

Adrian Garcia, Project Manager
SunZia Southwest Transmission Project
Bureau of Land Management c/o EPG, Inc.
4141 N. 32nd Street, Suite 102
Phoenix, AZ 85018

Dear Mr. Garcia,

I am writing out of deep concern regarding one of the possible routes for the proposed 500kv Sun Zia transmission line. The area of concern is the San Pedro Valley in southeastern Arizona, between the villages of Pomerene and San Manuel. The future of this unique portion of the San Pedro Valley area stands at a crossroads, the possibilities of which could not be more starkly contrasting. It is likely that the next decade will see this area transformed into either a federally designated conservation area, or a utility corridor. Allow me to explain:

The above mentioned area is by any measure the wildest portion of the approximately 100 mile long San Pedro Valley. Within this area lie a national park, a national forest, 3 federally designated wilderness areas and one of the Nature Conservancy's largest U. S. preserves. In addition, a large and growing number of conservation and archeological easements are held by the Bureau of Land Management, The Nature Conservancy and the Center for Desert Archeology. Furthermore, it is important to understand that the entire area functions as an ecological whole. As such, it contains the highest diversity of mammal species in North America and is also the main flyway for migratory birds in the American West.

Much of the reason for its ecological integrity lies in the fact that infrastructure is minimal. Just one county-maintained dirt road passes through it and it is home to only a few hundred people.

An increasing number of local land owners, conservationists and researchers are coming together to seek federal conservation status for this unique environmental treasure--status that would protect the irreplaceable natural features of the area while allowing for time honored land uses such as grazing and hunting.

This vision is endangered by another vision in which the area could simply become a utility corridor. There are already several precedents for this. A 345KV transmission line currently passes through the area's southern boundary and a 115KV transmission line travels through the heart of it, as does a gas pipeline. In 2007, this portion of the San Pedro Valley was targeted by the Arizona State Transportation Board as a possible route for an interstate highway. The cogency and vehemence of the opposition defeated this proposal.

I will suggest that opposition to the Sun Zia proposal will be equally as daunting.

Fortunately, there is an alternative, which is to follow the I-10 highway and rail corridor, which is already disturbed by infrastructure. This would obviously be a somewhat longer and more

costly route to install, but would avoid the considerable environmental, legal and public relations costs that a San Pedro Valley route will most certainly incur.

We all need a future that embraces both renewable energy and ecological integrity. I urge you to make the decision that offers both.

Sincerely,

David Omick
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