

**ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION**

**DOCKET NO. 12-0598**

**DIRECT TESTIMONY**

**OF**

**JULIE MILLER**

**VILLAGE OF MT. ZION**

**Submitted on Behalf**

**Of**

**The Coalition of Property Owners and Interested Parties in Piatt, Douglas, and Moultrie  
Counties (“PDM”), the Channon Family Trust, and the Village of Mt. Zion**

**November 13, 2013**

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1 Q. Would you identify the negative impacts faced by the Village associated with the  
2 proposed line and substation?

3 A. The proposed line and substation would be located on the south side of Sulphur Springs  
4 Road as that road approaches the Village from the west. The substation site is also on the south  
5 side of this road, and as a result, both would be within 100 feet of a developing subdivision on  
6 the southwest side of the Village. In addition, the Village made an investment of \$300,000 in a  
7 water main loop in this area specifically to provide water service to this growth area.

8 **INTERFERENCE WITH THE VILLAGE OF MT. ZION**

9 Q. Do the ATXI proposed facilities directly interfere with the Village?

10 A. Yes. Although the proposed line and substation do not traverse into the Village limits  
11 from the west, along Sulphur Springs Road, as the proposed route progresses to the east from the  
12 substation site, the line would pass directly through the Village. Direct interference arises from  
13 the fact that a long standing Village ordinance prohibits utility structures more than 50 feet in  
14 height. This ordinance has been observed by AIC and its predecessor (Illinois Power) in keeping  
15 with their franchise agreement with the Village.

16

17 Q. Do any other proposals result in similar interference?

18 A. Possibly. While the Village is not a party to the Stipulated Agreement between ATXI and  
19 MCPO, we are aware of the terms of that Agreement. This Agreement supports a Route which  
20 would include structures and rights of way within the Village that would be in violation of an  
21 ordinance as well as interfere with the water main loop. The Village of Mt. Zion opposes the  
22 ATXI and MCPO Stipulated Route to the extent that it impacts the Village of Mt. Zion.

23

24 Q. Would you describe how the subdivision would be impacted by the line and substation?

25 A. The Village has been contacted by the subdivision developer, as well as existing lot  
26 owners and homeowners in this subdivision. These parties have expressed fear that their  
27 investment would be placed at risk if high voltage structures and a substation were within sight  
28 of and in close proximity to their homes or home sites. These concerns are precisely the  
29 motivation for the Village to Intervene in this proceeding.

30

31 Q. Would you describe the investment in the water main you referred to and explain why the  
32 Village chose to build it?

1 A. Yes. First I feel it is necessary to explain why any development in the Village does not  
2 constitute growth in the greater Decatur area. If one were to examine population changes in the  
3 Village in the last 30 years, it can be observed that as population in the Village increased,  
4 population in Decatur/Macon County itself decreased to a greater extent. More specifically, the  
5 Census data reflects a population growth in Mt. Zion from 4,432 to 5,835 from 1980 to 2010. In  
6 the same time period from 1980 to 2010, the population of Macon County has declined from  
7 131,375 to 110,768. Likewise, the population of Decatur, Illinois has declined from 94,081 in  
8 1980 to 76,122 in 2010. We have researched these changes and have found that the majority of  
9 people moving into the Village during this time period moved from Decatur. This accounts for a  
10 displacement of some, but not all of the loss in population in Decatur. The water main was built  
11 in an effort to enhance and facilitate the economic development in that Mt. Zion region. Mt.  
12 Zion can only grow in this direction due to being landlocked by Decatur and Long Creek.

### 13 AREA ECONOMIC DETERIORATION

14 Q. Can you provide specific examples of economic deterioration in the Decatur area?

15 A. Yes. Generally, population in Decatur and Macon County has decreased since 1980.  
16 While the Village of Mt. Zion's population has grown, this is largely due to displaced residents  
17 from Decatur and only a small percentage of the residents leaving Decatur have moved to Mt.  
18 Zion. The rest have left Macon County completely as reflected in the Census data. The work  
19 force is aging and it is not being replaced as people retire. Many local businesses have left  
20 Decatur completely or downsized their Decatur operations in the past 30 years including, but not  
21 limited to, ADM, Tate & Lyle, Bridgestone/Firestone, PPG, Caterpillar, Borg Warner, Wayne  
22 Castings, Ameren, and most recently the ADM Global Headquarters. Furthermore, this does not  
23 include the small businesses that served these large industries and were forced to close.

24

25 Q. Can you point to similar observations by others to substantiate your conclusions?

26 A. Yes, in fact this support can be found in the record already established in this proceeding.  
27 I would refer you to the Direct Testimony of Paula Cooley. Ms. Cooley reaches the same  
28 conclusion I have reached, and her testimony has not been refuted by any party in this  
29 proceeding.

30

### WATER MAIN INVESTMENT

31 Q. Would you now like to describe the investment in the water main you mentioned earlier?

32 A. Yes. Village planning obviously was aware of the expansion to the south and southwest  
33 due to the displacement effect I describe above. The Village wanted to be proactive in having  
34 facilities for water service in the ground where we knew they would be needed. This water  
35 main is divided into 2 sections, Section 1 runs from the intersection of Karl Road and County

1 Highway 30 (Main St.) along Karl Road headed South to Sulpher Springs Road, then East to  
2 Traugher Road, then North to County Highway 30 (Main St.) then West on Highway 30 (Main  
3 St.). Section 2 runs from the intersection of Traugher Road and Sulpher Springs Road East on  
4 Sulpher Springs continuing East on Kraft Road to Henderson Road, then North to County  
5 Highway 30, then west on Highway 30 to Traugher Road.

6

7 Q. How close does the proposed line and substation get to this water main.

8 A. At the closest point, 100 feet. The water main and the line route would be literally across  
9 the road from one another.

10

11 Q. If growth in the southwest portion of the Village is stifled, how would the Village recover  
12 the cost of the water main.

13 A. The Village would not recover this investment and the unrecovered cost would simply be  
14 borne by the Village residents.

15

### **ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS**

16 Q. Are there any additional economic impacts on the Village other than the historical events  
17 you and Ms. Cooley have identified?

18 A. Yes. Very recently the Decatur area was made aware that ADM intends to relocate its  
19 world headquarters from its current home in Decatur. This is a concern to the Village because a  
20 number of these executives reside in Mt. Zion. These executives reside in homes that are at a  
21 value significantly greater than other homes in the Village. As a result, these homes, and the  
22 incomes of these executives provide higher than average benefits to the Village. These benefits  
23 include these higher wages being spent in the Mt. Zion community and higher than average  
24 property taxes. Our fear is that when these executives relocate, the Village will not see this level  
25 of revenue replaced. The homes will likely be on the market for an extended time, due to the  
26 poor economy and the fact that these executive's positions will not be replaced in the Decatur  
27 area. It is also likely that if these homes eventually sell, they will sell at a depressed market  
28 price. Thus, the Village will lose property tax revenue after the homes valuation declines as well  
29 as sales tax revenue from these individuals' spending power within the community.

30

### **INDUSTRIAL CUSTOMER TIES TO THE LOCATION OF SUBSTATION**

31 Q. ATXI has stated in testimony that it originally planned to locate its Mt. Zion substation  
32 next to an industrial customer. Do you have an opinion as to what customer this is?

1 A. Yes. We are very certain this customer is the PPG plant in Mt. Zion, the only industrial  
2 customer near the Village limits.

3

4 Q. Are you aware of any major changes at the PPG plant in the last 10 years?

5 A. There has been a strong effort by PPG to reduce jobs and close facilities as part of a cost-  
6 cutting effort started in 2009. The affect at the Mt. Zion location was to idle one of two float  
7 glass production lines with production on that remaining line being reduced.

8

9 Q. Does the Village have any information or has the Village formed any opinion of the  
10 Viability of this plant in the future?

11 A. We hope that it remains open, however it is currently a shell of its prior operations. We  
12 fear we may lose this plant in the near future similar to how Decatur has lost many businesses  
13 described in earlier testimony.