

Commissioner Simon's Talking Points
Item 60: Southern California Edison Company's
Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP)

Colleagues,

- I support Item 60. I have long preached the need for streamlined review of transmission projects in California, and I am pleased to see the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project move forward more quickly than has generally been the case with recent projects of this magnitude. We are in desperate need to increase transmission to meet our reliability and RPS objectives, and we are making a statement today by approving a project that could potentially deliver up to 4500 Megawatts of renewable energy.

- I have to commend Commissioner Grueneich, her staff, and ALJ Kolakowski for their efforts in delivering a well-reasoned Proposed Decision in a relatively timely fashion. This was a collaborative team effort, and I appreciate the diligent work to develop such thorough briefings as we tested the merits of the two project alternatives. Ultimately, the Proposed Decision before us today is clearly a sign of progress. I am optimistic that California can build on the success of this deliberative process and continue streamlining our transmission siting and permitting.

- We have been asked to carefully weigh the relative costs and benefits of two alternative transmission routes as a whole, but it is important to keep in mind that only one of eleven transmission line segments was truly controversial. Interestingly, between the two competing alternatives, we were required to evaluate a broad range of landscapes, risk factors, and somewhat unusual variables. From potential health hazards, to habitat restoration concerns, to munitions facilities – this proceeding featured a wealth of bizarre tradeoffs that one might only find as a hypothetical scenario in a textbook for policymakers.

The Need for Critical Infrastructure Investment and Green Jobs

- It is crucial that California continue to invest in critical infrastructure, not only in order to augment our portfolio of preferred resources, but also to enhance reliability and help grow the economy. Transmission and generation projects yield an assortment of high quality jobs, which is another reason for expedited approval of the Tehachapi project at a critical juncture in a faltering state economy

The Merits and Challenges of Alternative 4C(m)

- I want to applaud the strong case that was made for Alternative Route 4C(m), a compelling and well-researched transmission proposal advanced by Chino Hills (Mike Day) and supported by other parties. The Alternate Route offers a number of compelling features, and this made my evaluation more challenging. For instance, if simply given the choice between putting a transmission line through a park versus a neighborhood, I would look to protect the people first, animals second.

(insert statement about two-legged vs. four-legged creatures). However, this was clearly not the only consideration.

- Ultimately, in my estimation, Edison's proposed route is the superior choice insofar as it would result in fewer contingencies while also adhering to Garamendi principles by utilizing the existing Right of Way. In addition, it is critical that we give special consideration to project timelines and remain vigilant of factors that could potentially protract transmission construction. While the asserted construction delays associated with Alternative Route 4C(m) may not be significantly greater than those associated with Edison's Proposed Route, it is nevertheless a risk that must be weighed in the context of our pressing renewable energy policy mandates. On balance, when combined with the Chino Hills State Park General Plan Amendment requirement and other documented contingencies, Alternative Route 4C(m) seems to carry more risk than Edison's Proposed Route.

Concluding Remarks

In closing, I want to thank Commissioner Grueneich, her staff, and ALJ Kolakowski, and Energy Division for working closely with my Office to address our questions and concerns in a timely and responsive fashion. I'd also like to thank parties for their robust participation and excellent input into this extensive decision-making process.

Thank you.

