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Public Hearing with the Public Service Commission (12-14-2016) DEC 28 2016

Re: Grain Belt Express Clean Line Energy

Missouri Public
Service Commission

Good Afternoon,

My name is Bud Motsinger. I serve as Presiding Commissioner in Caldwell County. I do want to say Thank You to the Public Service Commission for taking time to come to Caldwell County to hear from the public and listen to their opinions concerning Grain Belt Express Clean Line Energy.

As a County Commission, we are here to represent and express the concerns of our constituents from Caldwell County. The citizens of Caldwell County have overwhelmingly expressed their opposition to the construction of the proposed Grain Belt Express transmission line through Caldwell County. **The citizens of Caldwell County have also expressed their opposition and concern that if the Public Service Commission were to grant Grain Belt Express with the "public utility" status, that the privately owned company would use that public utility status to obtain needed easements to construct their DC Transmission line on private property by use of "eminent domain" or the "taking of private property" from individuals that do not desire to have the transmission power line on their property.**

The power of eminent domain is often a necessary provision in the law allowing public utilities, transportation, and other government entities to conduct business for the greater good of the general public. However, it was not meant to be used by private-for-profit companies to use to take private property from private citizens for the benefit of larger companies to make a profit. The law allows for negotiations and reaching an agreeable selling price, if desired, or allowing the property owner to reject all offers and to keep his property.

As a county commission, we do not oppose the use of renewable fuels such as wind energy. We realize that energy produced by wind farms must be transmitted from the wind farm to become a part of the overall energy power grid to serve the energy needs of Missouri. We do have a large number of wind mills and wind mill farms in north Missouri to help serve the energy needs of north Missouri. **Our primary objection is the use of eminent domain to take private property from private citizens.** We have 5 private pipelines buried underground running through Caldwell County, which transport various petroleum products. These pipelines negotiated with the land owners to obtain the easement to construct through their private property at an agreed upon price.

We recently met with our pipelines and had a pipeline safety meeting with our fire departments and first responders. There was concern that the proposed Grain Belt Expressed transmission line is following the same route or corridor through the county as the pipeline and were concerned with safety issues, with the direct current power line being so close to the highly explosive petroleum products under pressure in the pipelines. There was also concern about construction near their pipelines with drilling or blasting through rock to set the power poles or towers. There was some concern with the powerlines interfering with the pipeline when checking their pipelines by air for possible leaks or damage.

Some landowners have objected to the DC power lines being visible and potentially reducing the esthetic value and property value of their property. Power lines constructed above ground are more subject to damage from wind, ice, fires, and possible acts of vandalism. The power lines could be buried underground like the pipelines, "out of sight, and out of mind". It may be more costly to bury the transmission lines, and it may cut into the projected profits of the



private-for-profit investment company, but it is an alternative. We understand that the wind power and other renewable fuels have been heavily subsidized by the government. They are in direct competition with other sources of energy such as petroleum and coal.

Caldwell County is currently in the process of adding Fiber Optic communication lines from Polo to Kingston and in other parts of the county. These lines are all buried under ground. It may be more expensive initially for the company to bury their lines, but the Fiber Optic provider was willing to make the investment to provide service to the citizens in Caldwell County. If the transmission power line is really essential for the Grain Belt Express customers on the East Coast to have a dependable source of renewable energy, then they should also be willing to invest the additional cost of burying their lines underground. (If it is truly about service rather than profit.)

We feel that the transmission lines should be required to follow the same procedures as private pipelines and **not be given an unfair advantage by allowing them to have the power of eminent domain to take private property.** We do question the need for the transmission lines to take wind power produced in southwestern Kansas to the east coast, when new emerging technology is available to produce energy from the ocean currents and oceans winds and other sources closer to the east coast. We are also very concerned that with emerging technology and the proposed removal of government subsidies, that these DC transmission lines may become unprofitable for the investment company and abandoned in the future. If the Grain Belt Express Clean Line were to file bankruptcy in the future, we are concerned about removal of these proposed lines and failed promises that have been made both to land owners and public entities.

As a county commission, we are also concerned with potential damage to county roads during construction and possible liability issues of damage to the lines by fire when farmer may be burning off their CRP fields or working with equipment close to the large power poles.

However, our main objection to giving Grain Belt Express Clean Line the public utility status is our concern of a private- for-profit company being allowed to and given the power to take private property from landowners by the use of eminent domain.

Thank you for listening and allowing the public to express our concerns on this issue.

Sincerely in Service,
C.R. Bud Motsinger
Presiding Commissioner
Caldwell County

