Lic. Felipe Calderón Hinojosa DATE

President of Mexico

Residencia Oficial de los Pinos

Casa Miguel Alemán

Col. San Miguel Chapultepec, C.P. 11850,

Mexico D.F. MEXICO

Dear President Calderón,

On behalf of (YOUR ORGANIZATION HERE), I would like to express my concern regarding the resubmission of a proposal to construct a high tension electrical transmission line from the area of Vizarrón to Jalpan de Serra, in Mexico. (YOUR ORGANIZATION HERE) urges that the environmental impacts on the protected area of Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve be taken seriously and the outcome favor deviating the power line.

Our partners in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve report that the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) is attempting to sidestep the legal framework and administrative rules of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve which clearly does not permit changes in land use within the reserve’s boundaries. Viva Sierra Gorda, a project of Earth Island Institute in California, has informed us that neither Jalpan, nor the surrounding region, requires the amount of energy that the power line would conduct. Instead, the power lines should be modernized which would cost less and have a minimal environmental impact.

We also understand the Environmental Impact Assessment submitted by the CFE is an underestimate of the amount of damage that the construction would cause and that mitigation measures associated with the construction of the power line are insufficient. The roads that would need to be built through the Reserve in order to transport the construction materials would be an unavoidable hazard to protected wildlife, and there is evidence that there will be severe loss of scenic and touristic value of the area through visual contamination, in a Reserve that is recognized globally as the vanguard of conservation management.

With a length of 45 km, the power line would severely fragment the ecosystems and habitat in the mountain highlands, affecting the watersheds and water supply, and infringing on private properties in the hands of extreme poverty communities that are dependent on the water level and quality in the springs. Vast numbers of flora and fauna, some in danger of extinction, and ecosystems including dry scrublands, temperate forests and low tropical forests habitat to species such as the Jaguar and the increasingly threatened Military Macaws (Ara militaris).

Mexico is extremely fortunate to have the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve, it provides vital natural resources to the global community and our interest is to protect this global commons. Local civil participation headed by the Grupo Ecologico Sierra Gorda is a credit to the country and is a role model around the world for the co-management alliance with the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) of the Mexican Federal Government. (YOUR ORGANIZATION HERE) hopes that the Government of Mexico will advocate protecting this valuable global natural resource, and not allow such a destructive development to overrule the protection that was put in place by the Mexican Government when it granted Biosphere Reserve status in 1997.

 Earth Island Institute is a leading conservation organization operating around the world through 30+ projects since 1982. Since Viva Sierra Gorda joined us in 2004 we have raised awareness, facilitated funds for Sierra Gorda community projects and given voice to a region little known but of significant global value.

We rely on your commitment to live better (VIVIR MEJOR) and will give this matter your attention.

Yours sincerely,

c.c M.C. Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada, Titular de la Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y

Recursos Naturales.

c.c Ing. Alfredo Elías Ayub, Director de la Comisión Federal de Electricidad.

c.c. Dr. Ernesto Enkerlin Hoeflich, Comisionado Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas.

c.c Ing. Guillermo Ramírez Filippini, Director Región Centro y Eje Neovolcánico,CONANP.

c.c Mtra. Martha Isabel Ruiz Corzo, Directora de la Reserva de la Biosfera Sierra Gorda, CONANP.