

CITY OF CHINO HILLS

PRESS RELEASE



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UNDERGROUNDING APPROVED: THE CPUC ISSUES A DECISION APPROVING THE CHINO HILLS PROPOSAL TO REMOVE THE EDISON OVERHEAD TOWERS AND UNDERGROUND A 3.5 MILE SEGMENT OF THE TEHACHAPI RENEWABLE TRANSMISSION PROJECT

Today the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) issued a final decision in the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP) that grants the undergrounding proposal of the City of Chino Hills. The Decision, approved by a 3-2 vote, states that the burden imposed on Chino Hills by the overhead lines is unfair and contrary to community values. Accordingly, the Decision orders removal of the towers already built in the 3.5 mile section of the TRTP right of way in Chino Hills and orders Southern California Edison (SCE) to complete the project by constructing a single circuit, two cable per phase underground XLPE cable in place of the overhead lines. The Decision concludes that the cost of constructing the underground line would be approximately \$224 million, which amount would be added to the overall cost of the TRTP project, now over \$2 billion, and included in the costs of all California utility ratepayers. An analysis performed by the City of Chino Hills concluded that the net present value of the cost of undergrounding for each household is only \$7.03 over the entire 40 year useful life of the project.

“We are extremely pleased that the Commission has approved President Peevey’s Alternate Decision that orders undergrounding, and we want to thank all of the CPUC Commissioners for taking a serious look at this issue and giving our City an opportunity to

reopen the record and submit the new evidence that proved that the 2009 decision approving overhead lines should be reversed,” said Peter Rogers, Mayor of Chino Hills.

According to Mayor Rogers the underground cable will carry all the renewable energy that SCE can procure, can be built in a timely manner, and will result in an environmentally superior project because it eliminates the severe negative impacts to the community of having overhead lines on 200 foot tall towers in a right of way only 150 feet wide.

The City of Chino Hills did not oppose construction of the TRTP, which is designed to bring renewable wind and solar energy from the Tehachapi Renewable Resource Area to SCE customers, but from as early as 2007, the City did recommend alternative routes that would have avoided the need for 500kV towers to be built in an old right of way through the middle of the City. The 150 foot right of way was originally used by SCE for 75 foot tall 230 kV structures, but the shorter lines have not been energized for decades.

Once SCE announced its proposal for TRTP and its decision to build 500 kV towers in the narrow right of way through hundreds of homes in Chino Hills, the City actively sought CPUC approval of an alternate route to connect with other 500kV lines in Chino Hills State Park. Even with the support of local environmental groups such as Hills for Everyone, the City was unable to convince the CPUC to adopt an alternate route, and the overhead towers were approved in 2009 and construction of the towers began in 2011.

Once the towers were in place they appeared so much larger and more massive than anticipated, even after the community was shown photo simulations of the overhead lines, that the community quickly organized to seek relief from the CPUC. In 2011, the City of Chino Hills filed a Petition for Modification to reverse the decision to use overhead lines, and after lengthy discussions and the preparation of thousands of pages of testimony and exhibits, the case went to hearing for a second time in April 2013.

The City of Chino Hills presented transmission planning and power cable experts who testified that a reasonably sized underground cable was feasible, could be built on time, and could be built for approximately \$150 million, far less than the \$370-\$700 million estimated by SCE. The City also presented a detailed study to prove that renewable resource projects would still be able to deliver their power to the SCE grid, and that the time required to build the underground line would not delay the interconnection of new renewable projects.

The CPUC considered two alternative decisions in this case. The Proposed Decision of the Administrative Law Judge would have denied Chino Hills’ petition and ordered completion of the overhead lines. The Alternate Decision of CPUC President Peevey, which

was approved by the full Commission, adopted the Chino Hills undergrounding proposal and orders SCE to take the extraordinary step of removing the already constructed towers, and replacing them with the underground cable by late 2015 or early 2016.

As a result of the CPUC ruling to bring the towers down and underground the transmission line, the City will be meeting with Southern California Edison to understand the new construction schedule, logistics, and new impacts and will then immediately and aggressively share that information with the public. By no means is the City's work done, there is significant coordination and logistics to work through with Southern California Edison. For additional information, please contact Public Information Officer Denise Cattern at (909) 364-2615 or Community Relations Manager Valerie McClung at (909) 364-2618.

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