



The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

February 2006

Suspicious Surround Power Line Proposal SDG&E Should Seek Alternative to Monster Transmission Line in Backcountry

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People who live in the Ramona and Julian areas are furious about a proposal by San Diego Gas and Electric to build a giant 500 kilovolt transmission line from Imperial County through the Anza Borrego State Park across stretches of northeast San Diego County. Rightfully so.

It's bad enough that the utility is asking the California Public Utilities Commission to break from the standard procedural process and do the unprecedented. That is: decide the *need* for the line separately from the *route* of the line.

It's worse that there are so many unanswered questions surrounding a plan unparalleled in size and expense. The utility estimates that the 100-mile project— called the Sunrise Powerlink— could cost up to \$1.4 billion.

I agree with the many regional energy experts who question the utility's case for the costly line and I firmly believe there are far less-obtrusive alternatives to this gigantic proposal.

Many ratepayers are mindful of the California energy crisis of 2001. Some of the actions of SDG&E and its parent company now have landed before the

courts. This sad history causes many to suspect that the utility has ulterior motives for pursuing this line, motives other than reliability.

SDG&E isn't saying where exactly it plans to put the hulking towers that would string the line, many higher than 150 feet. Instead, company officials have unveiled three sweeping corridors, each considered a possible route, and have pledged to introduce a more precise path at a later date.

By splitting in two its proposal, SDG&E is asking the Commission to determine if power from the line is needed without knowing where the line would go. As I said to CPUC Commissioner Diane Grueneich at a pre-hearing conference recently, "The Commission is being asked to bypass due diligence, fly blind, and approve a proposal with no specific location and no cursory environmental review."

Is the attempt to bifurcate the regulatory process tactical on the part of SDG&E? Based on the math the utility is using to justify its proposal, the case for the line is very weak.

SDG&E says the region will need 5,900 megawatts of power by 2015. It projects that the region will fall about 600 megawatts short of this goal. Energy specialists, including the owners of two locally-based plants, disagree. Numerous experts insist that current forecasts show the region meeting, or exceeding, the

“Why does the utility believe a costly line through pristine lands is preferable to supporting in-basin generation? That's the \$1.4 billion question.”



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the 5,900 megawatt goal.

Even if the gap were real, SDG&E's eagerness to invest in out-of-county generation is especially troubling.

In 2002, a cross-section of regional leaders formed the Regional Energy Policy Advisory Committee to craft a blueprint for our region's energy needs through 2030. I sat on this committee, along with energy experts and SDG&E and spent two long years drafting the Regional Energy Strategy.

The document places an overwhelming emphasis on *decreasing* the region's dependence on imported energy.

In fact, the Strategy's number two goal reads: Achieve and maintain capacity to generate 65 percent of summer peak demand with in-basin generation by 2010 and 75 percent by 2020.

We are far from the goal.

Why then, is SDG&E backing away from a proposal it helped create? Why does the utility believe a costly line through pristine lands is preferable to supporting in-basin generation? That's the \$1.4 billion dollar question.

Many point to Sempra Energy's 600 megawatt plant in Mexicali and see the proposed line as a veiled attempt to profit from cheap Baja power by selling it to customers north of SDG&E's service territory.



BEFORE: Home located in corridor targeted for power line.

SDG&E says the new line will support renewable power from Imperial County. With the exception of one solar project, SDG&E has not been forthcoming about its efforts to procure renewable sources from that area.

Further, experts say a 500 kV line far exceeds the capacity needed for renewable transmission and is designed for energy produced from fossil fuels.

People who live in the Second Supervisorial district *already* have

an east-west 500kV line traversing their backyards. To saddle residents with a second line is inequitable and unfair, especially if SDG&E has other options for reliability.

Can the \$1.4 billion price tag for this line help advance the Governor's Million Solar Roofs campaign? Can it help re-power locally-based plants in Carlsbad and the South Bay, making them less polluting and more efficient? Can that massive investment support conservation efforts like those that were successful during the crisis?



AFTER: Rendition of home after power line approved.

Photo courtesy of www.raasp.com

Before we change the landscape of our majestic backcountry forever and before we devalue properties, I have

respectfully asked the Commission to thoroughly investigate all of the legitimate questions surrounding this line.

I firmly believe that we can find a better way!



SIGN FOR SAFETY: Supervisor Jacob personally collected hundreds of signatures to qualify Jessica's Law for the State ballot.

Jessica's Law Bound for Ballot

Supporters of the Jessica's Law initiative believe they have gathered enough signatures to qualify the tough-on-sex-offenders measure for the state ballot. The initiative does what many in the State legislature have failed to do over the years: strengthen guidelines for registered sex offenders.

If approved, the measure would require lifetime GPS tracking of sex offenders and create predator-free zones around schools and parks. It would put an end to the use of "goodtime credits" for shorter prison terms and make the possession of child porn a felony, instead of a misdemeanor.

HOMELAND SECURITY

Keeping the Region On the At-Risk List

Most of us are scratching our heads over the Department of Homeland Security's decision to drop San Diego from the list of regions eligible for "high threat" urban funding in 2007.

The County and other cities are pressuring the federal government to reverse its decision. Supervisor Jacob believes it is illogical that San Diego was not among a group 35 areas found to be at great risk of attack, particularly considering the formula used to create the list.

Risk factors included the presence of international borders,

population and location of critical infrastructure.

As the sixth largest county in the nation with the busiest international border crossing in the world, our region fits that profile like none other! We are a top tourist spot, drawing 27 million people last year. We have the largest concentration of military bases in the nation. In fact, one-third of the Pacific Fleet is home ported in our Bay. With an especially critical nuclear power plant along Interstate 5 and a busy seaport on our coast, the region belongs on the high risk list.

KIDS

Supporting Outdoor Fun

Don't know what a vernal pool is? Try asking the folks at Mt. Woodson Elementary in Ramona. The PTA there is preserving one of these unique seasonal ponds that spring to life with plants and animals after periods of rain. Supervisor Jacob is helping build an outdoor classroom around the pool. It will feature a redwood deck and benches so that young minds can get a close look.

Young sluggers in

Jamul have teamed with Supervisor Jacob to improve their home fields. \$75,000 will help the Jamul Little League install new sod and improve road access to the fields.

TRAFFIC

Changes in Rancho San Diego

Drive through the Rancho San Diego area? The good news is Jamacha Road and Campo Road are getting wider and safer. The bad news is the slowing during construction.

Improvements include widening in

some sections from four to six lanes, raised and drought-resistant landscaped medians and signal changes. Work will take place Monday to Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Two lanes will remain open with traffic control.

SWEET VICTORY



There are probably more grueling tests of athletic prowess than the City of San Diego versus the County of San Diego Football Classic. Few contests, however, feature such high-stakes bragging rights.

For the second time in a row, the County team emerged victorious. Final score: 42 to 28.

Key to the win were Jacob staffers Adam Wilson, Nate Potter and Jeff Collins. The patent-pending Wilson-Collins offense combined with Potter's concrete defense to embarrass a City already suffering from off-the-field financial woes.

Post-game rumors swirled that the County was denied a larger win by scorekeepers from the City Auditor's office.

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

Supervisor Jacob invites you to an informal coffee to share your thoughts and ideas.

Friday, February 24 at 8:30 a.m.
Mario's Italian Restaurant
12440 Woodside Avenue, Lakeside

Friday, March 24 at 8:30 a.m.
Julian Town Hall
2129 Main Street, Julian

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We hope to hear from you soon!

Feb 06

(619)531-5522

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Caroline Braun

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Senior Policy Advisor

Erin Farris

Policy Advisor

Nathaniel J. Potter

Field Representative

Donna Sievert

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Robert Spanbauer

Policy Advisor

Jennifer Stone

Communications Advisor

Adam Wilson

Policy Advisor

DIANNE JACOB

*Supervisor, Second District
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
San Diego, CA 92101*

*(619) 531-5522
(800) 852-7322 toll free
(619) 696-7253 fax*

*e-mail:
Dianne.Jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov*

*website:
www.diannejacob.com*