

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA  
7TH DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public  
Lands, Chair  
Subcommittee on Water and Power

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR  
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections  
Subcommittee Early Childhood, Elementary and  
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CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS,  
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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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January 5, 2010

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Mr. Ken Salazar  
Secretary of the Interior  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

I write to you today to express my concern regarding the proposed routes for the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project in Southern Arizona. The proposed action would bring two parallel 500 kilovolt high capacity electric transmission lines through the Lower San Pedro River Valley, from New Mexico to Arizona, by extending a high-tension power line with a 1000 ft. wide access corridor. It is my understanding that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) supports the project.

The Lower San Pedro River Watershed remains ecologically intact, with a relatively pristine landscape in a rapidly growing region. The proposed transmission lines would damage the delicate San Pedro Valley from the inevitable development that would follow the corridor. Additional roads and infrastructure will fragment core habitat areas for several threatened and endangered species in the San Pedro River, its watershed and its major tributaries, including Hot Springs Canyon. Several properties in the watershed are used by state and federal agencies for mitigation projects for several bird and fish species. Water quality could deteriorate due to erosion of upland soils caused by new or expanded access roads for the SunZia project.

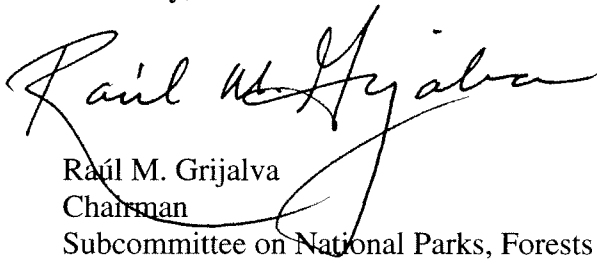
Public land managers and ranchers throughout the western states have had problems dealing with environmental and infrastructure damage done by ATV users. SunZia service roads would facilitate ATV access and off-road abuses that lead to additional soil erosion, plant destruction and damage to wildlife habitat.

The BLM holds a conservation easement on several properties in the area to protect its ecological and cultural values. However, running a 1000 ft. utility corridor through the area is inconsistent with the BLM's own stated conservation goals in the San Pedro Watershed. There are no sufficient mitigation options for the damage new roads and infrastructure development could do to this fragile area.

I encourage the Department of Interior and the BLM to look into rerouting the proposed transmission lines to the south of the San Pedro River Valley, along existing transmission routes, including along the I-10 highway. While I recognize that the growth in the Tucson and Phoenix areas has put a strain on our utility system, we must remain mindful of the impacts of the solutions that are offered – and pushing this onto our pristine, natural areas is not the solution.

If you would like to speak with me about the concerns I have raised, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end that extends under the typed name below.

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands

cc: Bob Abbey, Director, Bureau of Land Management