

Letter: Liberty Utilities must rethink its project

To the community,

CalPeco Utility line upgrade – why should the basin ratepayers be responsible?

The inconvenient truth is that this project was proposed and an initial environmental analysis was undertaken by Nevada Energy in 2010 with a customer base of over 2 million. CalPeco/Liberty Utilities then purchased a smaller market share of customers which is approximately 49,000. CalPeco found it easier and of course cheaper to piggy-back off the NV Energy enviro documentation. Why reinvent the wheel?

The EIR documentation should include a couple more alternatives that don't require an entire looping system. The number of customers and economics of this project must be a factor and additional alternatives be proposed for different independent loop options, and an option for no upgrade to the basin line segments which could minimize or eliminate rate hikes of up to 30 percent for all basin ratepayers. This is a significant impact to the ratepayer.

The environmental documentation must provide a breakdown and needs assessment for the proposed expansions of Northstar and Squaw along with Homewood Mountain needs. And provide a separate needs assessment for the regulated growth needs of the Tahoe basin portion of the project.

There are many other issues that need to be raised:

Noise:

CalPeco will provide notification of construction to all properties owners 300 feet of project and post a phone number

within 1,000 feet of residences for disturbances. The flight path of helicopters is a much larger area than just the construction sites and will generate noise levels that could exceed CNEEL as could blasting activities which will be heard up to a couple of miles from actual blasting site. CalPeco should, at a minimum, post proposed activities and expected hours of operations on their website and post in all local newspapers a minimum of one week before construction, blasting, etc., activities schedules. Construction activities will occur 8am-6:30pm in TRPA jurisdiction, 6am-8pm and 8aa-8pm weekends in Placer County with certain exceptions for nighttime activities that are required.

Habitat disturbance:

From CalPeco EIR: 4.7.2 Disturbance or loss of sensitive habitats (jurisdictional wetlands, riparian vegetation, and SEZ). Implementing the action alternatives would result in direct removal and disturbance of sensitive habitats, including waters of the United States, waters of the state, riparian habitat and SEZs. Mitigation Measure 4.7-2a Compensate for unavoidable Loss of Stream and Riparian Habitat.

CalPeco shall compensate for permanent riparian habitat impacts at a minimum of a 1:1 ratio through contributions to a CDFW approved wetland mitigation bank This does not correct the damage done. Mitigation Banks do not correct the onsite destruction or loss of habitat. The mitigation bank contribution must mitigate within the Tahoe basin.

Northern goshawk habitat, PACs, and TRPA disturbance zones, overall, implementation of Alternative 4 (Proposed Alternative) would initially result in the permanent loss or disturbance of up to 72.6 acres of potential habitat for northern goshawk over the study area. TRPA code prohibits this disturbance: TRPA Code 62.4.1. Disturbance Zones – Perching sites and nesting trees of goshawks, peregrines, eagles, and

osprey as shown on the TRPA Regional Plan Overlay Maps shall not be physically disturbed in any manner nor shall the habitat in the disturbance zone be manipulated in any manner unless such manipulation is necessary to enhance the quality of the habitat. The threshold shall apply not only to the number of known population sites but also to the disturbance and influence zone buffers to sites found in the future.

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista resident and Liberty Utilities customer