

One hopes that the station's headline (which so closely matches SDG&E's message) in no way reflects the significant amount of SDG&E funding to this "public" radio station.

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KPBS Radio

Sunrise Powerlink a Step Closer to Approval

A key milestone in the long approval process for a proposed high-voltage transmission line. California regulators released their environmental assessment of the proposed Sunrise Powerlink project. The 150-mile power line project would stretch from Imperial County to San Diego. KPBS Reporter Ed Joyce has more.

San Diego Gas and Electric says the Sunrise Powerlink is needed to ensure energy reliability in the region. The utility's preferred route crosses through the Anza-Borrego State Park. But the California Public Utilities Commission and U.S. Bureau of Land Management environmental study identifies several alternatives that the regulators say are "environmentally superior" to the proposed project. The study also considers a range of non-transmission alternatives to the line. David Hogan is with the Center for Biological Diversity.

Hogan: Based on the content of the report it's going to be next to impossible for supporters and officials to continue their support for SDG&E's project when there are at least two local generation alternatives that are identified in the report that would achieve the same results.

Jennifer Briscoe with SDG&E says the study puts the utility one step closer in the approval process.

Briscoe: What this draft report represents is a document that is intended to inform the public and the California Public Utilities Commission and Bureau of Land Management decision-makers. But it doesn't dictate the outcome of the final decision. And it doesn't make a recommendation for or against the Sunrise Powerlink Project.

The public has 90 days to comment on the environmental report. In the meantime, the CPUC and BLM will hold eight public workshops in the region later this month on the environmental issues in the report. State regulators are expected to make their final decision on the project later this year.

Ed Joyce, KPBS News.