

## Missouri PSC Testimony Questions Economics of Grain Belt Express Project

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MO Farm Bureau, MO Cattlemen Association, MO Dairy Association, and Rockies Pipeline also file opposing testimony

Landowners turned out in a big way to oppose the Grain Belt Express ("GBE") project at eight public hearings held by the Missouri Public Service Commission across the state in recent weeks. Now testimony of staff experts, and other interveners, has been filed that calls into question much of Grain Belt's economic promises to Missouri. The PSC staff, who act as investigators in matters before the Commission, have filed mountains of paperwork.

Much of the testimony is quite negative about GBE. Most notably, staff expressed doubts about the promised economic "benefits" to Missouri. Staff testimony stated that the project could increase both transmission congestion and electricity costs for Missouri's electric consumers. They also spoke of the impact on jobs and taxes from displaced generation at existing plants, and/or closing of existing plants.

Additionally, staff reported that the Commission has thus far received 7,016 comments opposing the project, while only 60 comments of support were submitted.

Rockies Pipeline's testimony questioned the safety of setting GBE parallel to its pipeline. Rockies Pipeline's expert stated: "When an HVDC circuit(s) are located in proximity (within 1,000 feet or less) to an underground steel pipeline, both normal and abnormal operation of the HVDC circuit can compromise the operation and integrity of the pipeline system. When these threats are not properly mitigated, the HVDC line and its grounding system can cause pipeline operations to reduce operating efficiency by the reduction of operating pressure and delivery capacity, can necessitate costly and disruptive (to REX and landowners) repairs to the pipeline, and can even lead to pipeline rupture." Fifty-three percent of the chosen route is sited within 1 mile of a pipeline.

Missouri Farm Bureau President Blake Hurst testified, "It is a business venture that does not merit certification by the Mo PSC." He was backed up by former long-time Farm Bureau president Charlie Kruse, whose lengthy and compelling testimony demonstrated the impact this line would have on impacted farmers.

John Cauthorn, on behalf of the Missouri Cattlemen's Association (MCA) and the Missouri Dairy Association (MDA), testified: "Allowing a privately held company to magically operate as a public utility flies in the face of everything we stand for as a state and as a nation. Allowing this for-profit company to engage in a land grab in Missouri is blatantly wrong and sets a precedent for other privately owned companies to do the same thing. Where would it stop? How much land currently in agricultural production has to go away before we put an end to this? The concerns in rural America and within the cattle sector are real. We stand firmly in support of protecting our private property rights. If a landowner wants to enter into a partnership with this company or any other company, then that is their right. However, landowners should not be forced to give up their property. That is absurd."

The PSC will be hearing cross-examination of filed testimony and weighing evidence at its formal hearing on the matter in November. The Commission will likely make their decision on GBE's application after the first of next year. Group spokesperson, Jennifer Gatrel for Block Grain Belt stated, "We are so pleased by the depth of the testimony submitted. We are extremely hopeful that the Commission will carefully consider the evidentiary record before it and deny Grain Belt Express's application in favor of protecting landowner rights." Landowners have been fighting for over a year to protect their property rights from this out-of-state company seeking a grant of eminent domain status to construct its speculative, mega DC power line that would originate in Kansas and terminate in Indiana. The Missouri PSC is the state office that determines whether a not a company is granted a Certificate for Convenience and Necessity, and thus the right to condemn and take property through eminent domain. Over 2,000 people attended the recent public hearings, with the vast majority in opposition to the project. The fate of their property rights now rests with the attorneys and witnesses involved with the legal process, and ultimately with the decision of the Missouri Public Service Commission.

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