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We hope to hear from you soon!

May 08

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THE JACOB JOURNAL

A Newsletter from Vice Chairwoman Dianne Jacob

May 2008

Sunrise Poses Dangerous Fire Threat

Jacob says monster transmission line would harm firefighting efforts

The California Public Utilities Commission held a special meeting in Borrego Springs this month to hear from the public about San Diego Gas and Electric's Sunrise Powerlink proposal. Supervisor Jacob is grateful to the four members of the commission who traveled to San Diego County to attend the hearing and pleased to share with you an excerpt from her remarks.

I would like to take this opportunity to focus on SDG&E's claims that Sunrise will bring greater reliability to our region.

Where we are today, the Borrego Springs Resort, hosted many fire victims evacuated from homes during the 2007 wildfires. It wasn't the first time. The same thing happened in 2003 during the largest fire disaster in State history, the Cedar Fire.

This map (see page 2) shows you the fire boundaries of the 2003 and 2007 wildfires. Notice the overlapped areas where the fire burned in 2003 and again in 2007.

To people unfamiliar with San Diego County, this map is horrifying. But, to many of us in the room, this map is our way of life. Our county is dominated by a Mediterranean

climate. The areas on this map especially are home to dense drought-adapted brush that is highly flammable. Add 70 to 100 mile per hour Santa Ana winds to this equation and you get all the ingredients of a perfect firestorm.

This information isn't new. It's been this way for centuries. Section D.15 page one of the Draft EIR describes it perfectly: "one of the most fire-prone landscapes in the world."

Firefighting aircraft cannot make effective water drops over a 500-kilovolt transmission line in high wind conditions.

In the entire 6,000 page Draft EIR, there is one page that rises above all others in terms of importance. That page is in the Fire and Fuels Management section, page D.15-69. This page describes computer modeling used to simulate the impact of Santa Ana Wind conditions on the Sunrise Powerlink's preferred route.

Table D.15.24 summarizes what I believe are deadly results. For the Ranchita, San Felipe, Santa Ysabel, Ramona and Poway areas, the analysis came to these conclusions: first, construction and maintenance of the line would significantly increase the probability of wildfire. Second, the line itself would increase the probability of wildfire. Third, the line would reduce the effectiveness of firefighting efforts.

Each of these conclusions were ranked from Class 1 to Class IV, Class IV being beneficial" for the land and Class I meaning "cannot be mitigated."

For Ranchita, San Felipe, Santa Ysabel,

Serving the Cities of:
El Cajon
La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Poway
Santee

Serving the communities of:
Agua Caliente
Allied Gardens
Alpine
Barrett
Blossom Valley
Bostonia
Boulevard
Campo
Canebrake
Casa de Oro
Crest
Cuyamaca
Dehesa
Del Cerro
Descanso
Dulzura
Eucalyptus Hills
Fernbrook
Flinn Springs
Granite Hills
Grantville
Guatay
Harbison Canyon
Jacumba
Jamul
Julian
Lake Morena
Lakeside
Mount Helix
Pine Hills
Pine Valley
Potrero
Ramona
Rancho San Diego
Rolando
San Carlos
San Pasqual
Santa Ysabel
Shelter Valley
Spring Valley
Tecate
Tierra del Sol
Vallecitos
Wynola

Serving the Indian Reservations of:
Barona
Campo
Cosmit
Cuyapaipe
Inaja
Jamul
La Posta
Manzanita
Mesa Grande
Santa Ysabel
Sycuan
Viejas



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Santa Ysabel, Ramona and Poway the news couldn't be any worse. The presence of Sunrise would be a Class I threat. With regard to "reducing the effectiveness of firefighting" Sunrise would again be a Class I threat. Let me repeat that a Class I ranking means the danger "cannot be mitigated."

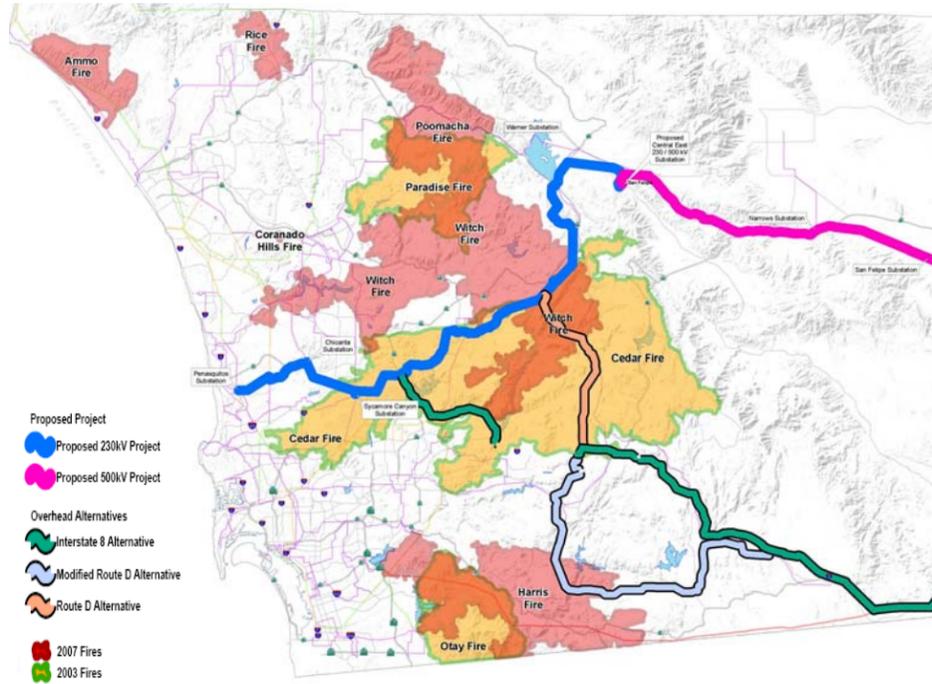
Commissioners, it is my very strong belief that what SDG&E is asking you to approve is the equivalent of walking into our fire prone backcountry during Santa Ana wind conditions, striking a match and throwing it on the ground.

Given what this region endured in 2003 and 2007, SDG&E's continued push for this line is unconscionable. The utility wants you to gamble with human lives. Please don't.

Firefighting aircraft cannot make effective water drops over a 500-kilovolt line in high wind conditions. Ground attacks cannot be made within 500 feet of a power line conductor. This is a firefighting rule of thumb noted in the Draft EIR.

Indeed, during the 2007 Harris Fire, the existing 500-kilovolt Southwest Powerline had to be shut down to protect the safety of crews.

Recently, SDG&E has taken to saying that smaller distribution lines, not transmission lines, are more likely to cause wildfire. Statistics in the Draft EIR tell a different story.



Using SDG&E's own data, the Draft EIR states that between 2004 and 2006 there were nine fires touched off by transmission lines in SDG&E service territory. Two of those nine fires were caused by heavy winds.

At this time, I would point out that the Draft EIR computer modeling software used 50 mile per hour winds to simulate "extreme" conditions. Santa Anas can be twice that.

Commissioners, to understand the financial liability associated with power lines and fire prone landscape, I urge you to speak with the National Guard. In 2002, a National Guard helicopter clipped a power line and touched off the 61,000 acre Pines Fire near Julian. 37 homes were destroyed. The legal claims following that event were not ideal for the Guard.

The people in this room are

not a small minority. We love our landscape and we understand its unique fire conditions. We are trying, desperately, to sound the alarm. Please don't let SDG&E send our region's energy future up in flames, literally.

In basin-generation and innovative solar projects like Southern California Edison's remarkable rooftop project are cheaper, cleaner and above all, safer alternatives to Sunrise.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today.

Read the entire Fire and Fuels Management Section of the Draft EIR at www.cpuc.ca.gov. Click on "Sunrise Powerlink" under "In the Spotlight."

A Special Message for Troubled Parents

Baby found dead in dumpster. Hours-old baby given to stranger at gas station. Dead newborn abandoned in shopping center restroom. Tragic headlines like these are avoidable thanks to California's Safely Surrendered Baby Law.

Since 2001, County of San Diego hospitals have been designated as Safe Surrender sites. Starting this month, nearly 200 County fire stations also share that designation. Fire districts have come together with Supervisor Jacob and the County to open their doors as safe places for distressed parents to safely drop off their newborns.

Most 24-hour fire stations in San Diego County will be available to accept an infant within 72 hours of its birth with no questions asked of the parent dropping off the baby. All participating stations display the Safe Surrender sign on the outside of the fire station. Stations that are not staffed 24 hours will have a different sign, directing people to call (858) 694-5700 to find the nearest Safely Surrender site.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
STATEMENT FROM DIANNE JACOB

The State of California is at it again, proposing the release of two convicted child molesters now classified as Sexually Violent Predators. This time, the community being targeted is rural Jacumba. Supervisor Jacob released the following statement to media minutes after hearing of the proposed release:

"I adamantly oppose the placement of Sexually Violent Predators in Jacumba, or any place else in our region. I continue to question the wisdom of State mental health experts who have concluded that these individuals are safe for return to society. I view the release of anyone classified as an SVP as a reckless and unjust gamble with the safety of the public. Our region has already been subjected to the doomed release of

Douglas Badger and Matthew Hedge. Both are back in State custody. It is my very strong belief that the State is asking for a repeat of that failed experiment.

I once again implore the State legislature to ensure that individuals classified as Sexually Violent Predators remain institutionalized in perpetuity. If the law requires them be placed somewhere, the only appropriate location would be in a trailer on the grounds of Donovan State Prison, where sexually violent predators have been previously placed because of its isolation from neighborhoods and sufficient proximity to social services and law enforcement. With no access to public transportation, Jacumba is too far from the social service programs these offenders are required to use. The public is placed at an even greater risk because of the offenders' need to travel."

Revitalizing Alpine

Got ideas to make Alpine a better place to live, work and play?
Join Supervisor Jacob at an Alpine Community Revitalization meeting!
Friday, June 20 at 2:30 p.m.
Crown Hills Clubhouse, 1821 Victoria Park Terrace, Alpine