



## Los Angeles' proposed energy route through Mojave Desert in doubt

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Los Angeles officials confirmed Tuesday that they may abandon a hotly debated plan to route electrical transmission lines across undisturbed areas of the Mojave Desert near Joshua Tree National Park.

The city is "seriously contemplating" removing the area near Yucca Valley from its list of seven proposed routes for the Green Path North renewable-energy project, said Sarah Hamilton, press secretary for Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

"It's under review," she said. "The concerns of the community have certainly been heard and taken under advisement."

Environmentalists have decried the project since DWP unveiled its "preferred route" through the desert almost three years ago. The lines would carry geothermal, solar and wind power from the Salton Sea area of the Imperial Valley to a substation near Hesperia.

They said the lines would cut a nearly mile-wide swath through the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve in Morongo Valley, a critical water source for migratory birds and wildlife, and through parts of the privately owned Pipes Canyon Wilderness near Pioneertown in San Bernardino County.

April Sall, who has led the opposition to Green Path North with her group, the California Desert Coalition, cautiously praised the move by DWP.

"It sounds like good news, but I fear there's nothing to celebrate yet," said Sall, who oversees the Pioneertown preserve owned by The Wildlands Conservancy, based in Oak Glen.

The public scoping and review period on Green Path North was set to begin in the spring but that has been delayed until next year while an independent third party is found to perform an environmental review, city officials said.

In February, DWP added a seventh proposal to its list. This route would sidestep sensitive desert land by running towers parallel to existing lines along Interstate 10 and through San Timoteo Canyon to Lytle Creek.

Villaraigosa has ordered that the city receive 40 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2020. The direction now is to develop renewable energy in areas that are close to existing transmission lines, such as Owens Valley.