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November 30th, 2017

To: The Honorable Kimberly D. Bose
Secretary Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20426

From: Southwest Riverside County Fire Safe Council
23905 Clinton Keith Road, Ste 114-300
Wildomar, CA 92595

Re: Lake Elsinore Advanced Pumped Storage Project No. P-14227-003

Dear Ms. Bose:

Please accept this letter as a strong opposition from the Southwest Riverside County Fire Safe Council to the proposed Lake Elsinore Advanced Pump Storage (LEAPS) project and the installation of high voltage power lines through the Cleveland National Forest. The Fire Safe Council is a community organization formed in 1998 to assist local, regional and state fire agencies in offering fire prevention and informational opportunities to residents and property owners of SW Riverside County.

This LEAPS hydroelectric energy project was disapproved approximately six years ago but had been under consideration for a number of years before that. In spite of numerous hearings, investigative research and strong adjacent community protests it appears that it is being resurrected..

With respect to the construction of 500kV high voltage transmission lines through the Cleveland National Forest, we have several concerns: increased fire risk, increased risk of earthquakes, aesthetic issues, effects on our property values, and adverse impacts on adjacent communities during the construction process.

Our reasons for opposing the project are:

Fire Danger: This is the largest concern of everyone living in adjacent communities. The addition of the high voltage power lines in the Cleveland National Forest adds a potential fire component; that of the possibility of a fire being caused by a downed power line, or lightning strikes to a metal tower or metal power lines.

On October 26th of this year, a significant brush / forest fire named the "Wildomar Fire" by the fire authorities, occurred in the Cleveland National Forest where these LEAP project power line towers are proposed to be built. It posed an immediate threat to the densely populated communities of Wildomar and western Lake Elsinore as well as to the rural residents of the Santa Rosa Plateau and Ortega Highway communities – a combined population of approximately 10,000 people that was partially evacuated during this event. Over the three day period the fire was vigorously attacked with a combination of aerial and ground assaults. Miraculously, the notorious Santa Ana fall winds cooperated and the 850 acre fire was contained within several days with the combined use of almost 1,000 firefighters from several different agencies on the ground, plus a vigorous aerial assault of numerous helicopters and fixed wing aircraft dropping water and fire retardant almost continuously over the three day period. No homes or private property were damaged.

Without the aerial assault, the Wildomar fire would not have been brought under control so quickly. Fire agencies have protocols in place that requires them not to use aircraft to fight fires in the vicinity of high

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voltage power lines. Any investigation into the safety of building high voltage power lines near populated communities should involve these fire agencies' input.

The construction of this ill-conceived hydroelectric project with its high voltage power lines stretching throughout this already "fire-sensitive" area would be presenting a clear and present danger to those property owners and residents in the immediate area. Of all of the reasons not to approve the construction of high voltage power lines within the Cleveland National Forest, this should be the first consideration.

Earthquake Possibility; the proposed location for the LEAPS project is very close to the Elsinore Fault. The last major rupture on the Elsinore Fault was a magnitude 6 in 1910. Engineering research has documented examples where hydro dam projects may have triggered earthquakes both in China and India. Building such a project on a known fault line whose activity has been dormant and may be ripe for an episode should not even be considered.

Environmental Impact: The decimation of the immediate area that would be impacted by the construction of this hydro-electric project would be obvious. A new California Environmental Impact Report will be required. The previous report that was prepared some six to eight years ago will no longer be pertinent. Many new homes, commercial interests and other municipal facilities have been constructed near Lake Elsinore since this project was first presented for consideration. The environmental impact on the Lake itself and its fish and habitat as well as the riparian areas near the lake should also be a prime consideration.

Construction Impact: Residents in adjacent communities on the Santa Rosa Plateau as well as those who live along Grand Avenue and Palomar in Wildomar and Lake Elsinore have concerns regarding the wear and tear on their roads and infrastructure due to any major construction connected to this project. All of the paved roads within Santa Rosa Plateau communities are private and maintenance is paid for by property owners. Construction vehicles accessing the power line corridor work areas will no doubt use these private roads, putting an additional burden on these roads for which they were not designed. Will Nevada Hydro reimburse these property owners for the damage they will cause to their roads? What about the constant drone of helicopters on a daily basis interfering with privacy and quiet enjoyment of these property owners' properties? How will the construction workers access the work site? Currently, there are no roads into the National Forest from the LCPOA paved roads that could handle the construction traffic, and there are no rights-of-way to construct an access road. Will Nevada Hydro blaze a road through someone's private property to gain access to the construction sites? Nevada Hydro has yet to address these issues.

Aesthetic Impact: Having the 190' high towers and high voltage lines directly in view of those Santa Rosa Plateau properties on the northwest area will no doubt have a negative impact on their property values. Many of the properties located in the La Cresta POA back up directly to the National Forest and would basically have the towers and power lines in their back yards.

In closing, we want to emphasize that we are against these ill-conceived LEAPS hydro dam and power line projects. Both of these projects will not be of any benefit to anyone in the immediately adjacent communities yet these people will have to bear the inconveniences and potential dangers as a result of this project. We urge the FERC to deny Nevada Hydro's application -- with prejudice this time.

Sincerely,

The SW Riverside County Fire Safe Council

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