

February 17, 2009

Board Opposes Potomac-Appalachian Transmission Highline

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has unanimously approved a resolution opposing Allegheny Energy and American Electric Power's proposed Potomac-Appalachian Transmission Highline (PATH).

The proposed project calls for a single 765 kV transmission line from near Charleston, West Virginia, to an area southeast of Frederick, Maryland, a route which would include Loudoun County. The text of the resolution adopted Tuesday is as follows:

WHEREAS, Allegheny Energy (Allegheny) and American Electric Power (AEP) have proposed to build a 765-kV transmission line (PATH) through the States of West Virginia, Virginia and Maryland, beginning at a substation adjacent to the John E. Amos coal-fired power plant in Putnam County, West Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Loudoun County, in the Metropolitan Washington, DC area is located in a non-attainment area according to federal health standards for ground-level ozone and particulate matter (PM 2.5); and

WHEREAS, this proposal will result in increased emissions of greenhouse gases; and

WHEREAS, the need for the PATH proposal remains unexamined and unanalyzed by credible independent experts, as does a review of alternatives, including enhancing energy efficiency and savings, fostering demand-side management and renewable energy penetration in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, reliance on distant generation sources can reduce overall grid reliability, making Loudoun more vulnerable to cascading blackouts; and

WHEREAS, the alternatives of building energy efficiency, renewable technologies and local sources of electricity generation, i.e. backup generation at data centers offer significant reductions in peak power demands and improvements in security, reliability and efficiency in the power transmission grid; and

WHEREAS, a sensible national energy policy must foster an optimal mix of deliverable power from diverse and increasingly renewable sources so as to promote economical energy efficiency and sustainable economic and environmental practices that will benefit Loudoun County, Virginia, and the United States; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors have been elected to serve and protect the welfare and interests of the citizens of Loudoun County, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the PATH proposal would do great harm to the citizens of Loudoun County, particularly those who reside at the gateway to Loudoun County and the Town of Lovettsville, settled in 1732, because they highly value its historic and environmental resources, agriculture, rural economy, rural character, scenic view sheds, open space, tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, Loudoun has historically invested public fiscal resources in its agricultural lands through the implementation of Virginia's Use Value Taxation Program and local tax dollars in a Purchase Development Rights Program; and

WHEREAS, the routes proposed for PATH cross through and/or directly affect our communities, agricultural districts, forests and conserved open space land, inflicting economic damage on a wider group of citizens through adverse impact on the value of their properties, businesses and historic homes in the northern part of Loudoun County; and

WHEREAS, this proposal would impose water quality degradation for residents and livestock resulting from runoff of herbicides for cleared land needed to maintain the easements for the 765-kV transmission line and because of highly sensitive ground water aquifers and springs; and

WHEREAS, this proposal for a 765-kV transmission line raises public fears about health risks for residents from

electromagnetic fields; and

WHEREAS, Loudoun County has earnestly invested fiscal resources for energy conservation in its personnel structure, operations, and capital facilities buildings, establishing a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Certification standard developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) as its capital facilities standard and in 2008 winning first-place in the Virginia Municipal League's Green Government challenge; and

WHEREAS, this proposal ignores High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) underground transmission technology alternatives, does not examine the future economic, and technological improvements in such technology possible with a delayed transmission timetable; and

WHEREAS, no Environmental Impact Statement was required by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) prior to granting Allegheny and AEP a 14.3 percent annual rate of return on its investment in the construction of the PATH project, to be paid by electric customers in 13 states, including Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the procedures followed and information provided regarding the PATH proposal have not allowed sufficient public engagement or impartial analysis of impacts and alternatives to warrant Loudoun County's support for the proposal; and

WHEREAS, Loudoun County wishes to join Frederick County, Virginia and counties in West Virginia who have passed similar resolutions opposing the PATH;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors hereby opposes the construction of PATH anywhere inside the boundaries of Loudoun County until the completion of a federal programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, with full public review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970, addressing the need for power, alternatives to the PATH proposal, and all significant impacts on the human environment of the PATH proposal and its reasonable alternatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on today's date of February 17, 2009, a copy of this resolution will be permanently included in the official records of Loudoun County.

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