



March 15, 2022

Chair Ashutosh Bhagwat
Vice Chair Mary Leslie
Governor Severin Borenstein
Governor Angelina Galiteva
Governor Jan Schori

California Independent System Operator
250 Outcropping Way
Folsom, California 95630

Via email

**Re: Public Comment on San José Area HVDC Line (Metcalf – San José) Project in 2021-2022
Transmission Plan**

Dear Chairman Bhagwat and Governors,

On Friday, March 11th, the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (Authority) was contacted for the first time by representatives of NextEra Energy Transmission (copied below) about a proposed new electric transmission project for the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) close to the existing San Jose B substation and Metcalf substation. Our understanding is that project would be located in close proximity to the Authority's land conservation properties in the Coyote Valley. I am writing to request that the Authority be engaged in the planning process for this new infrastructure so that we can understand the potential benefits and impacts of the project, and to share preliminary information about the Coyote Valley context in which this work would occur.

The Open Space Authority is a public land conservation agency and independent special district created by the California State Legislature in 1993 to conserve the natural environment, support agriculture, and connect people to nature by protecting open spaces, natural areas, and working farms and ranches for future generations.

While we appreciate the need to bolster San José's electric grid to transform and modernize the system, we wish to alert you to the irreplaceable conservation values of Coyote Valley and nearby open spaces, as well as the substantial public and private investments that were recently made to ensure their lasting protection. Through a novel partnership in 2019, the City of San Jose, Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), and the Authority invested nearly \$100 million to

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acquire 937 acres in northern Coyote Valley near the Metcalf substation and San Jose B Substation. Since that time, POST and the Authority have expanded the network of conservation lands to encompass over 1,450 acres at a cumulative cost of more than \$150 million, much of which was derived from public funding, including state and local sources. These conservation lands serve as vital natural infrastructure and provide opportunities for wildlife connectivity; recovery of rare, threatened, and endangered species; flood protection; groundwater recharge; agricultural viability; cultural resources protection; and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Further, many of these properties are encumbered by easements, deed restrictions, and other encumbrances that would obligate the Authority to defend against development impacts that could impair their conservation values.

Because of the significant public investment in this critical natural infrastructure and the substantial environmental constraints associated with the conservation properties that are located in the vicinity of the Metcalf substation, it is critical that any new energy infrastructure projects be located within the footprint of existing substation development. We understand from the City of San Jose that the primary role of CASIO will be to conduct a competitive solicitation process to choose a developer. We concur with the City that early community and stakeholder engagement and buy-in is essential for this critical infrastructure project, and trust that the Authority will be included in the public engagement process.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on this project and respectfully request that future outreach and communications be directed to Matt Freeman, Assistant General Manager, via email: mfreeman@openspaceauthority.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrea Mackenzie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrea Mackenzie
General Manager

cc :

Mayor Sam Liccardo, City of San Jose
Councilmember Sergio Jimenez, San Jose District 2
Walter Moore, President, Peninsula Open Space Trust
Karen Douglas, Office of the Governor
Fanny Kidwell-Langlois, NextEra Energy Transmission