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DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**RE: TE/VS - LEAPS Project**

Dear Mr. Barnsdale:

Inland Empire Waterkeeper, a grassroots nonprofit water-quality organization based in Riverside, California, strongly objects to the proposed Talega-Escondido/Valley-Serrano 500 kV Interconnect (TE/VS) currently proposed by The Nevada Hydro Company, and the associated Lake Elsinore Advanced Pumped Storage (LEAPS) project. The mission of Inland Empire Waterkeeper is to protect and enhance the water quality of the Upper Santa Ana River Watershed. At Inland Empire Waterkeeper, we believe our watershed, its wildlife, and the quality of life for people in the Inland Empire will be negatively and irrevocably impacted by the TE/VS - LEAPS project as it is currently envisioned. Because the TE/VS project would facilitate the development of the LEAPS project, it is important to evaluate the cumulative impacts of the two inherently linked projects. As a concerned individual, with the support of Inland Empire Waterkeeper, I strongly object to the TE/VS-LEAPS project and urge you to reconsider the proposal in light of the following points:

1. **Cost** – At an estimated cost of over 1 billion dollars, this is a project we cannot afford, especially during a national and statewide fiscal crisis. The proposal even states that the amount of required energy needed to pump the water uphill will outweigh the amount of energy recaptured during the release of the water. Please do not consider wasting such an exorbitant amount of taxpayer money on a project that will cost more to operate than the benefits it claims to generate.
2. **Risk to Protected Environments & Wildlife**– The TE/VS-LEAPS project represents permanent and irrevocable impacts to the ecology of the Santa Ana Mountains, Cleveland National Forest, San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, and the Margarita Peak Preserve. The hydroelectric dam, associated facilities and transmission lines, will result in the loss of habitat for federally listed threatened species and will permanently eliminate more than 50 acres of sensitive plant communities, including coast live oak riparian forest, sycamore-alder riparian forest, southern willow scrub, and coastal sage scrub. Furthermore, the project also will destroy hundreds of acres of other habitats such as chaparral and grasslands and harm many more at risk plant and wildlife species. These protected areas were not intended to be lands conserved for future development projects that would wipe away their intrinsic benefits. We cannot open the door for energy corridors in our National Forests and other protected areas.
3. **Risk to the Local Community** - The TE/VS-LEAPS project would irrevocably change the character of the local community by placing a dangerous industrial power project in an area treasured for its rural lifestyle. The proposed project would create a permanent scar on the landscape and generate large areas of Electro-Magnetic Fields below high-tension powerlines. It would turn peaceful recreational areas into areas dominated by overhead powerlines and new dams. The TE/VS-LEAPS project also significantly increases the threat of wildfire in rural areas and remote wildlands because of the transmission lines and substations, which are known to increase the risk of fire ignition. The project scope is also excessively risky to life and property because of potential flooding in the case of a dam breach. The close proximity to the active Elsinore fault zone also makes earthquakes and the resulting consequences to the proposed infrastructure a constant threat.
4. **Construction Impacts**–The TE/VS-LEAPS project would have negative impacts on water and air quality in Riverside, Orange, and San Diego counties. The construction and filling of the upper LEAPS reservoir would transport polluted water from Lake Elsinore into a pristine watershed, threatening the water quality of biologically rich San Juan Creek. It would also repeatedly churn sediment in the shallow Lake Elsinore which is already suffering from turbidity problems. Heavy construction would result in increased dust, diesel exhaust, and greenhouse gas pollution. The project area would also become crisscrossed by unsightly access roads, and other facilities needed to service the TE/VS transmission lines and LEAPS reservoir. Residential roads would be impacted by the truck traffic, and the construction operations would be a maddening noise to residents and local wildlife.

**The proposed Talega-Escondido/Valley-Serrano 500 kV Interconnect (TE/VS) and associated Lake Elsinore Advanced Pumped Storage (LEAPS) project does not utilize the land and fiscal resources for the optimum benefit of the American people.** I urge you and your consultants to reconsider this project for the sake of our environment and for the lives of our local residents.

Sincerely,

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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