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Benson, AZ 85602  
August 28, 2009

Adrian Garcia, Project Manager  
SunZia Southwest Transmission Project  
Bureau of Land Management  
Post Office Box 27117  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-0115

Dear Mr. Garcia:

I am writing you regarding the route of the proposed high tension transmission line that is now being considered to run from central New Mexico to central Arizona. It is my understanding that one of the possible routes is through the Lower San Pedro River Valley. I am writing to you to respectfully ask that you not use this valley as a route for the transmission line.

The San Pedro River is the last free flowing, undammed river in the state of Arizona. The valley through which this river runs has been continuously occupied by humans for at least the last twelve thousand years. There are more than 500 known archaeological sites, and undoubtedly there many that have not yet been discovered.

The valley and the surrounding area, much of which is relatively pristine desert, has been used by indigenous people since the last ice age, and by migratory wildlife for much longer than that. The valley acts as a corridor for migrating mammals as they move between the mountain ranges that lie both east and west of the San Pedro. The valley is the principal migratory corridor for birds in the West, as they move between nesting grounds in the north and their wintering grounds farther south. The convergence in this area of the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts, the Rocky Mountains, and the Sierra Madre Mountains creates a region of biodiversity that is unlike any other in the United States, and perhaps in the world. Running a transmission line through this valley would greatly change and I fear, irreparably damage this natural environment.

Both the construction and maintenance of the transmission lines will adversely affect this fragile desert ecosystem. Habitat fragmentation is one of the most serious threats to wildlife populations, particularly in harsh environments such as deserts. Habitat fragmentation will certainly come as a result of building this transmission line. Service roads will be needed to maintain the power lines after they are built. These roads will serve as corridors for invasive species of plants and animals that are not native to this area, and they will open up the area to ATVs and other off road vehicles. The end result will be a significant degradation of what is now in many places, a pristine environment.

There are better ways to accomplish the task of supplying power to areas where it is needed. I suggest that instead of running transmission lines across large areas of undeveloped land, and creating the environmental damage that will most certainly ensue, you consider using existing corridors, such as railroad and highway rights of way. These areas are already disrupted and environmentally degraded, and the impact will be far less than to run the lines through pristine desert.

Another option to consider is to generate power locally, instead of running it across vast stretches of

landscape and incurring the cost to build and maintain the transmission lines. In addition to that cost, there is an inherent inefficiency in running electricity through power lines; we lose a part of the power that we generate simply by running it through long transmission lines. The era when the most cost effective way to generate electric power was to do it in coal fired power plants, hydroelectric generating stations, and nuclear power plants is, I believe, drawing to a close. We now are developing the technology to generate electricity using renewable and sustainable means, and as a taxpayer, I believe that my money would be better spent developing power generation systems on a local scale, and abandoning the old ways of doing things. I am 72 years old, and as a retired electrical engineer; I know that there are better ways of providing electricity to locations where it is needed than by running it over long distances through transmission lines, and incurring the cost and environmental degradation that are inherent in doing it that way.

As a tax payer and as a voting citizen of the United States and the State of Arizona, I am opposed to building a power transmission line through the San Pedro River Valley. I respectfully request that, if you find that you must build such a transmission system, that you pick a route that does not damage pristine wild lands.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Evans  
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Benson, Arizona 85602