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August 17, 2026

Supervisor Jim Desmond, District 5
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
County of San Diego
1600 Pacific Highway, #335
San Diego, CA 92101

(sent via email to jim.desmond@sdcounty.ca.gov)

Re: Proposed Alignments for the Golden Pacific Powerlink Transmission Line Project

Dear Supervisor Desmond,

The Vista Irrigation District (District) is concerned about the potential adverse impacts to water supply, water quality, and fire protection from San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E)'s proposed Golden Pacific Powerlink (Project). The Project is a proposed 500-kilovolt transmission line being developed by SDG&E that would travel from the Imperial Valley through San Diego County to a future substation in Orange County. The Project's preliminary alignments would cut cross land owned by the District in Warner Springs, in San Diego County.¹

The District is a public agency that provides water service to over 135,000 people in the city of Vista, and portions of San Marcos, Escondido, Oceanside and unincorporated areas of San Diego County. Primarily for water supply and water quality protection, we own and manage Lake Henshaw, Henshaw Dam, and the surrounding 43,000-acres that overlie the Warner Valley Groundwater Basin (Warner Ranch); typically, 15 to 25 percent of the District's water comes from Lake Henshaw. We also have various land use agreements for portions of the Warner Ranch, including cattle grazing, recreation, wireless telecommunications, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), United States Department of Navy Remote Training Site Warner Springs and other governmental uses. The District is committed to environmental stewardship and being a responsible part of the community.

Lake Henshaw is a raw water reservoir that captures surface water runoff from the watershed during wet weather and is augmented through pumping from the Warner Basin during dry periods. The lake is fed by runoff from several streams within the watershed, including the pristine West Fork of the San Luis Rey River, and has a direct hydraulic connection with groundwater. Water released downstream from Lake Henshaw

¹ Information on the Project's preliminary alignments are from SDG&E's webpage at:
<https://goldenpacificpowerlink.com/>.

serves as an important source of supply not only for the District, but also for the City of Escondido, and five local, federally recognized tribes.²

The District has serious concerns about potential negative impacts resulting from construction and final placement of a proposed large-scale transmission line across District land. Given the interconnected nature of groundwater and surface water, construction activities risk altering hydrologic flows, degrading water quality, and introducing contaminants into Lake Henshaw. Furthermore, permanent transmission infrastructure poses long-term risks to both water production and water quality, which could directly impair the District's ability to protect and manage our water supply.

Additionally, several faults cross the Warner Basin, including the Elsinore Fault Zone, with evidence of recent seismic activity. The presence of these faults raises concerns about the suitability of the proposed location due to the risk of earthquake-related damage and disruption of reliable power for groundwater pumping and fire protection following a seismic event.

Lastly, the District's groundwater wells and Lake Henshaw serve as essential water sources for firefighting agencies during emergencies. This was recently demonstrated during the Grade Fire, which began on property adjacent to District lands on July 31, 2026. Cal Fire relied on the District's groundwater wells and water from Lake Henshaw to suppress the fire. These local resources played a vital role in fire suppression efforts, helping limit the burn area to around 700 acres. A transmission-line related wildfire, or an incident that damages or limits access to the District's groundwater wells or Lake Henshaw when the immediate demand for those resources is greatest could have devastating impacts to the District's water supply as well as to the local community.

Considering the importance of Lake Henshaw and the Warner Ranch, the District plans to actively engage throughout the Project's stakeholder and environmental review process to ensure these important resources remain protected.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for more information at (760) 597-3162 or BHodgkiss@vidwater.org. Alternatively, you may contact the District's Director of Water Resources, Lesley Dobalian, at (760) 597-3112 or LDobalian@vidwater.org.

Sincerely,



Brett Hodgkiss
General Manager

CC: County of San Diego Board of Supervisors
Darren Gretler, Chief of Staff
Lesley Dobalian, Director of Water Resources

² The San Luis Rey Indian Water Rights Settlement Act of 1988, along with subsequent related agreements, established local water supply rights among the City of Escondido, the Vista Irrigation District, and the five bands of Mission and Luiseño Indians—specifically the La Jolla, Pauma, Rincon, Pala, and San Pasqual Bands—which together comprise the San Luis Rey Indian Water Authority.