

May 2, 2016 - Statement before the Virginia State Corporation Commission on PUE-2016-00107
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Prince William County citizen-residents have expressed their sincere appreciation for the opportunity to submit information to you regarding Dominion Power's proposed Haymarket 230kV Line and Substation Project. I, too, thank you for this consideration.

I also want to alert the SCC the Crossroads Village Board of Directors will submit a variety of documents to them before June 7th.

Using corporate and citizen power disparity as a frame of reference, I offer a citizen-resident view of corporate objectives and local citizen impacts. And, I'll talk about the concepts of taking and compensation.

As to most sizable commercial projects, an innate inequality exists between a corporation and an average citizen. Corporations can invest large amounts of money, time, data and expertise in pursuit of profit making goals. Corporations usually operate with the assistance of legal staff. Corporations can acquire, store and repurpose knowledge derived from experience and past practices. And, corporations typically have easy, frequent access to legislators and politicians.

Citizen-residents, however, rarely have enough hours, purchasing power that stretches over years, subject matter expertise or the political access needed to effectively challenge proposals which have the potential to negatively affect health, safety or quality of life.

Briefly stated, the goals of Dominion Power's Haymarket 230kV double circuit transmission line and substation project are to improve reliability of electric power, facilitate economic development and meet near- and long-term energy demands. While such goals are not often opposed, we citizen-residents adamantly reject construction of permanent, above ground, high voltage electrical lines along communities when a buried option is available. And we don't intend to directly pay for the cost of extending a power cord to any business data center. We want Amazon to locate at Innovation Park and on its own dime.

A portion of the SCC's mission is to, "strive to apply law and regulation to balance the interests of businesses and citizens in regulating Virginia's business and economic concerns..." In accomplishing its mission I ask the SCC to weigh and balance power disparities among Dominion Power, Amazon and citizen-residents; evaluate the authenticity of Dominion's stated short- and long-term electric power needs for Prince William County; and fully mitigate every serious adverse impact which threatens us.

Some harmful impacts associated with the Haymarket 230kV Line and Substation Project proposal are not readily apparent--even so, they require SCC attention and evaluation

- "fuzzy" corporate estimates of subjective social costs
- obscure or flawed corporate modeling
- overstated power projections . Prince William County's population growth per year for the last five years is 1.3% and this figure isn't expected to change. And, growth is basically nil in the essentially rural areas in which Dominion wants to build a substation and transmission lines

In testifying before the SCC, citizen-residents identify personal loss or possible deprivation which often accompany above ground towers and transmission lines. We speak of

- devalued real estate
- diminished or destroyed aesthetics--a concept described by some as, "individual and beautiful personal values"
- loss of green areas accompanied by negative impacts to recreation, play or leisure activities and
- increased or new adverse nuisance effects and possible serious impacts to physical health or safety

DEVALUED REAL ESTATE

Real property valuation is an issue some corporate permit applicants might chose to ignore, understate or identify as mere "perceptions". It's important to keep the definition of perception in mind-- a perception is the apprehension of an individual mind and differs from person to person.

The perception along with the professional evaluation of some local brokers is if Dominion Power's above ground proposal is approved, real property losses will extend beyond Dominion's project area to

negatively affect large sections of Prince William County. And some local realtors say real property within the sight of towers and transmission lines will lose from 20 to 30% of recent past value.

Prince William County residents chose to build or buy homes near or within sight of bushes, vines, trees, weeds...even brush. These features are aesthetically pleasing, help reduce noise, serve as visual barriers and support wildlife. If and when we lose nearby natural environments, our homes are devalued. Men, women--even young persons who testify here clearly state the devastating financial impact real property loss will have on their lives.

Impacted by today's slow economy citizen-residents cannot donate enough scarce dollars to buy opposition expertise--the attorneys, engineers or environmental scientists needed to challenge Dominion's proposed above ground facility. Nor can we hand over enough dollars to buy the expensive data scientists and litigators must have to force Dominion to bury its high voltage transmission line. It's my sincere hope a careful analysis and citizen-oriented decision by the SCC will accomplish this feat. *Above ground transmission facility construction which devalues real property is more than perception or evaluation--it is a taking. Taking is an action that imposes a restriction on the use of private property for which the owner must be compensated. The SCC's selection of the I-66 and buried option mitigates the impact of taking.*

QUALITY OF LIFE AND/OR LOSS OF TREASURED AESTHETIC VALUES

In its application for approval and certification of the Haymarket electric facilities, Virginia Dominion Power addresses visual impacts.

Dominion writes it used two key evaluation factors to assess visual impacts--magnitude of change and sensitivity of affected resources to that change. Dominion describes magnitude of visual or aesthetic change from two perspectives. First, and I quote, "Compatibility of the Project with the surrounding landscape: How well the proposed development fits with its surroundings" and second, "Scale of the development: How large the development is relative to its surroundings" end quote. Dominion's focus is on inanimate objects--project and scale of development. In reference to the construction of just one more feature--110-foot towers and transmission lines, Dominion states--and again I quote, "The presence of these features and projects, as well as the overall developed and built character of the

landscape, indicate that the Project area would not be particularly sensitive to changes in aesthetic conditions" end quote.

What happened to the analysis of citizen-resident perspective and sensitivity as to human visual compatibility with the project or how citizen-residents expect family life to fit with nearby towers and overhead high voltage transmission lines?

Not to worry. As you can know, we citizen-residents present our perceptions, opinions and facts at every SCC hearing and in our emails and letters. In a variety of ways we tell the SCC above ground transmission facilities are incompatible with our use of homes, real property and green areas because

- we are acutely sensitive to seeing ugly transmission line facilities
- we staunchly oppose imposition of an industrial look on rural areas, small villages or communities
- we will not permanently give up green spaces which help diminish noise; create shade; provide habitat for plant, bird and animal species; promote human social inclusion and foster active life styles--walking, running or exercising
- we object to the construction and periodic maintenance of a 100 foot right-of-way corridor which may extend into some of our back yards
- we oppose the introduction of certain right-of-way tree or plant control herbicides which may inadvertently be sprayed or drifted by wind onto private property areas and
- we repudiate Dominion's flawed, "pile on" analysis that the permanent presence of just one more above ground feature--110 foot towers and transmission lines, will create only minor changes in the local view shed

Reduction, impairment or loss of leisure activities or enjoyment of nature is a taking of personal freedom, satisfaction or pleasure. In today's shrinking world, loss of already limited green space is a "big" taking for which compensation is surely due. The SCC's selection of the I-66 and buried option mitigates taking.

NUISANCE AND/OR POSSIBLE HEALTH EFFECTS

If Dominion's above ground facilities are constructed, will citizen-residents be subject to additional unwanted nuisances or to new and potentially damaging health effects?

For example, the nuisance of visual blight

We oppose decades long and daily sight of towers, transmission lines and barren right of ways--all of which degrade scenic quality. Towers seen for 3 or more miles give our communities an industrial appearance and, yes, they degrade property value.

For example, the nuisance of electric corona

Electric corona may be introduced to Crossroads Village although at 230kV audible noise levels are usually low. Coronas are periodic, unwanted, unpleasant luminous discharges caused by electrical overstress and, in wet or humid weather, corona activity is increased. Power line facilities operating above or at about 230kV may emit intermittent noise--buzzing or hissing caused by audible corona crackling. We can do without crackling.

For example, the possible detrimental health effects of electrosmog

Electrosmog or "dirty electricity" is comprised of invisible, high-frequency voltage transients. It's a by-product of today's modern energy-efficient electronics and appliances. Electrosmog is also a relatively new suspected carcinogen. And, because high-frequency voltage transients crawl along utility wires today's scientists are rethinking this part of the EMF debate as to power line hazards.

As of today, the question, "Is power line EMF safe?" has at least two answers. Maybe. Maybe not. When it comes to health, "Maybe" is a qualifier up with which we will not put. If nearby transmission lines cause or contribute to serious illness or are carcinogenic, citizen-residents adamantly oppose being subjected to more and higher levels of electrosmog.

When scientific proof of long term effects of electric or magnetic field emissions are not definitive, to expose persons to as yet unknown health risks when the safer option of buried cable is available is a Machiavellian form of taking. And, when harm is proven, a duty exists to provide compensation. The SCC's selection of the I-66 and buried option mitigates taking.

In a nutshell, the I-66 option mitigates serious issues related to our modern day concept of taking and compensation; lessens possible serious and detrimental impacts to wellbeing, health and life; and rebalances some of the disparities between corporate and citizen power. Thank you.