



Hope for the Hills
4195 Chino Hills Parkway #304
Chino Hills, CA 91709



April 14, 2012

Good Morning. I would like to thank Chair Judy Biggert, Congressman Gary Miller, the Honorable Luis Gutierrez and members of the Sub Committee on Insurance, Housing and Community Opportunity for this opportunity to address the serious matter we have developing in Chino Hills. My name is Bob Goodwin and I speak on behalf of Hope For The Hills, a community group that was founded in May of 2011 to carry on the work of a previous organization, C.A.R.E., which started in 2007 when this project was announced and unveiled. The purpose of both groups is and was to bring awareness to the tragedy unfolding in Chino Hills relative to the TRTP project being constructed by Southern California Edison.

This project, planned and built under the disguise of “green energy”, is many things but healthy and environmentally safe it is not. SCE promotes a policy of community partnership and caring, yet they have no problem building and energizing 198ft towers with 500,000 Volt power lines within 70ft of residences with the lines as close as 40 feet in some cases. This is not only a safety matter it is also raises health concerns relative to EMF fallout and the consequences associated with prolonged EMF exposure. The consequences highlighted in a Department of Health Services report from October 2002 stated that, among other things, prolonged exposure to this type of an EMF field lead to an increased risk of developing brain tumors, childhood leukemia, ALS (more commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s disease) and elevated number of miscarriages. When asked about this study, SCE repeatedly states that there is “no empirical data that supports this 100%”. I find that to be rather insulting to anyone and everyone that may have to live with this 24/7/365 if SCE is allowed to complete this portion of construction through Chino Hills. One can also argue that there is no empirical data that says it DOES NOT cause these health issues either. They even advised against construction of a Community Center because cars would be parked under these very lines for extended periods and they deemed that unsafe. Yet this company promotes “Safety is top priority for our ratepayers”.

How does this relate to why we are here today? For beginners, health and safety are directly related to property values. In Chino Hills alone, average property values are down 17% since this project started to become a reality in May of 2011. This number can be statistically proven by comparing the period six months prior to the towers going up when there were 331 closed sales with an average sales price of \$509,000. Since the towers went up, a total of 10 months, there have been 426 sales with the average sale price of \$421,452 or an average loss of \$87,549, a rate of -17.2%. In addition, the average number of sales has dropped from 55 to 42 per month. Many people have given up even trying to sell and some are just walking away from their home. How is that possible in our society? How can a utility company not see that this is wrong?

While it is true that SCE has owned this right of way (ROW) since 1941 no one, not even SCE, envisioned 198 ft towers on a 150ft ROW. Keep in mind, in 1941 there were cows and coyotes, bugs and bunnies living in this area. Homes were added after the fact and yes, people bought them knowing the ROW was there but were told, many by SCE themselves, this ROW was dormant. With that knowledge people purchased homes with piece of mind, never dreaming a few months/years later their homes would be deemed worthless when the poles went up.



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Today we have several homes in the “fall zone” where these towers have been erected. The average distance these homes sit from the towers is 71ft. When you factor in the 60ft cross arms, **IF** the 500,000 volt lines are strung, these lines will be within 41ft. of some homes. 24/7/365, no reprieve, no break, no relief to the worry and emotional toll that they will take.

It seems that the only agency with enough foresight to protect anyone is the Department of Education. They have specific guidelines that state towers of this magnitude must be a **MINIMUM of 350FT** from a public school. SCE has stated, in their safety guidelines, a recommendation that a **500FT** clearance is optimal. Yet we find ourselves today looking at towers as close as 71ft to homes and children’s bedrooms! Again the question has to be asked, how is this possible? Who will ever buy our homes with a 198ft power pole outside a bedroom window? In fact, FHA will not even approve a loan for any of these homes inside the “Fall Zone”. They recognize the risk of having an investment so close to a safety hazard such as 500,000 volt power lines on 198ft towers so close to homes.

Chino Hills is suffering from much more than property value loss. From personal strain and emotional worry to physical illness, SCE has created a community of fear and trepidation. Many residents do not know what the future brings. Many have lost their equity and peace of mind. Many are looking for answers and not finding much hope.

If you were to simply ask each homeowner to speak, every one of them could tell you their personal story. From a daughter who begged her newly widowed mother to move to Chino Hills to be closer to her and her grandchild only to finally move here and then shortly there after, come home from surgery to see a monster power pole going up outside her bedroom window. Then there is the mother who spends every waking moment researching and fighting this while missing out on family outings but not telling her children why because they are sick of her spending all her “spare” time on this fight instead of spending “quality” time with them, to the grandparents that have babysat their 18 month old grandson once because they have devoted every spare minute in their life leading a group of dedicated, devoted citizens’ in this fight.

We come here today to hopefully be heard and taken seriously. How can this be happening to our City, to anyone in this Country? Corporate greed comes to mind, Greed Energy vs. Green Energy. The city had provided a perfectly sound alternative that would have avoided this travesty. Alternative 4CM would have eliminated the problems all parties have encountered but SCE decided it was not convenient for them. Chino Hills also offered and provided an underground alternative which SCE essentially tried to price out of consideration. We are still hopeful that common sense will prevail and this solution, going underground, will be the acceptable alternative at this time.

SCE is ADAMANT about going above ground at all cost. The amount of time, energy, cost and legal fees they have spent to oppose the alternatives would have paid for the underground construction. We as residents also would like to know how the estimated \$3.6M monthly SCE collects from just the Chino Hills residential owners is being spent. Why that portion of their income isn’t directly applied to remedy this matter? How can our utility dollars support a project that so adversely impacts our community?



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Since SCE's position is now and has always been about the cost, there is one question they have never answered. The proposed alternative through the State Park would have been 10.5 miles shorter therefore saved 10.5 miles of construction costs so why didn't they consider this an acceptable alternative?

The question has been raised regarding notification from SCE relative to this project. Yes, people were notified. The approximately 300 residents along the ROW were advised. Did SCE notify all "impacted" residents, NO. Were public hearings held, YES. Was the public allowed to speak, YES. Were their concerns taken into consideration, I think the results answer that question loud and clear. A resounding NO!

I want to make one thing perfectly clear, this is not a NIMBY ("not in my backyard") issue. We adamantly oppose any project such as this that rapes a community and imposes such hardships on residents. Any and all utility companies, especially SCE, should be held to a much higher standard when it comes to community and environment safety. No community anywhere should have to endure what Chino Hills has had to go through. Let us be responsible for setting the precedent that states people MUST come before profitability and growth. We are all in favor of Green Energy, however, Green Energy should not hurt and this Green Energy project is KILLING the Chino Hills we have come to know and love. All at the expense of profits vs. people.

Why we are the ONLY country that does not mandate projects such as this be REQUIRED to go underground? Why does most every other civilized country construct high energy projects underground? Are they more technologically advanced than the United States? I would think not! Why does it always come down to having to adopt a LAW to do the right thing? Why can't companies like SCE do the right thing without being told? Whatever happened to common sense in this country? When something looks "good on paper" but takes on a whole different perspective in real life, why doesn't corporate America choose to do the right thing? We are better than that. We as a community are not afraid of taking on Goliath. Someone has to stand up and say this is flat out WRONG and must be corrected.

Please help us here today, once and for always, right this wrong and do what is right for Chino Hills and its residents. Let's show Corporate America that people DO MATTER. Let's show the country that people and their elected officials can get together and make common sense changes that will protect not only our future, but the future of our children and grandchildren.

I thank you for your time this morning. It has been an honor and a pleasure to address this committee.