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Sponsoring Party: NextEra Energy
Transmission
Southwest, LLC
File No.: EA-2022-0234
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MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

FILE NO.

EA-2022-0234

DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

**SARAH NETTELS
BURNS & McDONNELL ENGINEERING COMPANY, INC.**

ON

**BEHALF OF
NEXTERA ENERGY TRANSMISSION SOUTHWEST, LLC**

JULY 7, 2022

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1 **I. INTRODUCTION**

2 **Q. Please state your name, business address, and present position.**

3 A. My name is Sarah Curtis Nettels. I work for Burns & McDonnell Engineering
4 Company, Inc. (“Burns & McDonnell”) in the Environmental Services global practice as a Staff
5 Public Involvement Specialist. My office is located at Burns & McDonnell’s world headquarters
6 at 9450 Ward Parkway, Kansas City, Missouri 64114.

7 **Q. On whose behalf are you testifying?**

8 A. I am testifying on behalf of NextEra Transmission Southwest, LLC (“NEET
9 Southwest”).

10 **Q. Please describe your professional experience and educational background.**

11 A. I graduated from the University of Kansas in 2013 with a Bachelor of Science in
12 Journalism, with an emphasis in Strategic Communications, from the William Allen White School
13 of Journalism and Mass Communications, and a Bachelor of Arts in French Literature from the
14 College of Liberal Arts. After working abroad for the French Ministry of National Education, I
15 joined Burns & McDonnell in 2014 as a Communications Coordinator in the firm’s corporate
16 marketing department. I started in the Environmental Services division in 2017 as an Assistant
17 Public Involvement Specialist and have since worked on a variety of projects across the electrical
18 transmission and distribution, water, solid waste, remediation, transportation, and renewables
19 industries.

20 **Q. Have you previously provided testimony before the Missouri Public Service
21 Commission?**

22 A. No, I have not previously provided testimony to the Commission.

1 **Q. Please describe Burns & McDonnell and its role in the Wolf Creek-Blackberry**
2 **345 kV Transmission Project (“Project”)?**

3 A. Burns & McDonnell was retained by NEET Southwest to perform a routing
4 analysis for the project, the results of which are provided in the Routing Study and Environmental
5 Report (“Routing Study”) that is provided as Exhibit DW-1 to the Direct Testimony of NEET
6 Southwest witness Dusty Werth. Burns & McDonnell assembled a staff of various environmental
7 disciplines to assist in the data acquisition, routing analysis, and environmental impacts assessment
8 of the project.

9 **Q. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

10 A. The purpose of my testimony is to support the Applicant, NEET Southwest’s
11 request for a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity to construct, own, operate, and maintain an
12 approximately 94-mile, 345 kV transmission line between the existing Blackberry Substation in
13 Jasper County, Missouri and the existing Wolf Creek Substation in Coffey County, Kansas (the
14 “Wolf Creek-Blackberry Project” or “Project”). Approximately nine miles of the Project’s
15 proposed route (“Proposed Route”) are in Missouri, spanning parts of Barton and Jasper counties.
16 The Project was identified by the Southwest Power Pool, Inc. (“SPP”) as required to address
17 multiple needs identified in the 2019 Integrated Transmission Planning process, including an
18 economic need to increase the transmission capability from west to east within SPP. My Direct
19 Testimony will describe the public outreach associated with the routing process for the Project.

20 **Q. Are you sponsoring any schedules or exhibits as part of your direct testimony?**

21 A. Yes, I am sponsoring Schedules SN-1 through SN-7, which were prepared under
22 my direct supervision and direction.

1 **Q. How were stakeholders identified?**

2 A. After the Project's proposed route and corresponding route alternatives were
3 developed, the Burns & McDonnell public involvement team created notification boundaries to
4 identify potentially affected parcels and landowners. For the Missouri portion of the Project, this
5 boundary was established 300 feet from all potential centerlines running through Barton and Jasper
6 counties. See Confidential Schedule SN-1 for a full list of potentially affected parcels and
7 corresponding landowners.

8 **Q. What contact did NEET Southwest have with elected officials in the Project**
9 **area?**

10 A. As part of the open house outreach efforts for the Project, Burns & McDonnell
11 notified county elected officials and local leaders with the same Project communications
12 distributed to landowners. The officials and leaders included county commissioners, public works
13 directors, county road commissioners, county coordinators, county clerks, county assessors, road
14 and bridge departments, and others. A full list of elected officials contacted can be found in
15 Schedule SN-2.

16 **Q. Describe the level of outreach and public communication involved in the**
17 **Project.**

18 A. The Project team used the communication tools detailed below to inform and
19 educate stakeholders in the affected communities in Missouri about the Project in a proactive
20 manner, making Project messaging readily available to interested parties across a variety of
21 channels and allowing for two-way communication between Project team members and public
22 stakeholders. In conjunction with NEET Southwest, the Burns & McDonnell public involvement

1 team helped develop Project messaging to communicate with the public. This messaging includes
2 Project specifics and industry best practices.

3 **Q. Were any other outreach tools established for the Project?**

4 A. Yes, NEET Southwest established a Project phone hotline, Project website, and
5 Project email inbox to inform and solicit feedback from stakeholders and the public. During the
6 initial phases of project outreach, Burns & McDonnell established and managed a Project hotline
7 with a local prefix (the hotline number is 620-205-2051). This hotline has allowed the Project team
8 to interact with landowners and community stakeholders and determine any prevalent questions
9 and concerns that the public may have. A Project email address (neetsw@nexteranenergy.com)
10 was also created and managed by NEET Southwest. The hotline and email address that were
11 established for the initial public outreach and open house process will remain in effect throughout
12 the Project's development and construction phases so that stakeholders can continue to provide
13 input and ask questions of the Project team.

14 A Project website was also developed by NEET Southwest
15 (www.nexteraenergytransmission.com/subsidiaries/neetsw/projects/wolf-creek-blackberry.html)
16 to provide important Project messaging and relevant materials to the public and landowners.
17 Along with the Project hotline and email address, a contact form was built into the website and
18 utilized the same approach regarding returning messages. All comments submitted to the website
19 are logged by the team and were included for consideration in the route refinement. The recording
20 of the virtual open houses, Project fact sheet, and other information have been added to the website
21 since the March open houses. This update allows landowners who were unable to attend the open
22 houses or wanted to revisit the presentation receive the same information. Schedule SN-3 contains

1 screenshots of the Project website along with copies of other materials available for download on
2 the site.

3 **Q. What communications has NEET Southwest received through these various**
4 **channels?**

5 A. As of May 5, 2022, there have been 18 messages left on the Project hotline and 15
6 emails received to the Project email account. All comments submitted to the website are logged
7 by the team and were included for consideration in the route refinement.

8 **Q. What alternatives to large in-person meetings did NEET Southwest implement**
9 **in order to engage the public?**

10 A. In lieu of large in-person meetings, NEET Southwest offered several alternatives,
11 which it determined to be safer given the status of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic during
12 the spring of 2022. NEET Southwest hosted two virtual open house meetings on March 22, 2022
13 (10:00-11:00 AM Central and 6:00-7:00 PM Central). As described previously, NEET Southwest
14 made Project information available on the Project website and maintained the Project hotline and
15 email address where landowners and other interested stakeholders could contact NEET Southwest
16 with questions. Recordings of both open house sessions were captured and later uploaded to the
17 Project website.

18 **Q. How was this process impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?**

19 A. Due to concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic and consideration for the health and
20 safety of the community and Project team members during the spring of 2022, NEET Southwest
21 elected to host virtual events in lieu of traditional, in-person open houses. The well-being of the
22 Project's communities has always been NEET Southwest's and Burns & McDonnell's highest

1 priority, and as such, it was necessary to forego large in-person meetings to ensure the safety of
2 public participants, NEET Southwest participants, and event staff.

3 **Q. Did NEET Southwest request a waiver of the regulation that requires meetings**
4 **to “be held in a building open to the public”?**

5 A. Although I am not an attorney, it is my understanding that that requirement only
6 applies if 25 or more people in a county are entitled to receive the notice of the application. In
7 Barton and Jasper counties, there are fewer than 25 people each that meet that threshold, so a
8 waiver was not needed.

9 **Q. How did NEET Southwest invite participation in the virtual open houses?**

10 A. As part of the communications process for the virtual open house events, Burns &
11 McDonnell identified relevant publications in each impacted county to publish full-color, quarter-
12 page advertisements announcing the upcoming virtual open houses and key information. Burns &
13 McDonnell, on behalf of NEET Southwest, published advertisements for the virtual events on
14 March 2 and March 3 in the *Lamar Democrat* (Barton County) and *The Joplin Globe* (Jasper
15 County), respectively. Each publication’s ad ran at least two weeks prior to the open houses to
16 allow ample opportunity and prior notice for interested individuals to attend. Identification of
17 these newspapers involved web research to identify the best publication for each county, and
18 ultimately was decided on by selecting the largest newspaper for its corresponding county to have
19 the greatest potential community reach. Scanned copies of the newspapers’ advertisements are in
20 Schedule SN-4.

21 In addition, Burns & McDonnell developed a mailing list for landowner notifications that
22 included both parcel situs and mailing addresses to better disseminate information to all
23 appropriate parties. The mailing lists were not only used during the virtual open house postcard

1 distribution, but also allowed the Project team, including land agents, to better identify and catalog
2 future communications with landowners. The full mailing distribution list can be found in
3 Confidential Schedule SN-1.

4 On Monday, February 28, 2022, Burns & McDonnell mailed postcard invitations for the
5 virtual open houses to landowners, residences, and businesses within 300 feet of the Proposed
6 Route centerline in Barton and Jasper counties. I have provided copies of the postcard that was
7 sent to landowners in Schedule SN-5. NEET Southwest also posted notice of the virtual open
8 houses to the Project website on February 15, 2022. NEET Southwest also notified Commission
9 Staff and the Office of Public Counsel of the virtual open houses. If individuals did not have a
10 reliable internet connection or were not comfortable participating online, the newspaper
11 advertisements and postcard invitations also provided options for participating in the open houses
12 by telephone. Recordings of both open house sessions were captured and later uploaded to the
13 Project website for landowners that could not attend. The postcards and newspapers ads also
14 provided NEET Southwest's contact information for any questions in advance of the meetings.

15 **Q. Please explain how NEET Southwest conducted the virtual open house**
16 **meetings.**

17 A. The intent of the virtual public open house was to provide potentially affected
18 landowners, business owners, and other stakeholders near the Proposed Route with an
19 understanding of the need for the Project and to provide a forum to voice their questions and
20 concerns. Under the direction of NEET Southwest, the Burns & McDonnell public involvement
21 team led the virtual public open house presentations via the Microsoft Teams platform. This
22 platform allows attendees to view presentation materials, hear from Project representatives, and
23 engage in a Question & Answer session using the platform's question dialogue portal. Attendees

1 were also given a “call-in only” feature, allowing those with limited internet access to participate
2 by listening throughout the event.

3 As I testified above, NEET Southwest, as coordinated by the Burns & McDonnell public
4 involvement team, hosted two virtual public events on Tuesday, March 22, 2022—one morning
5 session from 10:00-11:00 am CDT and one evening session from 6:00-7:00 pm CDT. During the
6 initial event planning process, the Project team decided that having two sessions at varying times
7 of day would better accommodate stakeholders’ schedules and encourage participation.

8 **Q. How many people participated in NEET Southwest’s virtual open houses?**

9 A. A total of 64 individuals, from Kansas and Missouri, joined the morning session,
10 with 51 individuals logged into the online meeting and an additional 13 people utilizing the call-
11 in only feature. The evening session had 61 total attendees, with 36 individuals logged into the
12 online meeting and an additional 25 on the call-in feature.

13 **Q. What information about the Project was presented at these open houses?**

14 A. During the virtual open house sessions, the NEET Southwest team included three
15 presenters, with representatives from Development and Engineering & Construction. Information
16 was presented on the following topics: Background on NEET; Background – Project Need; Wolf
17 Creek – Blackberry 345 kV Transmission Line Project; Project Benefits; Routing Considerations;
18 Engineering Design and Construction Activities; Right-Of-Way Easements; Anticipated Project
19 Schedule; Operations and Maintenance; Question and Answer (“Q&A”) Session. Along with the
20 three presenters, the Q&A sessions also featured four additional SMEs representing areas of Land,
21 Environmental, Operations, and Legal to provide better insight to landowners’ potential questions.
22 The open house presentation and transcripts from both sessions can be found in Schedule SN-6.

1 **Q. What level of participation did NEET Southwest see during the public open**
2 **house meetings?**

3 A. During these two sessions, participants submitted a total of 65 questions – 32 in the
4 morning session and 33 during the evening. NEET Southwest representatives responded to these
5 questions during the meeting sessions or by following up with meeting participants directly after
6 the meetings had concluded. A complete log with the questions received during each event, as
7 well as transcripts of both Q&A sessions, can be found in Schedule SN-7.

8 **Q. How has NEET Southwest used the information gathered at the public open**
9 **house meetings and through its website?**

10 A. Comments and information obtained during the open houses were evaluated by the
11 Project team and shared with the appropriate land agents to help formulate and deliver responses
12 to landowners. This content is being compiled in a manner that allows the Project team to assess
13 public opinion, determine if Project modifications are needed and appropriate, and select a final
14 route. As with all other comments and questions received through the Project communication
15 portals, this request was evaluated by the Project team. A follow-up meeting was held with the
16 landowner to fully understand the landowner's primary concerns and internal coordination to
17 finalize the route in this area is on-going.

18 **Q. Were any modifications to the Proposed Route made as a result of this public**
19 **feedback?**

20 A. Yes, NEET Southwest has refined the Proposed Route and modified the location of
21 54 different structures as a result of public feedback. To date, all requests received from
22 landowners have been related to the Kansas portion of the Project, and we have not received any
23 modification requests specific to Missouri.

1 **Q. Does this conclude your testimony?**

2 A. Yes, it does.

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

In the Matter of the Application of NextEra)
Energy Transmission Southwest, LLC for a)
Certificate of Public Convenience and)
Necessity to Construct, Install, Own, Operate,)
Maintain, and Otherwise Control and Manage) File No. EA-2022-0234
a 345 kV Transmission Line and associated)
facilities in Barton and Jasper Counties,)
Missouri)

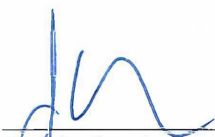
Affidavit of Sarah Curtis Nettels

1. My name is Sarah Curtis Nettels. I am a Staff Public Involvement Specialist at Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc. at 9450 Ward Parkway in Kansas City, Missouri 64114.

2. I have read the above and foregoing Direct Testimony and the statements contained therein are true and correct to the best of my information, knowledge, and belief.


3. I am authorized to make this statement on behalf of NextEra Energy Transmission Southwest, LLC.

4. Under penalty of perjury, I declare that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.



Sarah Curtis Nettels
Staff Public Involvement Specialist
Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc.

Date: 07/01/22


TAMI DANIEL
Notary Public-Notary Seal
STATE OF MISSOURI
Platte County
My Commission Expires Oct. 6, 2023
Commission # 15420517