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DEC 22 2016

Public Hearing – Monroe County
December 7, 2016

Missouri Public
Service Commission

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the commission. My name is Marilyn O'Bannon from Monroe County. My husband and I are landowners on the proposed Grain Belt Express route in Monroe County and I oppose the Grain Belt Express project.

It is difficult to express the connection one can have with farming the land. Perhaps, Paul Harvey described it best in his poem when he said, "God looked down on his planned paradise and said, I need a caretaker---So God Made A Farmer."

I grew up on a Century Farm, settled in 1873 by my great-grandfather. University of Missouri Extension recognizes family farms that have been in the same family for 100 years or more. My 86 year old father, third generation, is still on the farm. My sons will be the 5th generation, my grandsons, possibly the 6th generation. This is just one farm Grain Belt Express is proposing to cross. I am here representing five family members who own 11 different farms spanning about six miles on the proposed route. (picture showing the proposed line on century farm). The proposed line is approximately 600 ft. from this machine shed, very close to house.

Our family, like many others here today, consider ourselves good stewards of the land. The investment in our land goes beyond the price paid for it because of the sustainable farming practices used to maintain soil for its highest productivity. In a sustainable world, all land would serve its highest and best purpose. Sustainable practices do not include chopping up the property for a gigantic transmission line that may serve the renewable energy wants of people in states far away. Let the Eastern states find energy elsewhere, not taking farms that have been in families for generations and potentially more generations to follow. It does not seem like a wise decision to convert a century farm into a barren energy corridor to serve the temporary wants of others.

Our America has some of the most productive farmland in the world! Farmland gave our nation the foundation to grow and prosper over the centuries. I saw an alarming statistic from NRI (Natural Resources Institute) stating we lose nearly 40



acres of farmland every hour in the U.S. because of development, of course that is not all transmission lines.

I cannot accept the possibility of a private company trying to take away my landowner rights for property easements to destroy my land so they can achieve their business plan of making money. I have pictures of an electrical line update made on the century farm three years ago. Although not Grain Belt Express, I cannot expect any better treatment from an out-of-state company with foreign interests. We have seen a yield loss of 30 percent in and outside the easement area for the last three crop years. My family considers this a sacrifice to have reliable electricity for us and our neighbors, something Grain Belt will not provide. In fact, once concrete trucks pour up to 27 ft. under the proposed structures on Grain Belt easements, the land will suffer permanent damage.

My husband and I own a 140 acre, mostly tillable farm, Grain Belt is proposing to cross. We figure there is no compensation that could be equal to potential income and the soil production losses for our lifetime and generations to follow. There would be no future for other land uses on this property with a transmission line the size of Grain Belt Express. Basically, our investment costs for years of conservation practices and soil health will leave us with nothing but a lower land value.

There are 100,000 farms in Missouri, covering over 66 percent of the state's total land acreage. Farmers are progressive, utilizing the most up-to-date, cost effective methods and they rely on renewable resources such as taking care of the land to help **feed the world**. Missouri is rich in natural resources and agriculture is ranked high in most categories. In 2015 the Missouri Ag Industry contributed 15.2 billion dollars to Missouri's economy. If GBE approved, a precedent will be set and Missouri will be on a path to destroy its #1 industry. Are we going to compromise what so many landowners have sacrificed for to have a project like Grain Belt Express? I respectfully request the Public Service Commission to deny GBE-Clean Line's application.

Thank you for your time. Merry Christmas!