

3443 E. Lee Street  
Tucson, AZ 85716  
January 29, 2010

Supervisor Richard Searle  
Cochise County Board of Supervisors  
1415 Melody Lane, Building G  
Bisbee, AZ 85603

Dear Mr. Searle and the Cochise County Board of Supervisors:

I am writing to express my concern about two new 500 kV transmission lines that are being proposed by the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project to carry 3,000 megawatts of wind-generated electrical power from central New Mexico to central Arizona for distribution predominantly to California. While the source of energy is good, one of the two main transmission corridors proposed in southern Arizona is up the San Pedro River Valley, an area of significant environmental importance. I am writing to you as a Cochise County land owner and part-time resident of Cascabel, Arizona. The area of principal concern is in Cochise County District 3.

Two alternative corridors are proposed up the San Pedro River that pass through Cascabel, one on the east side of the river and one on the west. The lines on both sides of the river cross environmentally sensitive lands: Saguaro-Juniper Corporation lands with Nature Conservancy easements on the east and Pima County's A-7 Ranch and Beuhman Canyon on the west. The BLM itself has several parcels under conservation status in the area as well as easements on adjoining private land. I strongly object to both of these routes and hope that you and the Board will be concerned enough to formally object to them. I have enclosed three maps made by SunZia that show proposed routes: (1) an entire Arizona-New Mexico route map, (2) a southeastern Arizona route map, and (3) a detailed Cascabel area map (maps 2 and 3 have recently been updated). Purple routes on the maps are actively being considered; black routes have been eliminated.

The transmission corridor would be new across much of the landscape in the San Pedro River Valley and would require building a road along its length to install and maintain the towers and lines. Legally, each line requires at least 200'+ of right of way (400'+ total), although a utility easement of up to 1000' wide could be required. The towers would be constructed of steel and would be a minimum of 130 feet high with spans between them of ~1300 feet. The route on the east side of the San Pedro would parallel the river for up to 40-45 miles, while the route on the west side would parallel the river for ~30 miles. As valued as the San Pedro Valley is as an environmental resource, you can understand the damage that this would do and the strong objections that people have to the proposed corridors. Once a utility corridor like this is established, it would exist in perpetuity and likely be expanded for additional uses in the future.

The BLM, SunZia, and the Environmental Planning Group (conducting the environmental impact study for the BLM) held a community information meeting with the residents of Cascabel on January 13, 2010. Most of the individuals attending this meeting were local and ranged from ranchers whose families have been in the valley for five generations to individuals who arrived just a

few years ago. The meeting was very well attended (>100 people), and opposition to the routes was resounding. A representative from Gabrielle Giffords' office also attended the meeting.

In addition, the Board of Supervisors of the Redington Natural Resource Conservation District (RNRCD) unanimously opposes the San Pedro transmission routes and has officially filed for coordinating status with all federal and state agencies monitoring jurisdiction over land and/or resources located within the RNRCD. This will allow the RNRCD to directly participate in decisions related to projects such as SunZia and will require the BLM to sit at their meetings.

I hope that you can appreciate my concern and that of other San Pedro River Valley residents and express your concern about the San Pedro routes to the Bureau of Land Management, which is in charge of conducting the environmental impact study (contact information is enclosed). If I can provide any more information or help, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Norman M. Meader". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Norman M. Meader  
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