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News Release

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Sierra Club Asks for Governor Schwarzenegger's help for better energy solutions than the proposed Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Line

New campaign appeals to Governor to protect air quality, communities and open spaces, prevent further dependence on fossil fuels.

SAN DIEGO, CA – Today, the Sierra Club's San Diego Smart Energy Solutions Campaign launched an online advocacy campaign calling on Governor Schwarzenegger to help preserve regional air quality, as well as protect Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, local communities, and other sensitive natural areas from San Diego Gas & Electric's (SDG&E) proposed Sunrise Powerlink transmission line.

The Sunrise Powerlink is a proposed 150-mile, high-voltage transmission line that would start at the Mexican border in Imperial County, run through San Diego County, and end in the coastal community of Carmel Valley. It threatens regional air quality, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, protected State Wilderness Areas, and other sensitive natural areas, as well as dozens of San Diego communities. The costs are expected to exceed \$1.3 billion and would be borne, in part, by California ratepayers.

Although SDG&E has claimed the line will carry renewable energy, it admits it can make no guarantee. "This unnecessary line is a thinly-veiled attempt to continue Southern California's dependence on fossil fuels, including liquefied natural gas from overseas. SDG&E claims it will deliver renewable energy, but the facts show that the renewables claim is bogus," notes Micah Mitrosky, Conservation Organizer for the Sierra Club's San Diego Smart Energy Solutions Campaign.

"During his tenure, Governor Schwarzenegger has demonstrated environmental leadership. Today, we ask for his help in stopping an unnecessary, damaging transmission line that would increase air pollution and global warming emissions, as well as forever mar the beauty of local communities and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, the Crown Jewel of our State Park System. There are cleaner, more environmentally responsible ways to deliver power to our region."

Joe Zechman, San Diego Chapter Chair agrees: “Our region is at an energy crossroad. We have the opportunity to be a national leader in the way we approach and think about energy as we move into the Twenty-First Century. There are truly clean, renewable energy options out there that are ours for the taking. Unfortunately, Sunrise Powerlink is an outdated approach that leads us down the wrong road—the road of continuing dependence upon fossil fuels.”

Richard Miller, the San Diego Chapter’s Smart Energy Task Force Chair, applauds the Governor’s efforts to curb global warming and hopes he will use his influence to guide the direction of regional energy planning for Southern California. “The Governor’s Million Solar Roofs Plan is testament to his commitment to renewable energy. Our hope is that he uses this influence to help stop the polluting and unnecessary Sunrise Powerlink proposal, thereby opening the door to clean, renewable energy possibilities for the region that maintain quality of life and the integrity of our public lands and local communities. We believe San Diego should look for cutting edge solutions for our energy needs like solar and other renewable resources. We should be leading the way towards energy independence, not looking to last century’s solutions to solve our future energy needs.”

The Sierra Club’s coalition of Sunrise Powerlink opponents include community groups, environmental organizations, energy experts, health organizations, businesses and elected officials.

The online advocacy campaign can be accessed at the new San Diego Smart Energy Solutions web site, www.sdsmartenergy.org.

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