Attachment 4
COMMITTEE WORKSHOP
BEFORE THE
CALIFORNIA ENERGY RESOURCES CONSERVATION
AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of: )
) )
Informational Proceeding and ) Docket No.
) )
Re: 2004 Transmission Update )
White Paper )

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY BLDG.
CENTRAL VALLEY ROOM, SECOND FLOOR
1001 I STREET
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

MONDAY, AUGUST 23, 2004
9:14 A.M.

Reported by:
Peter Petty
Contract No. 150-04-002

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MS. GRAU: He's 11 years old, so he's not old enough to work anyway. All right, thank you.

So do we have any questions, or would you like to go right on to our speakers? If there's no questions for me we'll just move on.

PRESIDING MEMBER GEESMAN: Thanks, Judy.

MS. GRAU: All right, thank you.

PRESIDING MEMBER GEESMAN: First one up on my list is Keith Demetrak, California Department of Parks and Recreation.

MR. DEMETRAK: Well, good morning, Members of the Commission. My name is Keith Demetrak; I'm Chief of Planning for California State Parks. And I was asked by staff of the Energy Commission to address the Commission on the question of how should the Energy Commission work with the appropriate state and federal agencies to develop a policy for designating utility corridors across state of federally owned land. And I guess the short answer to that question would be closely.

Let me say that, at least speaking for State Parks, and I won't speak for Forest Service lands or National Parks, although I think we share
a common mission, at least with the National Park
Service, that we consider these parks as special
places.

We consider the placement of a utility
corridor or any intrusion in the park for a
nonpark purpose in much the same fashion as you
would look at a crossing of a national cemetery or
a national cathedral in much the same manner.

However, we're also mindful of the
state's needs for energy, water and all the things
associated with a growing population. There are
certain regulatory and policy requirements that we
consider in addressing the question of utility
corridors and transmissions across state park
property, some of which are statutory, some of
which are policy.

There is a Commission policy, that's the
California State Park and Recreation Commission,
on undergrounding of utilities. And quite
frankly, we're finding in some cases that's
probably not the best alternative. It's Roman
numeral III.8. And it essentially says that
utilities shall be placed underground in units of
the State Park System, exceptions may be permitted
by the option of the Director.
In terms of the regulatory kinds of things there are probably three requirements that we look at. The California Public Park Preservation Act of 1971 provides that a public agency that acquires public parkland for nonpark use must either pay compensation that is sufficient to acquire substantial equivalent substitute parkland or provide substitute parkland of comparable characteristics.

Similarly, Public Resources Code 5024 and 5024.5 related to CEQA requires a state agency that proposes a project which may result in adverse effects on historical resources listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historic Resources to consult with the State Historic Preservation Office and to identify feasible and prudent measures that will eliminate or mitigate the adverse impacts.

And then finally, at the federal level, the Act that set up the land and water conservation fund provides federal moneys for which many of our parks or portions of parks require, and that's the -- I can give you the citation later if you'd like -- has a requirement...
that the Act prohibits the conversion to a
nonrecreational purpose or property acquired or
developed with these grants without the approval
of the Department of the Interior.

Section 6F directs the Department of the
Interior to insure that replacement lands of equal
value, monetary, that is, location and usefulness
are provided as conditions to such conversions and
so forth and so on.

So we are bound by certain state and
federal laws and statutes, as well as policy, to
closely consider the question of transmissions
across State Park properties.

And I should also indicate that state
parks are divided into eight classifications and
three subclassifications. It's everything from
the major classifications are things like state
parks, state reserves, state seashore, wayside
campground, state historic parks, state beaches,
state recreation area and state reserve.

The three subclassifications, that is
classifications that are found within the
boundaries of existing park units are state
wilderness, state natural preserve and state
cultural preserve.
And looking at a statewide policy for
the transmission lines or corridors across state
park properties I think the things that come most
to mind are to avoid those resources and
particularly as maybe exemplified by the
classification of the most sensitive park areas.
That would be things like state wilderness, state
natural or cultural preserve, state reserve, and
to a certain extent, state parks.

To focus more on those areas there where
there's probably already more of a developed or
disturbed environment. That's going to be off-
highway vehicle areas, state recreation areas.

And, in fact, many of our state
recreation areas are reservoirs that were created
to either store water or store water for
hydropower and transmissions. And so you'll find
transmission lines already traversing these park
units.

Aside from that at the statewide level
the thing that we would probably look for are
locating transmission lines along already
disturbed areas, and that would be generally along
park roads. Because oftentimes it isn't so much
the initial transmission line, itself, that causes
us the kind of a long-range concern; it's the
ongoing maintenance and routine maintenance of
these areas and the need for additional roads and
traffic along undisturbed areas.

Beyond all that the suggestion that I
would most offer is to work closely with our
district and superintendents and our field staff.
Our Department, the 279 units in the State Park
System are divided into 18 districts. And each
district has one or more sectors to it.

In the case of Anza-Borrego, which is
the Colorado Desert District, and there are three
sectors; including one sector that is Anza-
Borrego, itself.

And what I'd like to do is just read
briefly to the Commission a copy of an email
transmittal that went between myself and the
sector superintendent for Anza-Borrego, Mark
Jorgensen. His comment was:

Our best luck comes from working in the
field with the power company representatives,
biologists and technical staff to meet both of our
missions. Mutual respect has paid off, though
there are still some inherent suspicions on both
sides. Getting familiar with each other and
practicing some give-and-take has worked so far.

We now have worked on two post-fire" -- and that's
the major fires that were in southern California
last year -- "where we are moving major lines out
of the canyons and roadless areas of the park over
to our paved or dirt roads."

"Statewide we are having to create new
corridors or replace lines, it would be beneficial
to consider putting utilities adjacent to paved or
designated dirt roads. What we have found so far
is that there is a lot of pole maintenance on
older lines and annual veg control around poles
for fire prevention. And in the wild areas the
major work often calls for work to be done by
helicopter."

"If we get lines up next to the roads it
makes for a situation where all the maintenance
work can be done from the roadside using boom
trucks and we don't have to get so involved with
the power company to mitigate impacts."

Further, his initial response to my
question about how is this working in the case of
Anza-Borrego and San Diego Gas and Electric, his
comment is: Our take on the subject is that with
the metro areas of San Diego, Orange County and
L.A. to our west and northwest, there are going to be ever-increasing pressures to deliver power, water and petroleum products from the interior of the county to the coast."

"Since Anza-Borrego is about 70 miles in length from north to south there are obviously going to be negotiations to bring power corridors across the park. Indeed we have met with SDG&E, Mr. Jeff Sykes, Supervisor and Environmental Coordinator, and Mr. Phil Bunch, Biologist, and driven the corridor which would most likely serve the needs of a future 500 kV power line."

"Currently there is a 69 kV line which basically traverses the middle of the park in an east-west direction along highway 78. On its western end the park turns northwesterly up the Grapevine. We discussed the concept, which the Park can agree with, of increasing the 500 kV using taller steel poles with longer spans than the current wooden poles. The taller poles with spans two to three times the current span would actually have less physical impacts on the ground, on archeological sites, riparian areas, wildlife habitat, plant disturbance, et cetera. Although they will have a much higher visual impact along
the corridor."

"We agreed in concept in the field that Parks will work with SDG&E or Sempra or whatever it takes to make this massive energy increase a reality in the future. Where we discussed what will be off-limits to new power corridors are the designated state wilderness areas within Anza-Borrego. The areas not designated as wilderness are the margins of current power lines and along paved highways and county roads."

"Thus the idea of putting any new power lines in the park centers on placement along already disturbed routes, i.e., paved highways, as discussed in the energy briefing paper. We can and will work with SDG&E. We've worked with them successfully in (inaudible) Rancho after the big fires to place the power corridor along state highway 79."

"This allows future pole and line maintenance to be done from paved roads" -- I mentioned that already. We are more than willing to get together with anybody any time we can bring along our GIS technology with archeological sites, eagle nests, bighorn lambing areas, water sources, veg layers, and, yes, even power line right-of-
ways to discuss these."

So I think at the district level it can
work very well, and kind of a mutual respect for
both our mission as well as the need for the
energy, or whatever the corridor transmission is.

There are some statewide things that can
be done in terms of siting location with respect
to some of the classifications we have.

We can also look towards, you know, how
can some of these transmission corridors benefit
the basic mission of parks or some of these state
or federal areas. And that is that some of these
corridors can create conductivity between major
habitat areas. If we look long distance, that's
one of the greatest problems, especially facing
habitat these days, it's both the loss of habitat,
but primarily the loss of conductivity of that
habitat. Perhaps these long-range or long-
distance corridors can connect some of that,
particularly across private lands where we're
currently having problems.

They can also provide trail
opportunities. And there's, you know, trail use,
hiking, bike, equestrian is the single largest
recreation activity in California. Perhaps
there's some opportunity to work jointly so it
accomplishes not only their mission, but our long-
range mission, as well.

Do you have any questions?

PRESIDING MEMBER GEESMAN: We sure want
to thank you for your contribution. And I think
that when we get the transcript of the remarks
that you quoted from, it will prove quite helpful.

My question is whether or not you have a
regular planning process in your 200-plus units
that addresses electric transmission corridors; or
whether it's more of a project-by-project as
particular sponsors want to address your concerns
they bring those to your attention?

MR. DEMETRAK: Well, we do not have a
project, we do not have a plan in place, nor do we
have it scheduled to look at transmission
corridors across park boundaries statewide. We
react to them on the basis of either a hearing
like this where there is a proposal for how these
might be -- might encourage that way.

And I'll use, for example, the high-
speed rail proposal right now. We've looked at
what's been proposed there, and currently we're
looking at potential impacts on 23 park units up

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