

Exhibit No. 851

F. Neil Mathews – Exhibit 851
Testimony of Neil Mathews
Direct
File No. EA-2024-0302

DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

F. NEIL MATHEWS

**AMEREN TRANSMISSION COMPANY OF ILLINOIS (“ATXI”)-
NORTHERN MISSOURI GRID TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM FOR
FDIM AND APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF CONVENIENCE
AND NECESSITY**

CASE NOS; EA-2024-O302

1. INTRODUCTION

Q., Please state your name and business address.

A. F. Neil Mathews [REDACTED]

Q. What are your qualifications and experience?

A. I am a 5th generation landowner of the 1885 Missouri Century Family Farm certified by the University of Missouri Century Farm Project which has been in our family’s ownership for 140 years in Worth County Missouri on Missouri Route M north of Denver, Missouri.

Q. Have you testified previously before the Missouri Public Service Commission?

A. No

Q. What is the purpose of your direct testimony?

A. The purpose of this testimony is to respond to the lack of timely notification to the landowners concerning the ATXI’s routing of the proposed electric transmission lines and towers dating back to July 2024, provide comment on various misleading correspondence and presentations from ATXI officials, review the validity of the ATXI Route Selection Study Report, and more

*Information redacted in compliance with 20 CSR 4240-2.135(2)(A)1 Customer-specific information

1 importantly, address why this testimony is important to 140 years of the
2 Mathews family farm for both the living and deceased family members.

3 2. **ISSUES**

4 **Q. Why was I as a landowner not notified in a timely manner in 2024 when**
5 **there was a shift in routes from the original DO-27 route to DO-28 route**
6 **so that I could have presented evidence for the records of the PSC and**
7 **Commissioners at the regional hearings held by ATXI and/or their**
8 **representatives in Northwest Missouri?**

9
10 A. There are no valid reasons for the reroute from the original DO-27 route to
11 the new (May 2025) recently substituted DO-28 route. I originally had been
12 informed by parties in Worth County that the route would be the westerly
13 track known as DO-27. I relied upon this information from sources inside
14 Worth County that the DO-27 route had been publicly presented as the final
15 route that would be proposed for acceptance by the Missouri Public Service
16 Commission reviewing the application of ATXI for a Certificate of
17 Convenience and Necessity. Also, the records reflect that DO-27 was the
18 one route that had been presented at the regional meetings conducted by
19 ATXI officials and/or their representatives.

20 To add to the misinformation and confusion associated with the ATXI
21 application, there had been two different parcel numbers assigned for my
22 property maintained by the Worth County Assessor, a parcel number and an
23 alternate number. ATXI did not do due diligence and made no attempt to
24 ascertain the correct parcel information and was not using certified mail to
25 communicate with me. The different parcel numbers for the same property
26 have caused miscommunication between ATXI and the affected landowners
27 in Worth County.

28 Also, the Worth County tax cards used by the Collectors Office and the
29 Assessor Office property addresses use of different parcel numbers for the
30 same farm have created major confusion. The landowners can't be held
31 responsible for this mistake. As a result, and more importantly, this has led
32 to a lack of timely notification beginning in 2024 by ATXI. The accuracy of

1 this communication and the presentations were the responsibilities of ATXI
2 and it took no action on correcting the problem and has left landowners
3 uninformed as to the new route DO-28 being submitted and currently under
4 discussion.

5 Three years ago, a previous company called NextEra Energy Transmission
6 Midwest (Stantec), certainly had no problem locating me using the USPS
7 mail system when they were involved in the planning of a transmission line
8 in the area before they abandoned the project. The routes were changed and
9 ATXI felt no need to locate the newly affected landowners who were not
10 responding knowing full well that this lack of notification might become an
11 issue later on. Further, it appears that ATXI used a third-party online site
12 called Devnet to get addresses which complicates the issue even more. It is
13 unacceptable to have this level of miscommunication, and ATXI needs to be
14 denied a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity.

15 **Q., Please explain why Table 4. Direct Constraint Data Comparisons of**
16 **Proposal DO 27 Route and New Proposal Route D0-28 (Schedule JN-**
17 **D1, Page 30) reached a conclusion that “D0-28 appears to be**
18 **comparable or a slightly better option than the original D0-27”?**

19 **A.** There are no valid reasons for the reroute from the original DO-27 to the
20 new substituted DO-28 route, given the data comparisons presented in Table
21 4. When considering the ATXI’s additional time and expense of clearing
22 more timber, crossing sensitive floodplains and more streams and local
23 roads, structures, and agricultural land than the DO-27 route, it appears that
24 there were perhaps other entities influencing the decision to move to the new
25 D0-28 route. This wasn’t just about choosing the most sensible and cost-
26 effective route. The original DO-27 route proposed followed a well-
27 established existing NW Electric Power Cooperative transmission line and
28 power grid to the Grant Substation, which makes perfect sense and was
29 embraced by ATXI. ATXI chose the new route DO-28 that is more
30 expensive, can’t be defended as “slightly better” when comparing the data,
31 and was chosen for other reasons that go beyond the Table 4 graphic.

32 **Q. Why is this direct testimony important to the current 5th, and future 6th**
33 **and 7th generation of farm owners for this ole’ Missouri family farm?**

1 A. This family farm and land ownership has survived financial hardships,
2 depressions, floods, drought, and hard times for 140 years and has real
3 historical significance and meaning to the family members who hold a
4 current role and a responsibility to those ancestors who survived challenges
5 and hard times of their own on this land staying alive, out-of-debt, and
6 holding on to the land. This has more to do with a family trait called
7 resilience, not investor return on investment, not convenience, and/or a
8 transactional/transmission business deal. There are very few companies and
9 property owners who survive 140 years in doing anything in America today.
10 The ghosts of ancestors past would be aghast at the desecration of this 140-
11 year-old farm being overrun with proposed 345-volt power lines and towers
12 if they were alive today. Their old log cabin/house is buried inside the
13 planned route of the currently proposed DO-28 345-volt power lines and
14 towers. I ask for your urgent consideration for finding another route solution
15 for this family-owned Missouri farm that maintains the family history and
16 connections. Future plans include building a family retreat center,
17 expanding the ponds, and maintaining prairie grass acres for a nature center
18 for future generations and a set-aside pollinator acreage. None of these
19 plans are compatible with 345-volt powerlines and towers on this property.

20 Q. **Do you have a recommendation for the Commission?**

21 A. Yes, I recommend that the Commissioners deny the Certificate of
22 Convenience and Necessity requested by Ameren Transmission Company of
23 Illinois and require they use another route where already existing power
24 lines such as the western route found in the original DO-27 route already are
25 in use with agreements. Better yet, I propose ATXI individually survey the
26 landowners whose land will be affected by the proposed DO-28 route and
27 query their attitude, concerns and/or support of this project with correct
28 addresses and contact information. I believe that many landowners are not
29 even aware of this new May 2025 DO-28 route proposal because of the lack
30 of transparency, communication, and due diligence by ATXI.