

PSC Formal Complaint Addendum – 10-15-24 (Cheri Meadows)

My ¼ mile long drive is the only way I have to get to or from my home from the gravel road. (see attached pictures) Each side of my property is either fenced for cattle or grows crops. The thought that I could be barricaded in or out of my home does not sit well with me. While my local electric line could be taken down by a storm, etc., I know that being local, my electric cooperative would work quickly to make the line safe and move any obstacles in my drive. With Grain Belt, I have no idea if it will take them an hour, a day, or a week, and my local electric company cannot work on their line without the Grain Belt repair crew doing whatever is necessary for their line.

In the meantime, if the Tiger Connector line falls on my existing power line running down my drive to my house, my local cooperative representative told me that “Nothing could happen or your house could burn down.”. My house is all electric. Without power, I have no well pump, which means I would have no water to put out any fire myself. In addition, my house is an earth contact home with only the front available to exit from and it is covered in (real) cedar siding. Everything I own, including my car, lawn mower, 4-wheeler, yard supplies, and many tools are kept in the attached garage. Potentially losing my home would be bad enough, but I could also easily lose everything I own, including my life. Given how remote my road is with no other houses on it, people often dump their cats and dogs. I take them all in. I currently have nine cats and dogs, eight of which are indoor/outdoor. In case of a fire, things could get bad quickly and I’d have to choose between trying to stop a fire, saving my animals, my car, or my own life, knowing no help is probably coming anytime soon. If they are able to get down my drive, my area is serviced by volunteer firefighters who have limited capabilities and resources.

Despite their claims about avoiding residences, whenever I questioned how my tiny slice of land and home, and the only residence on a one mile stretch of road was not avoided, nobody has been able to give me any answer at all. All I have repeatedly heard is “I don’t know”. No further assistance in getting this question answered has been offered or provided. I thought after having the Grain Belt land rep and his colleagues out to see and hear how greatly this line will impact my property and my safety and enjoyment of it, the line would be moved. Instead, I was told it was not possible for them to move the PSC approved line route.

According to several online news stories I found, (links provided at the bottom) transmission lines falling, and sometimes without an obvious reason, is not uncommon. Considering that I and emergency personnel would be barricaded from my house if the line ever fell, I feel like the emergency protocol for the Tiger Connector should have been provided to me several conversations ago by my land rep. He also could not tell me what the dimensions of the lines are so I’d know if driving over it in a low ground clearance, front wheel drive car would be possible in the event the line fell and an emergency situation required me to leave my home to seek emergency medical assistance.

In addition to ice, tornadoes, or just random equipment failure causing the line to fall, recently New Madrid fault warnings (<https://centralusquake.org/>) have been shown on tv. My property is in the area of impact, further making me uncomfortable with GBE’s line over my existing electric line, drive, and property.

Due to all of the grass, underbrush, and trees, including numerous cedar trees, my land could be a fire hazard to the line or vice versa. It is well known that smoke particles can cause a transmission line to arc.

The line may be approximately 1,000 feet from my house, but living in the country, I spend many hours outdoors mowing my large yard and drive, doing yard work, and walking down the drive with my pets to get my mail. I, and my pets will constantly be much closer than 1,000 feet from this line, including directly under it nearly every day, as the drive, which provides easy walking, is a common route we take on our daily walks.

I use zero toxic chemicals on my property or my animals. The idea of walking down my driveway where toxic chemicals have been sprayed over such a large area to prevent vegetative growth is upsetting. I don't want my animals, or myself exposed to them and it's not right that I have to give up enjoying a large area of my property that I have enjoyed for over 20 years in order to avoid me or my pets from being exposed to them. Round Up was considered safe until it wasn't. With cancer rates as prevalent as they are nowadays, unnecessary toxic chemical exposure to people and pets around such a high foot traffic residential area seems negligent. Moving the line south would put the line in an open field that would require very little to no spraying of anything to keep the vegetation down.

While high-voltage power lines are generally considered safe, so was the addition of fluoride to our municipal water for over 70 years until very recently. It has since been found that research has determined there is potential harm to children's intellectual development.

(https://search.brave.com/search?q=federal+judge+rules+fluoride+in+water+harmful&source=desktop&summary=1&summary_og=ca345ee2a52ed8399613f9) What if high-voltage power lines are determined to have negative health effects in the future? Will the lines be moved further away from houses and where people are regularly near them? Wouldn't it be safer to just avoid the proximity to existing houses at the time of construction, just in case? This seems especially true in my case where it is so easy to just move the line so enjoying/using my property and drive won't result in potential health issues down the road for myself or any future residents of the property.

Links to numerous instances of high-voltage transmission lines falling, some with no reason:

1. <https://communitypioneer.com/2023/06/electrical-crews-work-feverously-to-repair-downed-transmission-line/>
2. <https://www.click2houston.com/news/2015/07/19/centerpoint-energy-transmission-line-fell-caused-power-outage-for-14k-customers/>
- 3- <https://www.weau.com/2022/12/22/downed-transmission-line-knocks-out-power-hundreds-vernon-county/>
- 4 - <https://wreg.com/news/thousands-without-power-in-mississippi-after-transmission-line-falls-into-river/>
- 5- <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2024/04/20/breaking-news/hawaiian-electric-continues-repair-work-on-east-oahu-lines/>
- 6- <https://www.news-herald.com/2014/03/02/downed-firstenergy-cable-responsible-for-lake-county-power-outages/>
- 7- <https://www.myfoxzone.com/article/news/local/power-outage-in-north-san-angelo-affects-more-than-9000-customers-monday-morning/504-8400f3c0-5666-40de-bb32-79b00de8e0d0>
- 8- <https://flatheadbeacon.com/2009/11/24/downed-power-lines-cause-outages-across-the-valley/>
- 9 - <https://www.tiktok.com/@cedar.news/video/7369809819730971921>