



County Of San Diego

Board Of Supervisors

1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335, San Diego, California 92101-2470

Agenda Item

Date: August 18, 2026

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To: Board of Supervisors

Receiving a Presentation on the Effects of the Golden Pacific Powerlink Project on the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park (Districts: 2, 5)

Overview

The Golden Pacific Powerlink is a proposed high-voltage (500-kilovolt) electric transmission project being developed by San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) to deliver electricity from Imperial County to a new proposed substation in south Orange County. The project was identified as a needed transmission upgrade through the California Independent System Operator's (CAISO) statewide transmission planning process. Transmission lines act like freeways for electricity, as usage increases, the lines become congested, requiring more transmission lines to be built to decrease congestion. CAISO has determined the need for this line based on the estimated increase in demand for electricity in the state in the coming years.

SDG&E, as the local developer and operator, is conducting early engineering, environmental studies, and community outreach. A preliminary route has been identified that would extend from the Imperial Valley Substation north to State Route 78, following the highway through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. The route would then continue along State Route 79 through Temecula before crossing Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and ending at the proposed substation. Alternative routes are being evaluated at this time. Residents that live along the proposed route have wildfire, wildlife, environmental, and private property concerns. One of the principal concerns is the portion of the project that will cut directly through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, the largest state park in California.

The Anza-Borrego Foundation, the official non-profit partner of the park, has raised many concerns about the project and the effects it will have on the park. In addition, a local group, the Chaparral Land Conservancy, has a vested interest in the wellbeing of the state park. The Chaparral Land Conservancy's mission is to protect shrubland ecosystems, which make up a significant portion of the state park. These groups have partnered to bring awareness and education to our communities on the potential effects of the Golden Pacific Powerlink Project to the state park.

Receiving a Presentation on the Effects of the Golden Pacific Powerlink Project on the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

Today's recommendation will allow the Anza-Borrego Foundation and Chaparral Land Conservancy to give a detailed presentation of the potential impacts the Golden Pacific Powerlink Project will have on the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. The state park is home to a variety of wildlife, sensitive ecosystems, and endangered species. Their goal is to educate the Board of Supervisors of the effects this project could have on the County's premier state park.

Recommendation by Supervisor Jim Desmond And Supervisor Joel Anderson
Receive the presentation from the Anza-Borrego Foundation and Chaparral Land Conservancy.

Equity Impact Statement

n/a

Sustainability Impact Statement

The proposed Golden Pacific Powerlink is intended to improve transmission capacity, enhance electric grid reliability, and support California's transition to renewable energy by expanding the state's high-voltage transmission network. However, the project will have potential environmental impacts, potentially negatively affecting Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, California's largest state park. Potential impacts identified during project planning include habitat fragmentation, disturbance to sensitive desert ecosystems, effects on federally and state-listed wildlife species, disruption of wildlife corridors, and visual impacts to protected landscapes.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's recommendation to receive a presentation from the Anza-Borrego Foundation and Chaparral Land Conservancy. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

Business Impact Statement

n/a

Advisory Board Statement

n/a

Background

The Golden Pacific Powerlink is a proposed high-voltage (500-kilovolt) electric transmission project being developed by San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) to deliver electricity from Imperial County to a new proposed substation in south Orange County. The project was identified as a needed transmission upgrade through the California Independent System Operator's (CAISO) statewide transmission planning process. Transmission lines act like freeways for electricity, as usage increases, the lines become congested, requiring more transmission lines to be built to decrease congestion. CAISO has determined the need for this line based on the estimated increase in demand for electricity in the state in the coming years. CASIO estimates California will need at least 160 gigawatts by 2045, which is double the current usage. Without additional energy infrastructure, CASIO states California's grid could become constrained, leading to higher costs and reduced reliability during extreme weather conditions. This powerline project would provide California with electricity generated in Nevada and Arizona to all of California. A large portion of the preliminary route runs through San Diego County, including Districts 2 and 5.

Receiving a Presentation on the Effects of the Golden Pacific Powerlink Project on the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

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Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is the largest state park in California, encompassing more than 600,000 acres of desert landscapes, mountains, canyons, and badlands in eastern San Diego County. The park contains diverse habitats that support hundreds of plant and animal species, including several that are rare or protected. It is also recognized for its scenic vistas, extensive hiking trails, dark night skies, and recreational uses.

The Anza-Borrego Foundation is a nonprofit organization that supports the conservation, education, and stewardship of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Established in 1967, the Foundation works in partnership with California State Parks to protect the park's natural landscapes, wildlife, cultural resources, and recreational opportunities. Its efforts include habitat restoration, scientific research, environmental education, volunteer programs, trail and facility improvements, and advocacy for the long-term preservation of the park's desert ecosystems.

The Chaparral Lands Conservancy is a California nonprofit organization founded in 2009 to protect and preserve the state's shrubland ecosystems through land conservation, habitat restoration, stewardship, research, and education. The organization works to conserve chaparral and related habitats that support native and endangered plants and wildlife, while partnering with public agencies and local communities to restore degraded landscapes and promote long-term ecosystem health.

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Linkage To The County Of San Diego Strategic Plan

Receiving a Presentation on the Effects of the Golden Pacific Powerlink Project on the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

Today's proposed actions support the Sustainability and Community Strategic Initiatives in the County of San Diego's 2026-2031 Strategic Plan by engaging with community partners to discuss environmental impacts to our communities.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Desmond".

Jim Desmond
Supervisor, Fifth District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel Anderson".

Joel Anderson
Supervisor, Second District

Attachment(s)

n/a