

July 21, 2009

Mr. Jensen Uchida
San Joaquin Cross Valley Loop Transmission Project
Environmental Science Associates
225 Bush Street, Suite 1700
San Francisco, CA 94104-4207

Dear Mr. Uchida:

My family has farmed in the Elderwood area for over 50 years. One of our 70-acre citrus groves is in the path of the San Joaquin Cross Valley Loop Transmission Project. The power line will cut the grove approximately in half and require the relocation of possibly four wind machines. The problems associated with this action make our ability to farm this section of land difficult and perhaps impossible.

Relocation of the wind machines will move them closer to wind machines in the next citrus block. As a result, there will be less frost protection on the top half of the 70-acre block. Frost protection in this area of Elderwood is important as it can be colder than other areas and there is less water available to run in the winter for frost protection. Without water or wind protection, frost damage is assured and much of the fruit will be lost for the season. Trees will also suffer damage and will become weaker with each year of frost damage.

Obviously, the loss of the frost protection and the construction of the power line would mean the loss of much more acreage in this block of 70 acres than the DEIR states. The land would have no value to us for farming another crop as we farm only citrus products and are not equipped to dry farm. The land would also be worthless for sale as home sites since no one would want to live under the power line. It seems unreasonable to ask my family to sacrifice the value of this citrus producing acreage and be left with land that cannot be farmed.

Finally, farming under the power lines is not a liability we wish to assume. We will be losing the acreage under the power line because our current farming practices would require equipment with spray booms, etc. to operate under the lines. We are not willing to put our employees at risk of injury from working under the lines so we feel we cannot farm under the power line. That will mean a loss of acreage extending across the 70 acres in the path of the power line.

It is our sincere hope that SCE and the CPUC will reconsider the placement of the power line and locate it where there are fewer acres of permanent crops, which appears to be alternate route 3. The loss to our family as well as other small family farms on this route will be devastating.

Sincerely,

Conley Meling, partner
Meling Bros.
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