

Citizens' Oversight Projects (COPs) Committee
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El Cajon, CA 92019
CitizensOversight.org
619-820-5321



April 26, 2011

LETTER TO GOVERNOR BROWN REGARDING THE SUNRISE POWERLINK

Dear Governor Brown:

San Diego Gas & Electric has started construction of the Sunrise Powerlink (SRPL). I have thoroughly researched this project, and have come to the conclusion that it is not the “green energy” project it is said to be, and is a largely a waste of ratepayer dollars. Instead, that money should be spent to retrofit homes and businesses in the San Diego area with solar energy systems which will create power in-basin and avoid costly transmission losses.

The purpose of this letter is to persuade you to do two things:

1. Start an investigation regarding the illegal lobbying activity by Dan Skopec, former CPUC official who, in less than a year, lobbied that commission, resulting in approval of the project in opposition to the recommendation by the administrative law judge who heard all the testimony.
2. Put a hold on the project and restart a clean CPUC review before any more construction takes place. If the review finds, without illegal influence, that it is necessary, it can be restarted.

Based on clean and open government concerns alone, the steps above are warranted. However, they are also warranted because the project itself was sold to the public as a good “green energy” project. However, I suggest that the reality is far different. If you dig past the green-wrapper and the glorious PR, you learn that it does little to improve our renewable energy position but instead optimizes SDG&E profits by extending our reliance on imported fossil fuels.

Please consider:

1. SDG&E and Sempra Energy always like to point out that this project has been “studied to death” and there is an 11,000 page EIR, and it is time to proceed with the project. However, they neglect to say that the top four recommendations of the EIR was to not build the line at all – the so-called “no wires alternative.”
2. In essence, the SRPL is a bad solution for our energy needs in the county of San Diego, but it is the right solution to maximize profits of SDG&E. The Sunrise Powerlink does not generate any power at all, and indeed loses power (~7%) during transmission. The money that would be spent

on this project would be far better spent for in-basin photovoltaic panels on homes and businesses. Some analysts have suggested that the final cost of the SRPL is something on the order of \$7 billion. For that money, even at today's relatively high cost of PV solar, the same amount of power could be generated in-basin as would be transmitted by the SRPL.

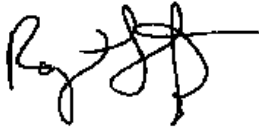
3. Building the transmission line using huge towers contributes to fire danger and makes firefighting more difficult. We have a severe fire danger in this area and this factor alone makes a new transmission line using a new route (I.e. not parallel to an existing route) one more factor that increases fire danger. For this reason alone, the project should be stopped.
4. SDG&E did not provide any tangible rationale for the project. They started with the assumption that the project was needed, then proceeded to outline various routes. It would have been nice to see an objective analysis to substantiate whether the line is warranted at all, such as maps of power use today and in the future, and sources of power that need to be transmitted. No such description was provided to the public.
5. The existing Southwest Powerlink is not completely utilized, and it has sufficient capacity for additional renewable sources of energy that may be developed in the Imperial Valley or other places, such as wind turbine farms in the mountains. This is one reason why the EIR recommended not building the line as the most appropriate action.
6. SDG&E has agreed that the line will carry at least 0% of its capacity as renewable energy. They are required to produce renewable energy for at least 20% of the energy produced in the near future (soon to be even higher). It would be reasonable to expect, if indeed the line was targeted to transmit energy from renewable energy sources (such as large solar arrays and geothermal sources), that at least 20% would be carried on the line, or even at least 5%. SDG&E gives no guarantee that the line will carry renewable energy at all.
7. SDG&E admitted to the administrative law judge that their intention was to build an additional line to connect this transmission line to the LA market. So the power would not necessarily be provided to San Diego users at all, even though ratepayers in San Diego would be asked to underwrite the project.
8. Sempra Energy recently completed a massive LNG terminal near Costa Azul, Mexico. Also, it has installed the North Baja Pipeline, a 30 inch diameter natural gas pipeline from the LNG terminal to Mexicali. LNG is imported from countries such as Russia and Indonesia, regassified at the Costa Azul terminal, and piped to Mexicali. There, it is burned in several NG power plants under (somewhat lax) Mexican smog standards. The electricity generated is transmitted across the border and then on the Sunrise Powerlink, destined for the LA market. The SRPL is not intended to be a renewable energy link. Quite the opposite, and that is why SDG&E would give no assurances that it will carry renewable energy.
9. The SRPL is a bad solution because it must be shut down during any high wind or wild fire events to avoid sparking new fires. PV Solar does not have to be shut down.
10. The SRPL is a bad solution because it is vulnerable to terrorist or vandalism attacks. PV solar distributed on homes and businesses does not have these vulnerabilities.

11. The SRPL route that is currently proposed did not undergo sufficient scrutiny, particularly in the section that goes through the El Monte valley. Currently, it is threatening a Golden Eagle nests in that area.

The SRPL is a project that may provide near-term jobs, but it does not help us with regard to the necessary migration to renewable energy. The transmission line generates no power itself, and it exacerbates our reliance on imported fossil fuels.

Please take the steps outlined above so we can concentrate on true green-energy solutions and not a profiteering solution designed to optimize only the profit of SDG&E and Sempra Energy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Lutz', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Ray Lutz
Coordinator, Citizens' Oversight Projects Committee.
Former Candidate, U.S. Congress, 52nd Congressional District
MS Electrical Engineering

Please find attached petitions from local residents requesting your action.