

**TESTIMONY OF
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BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON INSURANCE, HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY OF
THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES**

April 14, 2012

I want to thank Luis Gutierrez, Ranking Member, Madam Chair Judy Biggert, Committee Member Gary Miller, and Members of Committee for the invitation to submit my testimony to the House Subcommittee on Insurance, Housing and Community Opportunity of the Committee on Financial services on the subject of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project also know as the TRTP.

I am a mother, wife, Board Member of Hope for the Hills; a community based organization formerly know as C.A.R.E.-Citizens for Alternate Routing of Electricity, and long-time residents of Chino Hills. My husband and I moved to Chino Hills 23 years ago, because we wanted to raise our family in a safe, friendly, youth-orientated city with a rural atmosphere. We love this city and especially the beautiful view of the snow capped mountains during the winter.

In April of 2007, SCE sent out notices to the residents within 200 ft. of the easement, informing them about the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP). They stated they would be removing the existing 98 ft. towers, 220 kV lines, which have been de-energized since the early 1970's, and replacing them with 198 ft.+ towers, 500 kV lines in an easement of only 150 ft. wide. This will place the towers as close as 70 ft. to many homes and yes, my home is in the "Fall Zone" of one of these towers. This is not safe, especially since they are near several earthquake faults.

I attended SCE's workshops, to educate myself on some facts about the Project and SCE insured me that the Project was safe. I attended many CPUC scoping meetings, and participated in the CPUC Public Participate Hearing (PPH) in 2009. At this Hearing, there were many expert speakers in their field that addressed many legitimate concerns, i.e., engineering, fire safety, but after all was said, the PUC voted for SCE's preferred route through the right-of-way (ROW). It was noted that the preferred route was the "Environmentally Superior Route."

The DEIR/EIS's visual impact assessment is fatally flawed. The visual simulation photographs of the Project did not provide a fair representation of the neighborhoods that have been impacted by the poles. On Nov. 10, 2011 the Commission made a comment that the towers have a visual and economic impact far more significant than they envisioned at the time the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) was issued.

In May of 2009, the City of Chino Hills requested some data from SCE regarding the 195 ft. tubular steel poles (TSP). The question was:

- Has SCE ever used 195 ft. TSP's for the installation of a 500 kV transmission line?

Jerry Amalfitano, principal engineer at SCE answered the question with: NO.

So basically SCE will use Chino Hills as their lab rats for the testing of these towers.

Now I would like to discuss the issue of property loss. In the Final EIR it concluded that there were no significant impacts on property values as the result of the construction of the TRTP. It went on to state that the impact to nearby homes is very small and typically disappears within five years. I would like SCE to tell this to my neighbors, the Seagrave's who listed their immaculate and newly remodeled home in Sept. 2011 for \$359k and after they had over 90 interested parties viewing the home and visually see the tower directly behind it, these parties turned around and left. They have continued to drop the price and the current listing is at \$317k. According to the listing agent, it will probably drop down to the high \$200k. As I am standing here, testifying before you today, my good neighborhoods, the Seagrave's, are moving out. They are taking their two young children and walking away from their dream home. The emotional toll has drained them beyond belief and they are done putting their lives on hold.

A similar home on the same street, sold before the towers were constructed in 2010 for \$368k and was financed with a FHA loan. That is about a 20% loss in value. So, for Edison to say, there is no loss in property value, I beg to differ. I have documents I have submitted with my testimony, that shows where another neighbor's home fell out of escrow because of the Project.

The house next door to me sold for \$283k, and was originally listed for \$385k. The Project was disclosed and the home is located along the easement. That house is in the "Fall Zone" of one of the towers. Another good 20% + drop in value. There are many more stories of this nature, around the area of the easement. According to FHA guidelines, it states that, "No dwelling or related property improvement may be located within the engineering (designed) fall distance of any pole, tower or support structure of a high-voltage transmission line." I personally, have not been affected by this ruling, since I am not selling my home.

The electric and magnetic field, EMF – The CPUC and their draft EIR does not take EMF's into consideration because they say no link has been proven, but it hasn't been disproven either. In a testimony prepared in 2009 by a transmission engineer, Professor Turan Gonen, he has reported that SCE has significantly understated the potential maximum levels of the electric and magnetic fields along the ROW. To arrive at its calculation of magnetic fields at the edge of the ROW, SCE estimated the magnetic fields from the proposed line bases only upon the initial amount of electricity the lines are expected to carry in the near future. But the capacity of the lines is actually four times higher than the value SCE assumed in calculating the magnetic field.

In the future, as demand grows in Southern California, the transmission lines will likely carry electricity at their capacity. The result is that the people living next to the lines could be exposed to magnetic fields as high as 100 mG on a temporary or sustained basis rather than the 27 mG estimated by SCE. This is well above the accepted utility practice in the United States of limiting exposure to 10 mG at the edge of the ROW in residential areas, and even beyond the 100 mG threshold generally used for all other bordering uses. Further, the electric fields generated can charge non-grounded metal objects such as power tools or children's tricycles that would normally be used in the backyards of the residents living next to the power lines.

SCE has proposed no mitigation for the electric shocks residents will likely experience frequently from touching non-grounded metal objects. Although SCE is proposing to use a ROW only 150 ft. wide, a 200 ft. ROW is the minimum needed for new 500 kV high voltage lines through a residential neighborhood. SCE's own design and maintenance standards require a 100 ft. diameter clearance around poles.

We've all heard about increased cancer risks, and affects on health near power lines. When the Love Canal was built they thought that was safe and the same goes for the Titanic. Need I say more?

The talk of expanding the ROW is not an option. I do not have plans or wish to move. There are over 1,000 homes within 500 ft. of this Project. So, if you buy out some, you are just extending the problem.

A testimony prepared by past Chino Valley Independent Fire District Chief Paul Benson in 2009 he stated that the City's alternate route, which traverses part of the Chino Hills State Park, actually improves firefighting opportunities in the City's neighborhoods and in the State Park. Much of the City is in a high fire hazard area. In the residential area of the City that straddles the current SCE 150-foot ROW, the added height of the towers in the very narrow corridor would create a danger to firefighters during a fire, make access for fire equipment difficult, and would restrict airplanes and even helicopters from being able to safely drop water or retardant on a fire in the neighborhood.

The street I live on, Garden Ct., has only two ways in and out and both of these roads will have the 500 kV lines run across them. We cannot avoid these lines; you might say we are trapped.

The President of SCE stated that, "Our #1 priority is, and always has been, the health and safety of the public and our employees." I find this hard to believe, since they have been found guilty of overloading utility poles, found to be in violations with the FAA, which placed a halt on the construction in Chino Hills, they were fined \$146M for falsifying data, and the stories continue. Why should I and the other residents believe that this project is safe for our city, when Edison continues to be found guilty of negligence?

When the City of Chino Hills took their lawsuit to the Appeals Court, I still remember the comment that Judge Jeffrey King made to James Arnone, SCE's lawyer; he told him, "that just because the CPUC gives you their blessings you think you can do anything you want to?" That judge got the picture.

I may not have an engineering degree behind my name, but I have enough common sense to know right from wrong, and just looking at these towers, you know that it is definitely a wrong decision.

The damage cannot be mitigated and the emotional turmoil that many of the residents are facing, due to losing their nest-eggs or worrying about their families health and safety, is all due to SCE's need to put "Profit over People." I have been fighting for almost 5 years now to try and stop this project from ruining so many people's lives and mutilating this city. I have listened to their heartfelt stories, I have shared tears with them, and I have encouraged them to fight this injustice. I am standing before you today representing not only myself, but all of them too. One good thing that came out of SCE's arrogance is that they truly have brought this community together. I am not against green energy, but when it's about the type of green that lines someone's pockets, that is the green I am against. Green energy shouldn't hurt.

I would like to thank the Committee on behalf of the residents of Chino Hills for coming to California to hold this Hearing.

