

Exhibit No. _____
Issues: Project Area Impacts
Witness: Robert Wayne Wilcox
Type: Surrebuttal Testimony
Sponsoring Party: Grain Belt Express Clean Line LLC
Case No. EA-2016-0358
Date of Testimony: February 21, 2017

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

CASE NO. EA-2016-0358

SURREBUTTAL TESTIMONY OF

ROBERT WAYNE WILCOX

ON BEHALF OF

GRAIN BELT EXPRESS CLEAN LINE LLC

February 21, 2017

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1 **I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY**

2 **Q. Please state your name and address.**

3 A. My name is Robert Wayne Wilcox. I am a century farm owner and my property is
4 along the proposed route for the Grain Belt Express Clean Line transmission
5 project (“Grain Belt Express Project” or “Project”). I live at 2647 County Road
6 2520, Moberly, Missouri 65270.

7 **Q. Have you previously submitted prepared testimony and exhibits in this**
8 **proceeding?**

9 A. Yes, I submitted direct testimony on August 29, 2016.

10 **Q. What is the subject matter of your surrebuttal testimony?**

11 A. I would like to respond to the rebuttal testimony of witnesses for the Missouri
12 Landowner Alliance (“MLA”) Wiley Hibbard and Jim Edwards.

13 **II. WORKING WITH CLEAN LINE ENERGY**

14 **Q. In his testimony, Mr. Hibbard alleges that Grain Belt Express improperly**
15 **notified the public and landowners of its public meetings (page 4, lines 1-7).**
16 **Was that your experience?**

17 A. No. I am a landowner along the proposed route and I received notification of the
18 meetings that Grain Belt Express has held. I’ve attended most of the public
19 meetings in Randolph County. We get a lot of junk mail and I can see how some
20 folks may have thrown away an invitation thinking it was junk mail, but even if
21 that was the case, these meetings were well publicized, so there were plenty of
22 other ways to find out about the meetings.

23
24

1 **Q. Mr. Hibbard stated that at the meeting he attended “the young people there**
2 **from Grain Belt were polite, but they were uninformed” (page 4, lines 7-8).**

3 **Was that your experience at the public meetings?**

4 A. No. I have found these meetings to be very informative. Grain Belt Express has
5 had plenty of people with different expertise relating to the Project available at
6 these meetings to answer everyone’s questions. The president of the company,
7 Mr. Michael Skelly, has even attended some of these meetings. Grain Belt
8 Express has gone over and above, holding more meetings than some other
9 infrastructure projects ever did.

10 **Q. Mr. Hibbard claims that Grain Belt Express has not adequately**
11 **communicated with the Ralls County Commission since his time in office**
12 **(page 5, lines 1-7). Is it your experience that Grain Belt Express has not**
13 **adequately communicated with County officials?**

14 A. No. I’ve been on the Randolph County Commission since the start of this effort,
15 and Grain Belt Express has been very open and informative. When they first came
16 to meet with the Commission, they informed us that they would hold several
17 public meetings to get public input on the routes they were considering. They
18 followed through with exactly what they said they were going to do.

19 **III. FARMING AROUND TRANSMISION LINES**

20 **Q. Several witnesses make assertions about the difficulty of farming around**
21 **transmission lines. Before discussing these points, can you remind us of your**
22 **farming experience particularly as it relates to working around transmission**
23 **lines?**

1 A. I am a century farm owner and my family has owned our land in Missouri since
2 1884. I have a 345 kV power line on my home farm. I have three pipelines on my
3 farm. And at one point, I also had an AT&T line across my farm. I also operate
4 two other farms with 345 kV and 161 kV power lines, so I am very used to
5 planting, harvesting, and operating other farming implements around the
6 structures.

7 **Q. Do you agree with Mr. Hibbard’s assertion that transmission poles that are**
8 **in the middle of a field make it “impossible to have proper access to some**
9 **areas of the field?” (page 3, lines 5-8)**

10 A. I don’t agree with Mr. Hibbard, and he doesn’t provide any details or evidence to
11 back up this claim. I don’t believe that this power line would make it
12 “impossible” to access areas of a field for farming purposes. With your largest
13 equipment, you’ll have to make a few additional maneuvers or passes, press a few
14 buttons, or activate a few levers. With the smaller implements, sprayers, tillage
15 equipment, and such, you usually can just drive around the structures. It’s just not
16 that big a deal, I do it all the time, and so do hundreds of other farmers all across
17 the country.

18 **Q. Mr. Hibbard also contends that the line would “preclude the use of certain**
19 **irrigation equipment” (page 3, lines 7-8). Does that mean that farmers will no**
20 **longer be able to irrigate their fields because of the power line?**

21 A. No. The powerline could preclude somebody from using a certain type of
22 irrigation equipment in the future, say a center pivot irrigation system, but it
23 would not preclude you from irrigating all together. You would just have to use a

1 different method, for instance the travelling gun method. There are ways to run
2 the irrigation along the end of the field, or along the length of the line.

3 **Q. Mr. Hibbard also states that the line would “not allow spray equipment to be**
4 **properly utilized” (page 3, line 8). Do you agree?**

5 A. No, I don’t agree with that. You just have to drive your sprayer around the poles.
6 I see it done all the time, and I’ve ridden with a sprayer operator who’s done it on
7 my field.

8 **Q. Mr. Edwards describes in great detail the process of navigating his planter**
9 **around the transmission lines on his property (page 5- 6). Is this an accurate**
10 **description of farming around a powerline pole?**

11 A. Yes, I believe that’s an accurate description of using a planter around the
12 transmission line. But other farming implements like tillage tools, sprayers, and
13 hay tools don’t require that full process. You can maneuver these smaller farming
14 implements around the poles.

15 **Q. To someone who is not familiar with farming, the description Mr. Edwards**
16 **provides of maneuvering his planter sounds tedious. He states that the poles**
17 **on his property are a nuisance “taking up very valuable time” (page 6, lines**
18 **14-15). How long does one of those maneuvers take?**

19 A. Mr. Edwards uses a lot of detail to describe the process, but it really is not that big
20 of a deal. Most farming equipment is automated, so you just push a button and
21 the hydraulics just lift up the planter. If you are using older equipment, you are
22 activating a lever. Overall, this probably takes 2-3 minutes per pole with your
23 planter or harvester. So, in the case of Mr. Edwards, who according to his

1 testimony, has 8 sets of poles on his property, even if it were to take him up to 4
2 minutes per structure, that adds about 16-32 minutes to his farming, twice a year
3 (planting and harvesting). So he is taking about an extra 32-64 minutes of his time
4 each year so that his fellow citizens have access to reliable electricity. That seems
5 like a short amount of time for the benefit that our society is gaining in return.

6 **Q. Mr. Edwards claims that the process of planting around the transmission**
7 **lines causes him to over-apply seed and chemicals. (page 6, lines 8-9). Are**
8 **there techniques that he can use to avoid this problem?**

9 A. Yes. Most modern farming equipment allows you to turn on and off the different
10 rows of your planter or sprayer to avoid over application. We avoid over-applying
11 seed and chemicals around the transmission structures on my property because of
12 the equipment we use.

13 **Q. Do you agree with Mr. Edwards that this process compacts the soil (page 6,**
14 **lines 8)?**

15 A. Yes, the additional passes around the poles do cause some compaction, but that
16 compaction hasn't impacted the yields around the transmission line on my
17 property.

18 **IV. PUBLIC BENEFIT**

19 **Q. Mr. Hibbard claims that Grain Belt Express is asking Ralls County to “sell**
20 **out our future,” and that it is going to take land “by force” (page 6, lines 20 -**
21 **21). Does this language concern you?**

22 A. Yes. Grain Belt Express is no different than Ameren or Kansas City Power &
23 Light or any of the pipeline companies. They are all corporations with

1 stockholders and are in the business of making money for them, but they also
2 provide an important public benefit by delivering electricity or gas for the public
3 good. Grain Belt Express is not taking our land. Our sons and daughters and
4 grandchildren will continue to farm this land, and we still own it. We are just
5 hosting a new powerline for the benefit of the public. My understanding is that
6 Grain Belt Express will make every effort to negotiate with landowners to try to
7 reach an agreement before considering eminent domain.

8 **Q. Mr. Hibbard suggests that results of his recent election to County office and**
9 **other elections show that a majority of people oppose the Project (page 7,**
10 **lines 8-16). Do you agree?**

11 A. No. I was recently up for reelection in 2016. I have made it known for some time
12 that I support the Project, and yet I ran unopposed and was re-elected. That says
13 something.

14 **Q. Mr. Hibbard continues to be critical stating “I believe the other elected office**
15 **holders should think beyond just today” (page 6, line 21-22). Do you think**
16 **your stance on the Project is short-sighted?**

17 A. No, quite the opposite actually. I ran for office to do the business of the public,
18 for the best interest of the public at large, not the interests of a small group of
19 people, who have an interest in a single project. The image of the American
20 farmers stands a real chance of being tarnished with the general public if we
21 obstruct infrastructure projects that are for the public good. We are already losing
22 population and therefore losing representation at the capital. We can't afford to
23 let small-minded views stand in the way of the larger benefit. I've had a long

1 career in the military and have put a lot of time and effort into serving this
2 Country. I stand behind the Grain Belt Express Project because it is for the benefit
3 of the public in our state.

4 **Q. Mr. Hibbard concludes his testimony stating that “putting this world’s**
5 **biggest transmission line across our counties would be disaster for the people**
6 **of northern Missouri” (page 10, lines 5-7). Please respond.**

7 A. This is just another example of a clear falsehood used by Mr. Hibbard that puts
8 fear into the minds of the people of our region, and hurts our potential to bring
9 new opportunities to our citizens. This is not the largest transmission line in the
10 world. Other countries are well ahead of us at modernizing their grid.

11 **Q. Does this conclude your Surrebuttal Testimony?**

12 A. Yes.

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

In the Matter of the Application of Grain Belt Express)
Clean Line LLC for a Certificate of Convenience and)
Necessity Authorizing it to Construct, Own, Control,) Case No. EA-2016-0358
Manage, Operate and Maintain a High Voltage, Direct)
Current Transmission Line and an Associated Converter)
Station Providing an Interconnection on the Maywood-)
Montgomery 345 kV Transmission Line)

AFFIDAVIT OF ROBERT WAYNE WILCOX

STATE OF Missouri)
COUNTY OF Randolph) ss

Robert Wayne Wilcox, being first duly sworn on his oath, states:

1. My name is Robert Wayne Wilcox. I am a landowner in Randolph County, Missouri.
2. Attached hereto and made a part hereof for all purposes is my Surrebuttal Testimony on behalf of Grain Belt Express Clean Line LLC consisting of 9 pages, having been prepared in written form for introduction into evidence in the above-captioned docket.
3. I have knowledge of the matters set forth therein. I hereby swear and affirm that my answers contained in the attached testimony to the questions therein propounded, including any attachments thereto, are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.


Robert Wayne Wilcox

Subscribed and sworn before me this 21st day of February, 2017.


Notary Public

My commission expires: 6/15/2019

