



## Sunrise Powerlink Line Project

California SCH #2006091071

DOI Control No. DES-07-58



**To:** Recipients of the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS, Sunrise Powerlink Project

**From:** Billie C. Blanchard, CPUC, and Lynda Kastoll, BLM, EIR/EIS Project Managers

**Subject:** Notice of Availability, Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Sunrise Powerlink Project

**Date:** July 8, 2008

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), as Lead Agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), are recirculating a revised Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (“Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS” or “RDEIR/SDEIS”) for consideration of San Diego Gas & Electric Company’s (SDG&E) application to build and operate the Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Line Project. Public review and comment is requested. The comment period is 45 days, ending on August 25, 2008.

**A. What is the Proposed Project?** SDG&E proposes to construct a new 91-mile, 500 kilovolt (kV) electric transmission line from Imperial Valley Substation (in Imperial County, near the City of El Centro) to a new Central East Substation (in central San Diego County, southwest of the intersection of County Highways S22 and S2) and a new 59-mile 230 kV transmission line that includes both overhead and underground segments from the new Central East Substation to SDG&E’s existing Peñasquitos Substation (in the City of San Diego).

**B. Project History and Status.** On January 3, 2008, the CPUC and BLM published a Draft EIR/EIS on the Sunrise Powerlink Project. The Draft EIR/EIS contained 7,500+ pages in six volumes. It included the analysis of Proposed Project’s effects, as well as the analysis of future possible transmission lines and “connected actions” that are likely to be built if the Sunrise Powerlink transmission line were built. A 90-day comment period on the Draft EIR/EIS ended on April 11, 2008. Nine workshops and five public participation hearings were held during the comment period, and over 2,500 pages of written comments were submitted. After the comment period, two additional public participation hearings were held on May 12, 2008 in Borrego Springs, CA.

After the end of the public comment period on the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS, the CPUC and BLM will prepare a Final EIR/EIS. The Final EIR/EIS will present responses to all comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS and comments on the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS. The Final EIR/EIS will be published by mid-October 2008. The CPUC and BLM will make their decisions on the Sunrise Powerlink Project after publication of the Final EIR/EIS.

**C. Why Recirculate or Supplement a Draft EIR/EIS?** Under CEQA, recirculation is required when significant new information changes the EIR in a way that “deprives the public of a meaningful opportunity to comment upon a substantial adverse environmental effect of the project or a feasible way to mitigate or avoid such an effect.” New information may include changes in the project or environmental setting as well as additional data or other information. The CEQA Guidelines provide the following four examples of “significant new information” that trigger recirculation:

- (1) A disclosure that a “*new significant environmental impact* would result from the project or from a new mitigation measure proposed to be implemented.”
- (2) A disclosure that a “*substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact* would result unless mitigation measures are adopted that reduce the impact to a level of insignificance.”

(3) A disclosure that a “feasible project alternative or mitigation measure considerably different from others previously analyzed would clearly lessen the significant environmental impacts of the project, but the project’s proponents decline to adopt it.”

(4) “The draft EIR was so fundamentally and basically inadequate and conclusory in nature that meaningful public review and comment were precluded.”

Recirculation of the Draft EIR results from the first two items above, as well as from the requirement to provide a meaningful opportunity to comment on certain route modifications that do not result in new significant impacts.

Under NEPA (40 CFR 15029(c)(1)), a Supplement to an EIS is required when there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to the environmental concerns related to the proposed project or its impacts. In this case, the new information involves changes to the “connected actions” analyzed in the Draft EIR/EIS and route revisions (“reroutes”) proposed by SDG&E in comments on the Draft EIR/EIS.

**D. What is Included in this Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS?** The RDEIR/SDEIS includes the components described below. Comments on this document should be limited to the topics addressed here (see Section G for further discussion).

- 1. New and Revised Analysis of the La Rumorosa Wind Project.** In December 2007, Sempra Generation (Sempra) submitted to the U.S. Department of Energy an Application for Presidential Permit, defining a 1,250 MW wind project in Mexico, transmission lines into the U.S., and a new substation located northeast of the town of Jacumba. The Draft EIR/EIS analyzed a “connected action” and “indirect effects” as a 250 MW wind project in Mexico, a transmission line, and the “Jacumba Substation.” However, these components are described differently by Sempra, and the wind project considered in the Draft EIR/EIS was much smaller than the actual project defined by Sempra. As a result, the RDEIR/SDEIS presents new analysis of the Sempra project, still in the category of a “connected action” to the Sunrise Powerlink, and as “indirect effects” of the Sunrise project. See attached Figure 1, La Rumorosa Wind Project Components.
- 2. Description and Analysis of Transmission Line Route Revisions.** In comments on the Draft EIR/EIS, SDG&E modified several segments of the Proposed and Alternative transmission line routes. Some of these reroutes would affect new landowners, change the potential effect on already-affected landowners, or change the environmental impact of the route described in the Draft EIR/EIS. The RDEIR/SDEIS describes 13 reroutes. See attached Figure 2, a map illustrating environmentally superior alternatives, which also shows transmission line reroutes in red circles.
- 3. Revision of components of the Environmentally Superior Alternatives for northern and southern transmission lines.** Comments were received indicating that the permission legally required to extend the proposed transmission line through the Campo reservation as proposed by the Interstate 8 Alternative would not be granted. The Southern Environmentally Superior Route has therefore been modified to avoid all tribal lands, following the BCD Alternative and BCD South Option. The Northern Environmentally Superior Route has been modified to add consideration of an additional underground segment in the Santa Ysabel Valley, and to incorporate several route revisions described in #2 above. See attached Figure 2, Modified Environmentally Superior Northern and Southern Routes.

**E. What is Not Included in this Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS?** Some comments on the Draft EIR/EIS suggested that a recirculated Draft EIR/EIS would be required for reasons not included in the three items listed in Section D above. The CPUC and BLM have evaluated all comments on the Draft EIR/EIS and determined that other requests for recirculation are not valid because they do not trigger the CEQA requirements defined in Section C. The Final EIR/EIS will present a response to each comment requesting recirculation, explaining why this action was not required under the law.

**F. Availability of the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS.** The RDEIR/SDEIS will be released for a 45-day public review period ending on August 25, 2008. It will be available for review at numerous area libraries and on the project website, as listed in this notice. A compact disc (CD) containing the complete document may be requested by phone or fax at (866) 711-3106 or by e-mail at sunrise@aspenerg.com. The CPUC also has a limited number of hard copies of the complete Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS document available to the public upon request at the above addresses/numbers.

**G. Submitting Comments on the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS.**

***IMPORTANT:*** Comments on the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS are limited only to the topics included in this document. The Final EIR/EIS will present responses to all comments submitted on the Draft EIR/EIS and all relevant comments submitted on the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS.

***Only written comments*** may be submitted on the RDEIR/SDEIS; there will be no opportunity to make oral comments. Comments must be postmarked or received by fax or e-mail no later than **August 25, 2008**. Please be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number. Written comments should be sent to:

**CPUC/BLM**  
**c/o Aspen Environmental Group**  
**235 Montgomery Street, Suite 935**  
**San Francisco, CA 94104**

**Fax:** (866) 711-3106  
**E-mail:** sunrise@aspenerg.com

**H. Informational Workshop.** In order to help the public understand the RDEIR/SDEIS, and to explain how to participate in the CPUC and BLM's decision-making processes, the CPUC and BLM will hold one informational workshop, as described below.

<p><b>Monday, August 4, 2008</b> 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>Highlands Senior Citizens Center</b> 44681 Old Highway 80, Jacumba, CA</p>	<p><b>From San Diego:</b> Take Interstate 8 to Exit 65 for CA-94 toward Boulevard. Turn right at CA-94/Ribbonwood Road and continue for 0.5 miles, then turn left at Old Hwy 80 and continue for 8.1 miles.</p> <p><b>From El Centro:</b> Take Interstate 8 to Exit 77 for In-Ko-Pah Park Rd. Turn left at In-Ko-Pah Park Road and continue for 0.3 miles (crossing under I-8). Turn right at Old Hwy 80 and continue for 5.3 miles.</p>
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This informal workshop is an opportunity to speak with CPUC and BLM representatives and some of the specialists who wrote the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS and ask questions. A brief presentation will summarize the EIR/EIS process, the information presented in the RDEIR/SDEIS, and the decisionmaking process. Presentation notes will be available, so attendance at the beginning of the workshop is not required. While written comments may be submitted during the workshop, there will be no facilities to record oral comments.

**I. Where is Other Information Available?** Table 1 lists the public repository sites at which project documents may be reviewed. For additional information or to read the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS online, check the Internet website at:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/asp/sunrise/sunrise.htm>

<b>Table 1. Repositories for Sunrise Powerlink Documents</b>		
<b>Imperial County - Public Libraries and BLM Office</b>		
Brawley Public Library	400 Main Street, Brawley, CA 92227	(760) 344-1891
Calexico City Library	850 Encinas Avenue, Calexico, CA 92231	(760) 339-2470
El Centro Public Library	539 West State Street, El Centro, CA 92243	(760) 337-4565
Imperial Public Library	200 West 9th Street, Imperial, CA 92251	(760) 355-1332
BLM - El Centro Field Office	1661 South 4th Street, El Centro, CA 92243	(760) 337-4400
<b>San Diego County - Public Libraries</b>		
Alpine Branch Library	2130 Arnold Way, Alpine, CA 91901	(619) 445-4221
Borrego Public Library	571A Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs, CA 92004	(760) 767-5761
Campo-Morena Village Branch Library	31356 Highway 94, Campo, CA 91906	(619) 478-5945
Carmel Valley Branch Library	3919 Townsgate Drive, San Diego, CA 92130	(858) 552-1668
Descanso Branch Library	9545 River Drive, Descanso, CA 91916	(619) 445-5279
El Cajon Branch Library	201 East Douglas, El Cajon, CA 92020	(619) 588-3718
Jacumba Branch Library	44605 Old Highway 80, Jacumba, CA 91934	(619) 766-4608
Julian Branch Library	1850 Highway 78, Julian, CA 92036	(760) 765-0370
Lakeside Public Library	9839 Vine Street, Lakeside, CA 92040	(619) 443-1811
Pine Valley Branch Library	28804 Old Highway 80, Pine Valley, CA 91962	(619) 473-8022
Potrero Branch Library	24883 Potrero Valley Road, Potrero, CA 91963	(619) 478-5978
Poway Branch Library	13137 Poway Road, Poway, CA 92064	(858) 513-2900
Ramona Public Library	1406 Montecito Road, Ramona, CA 92065	(760) 738-2434
Rancho Peñasquitos Library	13330 Salmon River Road, San Diego, CA 92129	(858) 538-8159
San Diego City Central Library	820 E Street, San Diego, CA 92101	(858) 484-4440
Scripps Miramar Ranch Library	10301 Scripps Lake Drive, San Diego, CA 92131	(858) 538-8158
Spring Valley Branch Library	836 Kempton Street, Spring Valley, CA 91977	(619) 463-3006
<b>Riverside County - Public Libraries</b>		
Grace Mellman Community Library	41000 County Center Drive, Temecula, CA 92591	(951) 600-6262
Lake Elsinore Branch Library	600 W Graham Ave, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530	(951) 674-4517
<b>Other Government Offices</b>		
BLM - Palm Springs South Coast Field Office	690 West Garnet Avenue, No. Palm Springs, CA 92258	(760) 251-4800
CPUC - Los Angeles Office	320 West 4th Street, Suite 500, Los Angeles, CA 90013	(213) 576-7000
CPUC - San Francisco Office	505 Van Ness Ave, Rm 2103, San Francisco, CA 94102	(415) 703-2074