

I. Summary of public comments

Public Comments addressed in this section are comments the Commission receives from the public and are entered into the Commission's Electronic Filing and Information System ("EFIS") as public comments. This section of the Staff's Report addresses only the comments submitted in EFIS and assigned a public comment ("P") number. The multiple comments that were filed as exhibits to this docket are not discussed in this section, but can be found in bulk as items 152 and 155 on the docket sheet. The docket sheet also reflects several individual comments that were submitted as local public hearing exhibits and are not addressed in this section.

A large number of public comments have been submitted in this case, and that number continues to grow. As of ~~January 20~~ March 20, 2017 ~~(1:15 PM)~~, there have been ~~3,059~~ 3,341 public comments submitted in EFIS related to this case. A significant number were entered as signatures to a petition in opposition to the Project; ~~therefore,~~ or names on excel spreadsheet supporting the application. Staff estimates approximately ~~6,300 comments~~ 11,800 commenters have been ~~submitted~~ represented as submitting EFIS public comments in this case. Approximately ~~60~~ 53 percent of the ~~comments~~ commenters express support the application and 47 percent are in opposition to the Project.

In comparison, EFIS indicates that 4,460 public comments were submitted in Grain Belt's prior application case (Case No. EA-2014-0207); when considering the multiple signatures on petitions submitted in EFIS in that case, the 4,460 number grows to over 7,000 public comments submitted in the Grain Belt Express' prior application case.

~~Public comments are still being entered into EFIS on a daily basis for this case. Currently petitions and schedules are being entered into EFIS and assigned a public comment number that~~

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contain comments attributed to several individuals. The public comments in this case have been attributed to a range of individuals, from throughout Missouri as well as to individuals residing in other states. The number of out-of-state public comments is not currently available but could be produced, if desired. Some public comments were made prior to the application being filed in this case.

~~Staff has not examined all the public comments that have been received by the Commission to the level necessary to provide the specific number of public comments supporting and opposing the application in this case. The data is being collected to provide these numbers. However the determination of these numbers requires time after the public comment is entered into EFIS. Acknowledgements to the public comment have produced responses from individuals that assert they did not submit or authorize the submittal of the public comment submitted in their name; thus, changing the supporting or opposing numbers. In addition, public comment processing time is extended to answer and reply to the designated commenters regarding the comment submitted under their name. Time is also consumed dealing with returned email and letter acknowledgements for public comments submitted in this case.~~

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