

Plainsandeastern

From: Laurie Smith <psy65270@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2015 4:49 PM
To: Plainsandeastern
Subject: Deny Abuse of Eminent Domain

One of the foremost reasons 'Clean Line' Energy Partners should not be granted eminent domain status under Section 1222 of the 2005 Energy Policy Act is that it is not in the best interest of mankind or our country. If 'Clean Line' were granted this authority to run their ill-conceived HVDC lines across thousands of private properties, what would distinguish America from Communist countries such as the People's Republic of China or the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea?

What has made the economy of the U.S.A. great, in the past, is that we have enjoyed the fruits of living in a capitalist society, wherein the sole function of government is to protect man's rights. The ruling principle of capitalism is justice, and there is no justice in allowing the taking of one man's property to prosper another. In fact, the ideology of achieving "the common good" is best served through a capitalist economy.

There are an incredible number of drawbacks, flaws, and impossible aspects to 'Clean Line's' proposed HVDC transmission lines. Eminent domain should be determined by the states and reserved only for truly necessary and beneficial enterprises and should further be based on a strong majority of consensus among landowners.

It is, quite frankly, a falsehood to say that there are no studies showing adverse health effects to these power lines. Other countries have banned such lines in inhabited areas due to the dangers. 'Clean Line' owners and employees would not have the lines crossing their own properties. Even if they believed there was no danger, they would not have the lines on their properties in light of the serious devaluation of real estate on or near power lines--nearly a one third diminution attributed to power lines as determined by independent appraisers in the area where 'Clean Line' president, Michael Skelly resides in Houston, TX. The drop in value was definitively determined to be due to power lines whereas there were no other factors that distinguished these properties from comparable real estate. This is one example of numerous studies. Numerous realtors and appraisers have stated that power lines are the number one deterrent to property sales, and many areas have seen even greater drops than Houston's 30.7%.

In a public promotional meeting, some of our near neighbors asked Mr. Skelly if he would want the towers or lines across his property. Skelly, standing with his attorney, declined to answer. It appears that some people are to be the sacrificial lambs for those who want to line their coffers with more cash.

The few proponents, who stand to gain from the line, are making ludicrous statements in the news such as, "The lines actually increase property value." Who in their right mind would choose a property because it had power lines on it? What would account for increased value: the ugliness, the obstruction, the noise, the dangers, the damages to the land? If the property values improve with power lines, why has HUD ruled the lines a hazard and a nuisance, and why has the FHA had to adjust appraisals to reflect the decline in marketability of properties with power lines?

Undergrounding, which should be done on public lands, is financially feasible, safer, less offensive, and has already been done in other countries as well as in the U.S. A high voltage transmission line runs through a public park in CA, providing electricity for Californians, hence determined to be for "the common good". Those bothered by the emission of continuous, irritating noise and those with health concerns can choose to stay out of the park--obviously not an option for people burdened with lines on or near their homesteads.

I refer to CA because they have transmission lines in place and other projects on-going. In June of 2013, an

administrative law judge analyzing a utility project in southern CA said undergrounding would be too costly. But Michael Peevey, then-president of the PUC offered an alternate proposal. Peevey said, "I know undergrounding costs more, but I believe in this instance the costs are manageable and relatively minor considering the overall well-being of the populace in doing so." The PUC approved Edison's Project to bring wind energy from Kern County to the L.A. basin (again--energy harnessed within the state for the state). The project was on hold for a number of years, as politicians and residents criticized the narrowness of the right of way, and the height of the towers.

This project had already been started and required some deconstruction. Senator Bob Huff, who represents the area stated, "Those 200 foot high and 60 feet wide towers were an abomination and an eyesore. They were a danger to the community, located within yards of residential backyards and communities where children and families live." There are homeowners in California who have had to walk away from prime real estate that they could not sell due to power lines.

There is absolutely no excuse for a land-grab to support 'Clean Line's' projects. There are many places where their proposed routes make no sense. There are points where 'Clean Line' projects senseless paths to run over private properties in order to preserve such things as public parks and golf courses. They've chosen Amish lands despite the fact that electricity is an affront to the Amish and a danger to their families and livelihood. Some counties in California have banned these type of lines near schools to protect children's health. It is highly discriminatory to deem a certain sect of the population or certain people's property less worthy of protection.

If the lines are truly needed, which has not even been remotely proven, and if the government wants to grant permission for the lines, they should be run on public property. For the common good, they should also be run underground for the numerous reasons cited by so many. This is not comparable to use of eminent domain for roads and railroads which serve the public, as this project is to serve a select few.

Thank you for your consideration and presumably for protecting the rights of the people.

Sincerely,

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"Not to speak is to speak, not to act is to act." --Dietrich Bonhoeffer