

CITY OF CHINO HILLS

PRESS RELEASE



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Contact: Denise Cattern
(909) 364-2615

Valerie McClung
(909) 364-2618

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CITY OF CHINO HILLS SUBMITS TESTIMONY TO CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION ON THE TEHACHAPI RENEWABLE TRANSMISSION PROJECT

The City of Chino Hills has developed an efficient and viable alternative route for the Southern California Edison (SCE) Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP) Segment 8A that has been proposed to run right through the City. The City is working hard to convince the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) that its alternate route is better than the route that SCE proposes. The many advantages of the City's plan include avoiding the need to build 16 miles of transmission lines in Chino Hills, Chino and Ontario, saving ratepayers \$8 million in project costs; eliminating health and safety risks to residents of the three cities; and reducing the fire hazards both in the residential areas and in Chino Hills State Park.

City officials submitted written testimony on May 15 to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) as part of the official CPUC process to review the SCE-proposed TRTP project. The City's testimony was prepared by a team of experts and will be presented at the CPUC's Evidentiary Hearings in San Francisco scheduled from July 6th to 10th.

The City of Chino Hills has been an active participant in the review of the project and developed several alternate routes through Chino Hills to avoid the significant health and safety impacts of the SCE-proposed route. SCE's route cuts directly through 3.5 miles of residential neighborhoods on an old, narrow right-of-way (ROW) that currently houses

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much smaller transmission towers and lines which have been inactive for approximately 30 years. It will dramatically impact more than 3,000 people who live within 500 feet of the proposed high-voltage, double-circuit 500 kV transmission lines in addition to the more than 150 children who attend daycare within that same distance. SCE intends to replace the existing 100-foot tall towers with 198-foot poles that will dwarf residents' houses that are located as little as 75 feet away.

“The City of Chino Hills has committed significant resources to finding a win-win solution for the TRTP project. It is important to our residents, and to the future successful routing of green energy, that our community set a responsible example. So we took an untenable route, with truly unacceptable health and safety impacts, and found a better way,” said Mike Fleager, City Manager. “We were willing to do the work that Southern California Edison should have done to find the best route.”

In addition, given the unique situation that the City's proposed route would actually reduce the length of ROW and number of towers within Chino Hills State Park, a number of prominent environmental groups, including Hills For Everyone, founders of Chino Hills State Park; the Natural Resources Defense Council; the Angeles and San Geronio Chapters of the Sierra Club; the Endangered Habitat League; and, the Chino Hills State Park Interpretive Association all submitted either testimony or letters of support for the City's proposed alternative with the proposed Chino Hills State Park mitigation package.

A summary of the testimony submitted on behalf of the City of Chino Hills follows:
(The witnesses' credentials are provided in an attachment.)

Testimony by Chino Valley Independent Fire District Chief Paul Benson

The City's alternate route, which traverses part of Chino Hills State Park, actually improves firefighting opportunities in the City's neighborhoods and in the State Park. Much of the City is in a high fire hazard area. In the residential area of the City that straddles the current SCE 150-foot ROW, the added height of the towers in the very narrow corridor would create a danger to firefighters during a fire, make access for fire equipment difficult, and would restrict airplanes and even helicopters from being able to safely drop water or retardant on a fire in the neighborhood. And in the State Park, the mitigation proposed with the City's Alternative 4C Modified - including taking towers off of ridge tops (moving them further downhill), decreasing the overall length of transmission lines traversing the

Park, consolidating many existing lines into a common corridor, and reintroducing native plants - will improve the ability of firefighters to control wildfires by giving them better ground and aerial access to large portions of the 14,000 acre Park. The City's alternate route would reduce overall power line ignition potential in the 14,000 acre Park.

Testimony by Transmission Engineering Professor Turan Gonen

SCE has significantly understated the potential maximum levels of the electric and magnetic fields along Segment 8A. To arrive at its calculation of magnetic fields at the edge of the right of way, SCE estimated the magnetic fields from the proposed line based only upon the initial amount of electricity the lines are expected to carry in the near future. But the capacity of the lines is actually four times higher than the value SCE assumed in calculating the magnetic field. In the future, as demand grows in Southern California, the transmission lines will likely carry electricity at their capacity. The result is that the people living next to the lines in Chino Hills, as well as those in Chino and Ontario, could be exposed to magnetic fields as high as 110 mG on a temporary or sustained basis rather than the 27 mG estimated by SCE. This is well above the accepted utility practice in the United States of limiting exposure to 10 mG at the edge of the ROW in residential areas, and even beyond the 100 mG threshold generally used for all other bordering uses. Further, the electric fields generated can charge non-grounded metal objects such as power tools or children's tricycles that would normally be used in the backyards of the residents living next to the power lines. SCE has proposed no mitigation for the electric shocks residents will likely experience frequently from touching non-grounded metal objects.

Although SCE is proposing to use a ROW only 150-feet wide, a 200-foot ROW is the minimum needed for new 500 kV high voltage lines through a residential neighborhood. SCE's own design and maintenance standards require a 100-foot diameter clearance around poles. Further, a 200 x 200-foot laydown area is needed for the construction of each pole. Throughout the 250-mile TRTP project, the only segment with such a narrow 150-foot ROW is the segment through Chino Hills, Chino and Ontario that includes the 3.5 miles of densely populated neighborhoods in Chino Hills. And, SCE admits that there is only one example in the United States where homes abut double-circuit 500 kV lines in a 150-foot ROW – and in that case, the property owners had a

choice about living next to the lines because the lines were there first – this is not the case in Chino Hills.

Testimony by Expert Transmission Planner Dr. Dariush Shirmohammadi

Alternative 4C Modified, developed by the City of Chino Hills in conjunction with a local environmental group, Hills for Everyone, eliminates the need to construct 16 miles of Segment 8A high voltage transmission lines in Chino Hills, Chino and Ontario. At the same time, the design of this route is so efficient that Chino Hills State Park will have 1.8 fewer miles of transmission lines after the new route is completed. Further, much of the existing transmission lines will be removed from ridge tops where they are very visible and relocated to locations downhill that will have less visual impact on the Park. The Alternative 4C Modified proposed by the City of Chino Hills will cost \$8 million less to construct than the SCE proposal.

Testimony by Environmental Consultant Joann Lombardo

The City's proposed Alternative 4C Modified, combined with a \$50 million mitigation plan developed by the City after discussing State Park needs and priorities with local Park officials, would effectively mitigate the impacts of new transmission lines in Chino Hills State Park. Extremely negative visual impacts in the Chino Hills residential areas would be avoided, while visual impacts in the Park would be improved by the new configuration of lines. While in the Park, both wildlife and native plant species would benefit from the expanded and restored habitat that the mitigation plan would provide. Transmission lines and several towers would be removed from the environmentally sensitive Water Canyon Natural Preserve. Movement of wildlife in the region would be enhanced by the mitigation plan's creation of a bio-corridor between the Park and the Prado Basin.

Testimony by James Himes, Real Estate Appraiser, Himes & Himes in conjunction with Henry Noh, Principal Planner, City of Chino Hills

The City requested an estimate of the losses to properties in Chino Hills if a 200-foot ROW is required. Mr. Himes and Mr. Noh estimate that the cost of condemnations of all or portions of 147 homes, businesses, a church and City parks would be \$67,742,000. This calculation does not include the many economic losses that homeowners and businesses would lose due to the stigma of merely being located so close to such a massive, high voltage transmission line.

Testimony by CARE Representatives James Prindiville and Debra Ertel-Hernandez

The proposed SCE transmission line is fundamentally incompatible with the community values of the City of Chino Hills. It conflicts with City's General Plan goals of safety, maintaining views of the surrounding open space, and avoiding the installation of structures that divide the community. The SCE proposed line would intrude on the use of local homes, churches, and businesses, while constantly dominating the skyline and increasing the risk of harm from electrical or magnetic fields. When there is an alternative available to construct the line in unpopulated open space, it is simply not reasonable to impose such burdens on the City of Chino Hills, nor its residents.

Resources and Background Information:

CPUC Website for Edison's Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project
ftp://ftp.cpuc.ca.gov/gopher-data/enviro/tehachapi_renewables/index.htm

City of Chino Hills Website <http://www.chinohills.org/index.aspx?nid=737>

CARE Website www.saynotopowerlines.org

21st Century Green Partnership Website - www.21stcenturygreen.net