

Exhibit No. _____
Issues: Project Area Impacts
Witness: Robert Wayne Wilcox
Type: Direct Testimony
Sponsoring Party: Grain Belt Express Clean Line LLC
Case No.: EA-2016-0358
Date of Testimony: August 30, 2016

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

CASE NO. EA-2016-0358

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF

ROBERT WAYNE WILCOX

ON BEHALF OF

GRAIN BELT EXPRESS CLEAN LINE LLC

August 30, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY 1

II. WORKING WITH GRAIN BELT EXPRESS..... 2

III. THE NEED AND IMPACT OF THE GRAIN BELT EXPRESS PROJECT 4

IV. COUNTY ASSENTS 5

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 farmer and my property is along
4 the proposed route for the Grain Belt Express Clean Line transmission project
5 (“Grain Belt Express Project” or “Project”). I live at 2647 County Road 2520,
6 Moberly, Missouri 65270.

7 **Q. Please describe your community and governmental experience.**

8 A. I am a Farm Bureau member, a Veteran, a former School Board member of 18
9 years, I have served as a board member of my local electric cooperative since 1989,
10 and I have volunteered in my community in many others way.

11 I am the Randolph County Eastern District Associate Commissioner, and
12 have been a Randolph County Commissioner since 2009.

13 I am a former County Farm Bureau President and I served as chairman of
14 the Young Farmers and Ranchers in 1974. As the chairman, I served on the State
15 Board as an Advisory Member.

16 In total, I have had 39 years’ worth of federal service, seven years of that
17 being active duty. I am a two-tour Vietnam veteran and a two-tour Iraqi war
18 veteran. In 1989, I joined the Missouri National Guard. I am dedicated to my
19 community, my state and my country, and I am not afraid to stand up for what is
20 good for our state and our country.

21 **Q. Please describe the purpose of your testimony**

22 A. As a leader in my community, I feel it is important to stand up for projects that will
23 benefit Missouri citizens. The Grain Belt Express Project will bring new revenue

1 to the counties it goes through, will support our local workers and businesses, and
2 will bring a new opportunity for Missourians to access economical, clean energy.

3 I am submitting this testimony to take a stand against the vocal minority
4 that is opposed to this Project. I believe there are a lot of half-truths or just total
5 falsehoods that area people are spreading about this Project. My family and I have
6 been leaders in the community since the early 1900s. As the senior living member
7 of my family, I believe that this project needs to move forward.

8 **II. WORKING WITH GRAIN BELT EXPRESS**

9 **Q. Please describe your background interacting with Grain Belt Express Clean
10 Line LLC (“Grain Belt Express”) and the Grain Belt Express Project.**

11 A. The first time that I learned about Grain Belt Express was when they presented the
12 proposed Project to the Randolph County commission in 2011. After that, we
13 worked with Grain Belt Express on a road use agreement, which I will discuss later
14 in my testimony and which we signed in the fall of 2012.

15 Grain Belt Express hosted a roundtable discussion and open houses in 2012
16 and 2013. The purpose of those discussions was to narrow down the exact route of
17 the line. I attended almost all of those meetings and also attended the office hours
18 at the local community center in 2014. Just a few weeks ago, Grain Belt Express
19 hosted another public meeting in Moberly, to update landowners on the Project. I
20 also attended that meeting.

21 I have been learning about the Grain Belt Express Project for quite a while.
22 The President of the company, Mr. Skelly, also came to my farm to talk about the

1 project. Grain Belt Express has worked quite a bit with landowners to accommodate
2 their requests.

3 In certain instances, I have been working to help resolve landowner issues.
4 I have spoken with landowners who have specific concerns about the route of the
5 line on their property. I encouraged them to talk to Grain Belt Express
6 representatives. I know that in a couple of cases, the Grain Belt Express was able
7 to make adjustments to the route to accommodate landowners' requests.

8 As county commissioner, when a project like the Grain Belt Express comes
9 into the commission chamber, we try to understand and make sure they treat the
10 residents fairly. We have done that all along. We have not had any issue whatsoever
11 with the folks at Grain Belt Express.

12 **Q. Will the Grain Belt Express Project affect your property?**

13 A. Yes. Their transmission line runs through the northeastern part of my farm. I am
14 including a map with my testimony as **Schedule RWW-1**. There will be a turning
15 structure on my farm and the line will have to cross the existing 345 kV line on my
16 farm, as well.

17 **Q. How Does Grain Belt Express compensate landowners?**

18 A. Grain Belt Express pays for the easements, for each structure on the property, and
19 also for any crop or other damages. I particularly favor the idea of payments for
20 each structure, especially with the escalation clause going forward. I think this is a
21 novel approach and it provides an opportunity for the community to share the
22 ongoing benefits of the project.

23 **Q. Please describe your experience with farming around transmission lines.**

1 A. I am a century farm owner and our family has owned the land since 1884. I have a
2 345 kV power line on my farm. I have three pipelines on my farm. And at one point,
3 I also had an AT&T line across my farm. I also operate three other farms with 345
4 kV and 161kV power lines, so I am very used to farming around the structures.
5 They are not a problem. I do it all the time and anyone with these structures knows
6 that you just adjust to it.

7 **III. THE NEED AND IMPACT OF THE GRAIN BELT EXPRESS**

8 **Q. Is the Grain Belt Express transmission line needed?**

9 A. There is a definite need for renewable energy in the state of Missouri, including in
10 Randolph County. I believe that wind power from the state of Kansas is a great
11 place for it to come from. Wind energy in Kansas is cheap, and I want the most
12 economical energy resources to be available to our citizens.

13 Randolph County currently has three coal fired power plants. Adding
14 renewable energy to our portfolio could help protect this coal-fired generation.
15 There is a necessity for clean wind energy, because it will help us meet the
16 Environmental Protection Agency's regulations. And the wind energy from Kansas
17 will help us keep the cost of energy low -- and that keeps our economic engine
18 running in the State of Missouri.

19 **Q. How will the Grain Belt Express Project impact Randolph County?**

20 A. Projects like this are opportunities to bring money to local communities. As a
21 former school board member, we all know more money is needed in the school
22 systems, and this is where the bulk of the tax revenue will go. All the small entities
23 in the counties – fire districts, libraries, ambulance district, etc. – always need more

1 tax revenue. This benefits the county because every dollar we bring in from new
2 development brings us the potential to reduce the local tax burden by an equal
3 amount.

4 We have had examples of this type of community benefit in the past. There
5 was a mining operation that essentially paid for the new addition onto one of our
6 schools. Without that project, we would have been going to the taxpayers to raise
7 the funds for the school. The Grain Belt Express Project could have a similar
8 impact.

9 The Project will also benefit the county with opportunities for local citizens
10 to get work on the construction. I am familiar with PAR Electrical Contractors, Inc.
11 because they have been the contractor for work for the co-ops in the past. I believe
12 they will help to keep jobs in the community. And we will benefit from the workers
13 that have to be brought in as well, as they will eat at our restaurants, stay at our
14 hotels, and spend money in our communities. In summary, I am in support of the
15 Grain Belt Express Project because of the big benefits it will bring to our county
16 and our state.

17 **IV. COUNTY ASSENTS**

18 **Q. Please describe your understanding of the scope of the county assents**
19 **described in Section 229.100 RSMo.**

20 A. I call those crossing agreements. They are agreements to allow a company's project
21 to cross county roads. We agree on how the roads will be repaired when the project
22 is complete. In some cases, the newly fixed road is better than it was before. If the

1 company does not hold up its end of the agreement, there are fines or other penalties
2 that come into play.

3 **Q. Has the Randolph County Commission provided Grain Belt Express with its**
4 **county assent?**

5 A. Yes. Randolph County has completed several of these agreements with different
6 types of projects including the Grain Belt Express Project. Grain Belt Express will
7 have to come back to the commission with the specific roads it intends on using,
8 and we will fill in the other details of the agreement at that time. But, we already
9 have an initial agreement in place with Grain Belt Express.

10 I have attached it to my testimony as **Schedule RWW-2**. The “Right of
11 Way Access Agreement” states that:

12 “The County Commission finds that it is necessary to grant access to the ground of
13 certain of the county public roads and connected rights of way; and

14
15 That a contract for such access with guarantees from Grain Belt Express Clean Line
16 LLC is in the best interest of the County; and

17
18 That in such contract Grain Belt Express Clean Line LLC will guarantee that the
19 quality of the road beds and rights of way over and under the identified county
20 public roads and connected rights of way will be replaced and maintained in the
21 condition it existed prior to the utility lines passing over or under the road bed and
22 connected rights of way...”

23 The agreement goes on to explain other details, as well.

24 **Q. Should a County Assent hold up the construction of a project like the Grain**
25 **Belt Express?**

26 A. I don’t think the county assents should be used to hold up a project that has already
27 been approved by the PSC. As a commissioner, I interpret the purpose of the county
28 assents as a way to ensure the company complies with the rules and regulations
29 prescribed by the county engineer or county commission, and not as a tool to

1 prevent projects that are demonstrated to be in the public interest. There is a group
2 of people trying to block Ameren from getting their county assents. I was at a
3 meeting where they recently came and spoke. These project opponents are trying
4 to prevent investment from coming into the county.

5 As long as the company and the county agree to be fair about compensation
6 and repairs of the roads, then they should be able to reach an agreement. Everybody
7 is entitled to use the roads, but nobody is entitled to abuse them.

8 **Q. Does this conclude your Direct Testimony?**

9 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,)
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)

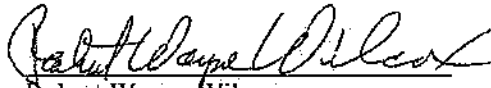
Case No. EA-2016- 0358

AFFIDAVIT OF ROBERT WAYNE WILCOX

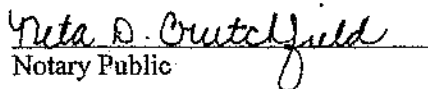
STATE OF Missouri)
COUNTY OF Randolph)^{SS}

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 Direct 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 26th day of August, 2016.


Notary Public

My commission expires: 6-15-2019