proposal because there are still too many unanswered questions surrounding the line. Unprecedented in size and price, Sunrise is the single largest energy infrastructure proposal in the history of the region. It has generated a mountain of doubt.

The applicant says the line is needed to help meet the State's renewable energy mandate of 20 percent by 2010 and promises that the line will carry wind, solar and geothermal power from Eastern San Diego County and Imperial County. Indeed, SDG&E has partnered with several companies that produce this power.

Unfortunately, none of these projects has been permitted by the California Energy Commission. In most cases, the permitting process has not begun. That process is costly, lengthy and involves a litany of local, state and federal regulatory agencies.

In the case of one very large solar project, the technology itself has fallen under scrutiny from energy experts who have said there is a serious problem with the equipment.

By seeking to build Sunrise before it is determined whether these renewable resources are even viable, I fear that SDG&E may be creating a proverbial "cart-before-the-horse" scenario. Before the public invests more than \$1 billion in a transmission line, these sources must be deemed dependable. We are far from that point.

SDG&E says the line is needed to meet a fast-approaching power deficit in the San Diego region. Many numbers have been thrown around and experts are not in agreement. Sometimes these numbers take into account additional power that would become available should two of the region's existing power plants become reconfigured for efficiency. Sometimes, they do not.

I respectfully encourage the Commission to carefully scrutinize the data supporting SDG&E's projected power deficit. The public deserves the most accurate figures.

I would also encourage the Commission to review a landmark document called the Regional Energy Strategy. It was crafted by the SDG&E and stakeholder groups as a blueprint for the region's energy future. The document calls for in-basin generation to meet the region's energy needs and says the region must decrease its dependence on imported energy.

It is still my opinion that Sunrise is not in keeping with the spirit of the Regional Energy Strategy.

Also, the proposal carves into the Anza Borrego Desert State Park. Representatives and supporters of the park will discuss their concerns in more detail this evening.

I am sure you will hear from many private property owners today concerned about the line destroying views and property values. Hundreds of individuals have contacted my office. I share their concerns and like them, I value this area's peaceful, rural way of life. Hulking transmission towers are not in keeping with the character of these communities.

Finally, the Commission should know that many people in this region have lingering distrust toward SDG&E. We were ground zero for the State's deregulation experiment and our experience was devastating. SDG&E and its parent company, SEMPRA Energy has been accused of price fixing during that time and that matter is pending in the courts.

SDG&E has been unable to put to rest a theory that the Sunrise proposal is really a covert attempt to profit from cheap power being produced in Baja plants by the parent company of SDG&E. It cannot be understated: this disturbing notion must be fully addressed in writing.

With the exciting renewable energy industry mushrooming in California thanks, in large part, to Governor Schwarzenegger, I believe the timing of the Sunrise Powerlink puts us all at a crossroads.

Can we be forward-thinking and work together to find a less costly, less intrusive alternative? I believe we can and we must try.

Can Distributed Generation programs such as the innovative Million Solar Roofs plan turn our everyday homes buildings into hundreds of thousands of small clean power plants? Let's hear from those experts.

Are there up-and-coming technologies on their way that will soon make the Sunrise proposal an antiquated dinosaur, unworthy of the sizeable investment that is being asked of ratepayers?

This may be the single most important question that must be raised as the Commission grapples with Sunrise and San Diego County's energy future.

Thank you again for making the trip to San Diego County.

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