



December 7, 2021

Chairwoman Sharon Bronson,
Pima County Board of Supervisors
130 W. Congress Street, 1st Floor
Tucson, AZ 85701

Emailed to: COB_Mail@pima.gov

Members of the Board,

Tucson Mountains Association TMA supports Vice-Chair Adelita Grijalva in Agenda Addendum Item 6, Pima County Code Amendment regarding Utility Lines along Scenic Routes. Tucson Mountains Association (TMA), established in 1934. TMA represents the interests of residents throughout the entire Tucson Mountains.

TMA promotes open space, conservation of native and urban wildlife and sustainable lifestyles. Climate change, urban sprawl and development creates pressure on the natural spaces of the Tucson Mountains. The text amendment proposed by Vice-Chair Adelita Grijalva is supported by TMA because it is the starting point of advocating for greater protections in our communities and natural spaces that start along our Scenic Routes. Drought, fragility of our desert ecosystem, pressures from climate change, extreme weather and invasive plant species make this the time to act and plan for the future.

Above ground lines are dangerous, harm the community and the ecosystem, and do not belong on a Scenic Route. Utilities throughout the country have been undergrounding for decades and have been accelerating undergrounding because current /future risks are too great.

Above ground power lines are dangerous.

- In 2019, Pole Auto Accidents caused 100,800 crashes and 1,363 Fatalities. (Insurance Information Institute 2019, A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Utility Poles, 2004)
- Wires & Transformers Spark/cause fires. At risk: property damage, lives & our desert. In California during the past 3.5 years, power lines started 2,000+ fires. (LA Times, CA Utility Equipment Sparked More Than 2,000 Fires in Over Three Years 1/28/19)

Above ground power lines cause economic harm to residents.

- Outages cost the US economy \$33 billion each year.
- TEP has told the ACC that Power Lines reduce property values by 10%
- TEP also admitted to the ACC twice that TEP could be sued for property impairment in 2018 testimony and cross examination.
- Research indicates that land 1000' from powerlines sells 18% less and directly adjacent to power lines sells 45% less. (Realtor Magazine, Study: Lots Near Power Lines Lose Nearly Half Their Value, 8/22/18 from a study published by Mothorpe and Wyman in the Journal of Real Estate Research)

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The fact is that undergrounding could prevent nearly all economic and safety harm issues. (Techlife News, Above-Ground Power Lines Grow in Risk as Climate Changes 11/30/19) The proposed text amendment by Vice Chair Adelita Grijalva represents what other communities have done to respond to present needs and prepare for the future.

TMA supports this process and that as the process goes forward, many considerations will need to be carefully thought out.

Respectfully,

Denise Baldwin
Vice-President
Tucson Mountains Association