

November 27, 2009

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

Dear Mr. Garcia:

I, along with my partner and two friends, co-own 130 acres at the mouth of Hot Springs Canyon in Cascabel, AZ. We purchased the property in 2005 and worked together with the Tucson field office of the B.L.M. for three years to secure a conservation easement intended to protect the many natural and cultural resources located on the property. This is but one small project among many private and public conservation efforts in the vicinity of Hot Springs Canyon. All of these efforts are intended to preserve the integrity of the wildlife corridor between the Galliuro and Rincon Mountains, and protect the San Pedro water shed.

The first lesson of ecology and conservation is that environments, habitats, gene pools, water sheds and migration routes cannot be contained in neat little packages of conservation properties, parks or reserves. These are large systems that range across our artificial boundaries and require an integrity of the whole in order to continue to function well, preserving the wild nature and remarkable biodiversity of the San Pedro River Valley.

I am dismayed that the B.L.M. along with SunZia are proposing a 1,000 foot wide power Transmission line corridor that would run directly behind, and possibly cross the property we steward. It would certainly cross Hot Springs Canyon and Redfield Canyon further to the North. The construction process, the maintenance roads and associated erosion and access would cause irreversible damage to these, and other, important wildlife corridors and tributaries of the San Pedro River.

Perhaps the single most egregious aspect of this proposal is the damage that would be done to native and migratory bird species. There are well documented studies of bird deaths from collisions with towers and power lines and the electrocution of large raptors. The San Pedro is considered the premier migratory route in the Southwest for birds traveling between South and North America. A Transmission line of the magnitude being proposed would represent a gauntlet of death to be negotiated each spring and fall by millions of birds as well as the large number of year-round resident birds of the valley.

I write to urge that the Bureau of Land Management and SunZia

Transmission L.L.C. not site additional power lines in the San Pedro River Valley.

If this project is to move forward it is imperative that the power line corridor be sited within established transportation and utility corridors along Interstate 10.

It would not only be an irony, but a major travesty for the B.L.M. to do anything other than conserve the San Pedro River valley, protecting it's inhabitants and water shed in perpetuity. I trust that you and your colleagues will fulfill the B.L.M.'s mission statement to, "steward our public lands with environmental responsibility."

Sincerely,

Rev. Brandon Wert
Tucson Borderlands YAV Coordinator
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