

Arizona Corporation Commission
Docket No. L-00000F-09-0190-00144
Case #144 - Vail to Valencia
Public Comment

OPEN MEETING AGENDA ITEM



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Dear Chairman Mayes and Commissioners,

2009 SEP 14 P 4: 5!

Thank you for holding a Special Open Hearing in Tucson. Sadly, due to a family conflict I will not be able to attend. I am hoping another community member will be allowed to read my comments.

DOCKET CONTROL

I write today as a member of the New Dawn Estates Community Association. Our association is a registered Neighborhood Association with Pima County within a half mile of the Project Study Area. I am also a TEP ratepayer and Coordinator for the Vail Preservation Society's 'Tis the Season event. The Vail Preservation Society is a registered Neighborhood Association in the direct vicinity of the Project Study Area for this case. My son attends high school not far from the Vail Substation. All of my groceries, gas and medical treatment come from a location just about the same distance or further than the Vail Substation. The only interstate in our area runs nearly adjacent to the project.

Arizona Corporation Commission

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In February of 2008 at the hearings for LS 137 my neighborhood, the New Dawn Estates, was surprised to learn that in addition to the proposed line between the Vail Vistas and New Dawn Estates, Tucson Electric Power intended to install a third 345 kVa line in the future. It would have made a total of 4 very large lines and towers between our neighborhoods in a very narrow corridor.

We have worked very long and hard with TEP, the City of Tucson and the ACC to move the Cienega substation to a more appropriate location using appropriate colored monopoles. We have really appreciated the efforts TEP has put into our requests regarding safety during construction, re-vegetation, flooding issues, intensive OHV prevention, and gating to prevent neighborhood trespassing. Additionally, we appreciate the neighborhood meetings that were held in our area at convenient times at convenient locations. We have shown that the Company can work collaboratively with the community on site specific issues. The Mountain View substation, the second part of LS Case 137, was shown that it was not needed. It is still shown on TEP's plans with the Southeast Arizona Study Group which is always a concern.

And, TEP still has the third 345 (TEP to Winchester) shown in their ten year plan that we will have to contend with. My point is this. **NO other community should be blindsided at one hearing that their community is going to be hit in the near future by another possible transmission line, especially another extra high voltage line. It should not be blindsided about the cost and installation of a transformer for FUTURE capacity in the TEP system.**

This is one reason, among many, we highly recommend a Citizens' Advisory Council, comprised of various community associations, emergency responders, and environmental groups to be added to the conditions of the Certificate of Environmental Compatibility, should it be granted. **Long term planning will help prevent these kinds of surprises. It will also help reduce costs associated with these hearings.**

I know Elizabeth Webb spent several thousand dollars on the LS Case 137; I spent a few hundred dollars. Our time should have a value but that was not added into our cost estimates. I believe the other intervener spent close to half a million. If we spent that

much, I hate to imagine what the company spent on 7 days of Committee hearings and then meetings in front of the Commission, especially since company employees, the environmental group and the attorneys get paid for their time.

I spoke on August 18th 2008 in front of the Commissioners and spoke of my concern about the lack of involvement of the neighborhoods in planning utility projects.

"When the first meeting with the City of Tucson zoning commissioner happened, we learned a lot more about the process and what was happening, such as TEP had been researching sites 18 months prior to determining the location at Dawn Drive and Shalom. During those 18 months, TEP did not include New Dawn Estates or Vail Vistas, the two neighborhoods that would have been directly impacted because the proposed substation would have been on Dawn Drive. And our neighborhoods are both on Dawn Drive, at the end of it. They didn't include us in the planning process."

If the Committee approves a Citizen's Advisory Council, there can be accountability and the Community, the Commission and the Utility will all hear the same thing. It is a win-win situation for everyone.

I stayed for the entire hearing and I heard what Commissioner Mayes had to say when she spoke and said

"And so I hope that going forward the company learns a lesson from this case from its customers, which is you need to do maximum outreach prior to any case being filed" and "So, you know, in addition to that I think we have learned a lot in this case. And I hope that the company has learned a lot. There has to be aggressive, upfront outreach to communities on all of these line siting cases."

I also heard Commissioner Mundell say: *"And then I would also say that the public outreach needs to be perfected" and "But even if your electricity is generated by renewable, solar, wind, et cetera, you still need transmission lines unless it is distributed generation" and "And so having said that, we still need to plan long term."*

Although the outreach to the public improved for LS Case 144, the newspaper ads for LS in the Vail Sun did not mention TEP involvement, they did not mention new construction to the Vail Substation only calling it an "upgrade", and the Open Houses were held at an start time not feasible for many working class commuters in our area (5:30pm). Moreover, the Open Houses were held outside of the Vail School District boundaries even though TEP had held meetings with us in schools in the Vail School District for the Cienega case. There are schools 3-5 miles north of the project in Rita Ranch, much closer than the Holiday Inn. We were not notified personally about the Open Houses although we were still actively working with TEP at the time. I suggest using flyers in impacted areas on Community bulletin boards, signs near cluster mailboxes not just on the actual line so people will be able to see them, and sending emails to anyone who has shown an interest in transmission line process

As 'Tis the Season Coordinator, I have worked with Bruce and Sandy Whitehouse from Corona de Tucson. There are schools in Corona De Tucson which is less than a mile from this project. There is also a meeting room available for use at the Corona de Tucson firehouse. I think the cohesiveness of individuals from varying sub communities within the Vail School District boundaries should be obvious by now.

Unfortunately, in Line Site Case 144, filed 8 months after the meeting on August 18th, 2008 there was not aggressive upfront outreach to the communities of Vail, Corona de Tucson and Rita Ranch.

Another request is to add a condition to assure that project notification signs are a standardized size and with visible font sizes and colors. The signs TEP used to notify our area of the Cienega Substation are too small to be viewed from a moving car and by the largest number of people. I cannot even see one of the signs when I am stopped at the intersection where the access road to the substation will be because it is blocked by a pole. It also looks just about like the Arizona State Trust Land signs in our area.

I would also like to observe signs where people will logically see them, regardless of car speed. Another of the signs is placed down the old highway 80, an unused dead end road with no structures along side it. The third one is placed on a barbed wire fence adjacent to the east bound I-10. My suggestion is to use more than one sign with directional arrows in those two instances.

I would like to thank the Line Siting Committee for assuring that gray poles would be used next to the existing steel structures on the northern end of the project.

Thank you for your time,

Sherri Stinnett
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Dated this 12th day of September 2009