

For Immediate Release, February 16, 2010

Contact:

David Hogan, The Protect Our Communities Foundation, 760 809-9244

Stephan Volker, Attorney, 510 496-0600

Donna Tisdale, Back Country Against Dumps, 619 766-4170

Laura Cyphert, East County Community Action Coalition, 858-627-1426

Federal Lawsuit Filed Against Massive Transmission Line Sunrise Powerlink Legal Fight Heats Up

SAN DIEGO, *Calif.* – A lawsuit was filed today to stop construction of San Diego Gas and Electric's "Sunrise Powerlink" transmission line through southern Imperial and San Diego counties. The lawsuit was filed in the Federal Eastern District Court in Sacramento.

The lawsuit challenges the decision of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to approve the power line in January of 2009. Three local community groups – The Protect Our Communities Foundation, Back Country Against Dumps, and East County Community Action Coalition – filed the lawsuit after the BLM failed to address issues raised in their administrative appeal.

"The Bureau of Land Management totally disregarded laws to protect people and nature when it approved the Sunrise Powerlink," said the group's attorney Stephan Volker. "Even the judge presiding over this project with the California Public Utilities Commission agreed with opponents that there's no need for the project to be built anywhere let alone through communities and the Cleveland National Forest."

"As impacted property owners, utility consumers, and taxpayers we can't let SDG&E bulldoze their way through our communities, sensitive public lands, and our wallets," said Donna Tisdale, President of Backcountry Against Dumps. "The faux green Sunrise Powerlink is far too expensive in so many ways – Increased utility rates and the double-whammy impact of the increased threat of fire and interference with firefighting activities."

"East County communities deserve to have the same level of environmental review that the northern route received", added Laura Cyphert of the East County Community Action. "As it stands, because of the last minute re-routing through East County, there are multiple very serious impacts which have not been addressed or considered in the environmental impact report. It is extremely unfortunate that the community has been forced to take legal action in order to make the BLM follow the law."

– *more* –

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

“This is still everyone’s fight,” said Denis Trafecanty, President of The Protect Our Communities Foundation. “North County communities like Santa Ysabel, Mesa Grande, Warner Springs, and Pala will be back in SDG&E’s crosshairs when the company returns to regulators with a proposal to extend the southern route north to Riverside, as described in the environmental impact report.”

SDG&E’s \$2-3 billion Sunrise Powerlink is a major new fossil-fueled electrical transmission line that would be constructed from the Imperial Valley to central San Diego County near Poway. California ratepayers will pay for the 123-mile transmission line consisting of a 500kV main line starting from near El Centro and Mexico to a huge new substation in a remote rural area east of Alpine. Two smaller 230kV spur lines would connect to San Diego with future plans by SDG&E to extend the 500kV main line north to Riverside through wilderness and communities. SDG&E successfully opposed any conditions by regulators requiring that the powerlink carry renewable energy. In fact, the powerlink would provide a highly profitable connection between SDG&E parent company Sempra Energy’s enormous natural gas and export power plant infrastructure in northern Baja California and the southern California electricity market.

The groups’ lawsuit can be viewed at: <http://www.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 non-profit organization, based in Boulevard, comprising numerous individuals and families residing in the eastern San Diego County, who are directly affected by the southern route of the powerlink, related projects, and the destruction of nearby federal land for inappropriate industrial wind energy development. www.backcountryagainstdumps.org

The East County Community Action Coalition (“ECCAC”) is a coalition of community groups, individuals and organizations, with the common goal of promoting and preserving the quality of life for residents of eastern San Diego County through coordinated community action. www.EastCountyAction.org

###