

**Back Country Against Dumps
East County Community Action Coalition
The Protect Our Communities Foundation**

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**Setback for Sunrise Powerlink
Project Delayed by Federal Ruling Allowing Opponents' Appeal to Proceed**

SAN DIEGO, *Calif.*— A panel of federal administrative law judges dealt a major blow to the Sunrise Powerlink power line project late Tuesday when they ruled that local opponents had standing to challenge the project and rejected SDG&E's claim that their appeal was untimely. They also ruled that SDG&E would have to comply with a new timetable delaying construction on the project until at least June 2010.

The ruling comes in response to an administrative appeal filed by powerlink opponents against a decision by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management approving the project last January. The ruling is intended to allow for resolution of the appeal prior to project construction.

So far project opponents have delayed the powerlink 3 years beyond SDG&E's original construction schedule. According to project application documents SDG&E intended to bring the powerlink online by July 2010. Following yesterday's ruling and considering SDG&E's past estimates of a 3 year construction duration, the powerlink, if it is ever built at all, is now unlikely to be completed until the summer of 2013.

"This ruling is a major blow to a deeply flawed project", said the groups' attorney Stephan Volker. "Most of the construction delays have been the direct result of agencies finding significant fault with this unnecessary power line."

"The power line should never have been approved in the first place and now it's much farther from getting all its permits or beginning construction", said Donna Tisdale of Backcountry Against Dumps. "Each year of delay means less risk of wildfire, less upset to property owners and communities, and less likelihood that the line will be extended north through even more private property to Los Angeles."

The Sunrise Powerlink is a major new fossil-fueled electrical transmission line proposed by San Diego Gas and Electric for construction from the Imperial Valley

to central San Diego County near Poway. Like a dead-end freeway with local off-ramps, the powerlink would consist of a larger capacity line to a remote rural area east of Alpine, smaller lines continuing on to central San Diego, and plans by SDG&E to extend the larger capacity “freeway” line to greater Los Angeles through wilderness and communities. SDG&E’s claims that the powerlink would carry renewable energy are greenwash – The powerlink would provide a highly profitable connection between SDG&E parent company Sempra Energy’s enormous natural gas infrastructure in northern Baja California and the southern California market. Local renewable and cleaner energy alternatives are readily available as an alternative to the powerlink – In 2008, the administrative law judge presiding over consideration of the powerlink at the California Public Utilities Commission ruled that local energy alternatives eliminated any need for the project.

Please visit The Protect Our Communities Foundation website to see the ruling:
<http://protectourcommunities.org/>

The Protect Our Communities Foundation is a non-profit community organization dedicated to the promotion of a safe, reliable, economical, renewable, and environmentally responsible energy future for San Diego County.
<http://www.protectourcommunities.org>

Backcountry Against Dumps is a community organization comprising numerous individuals and families residing in the eastern San Diego community of Boulevard who are directly affected by the southern route of the powerlink and the destruction of nearby federal land for inappropriate wind energy development.

The East County Community Action Coalition (“ECCAC”) is a coalition of community groups with the common goal of preserving rural quality of life and natural resources in eastern San Diego County. www.EastCountyAction.org
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