

## Meeting opposes Green Path North project

July 22, 2008 - 2:19PM

### FROM STAFF REPORTS

YUCCA VALLEY — Roughly 500 people turned out for a meeting to protest the proposed Green Path North project — a plan from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power that create a new corridor of power lines running through numerous communities including Lucerne Valley, Apple Valley and Hesperia.

Because the process is in its earliest phase, it was not a formal scoping meeting, nor were any decisions made. It was simply an opportunity for the LADWP to introduce their ideas and clear up rumors, and for residents to state their opinion to the decision-makers.

“Let me finish my comments with first, an apology, second a pledge and third a plea,” said LADWP General Manager and CEO David Nahai. “To all of you who felt violated by the markers, I apologize. This is the beginning of the process — I pledge to you that we will listen to your concerns and your suggestions. Now, I ask you to recognize that our cause is just, our goals are noble.”

Green Path North is a proposed transmission line connecting geothermal and other renewable resources in the Imperial Valley to existing electric facilities in the Victor Valley, according to the LADWP. But opponents of the proposal say that creating a new corridor — when one exists along much of Interstate 10 — is needless and will destroy hundreds of miles of pristine desert, as well as impact home values and have devastating ecological effects.

Boos, jeers, and standing ovations were all par for the course during the heated two-hour meeting in which Nahai tried to assure concerned citizens that they want to be “good neighbors,” and are searching to come up with a proposal amenable to desert residents.

As the crowd was comprised of those already in opposition, he did little to reassure anyone when he became unglued by dozens of comments during the one-hour public reaction session.

“I didn’t have to come here today,” Nahai said after a representative from the Alliance for Responsible Energy Policy read a letter of protest, suggesting the department knows that local energy production is the most effective.

“I don’t think it’s right, you don’t even know me. To call someone disingenuous ... He claims that I know this is not the better way, if that’s true, then what am I doing here?” Nahai said.

One woman from Flamingo Heights couldn’t hold back tears as she told Nahai, “We’re not against it, we just want you to think about what desert treasures we’ll be losing.”

In her initial comments, April Sall, Chairperson for the CDC who mediated the discussion, said that the idea is not to attack the utility or its goals, but to advocate for more innovative planning.

“The situation we are facing with respect to the Green Path North project can be described as using 19th century politics, with 20th century technology applied to 21st century energy needs,” Sall said.

In her final comment to the utility before the open session began she said, “David, yourself and the department need to recognize you’ve made a lot of mistakes in the past. We have a lot to protect here. We have a lot to fight for.”