

Feb. 14, 2014

To: ICC Commissioners

Re: Case #12-0598

ILLINOIS  
COMMERCE COMMISSION

FEB 18 2014

Office of Chairman  
And Commissioners

### Strongly opposed to MCPO route

More than 100 years ago, my great-grandfather came to the United States from Germany to make a better life. He settled in east central Illinois, starting his farming operation in Douglas County. Through hard work, good stewardship and progressive farm practices, his sons and grandson (my father, A. Edward Suhl), developed the land into a productive farm that we've taken great pride in for many years.

My brother, Steven E. Suhl, and I worked alongside my dad as we grew up. My mother ran the household and did everything she could to support dad in good times and bad. The farm life isn't an easy one, but it's a good one, and I can't imagine growing up under any other circumstances. We were blessed.

It is not just sentiment that prompts me to write this letter. Sentiment doesn't seem to count for much when money is involved. But let me come to the point: As I considered all the facts, it's clear there is a rat in the corn crib. The question is: Will you pay attention to it or overlook it?

Examining the facts, any honest person can clearly recognize that business ethics have been violated in the MCPO proposal to run power lines through Piatt and Douglas counties.

Examining the facts, a reasonably intelligent person can clearly understand why the MCPO proposal to run power lines through Piatt and Douglas counties makes no economic sense and does great harm to the historic and cultural values of the area.

Examining the facts, it's clear that the MCPO proposal to run power lines through Piatt and Douglas counties disregards the impact to many to satisfy the few.

So here are the facts, and why, as a property owner in both Piatt and Douglas counties, I'm strongly opposed and outraged by the proposed MCPO route and process.

#### **Economic sense**

The PDM/CFT route is *significantly less expensive* and clearly outperforms the MCPO route on all the known factors relevant to the case.

The MCPO route is over 9 miles longer and would cost \$17 million more to construct than the PDM/CFT route, which represents more Illinois waste that will either be passed on to Illinois ratepayers and/or taxpayers.

The MCPO route would include 50 more towers and spans than the PDM/CFT route, thereby increasing maintenance and construction costs, environmental and visual impacts, damage to property and area property values, the chance for weather-related outages, and danger to the public. (The MCPO proposed route runs next to the widely used Tuscola airport, increasing the danger to local pilots and over 91 University of Illinois Flight School students who use the airport as a training site.)

### **Impact on family farms and towns**

The MCPO route affects 4 times – FOUR TIMES! – the number of family farms than the PDM/CFT route. The proposed MCPO route splits 103 family farms by placing massive towers and high-voltage lines through the middle of cultivated field after cultivated field for over 27 miles. In stark contrast, the PDM/CFT route reflects public input by attempting to follow roads, section lines, and property lines.

The MCPO route would place these massive towers and high-voltage lines unnecessarily close to multiple towns (within 1/4 to 1/2 mile in several cases), negatively impacting property values, community aesthetics, and future community growth and development.

The MCPO route negatively impacts 40% more cropland, more property owners, and far more communities than the PDM/CFT route, including Mt. Zion, LaPlace, Casner, Hammond, Pierson Station, Atwood, Tuscola, Camargo, Newman, and Oakland, among others.

### **Historic, cultural and ecosystems damaged**

The MCPO route would include six 90° zigzagging turns in just over 2 miles while crossing over US 36 and the Arthur Road into the Amish community. Running these massive, high-voltage towers and lines through the Amish community would be devastating to this unique, historic area and would forever mar the area's beautiful, rural sight lines, which annually draw visitors from around the globe.

The MCPO route not only runs directly across the historic Amish community, it crosses a registered Native American archaeological site.

The MCPO route would require the clearing of forest land along the Lake Fork, Kaskaskia, and Embarras Rivers, and would cross 19 more streams than the PDM/CFT route, causing even more damage to the ecosystem.

### **Business ethics and practices violated**

No public forums or public meetings have ever been held in connection with the MCPO route.

In stark contrast, the PDM/CFT route follows Ameren's original, properly vetted route, which Ameren spent *years* studying, reviewing, publicizing, and refining based on feedback from multiple public forums.

The MCPO route through Piatt and Douglas Counties was developed *in less than 3 weeks and submitted by only 6 Moultrie County property owners.*

Ameren has never developed, submitted, or proposed any route through Piatt and Douglas Counties, and Douglas and Piatt Counties *were not even included* in Ameren's formal petition to the ICC.

The PDM/CFT route aligns with the interests of every intervening party in this rehearing, except MCPO.

More than 500 individual interveners representing communities across the 70-plus mile MCPO route have formally added their names to the intervener petition opposing the MCPO route.

Those 500-plus interveners represent *more than 10 times* the number of people who support the MCPO route.

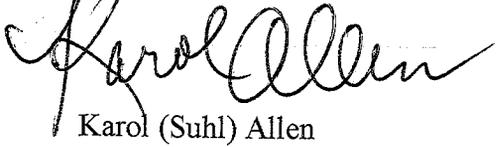
### **In conclusion**

I am particularly upset over the secretive, unethical, let's-ram-it-through-before-anybody-knows-what-is-happening behavior that has gone on in this reroute proposal process – and by some, the suggestion that people didn't really care about this MCPO proposed route. Well, we DO care for many reasons! I think the facts speak for themselves: The PDM/CFT route is significantly less expensive, fewer people are affected, less farm land devalued, fewer communities impacted, less harm to historic and cultural area values, and would pose less damage to the ecosystem.

So I call on the ICC to do its duty and follow the recommendation of its Administrative Law Judges.

Please **reject** the MCPO-proposed reroute through Piatt and Douglas counties and **support** the ICC's Proposed Second Order on Rehearing with recommendations for the PDM/CFT route, which comprises Ameren's original, carefully studied and properly vetted route.

Sincerely,



Karol (Suhl) Allen

Allen

*K*

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

14 FEB 2014 PM 5 L

3684 Lakeview Place  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

Doug Scott  
Illinois Commerce Commission  
527 E. Capitol Ave.  
Springfield, IL 62701

Re: Case #12-0598

62701198889

