

**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, Operate,)
Control, Manage, 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-2014-0207

**THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC COUNSEL’S STATEMENT OF SUPPORT
FOR PREHEARING CONFERENCE AND LOCAL PUBLIC HEARINGS**

COMES NOW the Office of the Public Counsel (Public Counsel) and for its Statement of Support for Prehearing Conference and Local Public Hearings states as follows:

1. On March 26, 2014, Grain Belt Express Clean Line LLC (Grain Belt) filed an Application with the Missouri Public Service Commission (Commission) requesting a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) to construct a high-voltage DC transmission line across northern Missouri.
2. On March 27, 2014, the Commission directed the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission (Staff) to file a recommendation regarding Grain Belt’s Application by May 30, 2014.
3. On May 12, 2014, Eastern Missouri Landowners Alliance d/b/a Show Me Concerned Landowners (Show Me), filed a Motion for a pre-hearing conference in this case. Public Counsel supports Show Me’s Motion.
4. As Show Me states, there are twenty (20) parties of record and two (2) additional intervenors whose applications are still pending. It is unlikely that a Staff recommendation will bring about agreement between the parties on the issues in this case. Therefore, Public Counsel

would agree that this case is a “contested case” as defined by and contemplated in Chapters 386 and 536, RSMo. As such, it is reasonable for the Commission to schedule a prehearing conference for the parties to work together to propose a procedural schedule that would allow a full and fair hearing on the merits of Grain Belt’s Application.

5. Public Counsel also supports Show Me’s suggestion that local public hearings should be scheduled in the areas along Grain Belt’s proposed transmission line. Affording affected citizens the opportunity to speak to the Commission at a hearing is critical to the determination of whether or not Grain Belt’s Application is in the public interest. At the time of this filing, the Commission’s Electronic Filing and Information System (EFIS) shows approximately 3000 customer comments have been received regarding Grain Belt’s Application. Such a large number of public comments is an indication of the number of citizens affected by Grain Belt’s Application and who wish to speak to the Commission. Therefore, Public Counsel agrees that local public hearings should be held in this case. Public Counsel is more than willing to work with the Commission to determine a reasonable number of local public hearings to be held.

WHEREFORE, Public Counsel respectfully submits its support for a prehearing conference and local public hearings.

Respectfully submitted,

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC COUNSEL

/s/ Christina L. Baker

By: _____

Christina L. Baker (#58303)

Deputy Public Counsel

P O Box 2230

Jefferson City, MO 65102

(573) 751-5565

(573) 751-5562 FAX

christina.baker@ded.mo.gov

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed, emailed or hand-delivered to all the parties of record this 12th day of May 2014:

/s/ Christina L. Baker
