

February 28, 2025

To the Responsible Official and Reviewing Officer, Regional Forester Michiko Martin
333 Broadway Blvd SE
Albuquerque, NM, 87102

SENT VIA EMAIL: objections-southwestern-regional-office@usda.gov

Re: APS Oak Creek to McGuireville 69kV Transmission Line Project in the Coconino National Forest

Dear Regional Forester Martin:

This is my objection to the above-referenced project on the Coconino National Forest. I am submitting these issues based on new information not available during the previous comment period, which ended January 14, 2022.

- The Final Environmental Assessment lacks an adequate range of alternatives, which violates the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). For example, an underground power line routed alongside Highway 179 between Beaverhead Flat Road and the Village of Oak Creek (VOC) is feasible and would eliminate wildfire risk and protect the unique scenery. But the Forest Service excluded this option from consideration and did not develop it as an alternative.
- Crucial information was not disclosed to the public during the comment period. For example, the Draft Decision Notice claims that wildfire risk created by the above ground line near the VOC would be mitigated based on an APS "Comprehensive Fire Mitigation Plan." That plan was not available to the public until March 2022, which was after the comment period closed. So, the public did not have a chance to assess whether the APS plan -- written by the company that would build the powerline! -- provides adequate or appropriate mitigation measures to reduce wildfire risk.
- The Forest Service failed to consider information critical to making an informed decision, such as its own determination that the VOC and Sedona are at "very high risk" of wildfire.

Sedona and the Village of Oak Creek are within the top 1% most beautiful places on Earth, let alone within the state of Arizona. Do they not deserve to have their beauty and integrity/safety protected by underground powerlines?

Thank you,

Andrew Wilcox