

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to a letter that appeared in the August 6<sup>th</sup> edition regarding Edison's Tehachapi project. The author wrote that he heard "Edison rejected the alternative route through Chino Hills State Park due to the objection from animal rights activist that it would pose a danger to the wildlife." This is simply not true.

As Executive Director of Hills For Everyone, the founders of the State Park, I would like to set the record straight about our role and the role of environmental groups in this decision by the CPUC. Though initially opposed to the four alternative routes through the Park proposed by the City of Chino Hills, we sat down with the City to listen. We made site visits, we met with their expert consultants to learn and we eventually supported an alternative route through the State Park. This route cleaned up the views, reduced the number of towers in the Park, removed over 1.5 miles of transmission lines and over a mile of spur roads. We then hired a renowned environmental law firm to comment on the EIRs and engage in the CPUC process in support of the City.

Next, we garnered the support of two chapters of the Sierra Club (Angeles and San Geronimo), the Endangered Habitats League, and the Chino Hills State Park Interpretive Association. I testified at the hearing in San Francisco with our one attorney to Edison's six attorneys. We also lobbied CPUC Commissioners as the decision neared. In all, as a small non profit, we spent over \$40,000 advocating for this alternative through the State Park because we believed it benefited both the residents of Chino Hills and the State Park.

State Parks' local staff cooperated with us throughout the process by allowing access to the Park's interior, joining us on field trips and consulting on proposed mitigation measures. However, the Department eventually decided a General Plan amendment to the Park's Master Plan would be necessary. The CPUC decided this added too much unpredictability and time to the project and chose the route through the neighborhoods.

The Parks Department had just fought off massive towers through Anza Borrego State Park and were afraid that approving this project through Chino Hills would serve as a precedent. This assumption was wrong. To be a precedent you need to replicate the circumstances. In retrospect, I don't think the Department fully understood the leverage that our group had that virtually assured the Park of adequate mitigation and sensitivity. Our group had a legally binding settlement agreement with Edison dating back to 1982 that required our approval to put any new double circuit lines through the Park. To our knowledge no other environmental group had that kind of leverage - to improve the layout of existing infrastructure in a State Park.

Make no mistake Edison spared no expense (with your rate payer money) to be certain that they got their own precedent - high voltage lines on an easement that is too narrow. Now they can do it anywhere. The CPUC decision is shameful and your city and our organization did everything we could to offer a wiser alternative.

Claire Schlotterbeck  
Executive Director  
Hills For Everyone