

## Green power line to Los Angeles hits roadblock

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LOS ANGELES, Sept 22 (Reuters)

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa wants to make Los Angeles the "cleanest, greenest big city" in the United States, but a key project to bring renewable energy across the desert to the city could change under pressure from environmental groups.

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the largest U.S. municipal utility with 4 million customers, wants to build an 85-mile (136 km) transmission line for clean energy, called the Green Path North transmission line.

Activists have decried a proposed path that would cut through the Yucca Valley, two wildlife preserves and the San Bernardino National Forest.

Building transmission lines to bring in power from solar and wind farms has raised environmental and permitting issues across the nation.

"We are taking a fresh look at the whole ball game, including the Green Path North transmission line," said Deputy Mayor David Freeman, who is in charge of the mayor's environmental agenda and former head of the city's utility.

This year Villaraigosa pledged to cut the city's dependence on coal-fired power plants and to get 40 percent of its energy from renewable resources by 2020. That goal is even more ambitious than California's goal to get a third of its electricity from renewable sources by 2020.

Freeman said the city is intensely reevaluating the proposed transmission line and its overall program to find the most effective and cost-efficient way of reaching its goal. The Green Path project is estimated to cost more than \$500 million.

The city could turn to its existing transmission lines, such as opening up Owens Valley for solar power projects or lines that go into Utah for geothermal power projects.

Environmental groups are concerned that the Green Path Project would harm desert wilderness.

"This is not environmental groups being opposed to renewable energy. This is a project that is being proposed that is not green," said April Sall, conservation director with the Wildlands Conservancy.

Sall said that as alternatives the city should look to already designated power corridors -- such as Edison International ([EIX.N](#)) unit Southern California Edison's transmission corridor along Interstate 10 -- and consider more local generation, like solar systems on rooftops.

"Destroying pristine lands is not necessary nor appropriate to reach these goals," Sall added. (Reporting by Laura Isensee, editing by Mary Milliken)