

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, BORREGO SPRINGS COMMUNITY SPONSOR GROUP

*****APPROVED MINUTES*****

Wednesday, May 6, 2026, 5:00 p.m.

In-person at the Borrego Library, 2850 Country Club Rd, Borrego Springs & also via Zoom

THE PUBLIC IS ALWAYS WELCOME TO OUR MEETINGS

WE REPRESENT YOU WHEN ADVISING THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO ON LAND USE ISSUES

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

John Peterson, Chair	Present
Jim Dax, Vice-Chair	Present
Sondra Boddy	Present
Bill Haneline	Present
Melissa Huston	Present
Anne O'Connor	Present
Nancy McRae, Secty	Present
Seat #1, Vacant	
Seat #2, Vacant	

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MEETING of April 1, 2026

Motion: Jim Dax - To approve minutes with short revisions requested by Boddy
Second: Anne O'Connor
Discussion: Boddy requested two edits to clarify comments made
Vote: Unanimous, with exception of McRae who abstained (not at April meeting)

C. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION (limited to 3 min per person): Opportunity for members of the public to speak to the Group on any subject within the Group's authority that is not on the posted agenda.

MP: Spoke about the phenomena of vulture collapse in India. Vultures are critical to keeping environment clean. Vultures died due to ingesting pain reliever used for cattle. Humans died because there weren't enough vultures to clean up the carrion. We are all interconnected.

Also voiced concerned about the way County ballot measures are phrased to obscure true intent of ballot measure. Recommended a policy to require clearer language.

D. ACTION ITEMS

1. Presentation on the SDG&E Golden Pacific Powerlink Project (GPP), Bernadette Buckowitz, Sr. Public Affairs Manager; Erica Martin, Director of Project Development; Gerard Ellison, Sr. Environmental Manager

Below are the powerpoint slides used in the presentation (slide #1 and #5 may be missing).

Slide 2:

Our Energy Future - The Golden Pacific Powerlink Project was identified in the California Independent System Operator's (CAISO) 2022-2023 Transmission Plan.

- Constrained Southern California transmission lines limit how much power can be delivered during periods of high demand.
- Statewide transmission planning identified a need for new electricity capacity to meet future needs.
- **Without new transmission pathways, electricity cannot be delivered where the demand is highest.**
- Transmission constraints can lead to: congestion on the grid; higher costs; reduced reliability during extreme weather or emergency conditions.

Slide 3:

How California Plans for a Reliable Electric Grid

- California Energy Commission (CEC) creates 15-year energy demand forecasts and communicates projected needs of the state to the California Independent System Operator (CAISO)
- California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) adopted clean-energy targets that require the **more than doubling the existing energy capacity by 2035**.
- CAISO is the independent system operator of our electric grid. CAISO uses CPUC targets and CEC forecasts to develop transmission plans to accommodate growth in the annual Transmission Plan.
- CAISO's 2022-23 Transmission Plan identified **45 projects across California** to reduce congestion & improve the power flow, including the Golden Pacific Powerlink Project.

Slide 4:

How We Use Energy Today

CEC map showing locales of greatest electricity consumption. (Map shows that the Los Angeles area is the largest consumer in the State with roughly 3x more energy consumed than either Orange or San Diego Counties).

- California's grid is under increasing pressure from: electrification policies; transmission constraints; increasing peak demand on very hot days; rapid growth in clean-energy integration.
- Our grid needs to meet growing demand to ensure reliability
- Southern California's system is strained. We need to move power from where it's generated to where it's needed.

Slide 5 - Missing?

Slide 6

Where We Are Now in the Process

- CEC forecasts how much energy California will need in the future; helps plan for long-term energy demand across California
- CPUC determines how much generation and storage load-serving entities must plan for; leads statewide energy planning through the Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) process
- CAISO identifies where transmission lines could be built to deliver power where it's needed most; selects the most cost-effective transmission solution through its Transmission Plan
- San Diego Gas & Electric (SDGE) conducts early engineering, environmental studies and community outreach; evaluates potential routes that meet CAISO requirement while seeking to reduce impacts to the communities and the environment, when feasible
- CPUC and other State & Federal Agencies review environmental impacts under state (CEQA) and federal (NEPA) laws; decide whether to approve the project and issue the required permits; grant necessary rights-of-way on state and federal lands

Slide 7

Benefits of a Golden Pacific Powerlink

- Advances state-wide energy goals: Helps transition to a flexible, modern grid to integrate diverse energy sources
- Supports electrification: Helps power electric vehicles, charging stations, transit and electric-ready homes and businesses.
- Diversifies energy delivery routes: Helps maintain power during extreme weather, wildfires, or other crises.

- As demand for energy increases: Power is there when you turn on the lights, charge a device, or power essential devices - both now and in the future
- Adds additional transmission capacity: Helps strengthen the regional system and reduce congestion. Helps manage energy costs over time by reducing congestion-related costs on the grid.
- Economic: Supports construction jobs, local business, and long-term economic growth

Slide 8

Depicting of map of the GPPP preliminary 140-mile route corridor from the Imperial Valley substation through the State Park ending at a new station to be built north of San Onofre - the SONGS substation.

- Strengthens our regional power network
- Reduces congestion costs and passes savings to customer
- Improves resilience during extreme weather
- Supports delivery of diverse resources

Slide 9

Depicting another map of the 140 mile preliminary route showing the state land, BLM land, Tribal reservations (sic) and Anza Borrego Desert State Park that the proposed route will cross.

Slide 10

Path to Energization - Projected Timeline

Spring 2023, CAISO identifies and approves project in its annual Transmission Plan

Summer 2025, SDGE assumes responsibility for to build, own and operate the new line

Spring 2026, Virtual Open Houses

Summer/Fall 2026, In-person Open Houses

Fall/Winter 2026, CPUC filing

Fall 2026 - 2029, State and federal permitting approvals

Fall 2029, Construction

2032, New transmission line begins service

Comments made by SDGE representatives during discussion (that are not on slides)

- We are one of the larger projects.
- Acquired project from winning bidder (Horizon, subsidiary of Nexus in Florida)
- In addition to residential and commercial consumption, more electric vehicles, electrification of industries. Those needs will rise.
- This is a county (referring to San Diego) where folks are very environmentally conscious, SDGE understands that more than most.
- We need to emphasis - this increase in demand is larger than what could be served on rooftop solar. California 3rd largest economy in the world.
- Map of route: Preliminary. Not a final route. SDGE coming to the community to seek input. CEQA process. Per map the route starts in Imperial Valley, goes through Ocotillo, Split Mountain, Hwy 78 parallels SDGE 686 as it goes through the Park, eastern end following Kane springs road, up through Grapevine, down west side. Have not gotten into detail, lines are not to scale. There are biological, cultural, constructability issues.
- The site has been identified. SDGE acting as developer.

Slide 11

Contact us. Visit us online at sdge.com/goldenpacific. Call 844.765.6388. Email goldenpacific@sdge.com

Questions & Comments from BSCSG members

Haneline: Q: You'll be using eminent domain to take land away? A: We don't know the final route, so we don't know what land rights we need to acquire. Q: What's the footprint of each tower? A: Variety of structures. Typical structure drill pier foundation, rounded, four - one for each leg; monopole structure, 8 - 12 feet, single round; micropile, similar diameter but smaller drilled rods, single rectangular pad. Haneline: Would be helpful to have examples - photographs to give an idea by showing visuals.

Dax: Q: Have you looked at upgrading existing line? A: CAISO looked at alternatives including upgrades, they determined that this line was necessary and the most cost effective

McRae: Q: Will this project require the full CEQA review or a fast-track review? A: Full review. Q: How many acres of the park does the proposed line go over? A: Don't know. Q: What specific input from the community will actually have an impact on your actions? A: We want to hear from you.

Questions and Comments from the Public (MP = Member of the Public) Approximately 100+ members of the public attended the meeting in person or on Zoom.

MP: Q: This is a 145 mile project. Is there a project now complete that we could visualize what this will look like? A: They don't know. Q: Sunrise Power Link? A: So much is different now.

MP: Q: This community rejected SunRise power link, basically same route, why are we doing this again? There are other routes available and we haven't heard about them. Does not need to go through protected land. A: Understand parallels to Sunrise Powerlink. SDGE points to CAISO who says there is a need. Sunrise is at full capacity. Q: Why are you running through protected land? A: We know where we have to start and end - there is a lot of geography in there. Anza Borrego Desert State Park is a very large part of that. Any impacts need to be carefully studied and analyzed. Going around the park raises feasibility, costs, construction, each additional mile will cost \$15M - costs will fall on ratepayers. Have to weigh affordability. Doesn't mean that we aren't looking at that, but we haven't be able to find a feasible route that is as cost efficient.

MP: Q: What's the source of the generation? How is power produced? Why is endpoint where you have it? A: Its about one substation to another substation. Moving electrons and helping the congestion. The route was identified by CAISO. Statewide renewable requirements are in the Plan and outline where energy will come from. Need to meet decarbonization goals.

MP: Q: Was there a reason why the website and marketing materials don't mention renewable energy as a primary reason for this line? A: We are not directly tied to a specific generation source. Q: I'm from Jacumba, Chair of their Sponsor Group. We have been through a lot of these projects. I've researched the claims that the need is because of growth of energy demand. If you go into CEC data , we have not increased energy consumption in 20 years. The dire forecasts don't get realized because of new efficiencies. Energy delivery - in the last 20 years it is actually down. This transmission line is based on provably false forecasts which have never been accurate. Are you aware of how inaccurate these forecasts are? A: SDGE did not do the modeling for the project. Took data from CEC's 15 year outlook. It's not an SDGE conclusion. CAISO not affiliated with any one developer.

MP: Q: The description of the impact from the footing doesn't include access road construction and maintenance, stringing the lines, access can be bigger than anything we've seen. It can provide access to off-highway vehicles, opening up a much larger area that is currently not accessible for those uses. Also goes through a cultural preserve. Will not avoid impacts by spanning it. (No response from SDGE.)

MP: Q: SDGE is saying how much more costly it would be to add 60 miles to go around the park. Even if it costs you, it makes no sense to tamper with something that is irreplaceable. SDGE doesn't have the trust of the people. They haven't been transparent. They're guaranteed a certain amount of profit just by building transmission lines. Conflict of interests. Technology is rapidly changing. It will be dated before it gets put up and you'll never get the land back. A: Additional costs are on the ratepayer. Diverse areas, everywhere has value. But the way we are intending to construct this project is to ensure we can intentionally focus and mitigate as many impacts as we can.

MP: Q: Was this line sized and routed to serve the data center in Imperial County? What studies of load growth due to data centers has been conducted? A: It was not sited or designed to service that data center. Not connected to any project or facility. For that area, the Imperial Irrigation District serves El Centro. The transmission line is our "ions highway," moving them to the load centers, the distribution - homes, businesses.

MP: I support reliable energy infrastructure and responsible planning for California's future energy needs. But I strongly oppose routing a massive 500-kV transmission corridor through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. This is not the first time a major transmission line has been proposed through Anza-Borrego. During the Sunrise Powerlink process, regulators ultimately concluded that routes through the park were environmentally unacceptable. We should learn from that history, not repeat it.

Anza-Borrego is not empty land. It is California's largest state park, containing protected wilderness, sensitive wildlife habitat, cultural resources, scenic landscapes, and internationally recognized dark skies that belong to all Californians. Major conservation organizations and community groups are already raising serious concerns about this proposal and the irreversible impacts a project of this scale would have on the park.

These massive long-distance transmission systems also come with real costs and risks — including energy losses over long distances, permanent industrialization of sensitive landscapes, and increased wildfire concerns in at a time when California is already struggling with utility-caused fires. If this project is truly necessary, then the public deserves a full and transparent evaluation of alternatives that avoid protected public lands and minimize environmental damage. **Protected landscapes like Anza-Borrego should not become sacrificial zones for statewide energy expansion.** (No response from SDGE due to long and loud applause.)

MP: Letter from David Garmon, M.D., President of the Tubb Canyon Conservancy: To the GPP Team - The Anza-Borrego Desert State Park was land that was put into the public trust not just for the current generation but for all future generations. The idea that setting aside park land in perpetuity is fine and good until such time as a corporation such as SDG&E can make billions by desecrating it is odious in the extreme. The hubris of the corporation for which you labor is exceeded only by its greed. As it is now, the residents of San Diego County pay more for electricity than any other county in the United States, with the occasional and intermittent exception of Maui. More than 25% of your customers are behind in their bills. And yet you want more. If shame is still an emotional possibility for you, I would ask you to consider it.

On March 26th of this year, you and your team came to my office in The Mall and showed me three maps. One map was the one we are discussing today with the GPP going through the Park. The second map showed the line going north of the Park. The third map showed the line going south of the Park. When I asked if your preferred route through the Park was simple because it would be "easier" than going around, you and your team responded "yes."

You and your team should be ashamed to be associated with this pernicious proposal to desecrate this public treasure. You and your team know what the obstacles are in going through the Park; and yet you persist. You know there were 52 unmitigatable environmental impacts with the Sunrise Powerlink tried to site a line along this exact same route. And nothing has changed. The impacts remain unmitigatable. And yet you persist. My hope is that at a minimum you and

your team will leave this meeting with the understanding that it will be easier to go around the Park than it will ever be to go through its heart.

MP: Q: From Hal Cohen, has done research on migration of birds through the area for more than 20 years. More than 5,000-8,000 Swainson's Hawks will fly through that area. The towers are 130-190 feet high. That will have quite an impact on migrating species, won't it? A: We haven't gotten to that part of our project development. But we are working with the Audubon Society.

MP: Q: History repeats. Sunrise power link. 52 reasons given to not do it. There are a lot more. None of that has changed. You want our feedback. What feedback can we give you to convince you to route the line out of the park? A: Continuing to have the dialog, so that we can continue to hear. We understand and hear your feedback. Will get that same level of CEQA review. MP: Nothing has changed. Wasting taxpayer dollars. A: The state's needs have changed.

MP: Q: The Sponsor Group has no authority. The County has no authority. SDGE is lying again. We **can** make the power in the cities. We **can** store it in the cities. Contact your elected officials, governor candidates. We have to go to the Feds. Trump just cancelled a line in Nevada. SDGE gets federal subsidies. They want you to think you did something by showing up. No. You have to contact the politicians and donate to the Desert Protective Trust. The Anza-Borrego Foundation (ABF) is becoming a party to the CPUC.

MP: Q: The way you've presented today it sounds like a done deal. The nice things you've said about looking at everything, the environmental review. But this the only alternative that you've presented to us. You've dismissed the alternatives out of hand. The cost of going through the Park is the most severe cost you have. A: We appreciate and feel the feelings in the room, it is meaningful. It is not a done deal. The route is not up to SDGE. The CPUC decides. As a permit applicant, we have to present something - most feasible and reasonable. We're trying to be transparent - we see a lot of challenges with avoiding Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. There will be alternatives.

Q: Are you really considering any alternative that doesn't go through the Park? A: When we started, yes. We see real challenges of using alternate routes.

MP: Q: Tom Lemon - Ocotillo Wells. State Parks commissioner for off-highway motor vehicle. The line does not go through Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) park. I participated in last round with Sunrise Powerlink. We have a sense of what it's going to take. We've got to think about long term. ABF took a small state park and is making it the largest in the nation. To that end you closed off all the possibilities to do other things. We're going to have to adapt. Do the towers have red lights on them? A: Under 200 ft does not. Q: Do you plan to fly in everything so you don't disturb the land with access roads? A: Yes. The Park has been successful in growing the Park. Sunrise Powerlink actually goes into Park up today.

MP: Q: Residents deserve to know how much this will cost ratepayers and how much profit SDGE will make. A: The benefits of a large project are spread across 80% of CAISO customers. SDGE is 9% of total customers. Cost is spread across decades. CAISO estimated \$2.3B.

MP: Q: Since the current scenario that you have provided goes through the State Park, how are you going to incorporate State Park leadership in developing that line? Have't heard a lot about State Park leadership being involved. A: We have sought feedback from them, particularly what are areas of priority.

MP: Q: Bri Fordham - There will be an industrialization cascade effect. If approved, transmission corridors don't develop in isolation, so solar, wind, etc. will follow the line in or near the corridor. We watched this happen on the Sunrise Powerlink. What analysis has been done to see what energy generation will be sited close to the transmission? Will the process include the effect? A: Cumulative impacts are studied under CEQA. Q: We need to learn where those projects will be sited, we know they will come - broader EIR needs to be done.

MP: Ocotillo wind farm - has changed the experience of camping in the area.

SDGE: Next meetings will be virtual. Planning for coming for in-person open houses later this year prior to filing.

Public Comments Closed

Boddy: Q: A lot of the residents leave for the summer. When will you schedule open houses? Q: For the fall, we want to capture input. Q: What is the role of SD County in this process? A: CPUC is the statewide lead. Everything rolls up to them.

McRae: National Parks and State Parks exist for a reason - to preserve pristine nature and wilderness forever, even during times of purported society crises. That is why the land is set aside - because it is worth preserving. The disruption you are contemplating to the Park is not mitigable. You will destroy it forever. You said there will be significant extra costs of routing around the Park and you want to spare the ratepayers. But there is also a cost to losing wilderness forever. It's priceless. You can't put a figure on it. You said the cost would be spread across decades. We are talking about millennia - it took millennia for this wilderness to evolve. When you are looking at your costs, you need to look at not only cost to ratepayers, but costs to all future generations of disturbing this wilderness forever. There is a cost to losing wilderness. Dax: We know that you're in this business for profit. The microgrid has been paid for and still does not work. Every time you do a project, you get a guaranteed 10% return. We know why you're doing this - it's for profit.

2. Borrego Service Award Program, Melissa Huston Presenting.

Read overview of award and how it works. Will be accepting nominations soon. Info will be in email.

E. NON-ACTION ITEMS

1. Resignation by Bruce Durbin, Seat #1

2. Should we consider decreasing the number of seats within our CSG to 7 from 9? Depending on discussion this would be added as an action item to our June 6, CSG meeting.

Sondra - presented pros and cons

Rebecca Falk (former BSCSG member - encouraged us to wait for a little while. Just increased to nine seats 3 - 4 years ago.

McRae - Recommended gathering data on how long it takes to fill seats when they become vacant.

F: GROUP BUSINESS

1. Status of required training for all members of the CSG.

2. Correspondence received: none

G. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Anne O'Connor

SECOND: Jim Dax

VOTE: Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 3, 2026 at 4:30 at the Borrego Springs Library. This is the last scheduled meeting of our CSG until October 7, 2026. Topics include SDGE - microgrid, RH - garden home projects, update on welcome signs

The Chair has appointed the following BSCSG Members to serve as points of contact for the following areas:

- a) Golden Powerlink, Sondra Boddy
- b) Road Maintenance, Bill Haneline

- c) Dark Sky Ordinance and issues, Anne O'Connor
- d) Association of Planning Groups, Jim Dax
- e) Landscaping at the La Casa Solar Panel Field, Bill Haneline/Jim Dax
- f) Report from the Infrastructure Committee, Bill Haneline.

Potential items for our next Sponsor Group meeting which is scheduled for June 6, 2026:

- a) Report from SDG&E regarding Borrego Microgrid upgrades.
- b) Presentation on Christmas Circle Non-profit organization, by Jeff Sloan.

Emails sent to the Chair at petersonenv@hotmail.com will be forwarded to the appropriate person.

To sign up for County of San Diego email or text notices about various programs and topics that you can choose, visit: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CASAND/subscriber/new?preferences=true#tab1> or search for the program at the county you want to find and scroll down to their email sign up link. For further information and to be added to the Sponsor Group email list to receive agendas and agenda packets, contact the Chair at petersonenv@hotmail.com . Address U.S. mail to: Community Sponsor Group, P.O. Box 1371, Borrego Springs, CA 92004-1371. For agendas, minutes and Community Plan, visit: <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/gpupdate/comm/borrego.html> .

Borrego Springs Community Sponsor Group Members:
Chairperson: John Peterson; Vice-Chairperson: Jim Dax; Secretary: Nancy McRae
Members: Sondra Boddy, Bill Haneline, Melissa Huston,
Anne O'Connor, Seats #1 and 2 Vacant
Standing Committees None

List of

attachments: Click on this [2026-04-01 Public Folder](#)