

SunZia Southwest Transmission Project
c/o EPG, Inc.
4141 North 32nd Street, Suite 102
Phoenix, AZ 85018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am against the proposed route of the 500 kilovolt (kV) high-capacity transmission lines through the San Pedro river valley. I feel there will be a significant environmental impact to the valley on a number of levels if the lines are routed through it. I would first like to comment on the depiction of the valley as a “low” area of concern by the Biological Resources and Cultural and Paleontological Opportunities and Constraints posters. Although there may be fewer cultural opportunities and concerns in the valley as compared to other sites in Arizona, there are certainly more paleontological opportunities in the San Pedro Valley than along other proposed routes for the transmission lines. Certainly using existing railroad or interstate highways would be a less intrusive alternative to ruining a natural environment. In addition, while these opportunities refer to early Native-American sites, there is a wealth of historical value in the valley with regard to the early settlement of the Tucson and surrounding area by Hispanics and early American settlers. Many of the original farm and ranch families have continued to live and work in the valley for generations on the same land their ancestors pioneered. Time continues to move forward with the past becoming the remote past, the present becoming the past and the future becoming the present. How much evidence of the recent past including settlement of the valley will be lost by the placement of the lines and attendant access roads only to be valued when it is no longer retrievable?

I also want to address the Arizona Corporation Commissions designation of the route with a permanent Certificate of Environmental Compatibility Corridor which was granted before 1972. There can be no debate that environmental impact studies prior to 1972 were certainly less sophisticated than those performed today and designation based on such studies must be considered inadequate and void without additional new studies.

The San Pedro Valley and Aravaipa Canyon are unique to the Tucson area affording residents and visitors the unique opportunity to see a natural free flowing river. The environment is a valuable riparian area and a migratory route for a number of bird species. The environmental impact of the lines would be substantial. The valley is also home to a number of mammalian species including coyotes, deer, javelina, bobcats, and mountain lions. These animals regularly travel from the foothills to the San Pedro River for food and water throughout the year. Placement of the power lines in tandem and creating new access roads will certainly have a negative impact on their natural habitat.

The addition of new access roads will alter the natural run off patterns of the large volumes of rain water the land receives during the monsoon season that could result in unintended flooding. The roads may also change the natural pattern of wild fires by acting as firebreaks, allowing increase growth of highly combustible vegetation that

could result in more severe wild fires at a later time. The roads will also encourage increased vehicle traffic, including off road traffic which is already encroaching into natural environment, often, illegally, on to restricted land.

The environmental impact of the line placement will not be limited to the valley's wildlife. There will also be a significant impact on the valley's human inhabitants. Many of the valley's residents live on the same land their families settled generations ago. New residents have relocated to the valley to appreciate the unique features of free flowing ground water, abundant and diverse wild life, the incomparable beauty of the valley and surrounding area. The added value derived by the residents to their quality of life from the pristine nature of the valley is incalculable. Likewise the loss of value by placing these lines cannot be overestimated.

We have a family cemetery that sits on a small bluff overlooking the valley's bottom land and the river. At least five generations are buried in the cemetery. When visiting a unique peace and calm is provided to the soul by the view of the surrounding country, the river, the clear blue sky with raptors circling overhead. That type of view is afforded to all residents and visitors to the valley. Placing the power lines in the valley will destroy that view and our environment.

I will end by briefly addressing the economics of routing the lines through the valley. Placing the transmission line in the valley will result in the loss of property values now and in the future, including the loss of future residential development opportunities. There are no foreseeable economic benefits to the valley and its residents. The sole economic benefit is to the transmission company.

The Gamez Cemetery
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