

August 6, 2026

Golden Pacific Powerlink Project Team
San Diego Gas & Electric Company
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RE: Golden Pacific Powerlink Project – Recreation Resources and Public Access

Dear Project Planning Team:

The California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Commission appreciates the opportunity to provide preliminary comments regarding the proposed Golden Pacific Powerlink Project and its potential effects on California's public recreation lands, recreation access, scenic resources, and visitor experiences.

The Commission recognizes California's need to maintain and modernize a safe, reliable, and resilient electric transmission system. However, the Commission also believes that recreation resources, public access, scenic landscapes, and outdoor recreation economies are significant public assets that deserve balanced consideration throughout infrastructure planning and environmental review.

At its June 2026 public meeting, the Commission engaged in a robust discussion regarding the increasing number of large-scale development proposals affecting California's public recreation lands. Commissioners expressed concern that major transmission corridors, renewable energy facilities, mining operations, utility infrastructure, and other industrial developments are being proposed with increasing frequency within or adjacent to State Parks, State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs), National Forests, Bureau of Land Management lands, National Monuments, and other important recreation landscapes. The Commission believes this represents an emerging statewide policy issue that extends well beyond any individual project.

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is California's largest state park and one of the most important remaining desert landscapes in the state. The Park and adjacent public lands provide exceptional opportunities for street-legal off-highway vehicle users, dual-sport and adventure motorcyclists, four-wheel-drive enthusiasts, overland vehicle users, campers, hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers, photographers, and countless other visitors seeking high-quality outdoor recreation experiences. The region's extensive network of designated roads, backcountry touring routes, primitive campsites, and scenic vistas represents one of California's premier recreation destinations.

The Commission is aware that an existing transmission line easement in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park would be expanded and bring permanent industrial infrastructure into a landscape specifically valued for its natural character. Transmission towers (150-200' tall), associated access roads, staging areas, vegetation management activities, construction traffic, and long-term utility corridors have the potential to fragment recreation landscapes, diminish scenic quality, alter visitor experiences, affect dark-sky resources, and permanently change the primitive character that makes Anza-Borrego unique.

California's outdoor recreation economy further underscores the importance of protecting these resources. Outdoor recreation contributes more than \$81 billion annually to California's economy, supports more than 545,000 jobs, and provides substantial benefits to rural communities, tourism, hospitality businesses, equipment retailers, outfitters, and local service industries. Recreation landscapes such as Anza-Borrego Desert State Park are not simply open space; they are economic assets that contribute to California's quality of life and long-term economic vitality.

The Commission is particularly concerned that recreation resources often receive less comprehensive analysis than engineering, biological, cultural, or utility considerations during infrastructure planning. Recreation access, scenic quality, visitor experience, outdoor tourism, and the cumulative effects of industrial development deserve the same thoughtful evaluation afforded to other public resources.

The Commission recommends that the project proponents and reviewing agencies:

- Conduct a comprehensive recreation impact analysis addressing how the proposed project would affect both motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities.
- Evaluate impacts from the proposed project to designated OHV touring routes, adventure motorcycle routes, backcountry road networks, dispersed camping areas, and recreational connectivity.
- Assess temporary and permanent effects on visitor experiences, scenic quality, night skies, recreation access, and recreation-based tourism from the proposed project.
- Evaluate alternative routes that avoid impacts to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, designated recreation areas, scenic byways, and high-value recreation landscapes.
- Continue meaningful coordination with California State Parks, the OHMVR Division, local governments, tribal governments, recreation organizations, tourism interests, and the recreating public throughout project planning and environmental review.

The Commission also believes this project presents an opportunity for state agencies to more carefully consider the compatibility of industrial-scale infrastructure adjacent to California's public recreation lands. While individual projects may appear reasonable when evaluated independently, the cumulative effect of transmission corridors, renewable energy facilities, mining operations, transportation infrastructure, and other industrial developments has the potential to incrementally industrialize recreation landscapes that were established to protect California's outstanding natural, scenic, and recreational resources.

The Commission supports thoughtful infrastructure planning that balances California's energy needs with the long-term protection of its public recreation system. Recreation resources should not become unintended collateral impacts of infrastructure development when reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures are available.

The Commission appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments and looks forward to continued participation as the Golden Pacific

Powerlink Project advances through the public planning and environmental review process.

Respectfully submitted,

California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission

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