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STATE OF MISSOURI

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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)	
In the Matter of the Application)	
of Grain Belt Express LLC for an)	
Amendment to its Certificate of)	
Convenience and Necessity)	File No.
Authorizing it to Construct, Own,)	EA-2023-0017
Operate, Control, Manage, and)	
Maintain a High Voltage, Direct)	
Current Transmission Line and)	
Associated Converter Station)	
)	
)	

The above-entitled matter came on for a Virtual Public Hearing before the Missouri Public Service Commission and the Honorable John Clark, Senior Regulatory Law Judge, on the 8th day of March 2023, with all attendees appearing via WebEx, commencing at 12:00 p.m.

Taken by:
Christine M. Clark, RPR

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WEBEX APPEARANCES

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION:

John Clark, Senior Regulatory Law Judge
Scott Rupp, Chairman
Maida Coleman, Commissioner
Jason Holsman, Commissioner
Glen Kolkmeyer, Commissioner

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FOR MISSOURI LANDOWNERS RELIANCE, EASTERN MISSOURI LANDOWNERS RELIANCE DBA AS SHOW ME CONCERN LANDOWNERS, NORMAN FISHEL, GARY AND CAROL RIEDEL, DUSTIN HUDSON:

PAUL A. AGATHEN, ESQUIRE
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Email: paa0408@aol.com

1 JUDGE CLARK: Good afternoon. It is
2 March 8th, 2023, and the current time is 12:00 p.m.

3 The Missouri Public Service Commission has set
4 aside this time today for a virtual public hearing to
5 give members of the public a chance to comment about
6 the Application in File Number EA-2023-0017, which is
7 captioned as: In the Matter of the Application of
8 Grain Belt Express LLC for an Amendment to its
9 Certificate of Convenience and Necessity Authorizing it
10 to Construct, Own, Operate, Control, Manage, and
11 Maintain a High Voltage, Direct Current Transmission
12 Line and Associated Converter Station.

13 I got a little bit of background noise there. I'm
14 going to remind everybody again, if you're not speaking
15 directly to the Commission, please mute yourself until
16 you've been called on to talk.

17 Now, the Missouri Public Service Commission
18 regulates investor-owned utility companies in Missouri
19 to ensure that rates are just and reasonable. The
20 Commission also regulates the quality of service and
21 the safety of operations of investor-owned utilities.

22 The Commission is made up of five commissioners;
23 Chairman Scott Rupp and Commissioners Maida Coleman,
24 Jason Holsman, and Glen Kolkmeyer. One Commission seat
25 is currently vacant.

1 The commissioners are appointed by the governor to
2 fixed terms and confirmed by the senate. The
3 Commissioners employ a staff of engineers, accountants,
4 attorneys, financial analysts and other experts in the
5 area of utility regulation.

6 My name is John Clark. I'm the Regulatory Law
7 Judge presiding over this hearing today. We are
8 meeting virtually via WebEx and telephone and internet
9 conferencing. Online with me today are Chairman Rupp
10 and Commissioner Coleman, Commissioner Holsman, and
11 Commissioner Kolkmeyer.

12 Now, this is an official hearing of the Missouri
13 Public Service Commission, and the statements of the
14 witnesses are being recorded by the court reporter and
15 must be given under oath or affirmation.

16 The Commission has not made any decisions in this
17 case. And neither the commissioners nor myself can
18 answer questions about the issues in the case today.
19 And that's because the Commission has to remain
20 impartial until after all the evidence has been
21 presented, which would include evidence at any
22 evidentiary hearing.

23 Now, as I indicated earlier, there's a court
24 reporter, who has the same last name as me, but we are
25 not related. The court reporter is transcribing this

1 hearing so the Commission may review and read the
2 comments.

3 Chairman, would you like to make any opening
4 remarks?

5 CHAIRMAN RUPP: Great. Thank you, Judge.

6 I just wanted to welcome everybody to the public
7 hearing here. It's always great to see a lot of
8 participation. We do want to hear what is on your mind
9 regarding this case and what your thoughts are. And we
10 are here to listen. And also your comments are being
11 recorded by the court reporter so that we can go back
12 and refer to that during the trial, if we so need, to
13 reference any of your testimony.

14 So we appreciate you being willing, your
15 willingness to come forward and let us know your
16 thoughts and concerns about this case, and we look
17 forward to hearing what you have to say.

18 Just to remind everybody, even though the judge
19 just mentioned it, it bears repeating, the
20 commissioners cannot answer any questions. We are here
21 just to listen to your testimony and use that as
22 evidence in the decision that we will ultimately come
23 to after the trial in Jefferson City, you know, in the
24 future. So I just wanted to make sure everyone knew
25 that and so it wasn't that we weren't responding. We

1 are unable to respond to any questions. But thank you
2 for your time today.

3 And, Judge, I appreciate the opportunity to make a
4 few comments.

5 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Chairman.

6 At this time, I'd like counsel for the parties who
7 are present to enter their appearance for the record,
8 starting with Commission staff.

9 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Good afternoon. I'm Eric
10 Vandergriff, staff counsel for the Missouri Public
11 Service Commission, representing staff. I work at
12 PO Box 360, 200 Madison Street, Jefferson City,
13 Missouri 65102.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Vandergriff.
15 On behalf of the Office of the Public Counsel.

16 MR. POSTON: Hi. Marc Poston, for the
17 Office of the Public Counsel.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Poston.
19 On behalf of Grain Belt Express LLC.

20 MR. SCHULTE: This is Andrew Schulte with
21 Polsinelli Law Firm, on behalf of Grain Belt
22 Express LLC. Also appearing today is Anne Callenbach
23 with the Polsinelli Law Firm, and the court reporter
24 has our address information.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Schulte.

1 Now, there are a number of interveners in this
2 case. Are there any interveners present that would
3 like to enter their appearance for the record? And by
4 that, I mean counsel for interveners. I believe we
5 have at least one on. Mr. Agathen, are you on?

6 MR. AGATHEN: Yes, Judge. Can you hear me?

7 JUDGE CLARK: I can now. Thank you.

8 Would you like to enter your appearance?

9 MR. AGATHEN: Thank you, Judge.

10 This is Paul Agathen. It's spelled A-g-a-t-h-e-n,
11 from Washington, Missouri. And I'm representing the
12 Missouri Landowners Reliance, as well as the Eastern
13 Missouri Landowners Reliance doing business as Show Me
14 Concern Landowners, Norman Fishel, F-i-s-h-e-l; Gary
15 and Carol Riedel, R-i-e-d-e-l, and finally, Dustin
16 Hudson.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Agathen.

18 MR. AGATHEN: Thank you, Judge.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Are there any other counsel
20 for interveners present who would like to enter their
21 appearance?

22 Hearing no one, I'm going to go ahead and proceed.

23 Now, for those who would like to provide comments
24 today, I'm going to call the names of the people who
25 have signed up first in the order they appear. Right

1 now I have 11 people signed up to speak. Once I've
2 finished -- once the people that have signed up to
3 speak are finished, if anybody else would like to offer
4 comments to the Commission at that time, I will open it
5 up and call on people individually who would like to
6 offer comments at that time.

7 Now, when I call on your name, please unmute at
8 that time. Again, if you are participating via
9 telephone, you can mute and unmute by pressing star 6.
10 I will place you under oath. I will ask you to state
11 and spell your name for the court reporter, and then
12 you may offer your comments to the Commission.

13 Now, I'm going to ask, because of the number of
14 people that are online today, that we keep our comments
15 to about five minutes. Also, please remain online or
16 unmuted for just a second after you give your comments,
17 and that's because myself, the Commission, or some of
18 the attorneys may have questions for you.

19 Because this is WebEx, please don't use the chat
20 feature. That is not part of the official record. And
21 if you want to get my attention, please do not use the
22 hands-up thing, because I have a hard time seeing it.
23 So, if any attorney wants to get my attention to ask a
24 question, please do so audibly.

25 Commissioners and Chairman, please feel free to

1 interrupt me at any time if you have any question
2 whatsoever.

3 At this time, I'm going to call the first witness
4 to offer comments. Is there a Susan Wideman present?
5 Susan Wideman?

6 MR. WIDEMAN: Judge, I don't think we signed
7 up to speak. This is her husband.

8 JUDGE CLARK: I have a Ms. Wideman.

9 MR. WIDEMAN: I'm sure she's on, but...

10 MS. WIDEMAN: I am on, but I signed up to
11 speak at the previous meeting.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Well, I apologize. I
13 didn't mean to call you out for that. If you don't
14 want to speak today, you certainly don't have to.

15 Next on my list is Mayor Burrely Loftin. And I
16 will say if you have given testimony in the previous
17 hearing, it is already part of the record. If you are
18 here today to testify or to offer comments again,
19 please offer new information.

20 So is there a Mayor Burrely Loftin present?

21 MR. LOFTIN: Yes, sir. And the spelling on
22 that would be B-u-r-r-e-l-y, and Loftin, L-o-f-t-i-n.

23 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your right
24 hand, please? Would you raise your hand to be sworn?

25 MR. LOFTIN: Yes. Yes.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or
2 affirm that the testimony you are about to give at this
3 local public hearing is the truth?

4 MR. LOFTIN: I do.

5 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to
6 tell the Commission today?

7 MR. LOFTIN: Just to express my interest in
8 the transmission line and in regards to constituents
9 here in the Ava community. And my location here is
10 about -- probably about 45 miles north of the Arkansas
11 line. So I'm just about as far south as we can get.

12 But, anyway, with this Grain Belt, with this
13 transmission line, there's a cost savings of somewhere
14 in the neighborhood of about \$330,000. And this is a
15 -- this is important to me because it's a potential
16 cost savings for the customer, not for the
17 municipalities, but this savings will go to the
18 customers. And it will amount to about -- we have
19 about 1,572 customers in the community. And it will
20 save them about a month to a month and a half on their
21 bills per year. So I am interested and concerned. I
22 hope that everything works and it happens for our
23 constituents here. So that's my concern for sitting in
24 on the meeting today.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. I don't have any

1 comments, or I don't have any questions for you,
2 Mr. Loftin.

3 MR. LOFTIN: Okay.

4 JUDGE CLARK: I appreciate your comments.

5 MR. LOFTIN: You bet. Thank you.

6 JUDGE CLARK: Is there a Brian Smith
7 present?

8 MR. SMITH: Yes, Judge. I actually ended up
9 offering testimony on Monday night, and I really don't
10 have anything new. So, unless you want an encore
11 performance, I will step aside.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Smith. I
13 appreciate that.

14 Jenn DeRose is the next name I have to offer
15 comments.

16 MS. DEROSE: Hello.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. DeRose, would you raise
18 your -- well, would you state and spell your name for
19 the court reporter first?

20 MS. DEROSE: Yes. It's J-e-n-n-i-f-e-r
21 D-e-R-o-s-e.

22 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your right
23 hand to be sworn?

24 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
25 you're about to give at this local public hearing is

1 the truth?

2 MS. DEROSE: Indeed. Yes, I do.

3 JUDGE CLARK: Please go ahead.

4 MS. DEROSE: Thank you so much. I just
5 first want to thank the commissioners for holding this
6 hearing. I really appreciate you all taking the time
7 to listen. So I wanted to start with that, but...

8 So the Grain Belt is an essential project. It's
9 going to improve our energy security, grid resilience,
10 reduce costumer costs, spur economic development and
11 help municipalities add to their tax base.
12 Additionally, it will reduce emissions as an added
13 bonus, especially to downwind communities.

14 In 2022, the Department of Energy stated that
15 70 percent of our nation's current grid is over
16 25 years old, and that's a liability to the safety,
17 security and reliability of our grid.

18 New transmission is necessary to prevent rolling
19 blackouts, create resilience and redundancy in case of
20 attacks or failures and mitigate weather-related
21 outages. According to expert testimony filed in this
22 docket, if the Grain Belt and Tiger Connector had been
23 operational during Winter Storm Uri, this project would
24 have saved the Southwest Power Pool over \$300 million
25 in costs. That is a significant benefit to our aging

1 ailing grid, and that alone would be a benefit to
2 ratepayers.

3 Of course, ratepayers will gain more than energy
4 security. The Grain Belt is projected to save Missouri
5 residents \$17.6 billion between 2027 and 2066. Other
6 benefits for ratepayers include social benefits,
7 including emission reductions worth over \$7.6 billion.
8 The Grain Belt is projected to reduce emissions of
9 carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide in
10 Missouri by 9.3 percent, 19.2 percent and 17.2 percent
11 respectively. I'm sorry for all the numbers. These
12 pollutions are harmful to public health, reduce the
13 quality of life for residents, increase medical bills
14 and contribute to premature deaths.

15 And then, you know, beyond all the other benefits
16 that I've just named, there are benefits to
17 communities. A short list of municipal benefits
18 include \$10 million in sales and property taxes for
19 Chariton County, half a million dollars to the
20 education of 3,731 students in Randolph County, and
21 \$142 million a year in savings for Shelbina. Lebanon
22 will be able to meet its clean energy needs of two of
23 its top manufacturers. And Mark Petty, who is the
24 director of Kirkwood Electric, recently told me that he
25 expects this project would benefit Kirkwood financially

1 and from a redevelopment standpoint. They, like many
2 other cities in Missouri and across the country, have
3 set goals to source 100 percent clean energy, and this
4 project will help them reach that goal.

5 The Grain Belt Express is necessary to shore up the
6 grid against climate risks while bringing clean,
7 affordable energy to Missouri. And I certainly hope
8 you will approve this urgently needed project.

9 Thank you so much for your time and your
10 consideration and for your service to our state. That
11 ends my testimony.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. Stay on for just a
13 second.

14 MS. DEROSE: Okay.

15 JUDGE CLARK: Just so everybody knows, if
16 you see me looking down, I'm not disinterested. I'm
17 taking notes.

18 Ms. DeRose, you have an extensive knowledge about
19 this case. Can I ask, are you affiliated with any of
20 the parties?

21 MS. DEROSE: Yes, indeed. I am with Sierra,
22 the Missouri Sierra Club.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Okay.

24 MS. DEROSE: Yeah. The Beyond Coal
25 Campaign, specifically.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Well, I have no
2 questions for you. Thank you very much for your
3 comments.

4 MS. DEROSE: Thank you so much.

5 JUDGE CLARK: Mark Haim?

6 MR. HAIM: Yes. Good afternoon. It's Mark
7 Haim. It's spelled M-a-r-k, H-a-i-m.

8 JUDGE CLARK: I'm sorry, Mr. Haim.

9 MR. HAIM: That's all right. My name
10 doesn't spell the way it sounds.

11 JUDGE CLARK: Would you raise your right
12 hand to be sworn?

13 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
14 you're about to give at this local public hearing is
15 the truth?

16 MR. HAIM: Yes, I do.

17 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to
18 tell the Commission today?

19 MR. HAIM: Okay. I come here today as
20 director of Mid-Missouri Peaceworks, a grassroots
21 nonprofit that's very involved in energy and climate
22 issues and represents over 400 member households in the
23 Columbia, Mid-Missouri area, but members throughout the
24 state.

25 I also come here as a grandparent. I'm 73 years

1 old. Most of my life is behind me, even if I live
2 quite a bit longer than many people my age might live,
3 and yet I am very concerned about the future. And the
4 future, as I see it, is one that looks very -- very
5 foreboding, very troubled based on climate change. And
6 there seems to me to be a great urgency in addressing
7 this matter. I think it's not just that it seems that
8 way to me, but the scientific community has basically
9 indicated that that is the case.

10 And, in fact, we need to reduce our carbon
11 emissions by half this decade if we have any hope of
12 avoiding the worst consequences of climate change. And
13 the only way we're going to get to reducing our
14 emissions in half this decade is switching from dirty
15 coal-fired and other fossil fuel-fired electric
16 generation to renewable energy, and, in particular, in
17 this part of the country, wind is a huge resource, and
18 we need that wind-generated power. We need it
19 throughout our state. And the Grain Belt Express is
20 one way that we can move forward and do that, to
21 replace dirty coal-fired power plants with clean
22 renewable electricity and create an economic future
23 that works for all of us.

24 You know, it's a blessing that it turns out that
25 this actually saves money. I would be willing to buy

1 it even if it cost more than coal-fired power, because
2 coal-fired power has a lot of externalized costs. But
3 it doesn't cost more. It costs less, and that's very
4 heartening. It's a very happy circumstance we find
5 ourselves in. And we can't afford to let the interests
6 of a few override the overwhelming interests of all of
7 us as a population of the State of Missouri.

8 This impacts every one of us. And, as such, I urge
9 you to recognize the climate emergency we're in and
10 take action on that situation by moving forward with as
11 much renewable-generated energy as we can, as quickly
12 as we can, and getting it to our consumers. Getting it
13 to our utilities in this state from Kansas makes a lot
14 of sense, so does other projects that might be done in
15 the state of Missouri or even in our individual homes
16 to move things forward. But the piece that's in front
17 of us today is one that is really clear, and we will
18 all benefit if you approve this amendment to their
19 operation.

20 So I thank you for your time. I thank you for your
21 consideration of our perspective. And I really hope
22 that you all will make the right decision and approve
23 this. Thank you.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Mr. Haim, I have no
25 questions for you. Thank you for your comments.

1 MR. HAIM: Thank you. Take care.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Steve Jeffery.

3 MR. JEFFERY: Here.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Jeffery, would you please
5 state and spell your name for the record?

6 MR. JEFFERY: Sure. It's Stephen Jeffery,
7 S-t-e-p-h-e-n, J-e-f-f-e-r-y.

8 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your right
9 hand to be sworn? Do you solemnly swear or affirm that
10 the testimony you're about to give at this virtual
11 local public hearing is the truth?

12 MR. JEFFERY: Yes, sir.

13 JUDGE CLARK: Please go ahead.

14 MR. JEFFERY: Thank you. I have a prepared
15 statement I'd like to read for the record.

16 Good afternoon. My name is Steve Jeffery. I'm an
17 attorney with Jeffery Law Group, LLC, 400 Chesterfield
18 Center, Suite 400, Chesterfield, Missouri 63017.

19 I represent the Mid Missouri Landowners Alliance,
20 LLC whose purposes include participation in activities
21 to promote the wise use of agricultural property in
22 Missouri, to prevent the diversion of agricultural
23 property from productive use.

24 The Mid Missouri Landowners Alliance requests the
25 Commission disapprove the requested amendments and

1 modifications to the certificate of convenience and
2 necessity for the Grain Belt Express.

3 As a threshold issue, Article 1, Section 28 of the
4 Missouri Constitution states, "That private property
5 shall not be taken for private use with or without
6 compensation, unless by consent of the owner, except
7 for private ways of necessity, and except for drains
8 and ditches across the lands of others for agricultural
9 and sanitary purposes, in the manner prescribed by
10 law."

11 Because the project developer is a for-profit
12 company -- for-profit private company -- pardon me --
13 any use of eminent domain to acquire private property
14 for private use, without the consent of the owner in
15 this matter, appears to violate Article 1, Section 28.

16 In addition, in a letter dated January 31st, 2023,
17 comments were submitted by the Mid Missouri Landowners
18 Alliance to the US Department of Energy concerning its
19 preparation of an environmental impact statement for
20 the Grain Belt Express project and the Tiger Connector.
21 These comments raised several --

22 MR. SCHULTE: Excuse me. Judge Clark.

23 MR. JEFFERY: Pardon me?

24 MR. SCHULTE: I'm very sorry to interject,
25 but this is a lot of information and legal argument.

1 This is not a public comment, and this seems to be the
2 wrong venue for legal argument from a party.

3 MR. JEFFERY: May I continue, Mr. ALJ?

4 JUDGE CLARK: Hold on just a second. Give
5 me a second to think this through. I'm going to ask
6 you a few questions real quick, Mr. Jeffery.

7 Do you represent any of the parties, any of the
8 interveners in this case?

9 MR. JEFFERY: No, sir, I do not.

10 MR. SCHULTE: Did you say that --
11 Mr. Jeffery, did you say that you represent the
12 Missouri Landowners Association?

13 JUDGE CLARK: I believe he said
14 Mid Missouri.

15 MR. JEFFERY: My client is the Mid Missouri
16 Landowners Alliance, LLC, a limited liability company
17 which was formed approximately four weeks ago. It's
18 not a party or an intervener in this proceeding, nor
19 has it been in any of the previous proceedings pending
20 before the Commission concerning the Grain Belt
21 Express.

22 And, you know, my position, you know, with respect
23 of whatever objection that was made, assuming it was an
24 objection, these are purely comments made on behalf of
25 my clients who are landowners in the Callaway, Audrain

1 County area. It isn't intended to be any type of legal
2 argument, which I clearly would agree with would be
3 inappropriate since we're not a party or an intervener
4 to this proceeding. These are merely public comments.

5 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. I'm getting some
6 background noise. Again, I'm going to ask if you're
7 not speaking at this time, please mute yourself. If
8 you're participating by phone, you may do so by
9 pressing star 6.

10 Mr. Jeffery, I've got one other question for you.

11 MR. JEFFERY: Yes, sir.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Does the Mid Missouri
13 Landowners Alliance, LLC anticipate becoming an
14 intervener or participant in this case?

15 MR. JEFFERY: Not at this point.

16 JUDGE CLARK: But you believe it could in
17 the future?

18 MR. JEFFERY: Pardon me?

19 JUDGE CLARK: Do you believe it could at a
20 future point?

21 MR. JEFFERY: It's my understanding, from
22 talking with my clients, that they will not be
23 involving themselves as an intervener in this matter.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. I'm going to overrule
25 the objection. I'm going to allow you to make your

1 comments, as long as you don't steer too far into legal
2 argument.

3 MR. JEFFERY: Sure. Thank you. Thank you,
4 sir.

5 I was commenting just to some points that were made
6 in a letter that was submitted to the Department of
7 Energy back in January concerning components of the
8 project.

9 It appears that the developers are now seeking
10 federal financial assistance to build the project. It
11 appears this may be contrary to previous statements
12 made by the developers. Second, the Department of
13 Energy is required by NEPA to consider the purpose and
14 need for this massive project. According to federal
15 law, the DOE cannot merely accept the developer's
16 stated purposes for the project. It has to make its
17 own independent determination.

18 Thirdly, under NEPA, the Department of Energy is
19 required to consider other viable alternatives to the
20 project. These alternatives, as stated in the letter,
21 include but are not necessarily limited to, first,
22 routing all or portions of the transmission lines along
23 existing highway rights-of-way instead of taking
24 significant amounts of valuable agricultural land out
25 of service. Secondly, routing all or portions of the

1 transmission lines underground, like what was recently
2 done in the European Union in connection with the
3 750 kilometer project referred to as the German
4 Corridors Project. Fourth, under NEPA, the Department
5 of Energy is required to fully consider and address all
6 of the significant environmental impacts of this
7 project.

8 While my client acknowledges that these
9 NEPA-related concerns are outside the scope of the
10 PSC's regulatory authority, it is nonetheless important
11 for the Public Service Commission and its staff to be
12 made aware of these comments in the public record.
13 But, more importantly, the Commission and the staff
14 should know that the Department of Energy's
15 Environmental Impact Statement will be critically
16 reviewed in order to protect and safeguard the legal
17 interests of all the landowners in Missouri and other
18 states who are adversely affected by this massive
19 project which could likely result in litigation in
20 federal court.

21 Thank you. I'd be glad to answer any questions.

22 JUDGE CLARK: I don't have any question. I
23 have, as a point of clarification, you said,
24 information for the Commission and staff. I will note
25 for the record that while the Commission and staff is

1 housed in the same building, there is a wall between
2 the Commission and the staff, and staff communicates
3 with the Commission like any other party, through
4 motions and pleadings. So staff does not get to make
5 any decisions regarding this.

6 I have no questions for you. Are there any
7 questions from the Commission?

8 I don't hear any. Thank you for your comments,
9 Mr. Jeffery.

10 MR. JEFFERY: Thank you.

11 JUDGE CLARK: Fred Barnes? Is there a
12 Mr. Barnes present?

13 MR. BARNES: I'm here.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Barnes.

15 Would you please state and spell your name for the
16 record?

17 MR. BARNES: My name is Fred Barnes, F-r-e-d,
18 B-a-r-n-e-s.

19 JUDGE CLARK: And, Mr. Barnes, would you
20 raise your right hand to be sworn?

21 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
22 you're going to give at this virtual local public
23 hearing is the truth?

24 MR. BARNES: Yes.

25 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to

1 tell the Commission today?

2 MR. BARNES: I am a -- I assist with
3 government affairs for Magnitude 7 Metals, which is
4 formerly the Noranda plant located in New Madrid
5 County, specifically in Marston, Missouri.

6 I am briefly testifying on behalf of Jon Reali,
7 R-e-a-l-i, the chief operating officer at Magnitude 7
8 Metals who is currently out of the country.

9 There has been a letter that's been submitted, you
10 know, from Mr. Reali on this matter. But, briefly,
11 energy affordability and growing reliability risks are
12 our top concerns for families and businesses across the
13 country and specifically in Missouri.

14 Magnitude 7 Metals is the single largest consumer
15 of electricity in the state. They use more electricity
16 than the City of Springfield, and energy reliability
17 and costs are certainly a concern for them. Associated
18 Electric Cooperative Incorporated, AECI, is a trusted
19 and loyal partner of their plant. However, even AECI
20 admits that they are likely not going to have the
21 capacity in the long run to meet consumer demands,
22 including enough energy to power Magnitude 7 Metals,
23 who employs close to 600 people in New Madrid County.

24 They are encouraged by the promise of the project,
25 and as you know -- as you may know today, the project

1 was approved by the Illinois Commerce Commission of
2 Grain Belt -- and approved Grain Belt Express's
3 certificate of public convenience and necessity.

4 I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you for
5 your time.

6 JUDGE CLARK: I have no questions for you,
7 Mr. Barnes. Thank you very much for your comments.

8 Susan Everett -- Everhart. I'm sorry. Susan
9 Everhart. Ms. Everhart?

10 Travis Britton?

11 MR. BRITTON: Yes, sir, I'm here.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Good afternoon, Mr. Britton.

13 MR. BRITTON: Good afternoon.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Would you please state and
15 spell your name for the court reporter?

16 MR. BRITTON: Yes. It's Travis Britton,
17 T-r-a-v-i-s, B-r-i-t-t-o-n.

18 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your right
19 hand to be sworn?

20 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
21 you are about to give at this virtual local public
22 hearing is the truth?

23 MR. BRITTON: Yes, I do.

24 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to
25 tell the Commission today?

1 MR. BRITTON: Mr. Chairman, members of the
2 Commission, my name is Travis Britton, and I reside in
3 rural Atlanta, Missouri.

4 My daughter Kayla exhibits livestock at our county,
5 regional and state fairs. And two years ago Kayla was
6 reserve champion at the Missouri State Fair and
7 wind energy purchased Kayla's meat pen of rabbits at
8 the Sale of Champions. We very much appreciate them
9 and their support for the children. I know wind energy
10 also purchases other county -- county fair animals all
11 the way along their route, 4-H and FFA livestock at
12 every county fair along their route.

13 So, you know, these young kids, they're going to
14 remember that. They're going to appreciate that, as
15 well as us, as consumers, appreciate wind energy. So,
16 in addition, they have a new \$500 community grant
17 program that helps 4-H clubs and nonprofits along the
18 route in our state here in Missouri.

19 So, you know, as our family, we're proud to support
20 the Grain Belt Express because they support the 4-H and
21 the FFA. As a business owner, you know, we want to buy
22 local. We want to support the people that support us.

23 So thank you for your time.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. I have no
25 questions for you, Mr. Britton. Thank you for your

1 time.

2 Clarissa Hawthorne. Clarissa Hawthorne. Is there
3 a Clarissa Hawthorne on? And I believe Ms. Hawthorne
4 spoke at yesterday's local public hearing.

5 Karen Newman? Karen Newman.

6 Okay. Those are the last names that I had signed
7 up to speak today. At this time, I'm going to open it
8 up. Is there anybody who did not sign up to speak who
9 would like to offer comments to the Commission at this
10 time?

11 MR. FALKE: Mr. Chairman, my name is --

12 SPEAKER: Judge -- go ahead.

13 MR. FALKE: Judge, my name is Stan Falke,
14 Presiding Commissioner of Carroll County. If this is
15 an appropriate time, I'd like to offer comments.

16 JUDGE CLARK: It is an appropriate time.

17 Would you please state and spell your name for the
18 record?

19 MR. FALKE: Stan, S-t-a-n, last name Falke,
20 F-a-l-k-e. I am Presiding Commissioner of Carroll
21 County, Missouri.

22 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your right
23 hand to be sworn?

24 MR. FALKE: Yes, sir.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or

1 affirm that the testimony you are about to give at this
2 local public hearing is the truth?

3 MR. FALKE: I do.

4 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to
5 tell the Commission today?

6 MR. FALKE: That Carroll County has been a
7 supporter of this project since its inception. And
8 while I've not done any statistical surveys, I believe
9 the vast majority of our citizens in the county also
10 approve of this project. And I believe that could be
11 just briefly labeled in two different categories: One,
12 reliable and affordable source of electricity going
13 forward, and, secondly, which is huge to Carroll
14 County, the opportunity for economic development in
15 Carroll County.

16 And just to briefly remark on the first, looking
17 from the grassroots up, I cannot imagine here in
18 Carroll County a single mother or father getting home
19 late at night with kids to feed, it's dark and cold
20 outside, and you open the door and flip the light
21 switch and it doesn't come on because it's dark and
22 cold inside because we've run out of electricity. And
23 I believe that has been alluded to in earlier
24 commentary. But we do and are concerned about this
25 reliable source of energy going forward and believe

1 that this project will greatly enhance that.

2 As far as economic development, Carroll County is
3 an enhanced enterprise zoned area throughout just about
4 all of the county, and this is just an excellent
5 opportunity for what we believe to be viable and
6 sustainable economic development at Carroll County.
7 And we believe that Grain Belt Express will be an
8 integral and compatible partner in moving forward to
9 achieve this opportunity for economic development. It
10 will mean an increase in our base for taxation, and
11 most of that will go right directly to the schools, and
12 we appreciate that for our county for sure.

13 And just, in closing, I would just like to say that
14 we realize, Mr. Chairman, that there are opponents to
15 this project, but these opponents are no more
16 passionate about their position than we are passionate
17 about our position supporting this. We just believe
18 it's an integral and excellent opportunity to move
19 forward and just would highly urge you to approve this
20 project. There now ends my commentary.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Falke.
22 I have no questions for you.

23 Is there anybody else who would like to offer
24 comments to the Commission at this time?

25 MR. BOENDER: Yes, I would.

1 SPEAKER: Yes, I would.

2 JUDGE CLARK: I'll take -- is it Call-in --
3 well, you can't see if you're Call-in User 10 or not.
4 Whoever spoke first.

5 MR. BOENDER: Okay. My name is Tim Boender.
6 I'll spell it.

7 JUDGE CLARK: And would you spell your name
8 for the court reporter?

9 MR. BOENDER: Yes. Yeah. It's T-i-m,
10 B-o-e-n-d-e-r. I'm representing my mother, the
11 landowner.

12 JUDGE CLARK: All right. Would you please
13 raise your right hand to be sworn?

14 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
15 you are about to give at this virtual local public
16 hearing is the truth?

17 MR. BOENDER: Yes.

18 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to
19 tell the Commission today?

20 MR. BOENDER: I'd like to give a little
21 background and maybe challenge some of the thought
22 process here of some of the previous speakers.

23 A little history. The farm has been in our family
24 since the early 1950s. Today we're currently farming
25 it. We've invested significantly in a lot of

1 sustainable upgrades to the property in the form of
2 terraces, waterways, etcetera. We also use it for
3 recreation, for outdoor sports and those types of
4 things.

5 One of my concerns with this power line coming
6 through our property, first of all, it's a privately
7 held organization, a privately held entity that is
8 working to try to put this -- put these towers on our
9 -- on our property, which doesn't feel right.

10 One of the things that -- one of the limitations
11 we're going to have, when you think about the future --
12 and I heard somebody mention NOx emissions and
13 sustainability and carbon offsets and all that kind of
14 stuff -- is one of the limitations we're going to have
15 in having these towers on our property is going to be
16 our inability to do some of the things that I think
17 we're going to need to do, i.e., application of cover
18 crops, you know, crops to reduce end-of-season NOx
19 emissions, fungicide application, which is another way
20 to maximize utilization of nitrogen, which has been
21 known to be a contributor to some of this, some of
22 these carbon issues, but it's really restrictive and,
23 if you look to the future, some of the things that I
24 think we're going to be held accountable to as far as
25 sustainable productivity.

1 My challenge to the group is, you know, we've
2 talked about these towers. But a gentleman mentioned,
3 you know, utilizing right-of-ways that are currently
4 available to do this. I don't think anybody opposes
5 cleaner energy sources. I'm just opposing the way
6 they're going about it.

7 Another point I want to make is my 83-year-old
8 mother got a call the other night with somebody asking
9 her about doing survey work on her farm, unknowing what
10 it was about, felt like it was a little presumptuous
11 and it was a little undercover of the night, one of the
12 reasons I'm on the call today.

13 My challenge to the Commission is, if you look at
14 who the people are, who the investors are that are
15 wanting to do this, you're looking at the way they're
16 going about it rather than looking at alternatives, my
17 view is, this is why you're in place, to protect
18 individuals like ourselves, landowners, in this event
19 that we're talking about today. And that's the end of
20 my comment.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Boender.
22 I have no questions for you. Thank you for your
23 comments.

24 MS. VOGELWEID: This is Mary Vogelweid. I
25 would like to make a comment, if I could.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Yes. Would you please state
2 your name again and spell it for the court reporter?

3 MS. VOGELWEID: Sure. Mary Vogelweid,
4 M-a-r-y, V-o-g-e-l-w-e-i-d.

5 JUDGE CLARK: And, Ms. Vogelweid, would you
6 raise your right hand to be sworn?

7 MS. VOGELWEID: Yes.

8 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or
9 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at this
10 virtual local public hearing is the truth?

11 MS. VOGELWEID: Yes.

12 JUDGE CLARK: What would you like to tell
13 the Commission?

14 MS. VOGELWEID: I would like to tell the
15 Commission that my comments are in a similar vein as
16 the individual who just spoke, in that the method in
17 which this -- there's no doubt that we need to have a
18 better grid, have a more secure grid and more reliable
19 grid. But the issue that I currently have with Grain
20 Belt Express is how they're going to go about
21 installing these lines and running them above farmland.

22 And I look at what's happened in California as an
23 example of what we should try to prevent doing, instead
24 of we're running these lines aboveground the way that
25 we've done historically, probably since back World

1 War II time. And what has happened in California is
2 that the utility company was held responsible and
3 liable for the Camp Fire which killed 48 people. And
4 when they were found guilty of 48 counts of involuntary
5 manslaughter after that fire, the utility went bankrupt
6 and dissolved, and then it was reorganized.

7 And so what they do today in California with these
8 overground transmission lines, during periods of time
9 when weather conditions are ripe to start fires, when
10 it's dry and windy, they turn the lines off. And so
11 the business owners and all the people in these
12 communities are then without electricity. And so what
13 they have been forced to do in order to operate their
14 businesses are to have auxiliary generators on-site.
15 So they're going with natural gas or diesel generators
16 or micro-solar array type areas.

17 And so my concern with the number, the size of
18 these lines, we have no lines this large running across
19 the United States today as opposed to what Grain Belt
20 is proposing to do. My question to you all is, what
21 happens when one of those lines goes down? Because
22 what I can foresee is that we will have hundreds of
23 thousands to millions of people across multiple states
24 without power for a sustained period of time. This can
25 be avoided, I believe, by more conscientious

1 installation of this line. And landowner rights could
2 be protected by routing it along established utility
3 corridors or along established rights-of-way.

4 That concludes my comments.

5 JUDGE CLARK: And when you say
6 conscientious, that it could be done more
7 conscientiously, you're referring to putting it along
8 right-of-ways, correct?

9 MS. VOGELWEID: Yes. And also -- and
10 burying it, if that's possible. Making it -- if we
11 want it to be resilient, it can't take a hit in a
12 disaster. It can't take a hit in a tornado. It can't
13 come down in a windstorm. It can't be taken out in a
14 fire.

15 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Vogelweid, thank you for
16 your comments.

17 MS. VOGELWEID: Thank you.

18 JUDGE CLARK: I have no questions for you.

19 Is there anybody else who would like to offer
20 comments to the Commission at this time?

21 MR. DYE: Yes, there is.

22 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Sir, what's your name?

23 MR. DYE: Yes. My name is Kent Dye, K-e-n-t,
24 D-y-e.

25 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your right

1 hand to be sworn?

2 MR. DYE: Yes.

3 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or
4 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at this
5 virtual local public hearing is the truth?

6 MR. DYE: Yes.

7 JUDGE CLARK: Please go ahead, Mr. Dye.

8 MR. DYE: Hi. My name is Kent Dye. I'm a
9 farmer from Monroe County and also a landowner. I'm
10 strongly opposed to the building of the Tiger Express
11 and Grain Belt Express line. The MISO, which is the
12 Midcontinent Independent System Operator, has already
13 approved new projects that will bring wind energy to
14 Missouri and Illinois. Grain Belt and Tiger Express
15 are not needed for reliability, economic and for any
16 other reason.

17 This has been a highly speculative project from the
18 beginning, over ten years ago, as Grain Belt now seeks
19 taxpayer funding from the Department of Energy. And if
20 energy says we'll sell interest in the projects to
21 other private parties for their own private use, this
22 would make Grain Belt Express no longer for public use.
23 It should never have been given the power of eminent
24 domain. Missouri landowners will be the victims in the
25 end with easements forced upon them to grant unlimited

1 access to their land into perpetuity.

2 I'll say I'm a multigenerational farmer. The
3 proposed line will cross over three and a half miles of
4 our most productive farmland, putting 40-foot square
5 based towers every quarter mile or less, which will
6 make it difficult for farming around, for aerial
7 application. We rely heavily on precision ag to guide
8 our implements across the field, and we're not sure the
9 effects of 3500 megawatts of power will have over that.

10 So, in closing, my position has not changed over
11 the last decade, as I stand in opposition to the Tiger
12 Express and Grain Belt Express lines. And I thank you
13 for listening to my comments, and that's all I have, if
14 you have any questions.

15 JUDGE CLARK: I had one question, and you
16 already answered it, and that was, does the line cross
17 your property. And you said that there would be
18 several 40-foot based towers. So thank you for your
19 comments.

20 MR. DYE: Yes.

21 JUDGE CLARK: I have no further questions
22 for you.

23 MR. DYE: Thank you.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.

25 Is there anybody else who would like to offer

1 comments to the Commission at this time?

2 I see a hand up, sir, but I can't hear you. You
3 may need to unmute.

4 MR. KLINEDINST: Lloyd Klinedinst.

5 JUDGE CLARK: And would you spell your name
6 for the court reporter?

7 MR. KLINEDINST: L--l-o-y-d,
8 K-l-i-n-e-d-i-n-s-t.

9 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your right
10 hand to be sworn?

11 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
12 you're about to give at this virtual local public
13 hearing is the truth?

14 MR. KLINEDINST: Yes.

15 JUDGE CLARK: Please go ahead.

16 MR. KLINEDINST: I hope you give careful
17 consideration to and approve the Grain Belt Express,
18 which will deliver safe, clean, reliable and affordable
19 energy to Missouri, enough to power 1.6 million homes.
20 This increased transmission is essential for saving
21 Missouri consumers money, ensuring grid reliability and
22 moving our state away from dirty outdated fossil fuels.

23 Thank you very much.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Is that all the comments you
25 have?

1 MR. KLINEDINST: Yes, sir.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. I have no questions for
3 you. Thank you.

4 Is there anybody else who would like to offer
5 comments on this case to the Commission today?

6 I see someone with their hand up.

7 MS. SCHUBA: Hello. This is Patricia Schuba
8 and a few people from the Labadie area that came to my
9 house to use the internet to testify before you today.

10 Again, I wanted to say thank you for providing this
11 opportunity. Often we come before you with a different
12 perspective on coal-fired power plants and wanting more
13 regulation there. So it's pleasant to be --

14 JUDGE CLARK: It sounds like you're getting
15 in your testimony.

16 MS. SCHUBA: Oh, sorry.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Before we do that, can I ask
18 you to state, spell your name, and then I'll swear you
19 in?

20 MS. SCHUBA: Sure. Sorry. Patricia,
21 P-a-t-r-i-c-i-a; Schuba, S-c-h-u-b-a.

22 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear or
23 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at this
24 virtual local public hearing is the truth?

25 MS. SCHUBA: Yes, it is.

1 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to
2 tell the Commission?

3 MS. SCHUBA: So, again, I wanted to say
4 thank you for the opportunity to be before you on a
5 positive note. And having said that, we all live near
6 the Labadie coal-fired power plant in Labadie,
7 Missouri, which is the largest in the state. It
8 doesn't have scrubbers, contributing the most to the
9 pollution that was mentioned earlier in testimony.
10 It's a 2400 megawatt power plant. And so the hope for
11 bringing clean energy into the state is that we're able
12 to make it more possible for our utilities to move
13 beyond this dirty energy that's affecting all of us. I
14 think it was mentioned the impacts to climate change,
15 the impacts to our health. This power plant alone has
16 almost 200 premature deaths per year. So if you look
17 at a 20-year period, it's thousands of Missourians that
18 pay for this form of energy.

19 Me and my sister are here today to testify. We're
20 the fifth generation of a farm family in the Labadie
21 area. And we actually have two large metal towers that
22 have crossed our property for decades. And prior to
23 that, wooden towers that preceded those, as early as
24 the '20s. So we know and empathize with the other farm
25 families of the impacts of taking on that additional

1 responsibility to make sure energy is provided to our
2 neighbors. But we're here to say that that is really
3 important that we be able to have this opportunity in
4 this state. It could save electric consumers here
5 about 17.6 billion according to testimony by Mark
6 Repsher. It's 2500 megawatts of safe, clean, reliable,
7 affordable energy. I think it was mentioned,
8 1.6 million homes. We're in support of it as a century
9 farm family.

10 I am a biologist. I've worked in healthcare for
11 about 25 years. The way we are producing energy
12 currently is so dangerous to our futures, and many
13 Missourians have paid with their lives to be able for
14 us to have dirty coal-fired electricity. We're
15 strongly in support of an extension to the Grain Belt
16 which has already been approved and also empathetic to
17 the concerns that these future projects should be built
18 in a better way than the old way that we did things.

19 So I had wished when I moved back here to Missouri
20 that the towers on our farm, which will probably be
21 there the rest of my life, would have been put
22 underground. So I understand that argument, and I'm
23 hopeful that those kinds of projects can happen, but I
24 also think it shouldn't be the reason not to approve
25 this project and to bring that clean energy into the

1 state so our utilities have incentives to move to clean
2 energy as soon as possible. And I think that's what I
3 have to say today. Thank you for the opportunity.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Schuba. I have
5 no questions for you. Thank you for your comments.

6 Is there anybody else who would like to offer
7 comments?

8 MS. SCHUBA: Can I pass it off to Christine
9 Alt?

10 JUDGE CLARK: You may.

11 MS. SCHUBA: Thank you.

12 MS. ALT: Hi. I'm Christine. I'm
13 Patricia's sister.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Alt, would you please
15 state and spell your name for the record?

16 MS. ALT: Yes. It's Christine,
17 C-h-r-i-s-t-i-n-e; last name is Alt, A-l-t.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Ms. Alt, do you
19 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're
20 about to give at this virtual local public hearing is
21 the truth?

22 MS. ALT: Yes, I do.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Please go ahead with your
24 comments.

25 MS. ALT: My name is Christine Alt, and my

1 family, as my sister mentioned, has been residing in
2 the Labadie area my entire lifetime. As a citizen and
3 now as a parent, I appreciate the Public Service
4 Commission asking for our participation in this hearing
5 today. So I want to thank you first, and I probably
6 will end with a thank you, too. This is a win-win, and
7 I'd ask to add another win to our state for all of
8 these -- all these impacts.

9 The Grain Belt Express can deliver up to 2500
10 megawatts of safe, clean, reliable and affordable
11 energy to so many homes, up to 1.6 million homes is
12 what I read. Secondly, the Department of Energy has
13 explained that 70 percent of our nation's current grid
14 is over a quarter of a century old. So it is a
15 liability to safety, the security, the reliability of
16 our grid system. And living in a small community that
17 is directly impacted by a coal-fired plant that is now
18 over 40 years old, I can appreciate the potential for
19 the Grain Belt Express and also the Tiger Connection
20 project.

21 This expansion through the Tiger Connector could
22 also help things be cleaner for all people. I also
23 would add that I understand the concerns that some of
24 the property owners have expressed and continue to
25 express for a long time, because, as my sister

1 mentioned, we have a family farm that's a century farm
2 in our family still operating, and my husband also has
3 a century farm still operating in this area. And if
4 given an option for this new project at the time when
5 the power lines went through our property, we would be
6 happy to see it in this area, hopefully, utilizing all
7 comments and best practices for the future, which may
8 even include lines along the right-of-way or placing
9 lines underground. And we look to Germany and much of
10 Europe for the success of those lines as well, but, for
11 now, we need to improve what we can improve, and this
12 project would.

13 Not only will these benefits make me feel better as
14 a parent, but citizens will also benefit beyond what I
15 have already expressed. The worth has been estimated
16 to be beyond \$7.6 billion. And myself and my family
17 strongly support this project expansion for all the
18 social benefits, the increased safety for people and
19 our environment, with greatly reducing emissions, and
20 financially, also, for the region.

21 So I would say, thank you for listening to us and
22 please support furthering this project with the Tiger
23 Connection. Thank you.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you for your
25 comments. I have one question.

1 MS. ALT: Yeah.

2 JUDGE CLARK: And, just, you'll have to
3 forgive me, it just has to do with the fact that I
4 don't know where you, your sisters or your husband's
5 farm is.

6 Does this project cross any of your properties?

7 MS. ALT: No, it does not. But we live
8 within very close proximity to the Labadie Ameren
9 coal-fired plant, which does not have scrubbers. And
10 we have been dealing with a very long time -- my entire
11 lifetime, my children's entire lifetime -- of living in
12 the wake of the problems with that plant. And we do
13 have power lines that go through our property that are
14 going to be outdated at some point. So we would hope
15 that those types of lines disappear and more projects
16 like the Grain Belt Express and also this Tiger
17 Connector would be looked at. And as I said, into the
18 future having those lines underground or safer, that
19 would be better too. But for now, this is a great
20 project and it should be encouraged.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you for your
22 comments, Ms. Alt.

23 MS. ALT: Thank you.

24 JUDGE CLARK: And I want to apologize. If
25 you hear the occasional dinging, that's me getting

1 email, and I do not know how to mute that. So I
2 apologize for that.

3 Is there anybody else who would like to offer
4 comments to the Commission today?

5 Yes, I see a hand.

6 MS. NOHL: Hi. My name is Carol Nohl.

7 JUDGE CLARK: And would you please spell
8 your name for the court reporter?

9 MS. NOHL: C-a-r-o-l, N-o-h-l.

10 JUDGE CLARK: And, Ms. Nohl, would you raise
11 your right hand to be sworn?

12 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
13 you're about to give at this local public hearing is
14 the truth?

15 MS. NOHL: Yes, I do.

16 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Go ahead with your
17 comments.

18 MS. NOHL: I don't -- I can't say that I'm a
19 scientist. I'm coming here today to give my comments
20 as a citizen who's been concerned about the need for
21 increasing affordability of energy and safety of
22 energy, and I've been associated with people in the
23 Labadie community for many years. My sister lives in
24 it. I used to live in it.

25 I did move to St. Louis County to care for my

1 elderly mother. And there are transmission lines near
2 where I live now, and they've been there for many
3 years. I feel that sometimes you have to give a little
4 to have something for the greater benefit of everybody.
5 And I'm happy that this project is being planned. And
6 hopefully it will be approved and move forward because
7 I feel like it will help everybody be able to afford
8 energy better. It will be cleaner energy, safer
9 energy, and I feel it will be safer for all farmers and
10 people across Missouri because it will help with our
11 concerns about climate change. And I've watched people
12 in Labadie being severely and adversely affected by
13 coal pollution.

14 So this, to me, is an exciting project, and I do
15 understand the concerns of the people whose land it
16 might go across. And I do agree that if it could go
17 underground that would be a good thing. But I think we
18 are looking at urgency in making green energy happen
19 now. And that's my comments. Thank you for listening.

20 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Nohl. I have
21 no questions for you.

22 Is there anybody else at this time who would like
23 to offer comments to the Commission?

24 MS. RUSSELL: Yes, sir.

25 JUDGE CLARK: You have a house full today,

1 Ms. Schuba.

2 And would you please state and spell your name for
3 the court reporter?

4 MS. RUSSELL: Rebecca, R-e-b-e-c-c-a;
5 Russell, R-u-s-s-e-l-l.

6 JUDGE CLARK: Would you spell your last name
7 one more time for me?

8 MS. RUSSELL: R-u-s-s-e-l-l.

9 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.

10 And would you raise your right hand to be sworn?

11 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
12 you're about to give at this local public hearing is
13 the truth?

14 MS. RUSSELL: Yes, I do.

15 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to
16 tell the Commission today?

17 MS. RUSSELL: I am also not a scientist, but
18 I can appreciate the comments of the landowners and the
19 farmers. I know that there's very much trepidation on
20 their part about what will happen with their land, the
21 transmissions, etcetera, etcetera. We have dealt with
22 these kind of things in the past, I do believe, because
23 the wires have been around for a long time.

24 I think that underground wiring would be wonderful,
25 but what we really need to address is the climate

1 change and what we are doing down the line. Things
2 have to start changing now. And with this Tiger
3 Connector -- the Grain Belt's already been approved,
4 with this Tiger Connector bringing so many -- so much
5 more clean energy into Missouri where we have so many
6 coal-fired plants.

7 And I do live close enough to the Labadie
8 coal-fired plant, that is the Ameren plant, and that it
9 has affected my health and many, many more people that
10 I know and some that are no longer with us. So I would
11 just like to see -- for the benefit, we've get to give
12 a little on each side. And I would certainly not be,
13 maybe, overly happy if I had transmission lines. I
14 would be more happy underground, but we have to solve a
15 problem. We have to solve an urgent problem that we
16 have, and it's not going to happen quickly, but we have
17 to get started on it.

18 And I think that's the end, and I thank you for
19 listening to us.

20 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you for your
21 comments. I have no questions for you.

22 MS. RUSSELL: Thank you.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Is there anybody else who
24 would like to offer comments today to the Commission?

25 MR. WIDEMAN: Yes, Judge. This is Gary

1 Wideman. If I could offer a brief comment, please.

2 JUDGE CLARK: I'm going to ask you to speak
3 up just a little. I'm having a little bit of a
4 difficulty hearing you.

5 Would you please --

6 MR. WIDEMAN: Yes. Can you hear me a little
7 better now?

8 JUDGE CLARK: Yes, it is.

9 Would you state and spell your name for the court
10 reporter?

11 MR. WIDEMAN: Yes. Again, Gary Wideman,
12 W-i-d-e-m-a-n.

13 JUDGE CLARK: W-i --

14 MR. WIDEMAN: -- d-e-m-a-n.

15 JUDGE CLARK: And is Gary, what spelling is
16 that? Is that G-a --

17 MR. WIDEMAN: G-a-r-y.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you.

19 MR. WIDEMAN: Thank you.

20 JUDGE CLARK: Would you raise your right
21 hand to be sworn?

22 MR. WIDEMAN: Yes, sir.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or
24 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at this
25 local public hearing is the truth?

1 MR. WIDEMAN: I do.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Please go ahead.

3 MR. WIDEMAN: Okay. Thank you.

4 I am opposed to this submission. There will be a
5 serious negative impact to my wife's farm and many
6 others. I have heard many statistics presented here in
7 support of this project. I do believe most of us know
8 that stats can prove both sides of cases. Sometimes it
9 depends on who is supplying those statistics.

10 As far as climate change, there are experts on both
11 sides of this issue. I remember reading the book,
12 "Population Bomb" many years ago in college. It ended
13 up to be an alarmist theory that did not occur.

14 I'd like to refer to an article in the Mexico
15 Ledger dated on 8/1 of 2022. A high ranking employee
16 of Grain Belt Express stated this: He acknowledged
17 that the company has no empirical data that illustrates
18 demand for what the Grain Belt Express has to offer.
19 "We are always trying to sell our product."

20 Let me restate that again because I believe it's
21 very important. This employee acknowledged that the
22 company has no empirical data that illustrates the
23 demand for what the Grain Belt Express has to offer.
24 "We are always trying to sell our product."

25 I do believe we need to be good stewards of our

1 environment. But should this be at the cost of our
2 small farmers and neighbors? There has to be a better
3 way than using these large towers traversing our
4 properties. I cannot understand how this corporation
5 can use eminent domain to disrupt small farms and
6 landowners. To me, it would seem illegal and certainly
7 not ethical to do this.

8 Thank you, Judge.

9 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.

10 And just to clarify, you said that article was in
11 the August 1st, 2022, Mexico Ledger?

12 MR. WIDEMAN: That's correct, sir.

13 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Mr. Wideman, thank you
14 for your comments.

15 MR. WIDEMAN: Thank you, Judge.

16 JUDGE CLARK: Is there anybody else at this
17 time who would like to offer comments to the Commission
18 about this case?

19 MS. EVERHART: Yes. Hello. Can you hear
20 me?

21 JUDGE CLARK: I can.

22 Would you please state and spell your name for the
23 court reporter?

24 MS. EVERHART: My name is Susan Everhart,
25 spelled S-u-s-a-n, E-v-e-r-h-a-r-t.

1 JUDGE CLARK: And, Ms. Everhart, would you
2 raise your right hand to be sworn?

3 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
4 you're about to give at this virtual local public
5 hearing is the truth?

6 MS. EVERHART: I do.

7 JUDGE CLARK: Please go ahead with your
8 comments.

9 MS. EVERHART: Well, our family farm is in
10 danger of being crossed by the Tiger Connector, which
11 would damage high-value cropland, pasture and
12 recreational woods. We fervently object to this
13 project utilizing valuable, useful soil. Towns,
14 cities, and golf courses, shopping malls are already
15 eating up cropland and farms at an alarming rate, and
16 soil lost through erosion is just another huge threat.

17 Soils are a fundamental natural resource, the basis
18 for all terrestrial life. Avoiding soil degradation is
19 crucial. Soil is not just dirt. This proposed project
20 covering miles of cropland will contribute greatly to
21 this degradation of the soil. When the structure of
22 the soil is changed and compaction occurs, the path of
23 the water runoff will change, and who knows how this
24 will impact soil loss.

25 Our farm, besides using terraces and waterways to

1 slow the soil loss, our tenants use minimum tillage
2 practices. For the last four years, our tenants have
3 implemented planting cover crops to further hold our
4 soil in place and improve soil life. This is the
5 improved soil that will be subject to degradation
6 during the construction of this project. Heavy
7 equipment will cause soil compaction. Soil will be
8 further damaged from concrete placed in the soil and
9 possible damage to terraces may occur at the
10 construction site.

11 Our woods and pasture also sequester carbon which
12 helps mitigate climate change. How many trees will be
13 torn up in the construction of Tiger Connector? We
14 also have a recreation lake alongside the proposed
15 Tiger Connector line also used by my family for four
16 generations for swimming, boating and fishing. Plus,
17 this recreation lake is also on the property adjoining
18 the proposed converter station. What an ugly thing to
19 look at while using our lake.

20 Why should farmers have to bear the negative impact
21 or losses incurred by this project? Does this not go
22 against the Department of Energy's stand on
23 environmental justice?

24 Also, on my personal land, I have the high voltage
25 Grain Belt passing next to my home. I don't know if

1 the negative health effects have been disproved
2 regarding living in close proximity to such a line. We
3 have never been notified of the exact size or
4 measurement of the easement they desire for the Tiger
5 Connector, nor have they said where they would enter or
6 exit the land. Grain Belt's representative tried to
7 pay us off to the tune of \$600 if we would let them
8 survey our property before the project was even
9 approved.

10 So, in conclusion, I advocate putting the
11 transmission line underground, at the site of an
12 existing right-of-way somewhere else. Thank you.

13 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Everhart. I
14 have no questions for you. Thank you for your
15 testimony.

16 MS. EVERHART: You're welcome.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Is there anybody else who
18 would like to offer comments to the Commission at this
19 time?

20 Okay. Not hearing anyone else, I would like to
21 thank everyone who took time out of their day to
22 participate and to offer their testimony.

23 Yes? Did someone say something? -- who took time
24 out of their day to offer their testimony and comments
25 to the Commission.

1 If you have additional comments that you did not
2 get to make today or if you know someone who could not
3 be present and would like to make comments, there are
4 ways to make written comments. You may do that by
5 going to the Public Service Commission's web page, and
6 there's a link there to offer comments. You can also
7 contact the Office of the Public Counsel. They've been
8 very gracious about seeing that public comments get
9 filed with the Commission. And you may further, if you
10 need help or assistance of filing comments with the
11 Commission, that can be done by contacting the Missouri
12 Public Service Commission Consumer Services. And the
13 number for that is 1(800) 392-4211.

14 With that, again, I'd like to thank everyone for
15 taking scrubbers time out of their day today. And I
16 want you to know that the Commission, this is our
17 chance to hear from the public, and I know that the
18 commissioners appreciate hearing from the public. And
19 I learn something new every time we have one of these
20 local public hearings.

21 With that all being said, this hearing is now
22 adjourned, and we will go off the court record.

23 (The hearing concludes at 1:11 p.m.)

24

25

CERTIFICATE

1
2
3 I, Christine M. Clark, RPR, hereby certify that
4 I reported the Missouri Public Service Commission
5 Remote Public Meeting on this 8th day of March 2023,
6 concerning the matter aforesaid;

7
8 That I was then and there a notary public;

9
10 That the foregoing transcript is a true and
11 correct transcript of my stenographic notes in said
12 matter, transcribed under my direction and control;

13
14 That I am not related to any of the parties
15 hereto, nor interested in the outcome of the action and
16 have no contract with any parties, attorneys or persons
17 with an interest in the action that has a substantial
18 tendency to affect my impartiality;

19
20 WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 20th day of March
21 2023.

22
23
24
25


Christine M. Clark, RPR
Notary Public

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