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BEFORE THE  
ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

PUBLIC FORUM

GRAIN BELT EXPRESS CLEAN LINE, LLC ) DOCKET NO.  
 ) 15-0277  
Application for an Order Granting )  
Grain Belt Express Clean Line LLC a )  
Certificate of Public Convenience )  
and Necessity pursuant to Section )  
8-406.1 of the Public Utilities Act )  
to Construct, Operate and Maintain a )  
High Voltage Electric Service )  
Transmission Line and to Conduct a )  
Transmission Public Utility Business )  
in Connection Therewith and )  
Authorizing Grain Belt Express Clean )  
Line pursuant to Sections 8-503 and )  
8-406.1(i) of the Public Utilities )  
Act to Construct the High Voltage )  
Electric Transmission Line. )

Pittsfield, Illinois

Tuesday, July 28, 2015

Met, pursuant to notice, at 5:00 p.m.

BEFORE:

MS. JANIS VON QUALEN, Administrative Law Judge

By: Carla J. Boehl, Reporter  
CSR #084-002710

1 ALSO APPEARING FOR THE ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION:

2 COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Brien J. Sheahan

3 Commissioner John R. Rosales

4 STAFF

Mr. Gene Beyer, Public Utility Bureau Chief

5 Mr. Greg Rockrohr, Staff Electrical Engineer

Mr. Bob Gough, Senior Public Information Officer

6

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1 Thank you all for coming. My name is Jan Von Qualen.

2 I am an Administrative Law Judge at the Commission.

3 Can everyone hear me? No? I will

4 try. Let's see if I move this microphone around.

5 Does that help?

6 AUDIENCE: Yes.

7 JUDGE VON QUALEN: This is a public forum on  
8 Grain Belt Express Clean Line, LLC's, application for  
9 authority to construct a high voltage transmission  
10 line across Illinois. I am the Administrative Law  
11 Judge who is presiding over the formal proceeding at  
12 the Commission.

13 I also have in attendance today from  
14 Staff the Chairman of the Commerce Commission. This  
15 is Chairman Brien Sheahan. And I also have  
16 Commissioner John Rosales. They do not have speaking  
17 roles here tonight. They are here to listen to the  
18 comments so that they can take them under  
19 consideration when they make their decision. And  
20 they will not be present later when we have the  
21 question and the answer session. That will be a more  
22 informal portion of the meeting tonight, and they

1 will leave, and there will be -- we have the Public  
2 Utility Bureau Chief Gene Beyer here who will be able  
3 to answer questions and who will monitor that. And  
4 we also have an engineer, Greg Rockrohr, from the  
5 Staff of the Illinois Commerce Commission, as well as  
6 a number of people from Grain Belt are here.

7 Grain Belt filed a formal application  
8 with the Commission on April the 10th of this year to  
9 build a 600 kilovolt transmission line across  
10 Illinois. The Docket Number for that is on the green  
11 cards, if any of you got that. It's 15-0277, and you  
12 can look up what's going on in that proceeding by  
13 going on to the Illinois Commerce Commission website  
14 and looking up that number.

15 The case, the formal case, is ongoing.  
16 It's being conducted in Springfield. We have  
17 participating, of course, Grain Belt. Notice of the  
18 proceeding was sent to all landowners along the  
19 route. Some of the landowners are participating, as  
20 well as we have Staff participating and other  
21 interested parties.

22 Those parties have filed testimony,

1 and there will be an evidentiary hearing where there  
2 will be the opportunity for cross examination. After  
3 that, they will file briefs. And after the briefs, a  
4 Proposed Order will be issued by me making  
5 recommendations as to what decisions should be made  
6 in the case. Parties will have an opportunity to  
7 file exceptions to my recommendations, and after that  
8 the recommended Order will go to the Commission for  
9 their consideration. They will review the entire  
10 record and make a determination based on that.

11 Today we are here to receive your  
12 comments. We are not receiving testimony tonight; we  
13 are receiving comments. And I know a number of you  
14 have signed up to speak, and we will be very  
15 interested to hear your comments.

16 The first thing that's going to happen  
17 tonight is we have a representative from Grain Belt  
18 is going to give a short explanation of what is being  
19 requested and the proposed transmission line. After  
20 that, we will have the comment section which will be  
21 the opportunity for people to come up and make their  
22 comments. I will call on the people who have signed

1 up to speak in the order in which they have signed  
2 up. Each person will have three minutes to speak.  
3 There will only be one person on the floor at a time,  
4 and there are no questions and no comments while  
5 anyone is speaking.

6                   Everyone -- there is going to be  
7 different opinions expressed tonight. Everybody is  
8 not going to agree with everything everyone else  
9 says, but there will be no comments, and each person  
10 will have the opportunity to give their position or  
11 their opinion or make their comments.

12                   We also have here a court reporter who  
13 will take down all the comments. The comments will  
14 be transcribed, and those will be placed in the  
15 Commission's filing system on e-Docket, and the  
16 comments will be there, and the Commissioners will  
17 consider the comments when making their decision in  
18 this proceeding.

19                   You may also file comments directly  
20 onto the Commission's e-Docket system. To do that,  
21 you go to the Commission's web page which is  
22 [www.icc.illinois.gov](http://www.icc.illinois.gov), and you will see on there the

1 spot for comments. Hit that, put the Docket Number  
2 in, 15-0277, and it will show you how to place  
3 comments electronically. There is also a phone  
4 number that can be called for comments, and that is  
5 (800)524-0795.

6 After the comment period tonight, I  
7 will step away and Mr. Beyer will take the  
8 microphone. The Commissioners will leave. They will  
9 not be here during the question and answer portion of  
10 the meeting, and at that time the court reporter will  
11 cease to take notes. That will be an informal period  
12 of time when people can ask Grain Belt or the  
13 individuals from Commission Staff if you have  
14 specific questions about the project, the  
15 transmission line, whatever that you have.

16 So at this point I think it's time to  
17 call the first individual up.

18 MR. BEYER: Grain Belt.

19 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Oh, yes, Grain Belt. Let's  
20 not forget Grain Belt. Mr. Skelly.

21 MR. SKELLY: Thank you very much. My name is  
22 Michael Skelly, and I am the President of Clean Line

1 Energy. I want to start by thanking the Farm Bureau  
2 for hosting us this evening, and thank the  
3 Commissioners, Sheahan and Rosales -- Chairman  
4 Sheahan, for attending tonight's hearing, and also to  
5 thank the Staff for all the work that we know goes  
6 into a proceeding like this.

7 On a personal note, as was just  
8 expressed, we understand that there are varying  
9 opinions about a project like ours. We obviously  
10 believe that this is an important project for the  
11 country and for the state, and we will talk further  
12 about that. But also on a personal note, I want to  
13 say thank you for everybody who is attending, whether  
14 or not they agree with us or not.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. LAWLOR: Hi, I am Mark Lawlor. I am the  
17 Director of Development for Grain Belt Express Clean  
18 Line. I want to thank you all for coming out and  
19 providing your comments on this proposal to bring low  
20 cost energy to the state of Illinois, and I also want  
21 to thank the Chairman, Commissioner, and Judge Von  
22 Qualen for attending.

1                   Now, we take these public meetings  
2 very seriously, and we want to listen to and hear  
3 your questions about our project. Our staff is  
4 available to speak with you one-on-one. We can  
5 review the proposed route with you and address your  
6 individual parcel and concern.

7                   I'd like to take a couple minutes just  
8 to first talk about why we are developing the Grain  
9 Belt project, and then address some questions that  
10 we've heard about the project.

11                   Now, the Grain Belt Express Clean Line  
12 is a power line that will bring enough clean energy  
13 to Illinois and the region to power 1.6 million homes  
14 each year. We are developing the project in Illinois  
15 because Illinois consumers have a need for low cost  
16 clean energy. The Grain Belt Express will help to  
17 modernize the electricity grid, and wind power  
18 delivered by the transmission line will significantly  
19 increase the amount of renewable energy available in  
20 Illinois.

21                   All of this new, low cost energy  
22 delivered by the transmission line will increase

1 competition in the Illinois regional electricity  
2 markets, which will cause wholesale power prices to  
3 fall. In fact, we project that there will be a  
4 decrease in Illinois of \$750 million in the first  
5 five years of the project's operation alone, to the  
6 benefit of Illinois electricity consumers.

7 In addition to these advantages, local  
8 residents will also benefit from the \$700 million  
9 investment that Clean Line is bringing to the state.  
10 And as you may have seen in the newspaper last week,  
11 Clean Line will pay an estimated \$41 million to  
12 Illinois landowners and \$33 million to local services  
13 such as schools in central Illinois over the first 20  
14 years.

15 You can see these payments' breakdown  
16 in a county level on this poster board here. For  
17 example, Pike County will receive \$5.7 million in the  
18 first 20 years, and Pike County -- and the landowners  
19 of Pike County will also receive about \$7.3 million  
20 in those first 20 years. Additionally, construction  
21 of the project is expected to create 1500 jobs during  
22 the project's three-year construction period.

1                   We recognize that we are introducing  
2 new infrastructure. And any time there are new  
3 developments, there are questions. I will address  
4 some of the most common questions now.

5                   First, some people are unsure of how  
6 Illinois will receive power from the Grain Belt  
7 project. Illinois utilities and Illinois competitive  
8 retail electricity suppliers will be able to purchase  
9 power off the line. Even in areas where retail  
10 electric providers do not choose to directly purchase  
11 energy delivered by the project, Illinois consumers  
12 will still benefit from increased market competition  
13 the project will bring to the wholesale market in  
14 Illinois because it will reduce overall market prices  
15 of electricity.

16                   Another issue is that some folks have  
17 questions on the effect of construction on farmland.  
18 We worked really hard to develop the Grain Belt  
19 Express route in a way that minimizes impacts on  
20 existing land use. We want to thank the more than  
21 3,000 people at our 27 public meetings that we held  
22 to get feedback to help us identify the route with

1 the least amount of total impacts across the state.

2 Now, this poster shows the three types  
3 of structures we will be using in Illinois. These  
4 will also be in the back of the room. Clean Line is  
5 in agreement with the Illinois Department of  
6 Agriculture to using single foundation, monopole  
7 structures along straight, non-turning sections in  
8 agricultural land. In this agreement and in the  
9 easement, Clean Line is also committed to mitigating  
10 the potential impact of the construction of the power  
11 line, including the compaction of soil, repairing  
12 drainage tile, if needed. Additionally, we will  
13 compensate landowners for any crop or property damage  
14 that results from the construction or maintenance of  
15 the power line for as long as the damage exists.

16 Now, some are concerned that Clean  
17 Line will use eminent domain instead of negotiating  
18 with landowners. This is simply not true. The ICC  
19 has exclusive jurisdiction to grant the authority of  
20 eminent domain to public utilities. In our current  
21 proceeding we have not asked the Commission to grant  
22 us eminent domain authority. When the ICC is asked

1 by a utility to grant eminent domain authority, the  
2 ICC evaluates this question on a parcel by parcel  
3 basis, not on a project-wide basis, and grants such  
4 authority only in the event that the utility  
5 demonstrates that it has tried in good faith to reach  
6 voluntary agreement with landowners. Therefore, it  
7 is in our best interest to reach voluntary easement  
8 agreements with each and every landowner, and that is  
9 what we hope to do.

10 I would also like to note that some  
11 folks opposing the project have used the phrase "No  
12 eminent domain for private gain," and I would like to  
13 address that directly. The gain of the project will  
14 be a public gain, increased competition in the  
15 electric sector and lower prices. It is true that  
16 Clean Line is a private company, but so is Ameren,  
17 ComEd and the oil pipeline companies that regularly  
18 receive approvals as benefitting the public from the  
19 ICC. In fact, our company uses a shipper-funded  
20 business model, also called Merchant, which is  
21 identical to the business model of the pipelines that  
22 are regularly approval as benefitting the public.

1 Again, the public benefits from lower prices and more  
2 competition.

3 Another question that has arisen is  
4 about the Missouri Public Service Commission decision  
5 earlier this month. We have multiple options to  
6 pursue in obtaining the requisite approval in  
7 Missouri, including bringing in a new stay with the  
8 Commission. We remain committed to moving the  
9 project forward and believe the project is too  
10 important to Missouri's energy future and Illinois'  
11 future to not pursue. Grain Belt Express will  
12 deliver meaningful benefits to Illinois consumers,  
13 and we look forward to continuing our efforts to move  
14 the project forward.

15 And, finally, Clean Line will  
16 compensate landowners fairly for an easement on your  
17 property. We are not purchasing the land. We are  
18 merely seeking an easement that will allow us to  
19 construction and maintain the Grain Belt Express.  
20 This is the only thing we can do on the easement. We  
21 cannot sell the easement for another purpose.  
22 Farmers can still farm within the easement directly

1 up to the base of the structures.

2 Now, the next poster shows how we will  
3 compensate landowners for these easements. You may  
4 have seen it before. But, first, we will make a  
5 payment for the land within the easement area,  
6 typically, 150 to 200 foot wide. This will be 100  
7 percent of the market value based on sales in the  
8 county determined by an appraisal firm.

9 Secondly, we will provide payments for  
10 each of the structures on your land, and landowners  
11 will be able to choose from a one-time payment or  
12 annual payment with a two percent escalator. And,  
13 finally, as I previously said, we will also  
14 compensate for any damage that we may cause.

15 Again, thank you for participating in  
16 these hearings. We look forward to your questions at  
17 the end and talking with you individually as well.

18 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Is Jim Koeller here? Please  
19 step forward.

20 Sir, please state your name and spell  
21 it for the court reporter.

22 MR. KOELLER: My name is Jim Koeller, J-I-M

1 K-O-E-L-L-E-R. Today thank you for attending.

2 I would like to first point out that I  
3 am a fourth generation farmer. I farm on a family  
4 farm. We are in just a little bit of a unique  
5 situation because in our area both the proposed route  
6 and the alternate route both cut right through our  
7 farmland. I suppose I can say I dislike them  
8 equally. So, therefore, I am not so much about where  
9 to push the line. That doesn't do anybody any good,  
10 and it's just puts neighbor against neighbor.

11 I want to speak to you more about our  
12 farming techniques today. And we -- 20, 30 years ago  
13 we would not -- if we had had this meeting in the  
14 same forum, we wouldn't have had to -- we would have  
15 been trying to describe some things how it would  
16 interrupt our farming that has certainly changed.  
17 The use of airplanes and fungicide applications has  
18 become much more widespread now than it was. So that  
19 and the use of drone airplanes to scatter crops, the  
20 use of irrigation equipment that folds and unfolds  
21 was something we wouldn't have seen 20 years ago or  
22 wouldn't have known about.

1                   So, therefore, I see this as an  
2                   opportunity to -- I am concerned about the things we  
3                   don't even know today as to how we are going to be  
4                   farming down the road when this power line would  
5                   still exist. So, therefore, I don't think the impact  
6                   on agriculture is truly understood. I am very  
7                   frustrated that we try to miss a wetland with a  
8                   pipeline, and I see zero impact on a wetland. Yet,  
9                   we are willing to plow through our best farms.  
10                  Agriculture just does not get a fair shake at the  
11                  table on where we choose to put our power line.

12                   The width of our equipment is wider.  
13                  We have spray booms that are wide. Twenty years ago,  
14                  you know, we wouldn't have dared to have said how  
15                  wide they are today and where we need to get in and  
16                  get out. So it's not just about that width of that  
17                  easement. You know, we have -- it affects the ground  
18                  on each side as well, much more than just what the  
19                  easement is. I watched an airplane try to go up over  
20                  a power line last summer, summer of 2014. The spray  
21                  landed somewhere, but I am sure it wasn't on my farm.  
22                  But yet just the impacted easement is the only area

1 that's going to get any continuity of payment. So,  
2 therefore, it will be affecting a bigger area than  
3 just where the easement is.

4 And just in closing, I would just like  
5 to say that there is a lot of speculation of what  
6 good this power line is going to do. And I am not an  
7 electricity expert, I am not a power line expert, so  
8 I can't hardly go there, other than I see this  
9 speculation, I see this private entity that stands to  
10 make a tremendous amount of money, but yet our  
11 county, I am convinced, will never use any of this  
12 electricity.

13 So a lot of speculation on what this  
14 power line is going to do. I don't think agriculture  
15 would get a fair shake on the impact.

16 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Jim Burke.

17 MR. BURKE: Good afternoon. My name is Jim  
18 Burke, J-I-M B-U-R-K-E. I'm vice president with  
19 Hutchison Engineering Incorporated. I am a  
20 registered professional engineer here in the state of  
21 Illinois in the practice of engineering for 24 years.

22 I wanted to speak in support of the

1 Grain Belt Express Clean Line. Illinois is in  
2 desperate need of updating and expanding its current  
3 electrical grid that's somewhat out-of-date.  
4 Additionally, by enabling Illinois to access low cost  
5 wind energy, Grain Belt Express will be able to  
6 increase the amount of wind energy in our electricity  
7 mix. This expansion of the electric grid and  
8 addition of wind energy through new construction of  
9 this line will increase reliability and flexibility  
10 of the existing system while creating jobs,  
11 increasing land revenues and increasing the  
12 probability of lower electric cost to the consumers.

13 I would encourage you, the ICC, to  
14 please approve this important project.

15 Thank you.

16 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Larry Werries.

17 MR. WERRIES: Mr. Chairman, Members of the  
18 Commission, my name is Larry Werries, W-E-R-R-I-E-S.  
19 My wife, Becky, and I now live in Jacksonville,  
20 Illinois. During most of the decade of the 1980s, I  
21 was privileged to serve as the Director of the  
22 Illinois Department of Agriculture. I followed Jack

1 Block into that position as he had been appointed to  
2 be U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Governor Jim  
3 Thompson who appointed both of us to the Illinois  
4 position, to his credit, made his selection not  
5 because of the candidates' political connection but  
6 because of agriculture credentials.

7 I have attempted, with a mixed degree  
8 of success, to retire since then. For the past year  
9 and a half, I have been the project coordinator for  
10 the American Farmland Trusts, a non-profit based in  
11 Washington, D.C., dedicated to the preservation of  
12 U.S. farmland by the acre and by the inch. When I  
13 made the transition from the farm to the Ag office, a  
14 media rep labeled me as the slow-walking,  
15 easy-talking pork producer from Chapin. I never  
16 resisted that moniker. During my almost nine-year  
17 tenure, no one ever had cause to question for whom I  
18 spoke, and that was the Illinois farmer and the rest  
19 of the ag community.

20 As I left the corner office eight and  
21 a half years later for a position in USDA in  
22 Washington, my press secretary informed me that I had

1     been the longest, continuously serving director in  
2     the history of the department. The time lapse  
3     between 1989 when I left IDOA was graphically  
4     displayed to me a couple of years ago when I was  
5     asked to keynote the FFA banquet, awards banquet, in  
6     Jacksonville. I noted, glancing at the crowd, that  
7     not only were the awardees not born when I was in  
8     Springfield but most of their parents weren't either.

9                     I would not attempt to address the  
10    demonstration of need or lack thereof for the  
11    proposed transmission line. A Mr. Michael Sivertson  
12    (sp) more than adequately has told us that the wind  
13    farm and transmission line was a solution searching  
14    for a problem which doesn't exist. Coffee shop rumor  
15    is that wind farms were conceived by someone who had  
16    viewed the Alfred Hitchcock horror flick, "The  
17    Birds," and he devised a sinister plan to diminish  
18    the nation's bird population.

19                    I will speak only to the permanent  
20    loss of production capacity and outright  
21    inconvenience the transmission line would represent  
22    to farm owners from Pike to Clark County in Illinois.

1 When one chooses to be a farmer, there are a couple  
2 of facts of life you must learn to accept. One is  
3 you cannot control the weather, and the second one is  
4 that railroads, highways and electrical transmission  
5 lines do not follow property lines. More railroads  
6 are being abandoned than are being built, and highway  
7 construction has slowed to a trickle, leaving  
8 transmission lines to create the dreaded point raise.

9           The previous speaker noted the  
10 difficulty with the right equipment. My brother's  
11 planter is 60 feet wide. The sprayer is 120 feet  
12 wide. Negotiating around light poles is a real  
13 hardship. I called my brother the other day and  
14 asked him what would be his response if a similar  
15 transmission line were proposed through his farm. He  
16 said, "Give me a little time; I will call you back."  
17 When he did, I asked him about the delay. His  
18 response was, "In April I planted my 51st crop, and I  
19 was trying to think of something that could be worse  
20 for that period of time. I couldn't do it."

21           A "no" vote would be appreciated by  
22 the farm community from Pike County to Clark County,

1 Illinois, by me, the farmers and the birds.

2 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Paul Flynn.

3 MR. FLYNN: Thank you. My name is Paul Flynn,  
4 P-A-U-L F-L-Y-N-N. I am a representative with the  
5 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. I  
6 represent 17 counties, of which Pike County is one,  
7 and in Pike County I have 12 members, one of which is  
8 a first year apprentice from Pittsfield here.

9 But just not -- you know, the jobs  
10 created here, they are just not jobs. They are head  
11 of household jobs. They are jobs that pay a living  
12 wage that come with health insurance and benefits,  
13 something this country needs more of.

14 I have been a benefactor of being an  
15 electrical worker. It provided me a living wage to  
16 where my wife could stay home with our kids, and as a  
17 result, I have got three great kids grounded with  
18 Christian values, and we didn't have to work two and  
19 three jobs to make ends meet.

20 The other point I would like to make  
21 is I am LEED green associate, Leadership in  
22 Environmental and Energy Design. I spent a lot of

1 time studying wind power, solar power, alternatives  
2 to coal and nuclear, and that's something that this  
3 country -- is a direction we must go. I like clean  
4 air. I like clean water. I want to leave this  
5 country better than it's left to me. As someone who  
6 lives on the waterways and sees the pollution that  
7 was caused in the '60s, '70s and '80s, we have  
8 cleaned that up, and now the next step is to clean up  
9 our air.

10 Wind and solar is the way to go, and  
11 we have got to transmit it. You have to get the  
12 power from the windmills to the end user, and it's a  
13 future technology that we need to embrace. It's  
14 going to be here to stay. Coal is on its way out.  
15 If we are not going to clean up the coal, then we  
16 have got to go to wind energy, and I want to leave  
17 this environment in better shape than I found it.

18 Thank you.

19 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Ellis Craig.

20 MR. CRAIG: My name is Ellis Craig. It's  
21 E-L-L-I-S C R A I G. I am a farm owner -- well, not  
22 a farm owner, but I am a landowner down in New

1 Canton, Illinois, which is in Pike County. I don't  
2 bring great credentials here to impress you with, so  
3 that won't take most of my time. But I do have a  
4 manufacturing plant, and I understand business pretty  
5 well because I am in it. And I also understand what  
6 it's like to live on farm because I have lived on a  
7 farm all my life.

8           The thing that bothers me about the  
9 project is that, immediately when we were notified of  
10 it, there was an argument presented, and I want to  
11 change the structure of that argument. The argument  
12 was that, when we came, it was the decision on where  
13 we would put the line, and we weren't asked whether  
14 we should put the line, and we missed that whole  
15 discussion.

16           And the reason we missed that  
17 discussion is because Clean Energy is definitely --  
18 the Clean Line is definitely a moneymaking  
19 proposition. It's a private-held company. They are  
20 not doing it for free. Obviously, my business is not  
21 for free. I make walk-in coolers and freezers. I  
22 don't give them away. So I realize they want to make

1 money on it. That makes sense. They will probably  
2 sell it.

3 But the problem that bothers me is  
4 that we don't argue whether it should be built.  
5 These people that are talking today, they have skin  
6 in the game, and that skin is they have had these  
7 farms for long periods of time. Their great, great  
8 grandparents, some of them, have owned these farms,  
9 and we are talking about taking a line through them.

10 And I have one line through our  
11 property right now, and they took 150 feet. When  
12 they first came down and made this presentation, they  
13 were going to take another 150 feet or 200 feet  
14 beside the 150 feet. So now we are talking 250 feet  
15 to 300 feet.

16 So, you know, I saw the argument was  
17 not really considering us in any way. And what I am  
18 asking the Commission to do is let's have the  
19 argument whether it should be done. Because we are  
20 emotionally attached, and we have skin in this game,  
21 and we are not going to gain money. People here are  
22 not doing this for money, obviously. They would sell

1 their farms if they did because a farm is worth a lot  
2 of money. But they want to farm, and they want to  
3 live in it. We are just making it more complicated  
4 and harder for them to survive by sacrificing so a  
5 company, which I understand is wanting to make  
6 money -- and I don't think their number one concern  
7 is that they are going to help Illinois in energy.  
8 That's the way they are selling it, but technically  
9 they want to make money, and I understand that.

10                   What I am asking you to do is to take  
11 into consideration the people and the emotional  
12 attachment they have and the fact that it will  
13 decrease their property. It will make it harder for  
14 them to do their work and do their business. They  
15 are cutting through farm ground that's got beautiful  
16 tree growths that, if I could take you to, you would  
17 be impressed. But they will go through and cut 150  
18 feet out of it, and then they will spray it every  
19 year.

20                   Anyway, I would like you to figure  
21 that out, and I would like to ask the question, since  
22 their main point was to promote this line, has

1 anybody -- they probably didn't look at alternatives  
2 such as taking this power that's coming out of Kansas  
3 City -- or coming out of Kansas and moving it up  
4 into -- say, pick it up in Kansas City on existing  
5 lines, upgrading the existing lines that we have to  
6 handle that power. I don't know if anybody has  
7 looked. I've never heard anybody say anything about  
8 doing the study on that.

9 Okay, thank you.

10 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Rich Nowack.

11 MR. NOWACK: Thank you. My name is Richard  
12 Nowack, R-I-C-H-A-R-D N-O-W-A-C-K. I am here  
13 representing Quigg Engineering today. Quigg  
14 Engineering is a certified disadvantaged business  
15 enterprise located right here in the state of  
16 Illinois. We provide engineering and environmental  
17 services to the transportation industry and the  
18 utility industry.

19 Earlier in the spring the Grain Belt  
20 folks had a series of informational meetings where  
21 they reached out to small businesses across the  
22 corridor to talk about work opportunities with the

1 project. And basically as a result of those outreach  
2 meetings, Quigg Engineering is here today to support  
3 the Clean Line project. The reasons for that is they  
4 use firms like Quigg Engineering. We have to  
5 diversify our services to stay in business.

6                   Unfortunately, as some folks know,  
7 either at the federal level or the state level, if we  
8 don't have a transportation bill, we have to figure  
9 out a way to pay for our infrastructure, and so we  
10 support projects like this that will bring  
11 engineering jobs and construction jobs back to  
12 Illinois. We anticipate those jobs to include, like  
13 I said, engineering design, environmental compliance,  
14 land surveying, instruction, inspection and the like.  
15 All of these were presented to us by the Grain Belt  
16 folks at the outreach meetings.

17                   In addition, we also attended public  
18 information meetings that Grain Belt held throughout  
19 the corridor, because as a small firm we'd like to  
20 know who we might potentially do business with. And  
21 we heard about the project, the lines, the potential  
22 environmental impacts, the farming issues and that.

1 But based upon what we heard and our own  
2 experience -- I have over 40 years experience doing  
3 environmental impact analysis for many infrastructure  
4 improvements. Prior to working for Quigg, I was  
5 working at the Illinois Department of Transportation  
6 for 28 years, worked on the Central Illinois  
7 Expressway across the Illinois River, as a matter of  
8 fact. I was on the planning group for that. So  
9 based upon what we heard at those meetings and the  
10 construction of the infrastructure improvements, we  
11 do encourage the Commission to approve the Grain Belt  
12 Express Clean Line project.

13 Thank you.

14 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Kathy Schmidt.

15 MS. SCHMIDT: Thank you. Kathy Schmidt,  
16 K-A-T-H-Y S-C-H-M-I-D-T. I live in Macoupin County.  
17 I am not a politician, I am not a lawyer or a  
18 lobbyist. I am an ordinary citizen and landowner.  
19 Lots of times it seems as though the voices of  
20 ordinary citizens are not heard by the people in  
21 power who make the decisions.

22 In this case concerning Grain Belt

1 Express, it is the voice of us, the ordinary citizen  
2 and landowner, who deserve to be heard, and we are  
3 saying we do not want this. We don't want heavy  
4 equipment going into our fields, causing damage that  
5 could last for years. We don't want steel structures  
6 in the middle of our fields and pastures, forever  
7 ruining our country landscape. We don't want our  
8 beautiful trees chopped down to make way for the  
9 transmission lines. We don't want to have to worry  
10 about the health and wellbeing of our crop dusters as  
11 they spray our fields. When I get to look at a  
12 rainbow after a storm, I sure don't want to see those  
13 structures ruining the beauty of that rainbow.

14 Ever since I decided to speak out  
15 against the Grain Belt plan, I have had difficulty  
16 trying to put into words how I feel about the Grain  
17 Belt Express. I cite to myself what's the problem on  
18 what to say; just say what I felt from my heart,  
19 plain and simple.

20 I wondered how many people involved  
21 with this had ever actually talked with the  
22 landowners who will be directly affected by the Grain

1 Belt Express. My brother and I are two such  
2 landowners. We are on the primary route. The  
3 transmission line will go right through our fields  
4 and will be very close to my house. Needless to say,  
5 I have been extremely upset ever since receiving that  
6 first letter from Grain Belt. First of all, I  
7 couldn't believe something like this could happen to  
8 landowners. How could a private company come in and  
9 damage and destroy our land, our livelihood for what  
10 and for who?

11 The reasons are many and emotionally  
12 charged as to why I am extremely opposed to this. I  
13 live right next to Sugar Creek where we have an  
14 abundance of wildlife. Beautiful trees line the  
15 creek and provide a wonderful view. It is  
16 heartbreaking to even think of those trees being  
17 cleared for these transmission lines. I can't  
18 imagine the beautiful landscape I have enjoyed all of  
19 my life on the farm being destroyed by these hideous  
20 structures. Ever since I received that first letter  
21 from Grain Belt, I find myself looking out over the  
22 fields and landscape more than I ever did before. I

1 do that now because I realize I never should have  
2 taken it for granted, because one day someone would  
3 try to come and change everything we have come to  
4 hold dear in our life. Then and there I decided, no,  
5 you won't. You have no right.

6                   Three years ago I went through the  
7 fight of my life. I received a diagnosis of cancer.  
8 I battled it with everything I had. Chemo and  
9 radiation were pretty rough, to say the least, and  
10 thankfully I am in remission. As they say, once  
11 you've gone through such an ordeal as I have, it  
12 totally changes one's perspective on life itself. I  
13 found out how true this is. Life is a blessing to be  
14 treasured every day. Life is too short to have all  
15 of this unnecessary stress that Grain Belt has  
16 caused.

17                   The health risks associated with these  
18 transmission lines have me very concerned. I am  
19 healthy now, and I want to stay that way. My mom and  
20 dad are both deceased. Since they cannot be here, I  
21 am here to speak for them. They would be strongly  
22 and adamantly opposed to this Grain Belt plan. A

1 private company trying to take our valuable, precious  
2 land, our livelihood, is just plain wrong.

3 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Steve Merold.

4 MR. MEROLD: My name is Steve Merold, S-T-E-V-E  
5 M-E-R-O-L-D. I represent the IBEW International  
6 Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. I am here to  
7 support the Grain Belt Express. We need these job  
8 opportunities in central Illinois. The Grain Belt  
9 Express will create 1500 construction jobs, and these  
10 are good paying jobs, jobs that have provided for my  
11 family all of my life. And I just encourage the ICC  
12 to approve this important project.

13 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Mark Sleeman.

14 MR. SLEEMAN: I am Mark Sleeman, S-L-E-E-M-A-N.  
15 I thank this committee for letting me speak. I am  
16 opposed to the Grain Belt Express project. This  
17 transmission line will run only 150 yards from our  
18 home. I am very concerned about the health risk to  
19 my family. Grain Belt Express should not be allowed  
20 to put families at risk. This giant transmission  
21 line will be right out our front door. Nobody should  
22 have to live with that.

1 I hope the Commission will follow the  
2 laws and procedures of our state that were put in  
3 place to protect us from this type of company.

4 Thank you.

5 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Jim Bates.

6 MR. BATES: Thank you. My name is Jim Bates,  
7 J-I-M B-A-T-E-S. I am the business manager for the  
8 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local  
9 51 in Springfield, Illinois.

10 I really respect the fact that the  
11 opponents here have many issues, and they absolutely  
12 need to be heard. My reason for being here is, very  
13 simply, jobs that projects like this, and this one  
14 specifically, create for our members. We do this  
15 sort of work on a daily basis. We have approximately  
16 a thousand people who that's what they do. They are  
17 highly trained, very productive, very respectful to  
18 the landowners that they work under. And we are  
19 either building lines, transmission lines, we are  
20 maintaining them, we are rebuilding them virtually  
21 every day of the year. We do a great job of this.

22 These are excellent jobs. They are

1 some of the highest paying, if not the highest  
2 paying, jobs in the state. My reason for saying that  
3 is the money that these folks make, historically, is  
4 plowed back into these routes, either the communities  
5 or the businesses along these routes, because our  
6 construction people do not like to hang on to their  
7 money. I am telling you, these are the best  
8 consumers in the state. They love buying trucks.  
9 They love buying everything they can get their hands  
10 on, and they spend money.

11 I appreciate the fact that you folks  
12 have difficult decisions to make, and I know this one  
13 is not an easy one. But we respectfully ask for your  
14 support on this project going forward.

15 Thank you very much.

16 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Wayne Fisher.

17 MR. FISHER: Thank you for giving me a chance  
18 to talk. My name is Wayne Fisher, W-A-Y-N-E  
19 F-I-S-H-E-R. It's a tough one.

20 I am here as a fourth generation  
21 landowner. My great grandfather and grandfather  
22 farmed. We have one high voltage power line running

1 across our north 40 and this one would run across our  
2 south 40. The south 40 is important to my family  
3 because my sons and I deer hunt there, we four-wheel  
4 with our grand kids, my grand kids. We camp there,  
5 and these power lines would be within a few hundred  
6 feet of where we love to play.

7 My concern, one of which is the  
8 Illinois state statute 406.1 is, as I understand it,  
9 for expedited projects for public companies, not  
10 private companies. So this makes this process a  
11 legal land grab which takes farmland, private lands,  
12 and gives access to a private company.

13 Another concern I have is overall, not  
14 just the power lines that would cross our farm, but  
15 the windmills that stand still along I74 by  
16 Bloomington. I see them when I go to visit my  
17 mother-in-law. They sit there, and I know they are  
18 not make electricity every time I go by there. My  
19 concern is also that in Australia and Germany and  
20 other European countries, these wind farms which are  
21 20 years ahead of us are failing, and these windmills  
22 are blowing up, burning up, collapsing, and that's

1 what's going to happen to these in 20 years or so.  
2 And the money that goes into them and all this  
3 trouble that it's caused the private landowners will  
4 be in our laps. And the people that approve these  
5 projects will be looking very foolish.

6 I think an environmental impact study  
7 should be done to protect the landowners. I think  
8 the health concerns should be a concern. Yes, on the  
9 web you can find that some people have said high  
10 voltage power lines don't affect our health, but you  
11 can find just as many that say that it does. And  
12 there is too many cancers, too many birth defects,  
13 children with leukemia and so on, that are impacting  
14 people across this country. There is too many kids  
15 and people dying of cancer because of things like  
16 this. I could go on and on. Three minutes isn't  
17 near enough. I am sorry.

18 My sons and I have served this country  
19 in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Europe, and we would like  
20 the ICC to protect our home and our land.

21 Thank you.

22 JUDGE VON QUALEN: David Sayers.

1           MR. SAYERS: Hi, my name is David Sayers,  
2           S-A-Y-E-R-S. We own a family farm in Schuyler  
3           County. It's been there seven generations of  
4           farmers. I am an IBEW member from Local 51, and I am  
5           a lifetime Farm Bureau member.

6                        I hear what everybody is saying here  
7           today, and I am in kind of a precarious situation.  
8           The first line went across our property in 1960 with  
9           an easement with what was then CIPS. We have since  
10          signed a new easement with Ameren for a 345 line to  
11          go through our property. Out of everything that you  
12          guys feel, all the emotions, the farm ground, how we  
13          are going to farm around it, I struggle with that on  
14          both sides, being a member, seeing the infrastructure  
15          of the city and the state being downgraded. We need  
16          new infrastructure. The lines that we have, the  
17          138s, won't stand up to what needs to come through  
18          today.

19                       I also understand what need is most  
20          precious to everybody here, the soil that you've  
21          lived on all your life. My main concern was not  
22          money when I signed with Ameren. My main concern was

1 that the soil is left and not compacted and left tore  
2 up. I looked to the Farm Bureau. We took a  
3 suggested lawyer from the law firm that the Farm  
4 Bureau suggested to us. Myself and farmers up and  
5 down the line, got paid to line, we all stuck  
6 together, got one law firm.

7 The most important thing was we got  
8 our easement rights the way we wanted them. Soil was  
9 left the way we wanted it. The impact upon our  
10 ground was going to be minimal at most. We planted  
11 our crops around it. I know we had -- we went from  
12 4-row planters since I was a kid, 16-row planters,  
13 bigger sprayers.

14 I know that it is very, very hard.  
15 It's very emotional for everybody. But the most  
16 important thing you need to do is communicate with  
17 your neighbors and with the company. And if the ICC  
18 does grant the line, you need to get your -- come  
19 together as a community, and everybody get what's  
20 best for your property.

21 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Jeremy Thomas.

22 MR. THOMAS: My name is Jeremy Thomas, spelled

1 J-E-R-E-M-Y T-H-O-M-A-S. Thank you for coming  
2 tonight. I just wanted to speak.

3 I am also a local farmer. I live  
4 right south of Pittsfield here. My family has farmed  
5 for several generations. Jim spoke earlier about the  
6 effects of the farming, and I was going to speak on  
7 that maybe a little bit, but he did pretty good.

8 This was a year that, you know, with  
9 the rain and the conditions we've had, we flew a lot  
10 of soybeans on in the county by airplane, and also  
11 airplanes spray fungicide. And like Jim said  
12 earlier, you know, maybe 20 years ago, you know, our  
13 farming practices wouldn't have had a lot of effect  
14 on a project like this. But these days and going  
15 forward there is a lot of things that we are going to  
16 start doing with airplanes, and more so than we have  
17 in the past. So having these lines to fly around,  
18 and not only fly around with airplanes but irrigation  
19 and other farming practices, it's just going to be a  
20 huge challenge. Like Jim said, when they have to fly  
21 so high, the spray might end up in your neighbor's  
22 farm or four miles down the road.

1                   Another thing is part of this goes  
2 through our farm. A lot goes through several farms  
3 that we farm. But I guess another comment, that as I  
4 watch some of these people speak here tonight, the  
5 supporters for this, they are not our friends and  
6 family from the area. They are people from outside  
7 the area or people that it benefits. The people that  
8 live under this and have to deal with this everyday  
9 ought to have the most impact and the say from this.  
10 The supporters that have spoken tonight, a lot of  
11 them benefit from this project, but we are the ones  
12 that are going to have to live with it long term.

13                   You know, other than health effects  
14 and everything, I don't know, I am not smart enough  
15 to know health, you know, what the health benefits or  
16 effects are going to be from it, but it's going to  
17 affect us forever. And it's not just me, but my kids  
18 and my grand kids. And I just hope you oppose this  
19 project.

20                   JUDGE VON QUALEN: Don Gourley.

21                   MR. GOURLEY: My name is Don Gourley spelled  
22 D-O-N G-O-U-R-L-E-Y. I am a Scott County landowner,

1 sixth generation farmer, and I rise in support of  
2 Clean Line. I will say that, while we are powering  
3 our homes and farmsteads with firewood, coal, natural  
4 gas and solar, etcetera, the wind is blowing across  
5 Kansas, so why not use utilize it. As the song says,  
6 the answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind. With  
7 that I give back my time.

8 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Andy Reid.

9 MR. REID: My name is Andy Reid, A-N-D-Y  
10 R-E-I-D. I appreciate you giving us the opportunity  
11 to speak here tonight.

12 I am a son of a small landowner in  
13 Greene County, Rodney Reid. He bought the farm in  
14 1974 and has farmed it his whole adult life. We are  
15 on the proposed route in Greene County. The first  
16 route is going to cut the usable property completely  
17 in half where a guy couldn't do anything on his own  
18 place. Now it's on the northern half. I'd like to  
19 put a house out there at some point, and I think it  
20 ought to be the property owner's ability to do with  
21 what he wants to do, not some company in Texas to say  
22 we are going to come in and take and do what we want

1 to do, and you've got to live with it.

2 We have got a son that will be  
3 inheriting this farm one, so it will be a third  
4 generation farm at some point. And I think as far as  
5 wind and solar go, it's a great thing. But you don't  
6 have to rely on somebody to bring it to you. Build  
7 your own solar panels, look in to building small wind  
8 turbines for yourself. Be self-sufficient. That is  
9 the legacy of the farmer.

10 The Ellis gentleman back here said why  
11 not fix what we have. That's what farmers do  
12 everyday. They don't throw nothing away. They  
13 rebuild what they have, and they make it work, and  
14 that's what we should do with our infrastructure,  
15 too.

16 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Christy Perry.

17 MS. PERRY: Hi there, Christy Perry,  
18 C-H-R-I-S-T-Y P-E-R-R-Y. I'm here to fully support  
19 the Grain Belt project purely from an Illinois job  
20 standpoint.

21 I come from an exceptionally small  
22 town in Illinois. My dad has been a concrete truck

1 driver for 30 years. I've benefitted from  
2 infrastructure projects from lock and dams, highways,  
3 that sort of thing. I am the first in my immediate  
4 family to go to college and only because my dad has  
5 been able to work an excellent paying teamster job  
6 that I am sure everybody can relate to.

7 So I am here to support this fully,  
8 and I hope that you will as well.

9 Thank you.

10 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Rodney Reid.

11 MR. REID: Yeah, my name is Rodney Reid,  
12 R-E-I-D.

13 And this proposed route is supposedly  
14 going right through where my front yard would be, and  
15 I don't feel that I should have to live near this  
16 electro magnet thing or my grand kid. And as far as  
17 what they've brought up, I've been a carpenter for 45  
18 years, and we didn't go and take the ground away from  
19 people for our own benefit for somebody else. I'm  
20 sorry, but I don't feel this is right. I bought this  
21 farm twice. I went through a divorce, and I feel  
22 that it should be mine to do as I want.

1 Thank you.

2 JUDGE VON QUALEN: John Czaizki.

3 MR. CZAIZKI: Thank you. I am here in support  
4 of the Clean Belt Energy Line. I am born and raised  
5 in Illinois.

6 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Sir, please spell your name.

7 MR. CZAIZKI: I'm sorry. I will have to spell  
8 it because it's not like Mr. Fisher's, pretty easy.  
9 J-O-H-N C-Z-A-I-Z-K-I. Anyway, a good Polish name.

10 Born and raised in Illinois. I am a  
11 vice president for Power Electric responsible for all  
12 the work in Illinois and eastern Missouri. I use a  
13 lot of the folks that the IBEW provides for us. We  
14 are signatory to the union. We provide some very  
15 high paid, well-benefit compensated jobs.

16 There is always going to be a need for  
17 linemen, and these projects help us develop  
18 apprentices, help the union develop apprentices.  
19 Whenever there is a storm, you folks are out of  
20 power, I know you are farmers and you are very  
21 self-reliant, and I applaud that. I applaud  
22 everybody that showed up tonight. I tip my hat to

1 everybody that took the time to stand up and speak.

2 But I am in favor of it for the reason  
3 of developing young apprentices, making more  
4 journeymen and creating good, well-paying jobs. So I  
5 wish the Commission would support the project.

6 Thank you.

7 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Noel Huks. Noel Huks. It  
8 looks like H-U-K-S.

9 Steven Hicks.

10 MR. HICKS: I'm Steve Hicks, H-I-C-K-S, and I'm  
11 from a fifth generation farmer from northern  
12 Macoupin, northern Greene County, and I am also  
13 representing my sister who has the farm this Clean  
14 Line may go through, that's in Seattle, Washington,  
15 so, of course, she can't be here.

16 I cannot speak as eloquently as some  
17 of the other folks there, but most of the things with  
18 the other farmers, I agree with them concerning the  
19 airplanes and so on. The only other thing I want to  
20 mention that has been made in our area is we have got  
21 bald eagles that are in the area nesting. I guess  
22 they are supposed to go somewhere else when this line

1 comes through.

2 To represent my family, I want to say  
3 I am opposed to the Clean Grain Line, and that's all  
4 I am going to say right now.

5 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Terri Treacy.

6 MS. TREACY: Good afternoon. Thank you for  
7 this opportunity. My name is Terri Treacy, T-E-R-R-I  
8 T-R-E-A-C-Y. I am a Springfield rep for the Illinois  
9 Chapter of the Sierra Club. We are an environmental  
10 organization with about 20,000 members throughout the  
11 state of Illinois.

12 The Illinois Chapter of the Sierra  
13 Club recognizes the urgent need to bring more  
14 renewable energy, including wind generated power, to  
15 Illinois and other markets. As a previous speaker  
16 has said, we also hope that the ICC carefully  
17 considers the local landowners' concerns. However,  
18 our primary concern is to reduce -- is for Illinois  
19 to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and nuclear  
20 power, and we believe that the Clean Line's request  
21 for a Certificate of Public Conveyance and Necessity  
22 will help Illinois achieve that. The state and its

1 citizens will benefit greatly from another clean  
2 energy source being delivered to Illinois.

3                   The Illinois Chapter of the Sierra  
4 Club also recognizes the impact a power line may have  
5 on natural areas and wildlife along its route, and  
6 urges Clean Line and its contractors to take all  
7 available steps to protect such resources in routing,  
8 constructing and operating the proposed Grain Belt  
9 Express transmission line. These particular natural  
10 resources in or near the project corridor requires  
11 special attention to avoid any unnecessary damage or  
12 disruption, such as Hidden Springs State Forest in  
13 Shelby County, potential eagle nesting and/or  
14 roosting areas along the Mississippi River in Pike  
15 County, and wherever that previous gentleman lives,  
16 we need to make sure we are looking at those eagles.

17                   We also recommend that Clean Line  
18 avoid dedicated nature preserves and avoid harm to  
19 Illinois natural areas' inventory sites and federal  
20 or state endangered or threatened species. To the  
21 extent impacts to important natural features and  
22 wildlife are unavoidable, take steps during

1 construction to minimize the impact on these  
2 resources. We must responsibly mitigate potential  
3 impact to these natural resources, operate and  
4 maintain the line in order to maximize the corridor's  
5 value and benefit to wildlife and biodiversity. Site  
6 construct and operate the Grain Belt Express in  
7 accordance with recommendations made by the Illinois  
8 Department of Natural Resources and any other natural  
9 resource agencies. Our wildlife natural areas and  
10 natural heritage are greatly threatened by our  
11 dependence on conventional power sources, and we  
12 recognize the urgent need to move to renewable energy  
13 sources.

14 The Illinois Chapter of the Sierra  
15 Club offers its support for the proposed Grain Belt  
16 Express Line subject to the conditions stated above  
17 for Illinois and for our nation.

18 Thank you.

19 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Mike Reed.

20 MR. REED: Mike Reed, M-I-K-E R-E-E-D. Thank  
21 you for scheduling the hearing today so that we might  
22 all share our views on this project.

1                   I am the superintendent/treasurer of  
2     the Sny Island Levee Drainage District for their  
3     headquarters in New Canton, Illinois. Sny Island  
4     runs from southern Adams County at Hadley Creek,  
5     south through all of Pike County, to our southern  
6     border Wildcat Hollow in Calhoun County. We  
7     encompass about 114,000 acres, most of which is in  
8     Pike County. This acreage is owned by more than 700  
9     landowners.

10                   The preferred route selected by Clean  
11    Line Energy Partners impacts several drainage  
12    district facilities including our Main Stem  
13    Mississippi River levee, the Hadley, McCraney and  
14    Kiser Creek diversion channels, the Sny channel  
15    itself as well as several of the Sny's designated  
16    district ditches.

17                   Representatives from our drainage  
18    district have had the opportunity to attend all of  
19    the meetings held in Pike County scheduled by Clean  
20    Line Energy Partners outlining the details of this  
21    project, including the routing. We have also heard  
22    input from our landowners impacted by the route being

1 taken by these transmission lines.

2 Our drainage district and, thus, our  
3 landowners have come under ever increasing pressures  
4 from numerous federal agencies, especially in the  
5 past few years, in an effort to comply with a myriad  
6 of federal regulations that mandate how our drainage  
7 district is to operate. Failure to comply with these  
8 regulations threatens our very existence, and our  
9 drainage district and our landowners are not one  
10 without the other. It is our landowners who have had  
11 to shoulder this ever increasing financial and  
12 regulatory burden just to survive.

13 From the comments that my  
14 commissioners and I have heard from our landowners,  
15 this project provides yet another burden in their  
16 efforts to maintain a successful farming operation.  
17 For this reason, the Sny Island Drainage District  
18 voted at its July 15, 2015, meeting to oppose the  
19 Grain Belt Express project relative to its  
20 Certificate of Public Conveyance and Necessity and  
21 granting Grain Belt the power of eminent domain. As  
22 a result of that motion, a letter stating such

1 opposition was mailed to your Commission, and we are  
2 here tonight to reiterate our feeling that we are  
3 opposed to this project.

4 I thank you for the opportunity.

5 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Keith Staats.

6 MR. STAATS: My name is Keith Staats, K-E-I-T-H  
7 S-T-A-A-T-S. I am here as a representative of the  
8 Illinois Chamber of Commerce. I am here today to  
9 testify in support of the Grain Belt Express Clean  
10 Line project.

11 Clean Line Energy is proposing to  
12 invest \$700 million in Illinois. Illinois  
13 businesses, including those involved in providing  
14 services, products and materials to construct the  
15 power line as well as ancillary service and  
16 hospitality businesses, will benefit from this  
17 project.

18 The construction of the power line  
19 will result in many good paying jobs in the state.  
20 According to the application filed with the  
21 Commission by Grain Belt Express Clean Line, the  
22 project is estimated to create about 1500

1 construction jobs per year during the life of the  
2 construction project, and that will result in  
3 increased income tax revenues to the state in excess  
4 of \$2 million per year. Grain Belt Express Clean  
5 Line estimates that additional sales tax revenues in  
6 excess of \$3 million per year will be generated  
7 during the three-year construction period.

8           The construction of the power line  
9 will also result in permanent jobs, and those jobs  
10 are going to continue to result in additional tax  
11 revenues. Additional property tax revenues will be  
12 generated during the life of the transmission line,  
13 and those additional property tax dollars will flow  
14 to local governments, governmental taxing bodies and  
15 will be available for the support of local schools  
16 and roads, and as well the statutory portion of the  
17 income tax and sales taxes that are generated by the  
18 project.

19           We urge the Illinois Commerce  
20 Commission to approve this necessary infrastructure  
21 project.

22           JUDGE VON QUALEN: Bonnie Mueller.

1 MS. MUELLER: Thank you. Bonnie Mueller,

2 B-O-N-N-I-E M-U-E-L-L-E-R.

3 This is going to be a challenge for me  
4 to get through with my comments. We here all have  
5 listened to economical concerns, our health concerns,  
6 environmental impact concerns. My question for you  
7 is to consider why. Why would you ever consider  
8 hiring a rooky, inexperienced company to build a  
9 structure such as the Grain Belt Line? Members of  
10 the ICC, I pose this question to you directly. How  
11 is it that you have come to hold your positions and  
12 have the expertise to make or sort through the many,  
13 many dimensions of gathering and assessing the needs  
14 of this project?

15 I am not here to make you dislike me  
16 at all, but this is my concern. I am sure you have  
17 received this honor in protecting the citizens of  
18 Illinois. Think about this for a moment. If I was  
19 going to hire you for this job, I would be looking at  
20 your past work experiences and resume's. I am sure  
21 every one of you would say you have earned all the  
22 battle scars leading to your sitting here in this

1 room today. And you know what, most of us that have  
2 worked hard to be where we are today understand that.

3 In fact, this brings me to a plaque of  
4 a little farm in Greene County owned by the late  
5 Wilson Hoots and Maurine Hoots which is my mother and  
6 father. Mom is here today along with my sister and  
7 my husband. We love our farm, but it didn't come  
8 easy.

9 How is it that it came to be? My dad  
10 was one of 15 children. His mother died when he was  
11 nine years old. When he was 11, his father died. He  
12 was passed around from older siblings to another to  
13 try to be raised. At age 16 -- and those years were  
14 hard. Those were hard years for him. At age 16 my  
15 dad quit school because he was tired of kids making  
16 fun of him because he was too poor to have good  
17 shoes, and he had nothing but holey shoes. My dad  
18 quit school, but he worked, worked, worked. He made  
19 something of himself and bought our farm, our family  
20 farm.

21 The first year is drought; what has  
22 mom and dad gotten themselves into. Many more years

1 of ups and downs had to be done and made by my sister  
2 and I. We love our family farm, and I am here today  
3 to honor my dad and mom's for the love and  
4 determination and sacrifices they made to pass on to  
5 us, my sister and I, my grandchildren and great  
6 grandchildren to come.

7 Today we are all here because of  
8 eminent domain. Grain Belt is asking us to play ball  
9 with them, and the rules may be fair or may not be.  
10 But we are not like other businesses where a doctor  
11 or a beauty shop can relocate our businesses in case  
12 a power line want to come through. We can't pick up  
13 our dirt and move.

14 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Andy Borrowman.

15 Darren Forgy.

16 MR. FORGY: Thank you. My name is Darren  
17 Forgy, D-A-R-R-E-N, Forgy, F-O-R-G-Y. I was raised  
18 here in Pike County. I have lived in central  
19 Illinois my entire life. One of these lines goes  
20 through my family farm that's here in Pike County,  
21 but I do rise in support of Grain Belt Express Clean  
22 Line Energy project.

1                   In addition to the construction jobs  
2           that you have heard about, this project will create  
3           surveying, engineering and land acquisition jobs  
4           which are important to my company, Prairie Engineers  
5           of Illinois. I encourage you to approve the Grain  
6           Belt Energy Clean Line project. That's all I have to  
7           say.

8                   Thank you.

9                   JUDGE VON QUALEN: Ron Hoskin.

10                  MR. HOSKIN: My name is Ron Hoskin, R-O-N  
11           H-O-S-K-I-N. I am a seventh generation Pike County  
12           farmer. The proposed line is going through property  
13           that we've actually owned, me or my direct ancestors  
14           for that seven generations. I've taken care of it.  
15           They took care of it. It's a little bit emotional  
16           for me, but that's to be understood.

17                   What I want -- I have a few points  
18           that I want to make, the first of which is the line  
19           is going through, directly through, the middle of my  
20           farm. And I went to the hearings -- or to the  
21           meetings. I suggested to them I don't want the line  
22           but if you want to put it on the edge of the farm, I

1 will cooperate. I have sisters who are neighboring  
2 landowners. They agreed to cooperate. In order to  
3 get it out of my farm, they would agree to run it  
4 down the side of theirs as well. That was met  
5 with -- with negative. So instead of going on the  
6 edge, they are going through the middle.

7                   And the point I want to make is it  
8 completely changes the character of the farm. It's  
9 pristine timber. It's a hunting recreational farm  
10 with farming attributes to it, a typical Pike County  
11 home farm. It will completely change the character  
12 of the farm. Much -- it's not about money, but the  
13 idea of buying an easement, a 150-foot easement,  
14 through the middle of a pristine farm is a little bit  
15 ridiculous.

16                   But that being said, I'd like to point  
17 out that I think if -- I don't know Sierra Club  
18 members. What I know about Sierra Club, I suspicion  
19 if their members saw my farm, they would probably  
20 wonder why their club was supporting ripping out the  
21 middle of it.

22                   I've got a lot of union members that

1 are friends. I think the union members that I know,  
2 they realize the benefit to them, but they would  
3 realize the damage that's being done is much more  
4 than what the benefit to them would be. I think if  
5 they spent some time with me, saw what was going to  
6 be done, that they probably wouldn't support it,  
7 either.

8 Also, I want to make the point that  
9 the process itself is not fair. Grain Belt had as  
10 long as it wanted to take, and obviously what appears  
11 to be an unlimited amount of money to prepare to come  
12 before the Commission. We had a very short amount of  
13 time. Obviously, our money is a little bit limited.  
14 We could pool our money, we could pool our resources,  
15 we could all get together and put together -- put up  
16 a contest, but think about the time that takes. That  
17 is very difficult to do at all, let alone in the  
18 expedited time that we have.

19 And I ask the Commission that when you  
20 consider this, take into account that we did not have  
21 the time to put up a contest. The unions have  
22 spoken, the folks that support the dollars that may

1     come in have spoken. The big issue is, is it going  
2     to work. We do not have a chance to challenge that  
3     because we don't have the time.

4                     Thank you.

5             JUDGE VON QUALEN: Lisa Kramer.

6             MS. KRAMER: Hi, my name is Lisa Kramer,  
7     L-I-S-A K-R-A-M-E-R. I am the president of Prairie  
8     Engineers of Illinois. We are an engineering and  
9     land surveying company, and I am here to speak in  
10    support of this project today, primarily for the jobs  
11    that it creates but I also believe it is important to  
12    improve the electric grid in Illinois and to bring in  
13    alternative energy sources for the future. So I am  
14    in support of this project.

15                    Thank you.

16             JUDGE VON QUALEN: Sarah Bradford.

17             MS. BRADFORD: Hi, I am Sarah Bradford,  
18     S-A-R-A-H B-R-A-D-F-O-R-D. I am a small farm owner  
19     in Greene County, and I agree with what all of these  
20     people have said because I cash rent, I have a farmer  
21     that farms for me, and he has all of the most current  
22     equipment. It's going to be very difficult for him

1 to deal with this.

2 But I am also going to approach it  
3 from the environmental side. This would cut through  
4 timber, take down a lot of timber that is deer  
5 habitat. And these environmental groups like the  
6 Sierra Club, I am hoping they will take that into  
7 consideration also. It is -- my family hunts on  
8 this. It would cut through a creek that would cause  
9 additional erosion.

10 We spend thousands of dollars on  
11 tiling to try to make this ground as productive as  
12 possible. We put lime on the ground. The  
13 construction equipment that would come in here and  
14 tear that area up, the destruction that it would do  
15 to the soil content and the mineral make-up, it would  
16 take a long time to restore that back to what it  
17 should be in the time that we have spent and the  
18 thousands of dollars that we spend to try to make  
19 this ground productive and to protect it.

20 Also, I am not sure whether you are  
21 familiar with Morel mushrooms. This is an area that  
22 is where Morel mushrooms grow. This is a very rare

1 type of edible mushroom that is indicative basically  
2 to just this area. Restaurants on the east coast try  
3 to buy them for \$100 a pound from this area because  
4 they are so desirable. This would destroy habitat  
5 for this type of a mushroom. And this is not a  
6 mushroom that man can reproduce. This is a mushroom  
7 that nature produces. It has to have the right soil  
8 content, the right type of trees, the right type of  
9 plants around this. So this type of construction  
10 would destroy this habitat, also.

11 I am also a bird watcher, and we know  
12 that these types of structures are detrimental to the  
13 bird population. I read a study this morning on Fox  
14 News. They have a new study that is talking about  
15 that these wind turbines, they expect a decrease in  
16 population for the birds because of these type of  
17 structures. But let alone from the pleasure aspect  
18 of the birds, they are a part of the food chain, and  
19 they play an important part in our nature.

20 And if you look at the statistics, our  
21 population is increasing on a regular basis, but our  
22 land production is decreasing on a regular basis

1 because it's being taken up by projects like these,  
2 construction projects that will only provide  
3 temporary jobs for a short period of time. But it's  
4 at the expense of the land that can never be  
5 reproduced.

6 So I am definitely in opposition to  
7 this, and I pray for your, you know, positive  
8 consideration of the people that are going to be  
9 affected.

10 Thank you.

11 JUDGE VON QUALEN: John Bzdawka. Sorry about  
12 that on your name.

13 MR. BZDAWKA: Pretty good. Good afternoon. I  
14 want to thank the ICC for listening to my testimony  
15 today. My name is John Bzdawka, J-O-H-N  
16 B-Z-D-A-W-K-A, and I am a representative for the  
17 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the  
18 IBEW. I am not here to talk about the transmission  
19 line routing, landowners' compensation, easements,  
20 use of equipment or any specifics about the actual  
21 construction of the line. There are experts here  
22 that have done their due diligence on those aspects

1 of the project. What I am here to talk about is  
2 jobs.

3 I am based in Wisconsin, and I  
4 represent over 700,000 electrical workers in the  
5 United States and Canada of which 51,581 live right  
6 here in Illinois. These 51,000 Illinois residents do  
7 all their working, living, volunteering, coaching,  
8 mentoring and raising their families right here in  
9 Illinois. Many of these homeowners -- many are  
10 homeowners, and they all pay taxes to support their  
11 local schools, libraries, playgrounds, roads,  
12 etcetera. Many of these 51,000 workers are employed  
13 in the electrical construction industry, and this  
14 project represents hundreds of their jobs so they can  
15 continue to work, live and raise families right here  
16 in Illinois. And with all the other work, including  
17 trucking, concrete mixing, fueling, tree trimming,  
18 landscaping, manufacturing and all other support  
19 occupations, it is estimated that 1,500 jobs will be  
20 created in Illinois by the Grain Belt Express Line.

21 Some may argue that these jobs are  
22 temporary. But for every worker in the construction

1 industry, their entire careers are made up of a  
2 series of these so-called temporary jobs. The  
3 business dictionary describes temporary employment as  
4 an employment situation where an employee is expected  
5 to remain in the position only for a certain period  
6 of time. So these construction periods are not  
7 temporary. If they are temporary, I have found  
8 temporary employment in the electrical construction  
9 industry for the past 36 years. Not too bad. But in  
10 reality these jobs are no more temporary than a  
11 teacher who changes students every year or a doctor  
12 who sees his patients annually or a politician who is  
13 elected to a fixed term. So as long as we continue  
14 to build things like this much needed, wanted, safe  
15 and green transmission line, we will all have jobs  
16 and continue to support our local communities like  
17 Pittsfield right here in western Illinois.

18 I urge you to approve this project and  
19 keep Illinois working.

20 Thank you.

21 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Ralph Kramer.

22 MR. KRAMER: My name is Ralph Kramer, and my

1 wife just spoke, and I very much share her opposition  
2 to this project. So I will yield to the next  
3 speaker.

4 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Thank you. Jeff Thomas.

5 MR. THOMAS: Hi, my name is Jeff Thomas,  
6 T-H-O-M-A-S, and I am representing Hubbell Power  
7 Systems. We are a manufacturer with a footprint in  
8 both Illinois and Missouri. We are manufacturers of  
9 components for the construction of power lines,  
10 substations and many products associated with  
11 delivering electricity to consumers. And we are very  
12 much in favor of this from the aspect of jobs.

13 One of the things I would like to make  
14 clear is the Clean Line's commitment to manufacturers  
15 in Illinois and Missouri for this project. They have  
16 signed commitments to us because of our location and  
17 the positive impact it has on the local community. I  
18 was born and raised in Illinois. Our manufacturing  
19 facility is in Edwardsville, Illinois, and it will  
20 have a very positive impact. And I thank you for the  
21 consideration and giving us the opportunity to talk  
22 to that.

1 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Joe Murphy.

2 MR. MURPHY: Hello, my name is Joe Murphy,  
3 M-U-R-P-H-Y. I am a farmer from Macoupin County,  
4 Illinois. I own one farm that will be impacted by  
5 this line and farm three others.

6 I am opposed to the construction of  
7 the proposed Clean Line Energy power line because I  
8 am not convinced of the need for this line. Where I  
9 farm, the proposed line would be exactly five miles,  
10 and approximately parallel to, Ameren's new 345,000  
11 volt transmission line known as the Illinois Rivers  
12 Project. This Ameren line will run all the way  
13 across Illinois and has been approved by the  
14 Midcontinent ISO or MISO, a regional transmission  
15 organization that helps coordinate plans for energy  
16 transmission. As far as I know, the Clean Line  
17 Energy line has not been approved by any such  
18 organization.

19 So my question is how do we know that  
20 this line is really needed or is it just wanted by  
21 the project's investors. If we in Illinois want more  
22 renewable energy, why don't we just build more wind

1 generators like the hundreds we already have, keeping  
2 all those jobs and all that revenue in Illinois?

3 I am not against Clean Line or any  
4 other organization that builds in Illinois if they  
5 are not allowed to take personal property from  
6 unwilling sellers by the use of eminent domain. As  
7 long as everyone made by an easement is happy with  
8 the arrangement and no one is forced to sell their  
9 easement, I have no problem with that. I just don't  
10 think the amount of money being offered by Clean Line  
11 will even come close to buying easements from those  
12 of us who understand what 50, 100 or 200 or more  
13 years of impence and encumberment (sic) is really  
14 worth.

15 So much has changed in the 50 years I  
16 have been farming, I can't imagine the changes  
17 coming, including the use of robotic-driven equipment  
18 that is now in our foreseeable future and almost  
19 certainly is not worth the high voltage lines.

20 Thank you for hearing me out.

21 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Russell Koeller.

22 MR. KOELLER: My name is Russell Koeller,

1 R-U-S-S-E-L-L K-O-E-L-L-E-R.

2 My brother Jim spoke earlier, and we  
3 will have many of the same concerns. We are separate  
4 operations, even though we do farm pretty close  
5 together. I operate a grain farm in western Pike  
6 County with my wife and two sons. And in addition to  
7 the interest of my family, I represent five other  
8 families who own farmland, but they are unable to be  
9 here tonight. Additionally, I also oversee a couple  
10 tracts of farmland owned by the local cemetery  
11 association. So I am here to speak against the  
12 granting of the certificate.

13 And to reiterate on this farming, both  
14 the size and the complexity of the modern farming is  
15 -- it can't be overstated. But especially I want to  
16 talk about the aerial application aspect. That is  
17 becoming more and more accepted practice in this  
18 area. We spray, you know, lots and lots of acres  
19 every single year, and the Clean Line transmission  
20 line as proposed is primarily an east-west  
21 transmission, and in our area the vast majority of  
22 the spray applications are done north and south. So

1 right away we see we have got a problem.

2 We already farm around, I think, 15 or  
3 16 of those Ameren steel lattice type towers, and  
4 they are difficult. And so some of those are  
5 probably 80 years old now. But things change, and  
6 recently the company came to us and said they needed  
7 more right-of-way, that it may not have been their  
8 decision but the FERC, the Federal Energy Regulatory  
9 Commission, decided they needed more right-of-way,  
10 and so we had no choice but to sell. And in one case  
11 they actually -- now, the right-of-way extends over  
12 one of my machinery sheds, and I am not allowed to  
13 make any expansion on that. So it affects you.

14 Additionally, FERC decided apparently  
15 that they needed more clearance. And just in my area  
16 they came in and added three more mile pole supports  
17 between the lattice towers. So we hear that the  
18 engineers are going to place the poles and structures  
19 where it will have a minimal impact, but that's for  
20 now. Things change and looking ahead who knows what  
21 the new rules and regulations would be.

22 I'd like to mention that Mark had

1 mentioned about the pipelines. Well, the big  
2 difference is that we farm right over the top of the  
3 pipelines. So it's not the same comparison as a  
4 public utility with this overhead transmission lines.

5 And so, again, even though the  
6 engineers that are represented at the public meetings  
7 are very courteous and indicated they would like to  
8 really work with us on placement, when the engineers  
9 do the final design, we are probably going to have  
10 something less than ideal presented to us.

11 So I urge you to vote no on this.

12 Thank you.

13 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Brian Koeller.

14 MR. KOELLER: I don't need to speak. Thank  
15 you.

16 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Dennis Sagez.

17 MR. SAGEZ: My name is Dennis Sagez, S-A-G-E-Z.

18 I am a farmer and landowner, also president of  
19 Landowners Alliance in Central Illinois, also a  
20 registered engineer of the state of Illinois.

21 My reason for addressing you this  
22 evening is just to state that from my perspective

1 this project is just wrong, and it's wrong for two  
2 reasons. It's wrong from a technical perspective.  
3 The energy industry seems to be changing rapidly. It  
4 seems to be moving towards distributed energy  
5 generation. That's generation of power where it's  
6 needed, where it's going to be used. That eliminates  
7 the need for things like 750-mile long extension  
8 cords and the associated devastation that they wreak  
9 on the environment.

10 As we speak, there is advances being  
11 made in solar cells. There are now transparent solar  
12 cells. Those will be windows. They will be used in  
13 the facades of all new commercial buildings. Those  
14 are in commercial production as we speak. Several  
15 companies have advanced research projects in nuclear  
16 fusion. I think these will be the nuclear reactors  
17 of the future. There is no greenhouse gas associated  
18 with those. No nuclear waste, very little radiation,  
19 no danger of meltdowns like in Japan or Chernobyl.

20 I also think the project is wrong from  
21 a social perspective. These people here tonight, you  
22 know, they are America. I've been in the engineering

1 business for 40 some years. I've worked throughout  
2 the world. What's always impressed me is that  
3 America is unique in the world in its propensity and  
4 its ability to do the right thing, first to recognize  
5 what's right and then to do it. And, you know, for  
6 these people here tonight, this is just the wrong  
7 thing. America really is -- it's not an abstract  
8 concept, not a place in the mail. It's certainly not  
9 the White House. It's these people sitting here  
10 tonight. They built America. They sustain America  
11 with their taxes. They bled for America. As one  
12 gentleman said, his family has a military tradition.  
13 That's really what America is. That's what has made  
14 America great and that's what will continue to make  
15 America great, if allowed to. For these people, you  
16 know, it's not about the money. It's about their  
17 heritage, their legacy to their children, their  
18 livelihoods and their lives.

19 So in conclusion I'd just like to say  
20 a little bit about jobs. I realize that this would  
21 be a job producer for Illinois, but at the end of the  
22 day that's a zero sum equation. If this thing

1 doesn't get built, there will be other energy jobs.  
2 What we really need to do for America is bring  
3 industry back that has gone off shore to prevent  
4 additional industry from leaving America. That's  
5 where the jobs will be created and will be produced.

6 Thank you.

7 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Perry Wheeler.

8 MR. WHEELER: Thank you. I am not a speaker.  
9 Like I said, my name is Perry Wheeler, P-E-R-R-Y  
10 W-H-E-E-L-E-R. I am landowner, a veteran, and I am  
11 opposed to this because I don't want to look at it.  
12 They turn around and they tell you they are going to  
13 buy it, buy the timber, the marketable timber. But  
14 what about the small stuff coming up that's worth  
15 nothing now. But 10, 15, 20 years it's going to be  
16 worth a lot of money. I don't want to look at it.  
17 Like I say, I know most of the other people around  
18 are the same way. I've got power lines running  
19 across my property now, that you have got to turn my  
20 farm around, work around them, everything else.

21 And also these here, these companies,  
22 they don't tell you the truth, the true facts. It's

1 hard for me to believe that they are actually --  
2 Illinois is going to get anything from all this power  
3 when there is a drop coming over in Missouri right  
4 where it comes into Illinois and then the next drop  
5 is not going to be 'til over the Indiana border. So  
6 that makes me hard to believe that Illinois is going  
7 to benefit anything from this.

8 Thank you very much.

9 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Edwin Harpole.

10 MR. HARPOLE: Edwin Harpole, E-D-W-I-N  
11 H-A-R-P-O-L-E. I don't have a lot to say here today  
12 that hasn't already been said. I farm here in the  
13 Pike County area. I feel like our property rights  
14 are really being impacted here by the power line  
15 project. It's not just affecting us; it's affecting  
16 all of our grand kids and generations to come.

17 We all talk about green energy and  
18 this type of thing, and there is no one more green  
19 than the American farmer out here. We are trying to  
20 do everything we can to help the environment. And  
21 now we get someone comes through, and they are going  
22 to add to the cost of production as it changes how we

1 have to farm, all of our practices and everything,  
2 for generations to come.

3 Habitat, what they are going through,  
4 they are wrecking habitat. All the time we are out  
5 here trying to plant switch grass or do something to  
6 benefit the wildlife management programs we have.  
7 They are going to destroy and wreck most of that  
8 also. And it's all for short-term gain, and what  
9 would be the cost of expenses, and it's going to  
10 affect us for years to come.

11 Most of the people, advocates, that  
12 have been here today for this seem like they are on  
13 short-term gain. They are either making sales or  
14 getting jobs for a couple years while this is being  
15 built, and we are affected for the rest of our lives  
16 and our children's lives and our grand kids' lives,  
17 and I just hope you vote against it.

18 Thank you.

19 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Corinne Fuchs. Hello.

20 MS. FUCHS: My name is Corinne Fuchs,  
21 C-O-R-I-N-N-E F-U-C-H-S. I am representing the  
22 Fuchs family farms in Montgomery County. I thank you

1 for being here to listen to our comments today.

2 I firmly believe that we do need new  
3 cost effective energy sources. However, I do not  
4 believe that the Grain Belt Express project is an  
5 effective solution to the problem. Most landowners  
6 along the proposed line are largely opposed to the  
7 project. They risk the loss of highly valuable and  
8 productive farmland which is a significant source or  
9 the primary source for their livelihood.

10 In addition to the loss of farmland  
11 directly on which the proposed line would reside, the  
12 implication for landowners and farmers would be much  
13 broader. The proposed line would disrupt work  
14 patterns. The construction could damage field tile  
15 which is critical to maximizing crop yields. Crops  
16 and soils could be damaged during construction.  
17 There are safety concerns about farming machines and  
18 high powered lines. There are concerns about damage  
19 and loss of access roads needed for farming. There  
20 are additional longer term concerns about the  
21 potential impacts of crop yields from the high  
22 powered lines and, as brought up before, we don't

1 know yet the effects on wildlife in the environment.

2                   Additionally, if public utility status  
3 were granted to this company, landowners could lose  
4 control over what alternative or additional types of  
5 transmission could run along and across their lands  
6 in the future, and risk unknown potential impacts to  
7 land and crops from those additional transmissions.  
8 This land is across what is central Illinois' most  
9 fertile and economically viable land, not only in the  
10 state of Illinois but in the world. And to disrupt  
11 it in such a way is risking a lot of very important  
12 farmland.

13                   Eminent domain, if it comes to that,  
14 is intended to apply in situations of creating public  
15 good. This case does not appear to be the case of  
16 public good, but rather a case of a private investor  
17 group seeking to profit at the expense of communities  
18 and landowners in the Midwest. It also sets a very  
19 dangerous legal precedent.

20                   Further, the entity has no experience  
21 with this type of project. It's not a public utility  
22 company, and it is organized as an LLC, limiting the

1 liability of investors to their invested amount.  
2 Given these circumstances, how can the other  
3 stakeholders have confidence that the entity will be  
4 able to successfully execute the project and that, if  
5 major issues are encountered, that the entity will  
6 remain to stand accountable. Our family has spoken  
7 to several attorneys and none of them will deny that  
8 in all probability the landowners would then be  
9 liable for any problems, even though they oppose the  
10 project.

11 We strongly encourage you to oppose  
12 the Clean Line's application for the Certificate of  
13 Public Convenience and Necessity.

14 Thank you.

15 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Anna Borrowman.

16 MS. BORROWMAN: Mr. Chairman, my name is Anna  
17 Borrowman, A-N-N-A B-O-R-R-O-W-M-A-N. I am a  
18 landowner in Pike County.

19 AUDIENCE: Speak up.

20 MS. BORROWMAN: How is that?

21 On July 1 the Missouri Public Service  
22 Commission -- or there was a story posted by WGEM, a

1 Quincy television station, saying the Missouri Public  
2 Service Commission denied Grain Belt's request for  
3 the proposed high voltage transmission line because  
4 Grain Belt failed to prove a need for the project.

5 Pike County, Illinois, is a sparsely  
6 populated county, and planners in some distant office  
7 might view us as a path of least resistance. We like  
8 our deer and tortoises and our relatively unsullied  
9 skyline.

10 The Missouri Commission questioned  
11 whether the project was worth inconveniencing  
12 Missouri's residents.

13 Federal land is exempted from  
14 development. The Mississippi River bordering Pike  
15 County is federal along either side of the river for  
16 most of its travel along Pike County's western  
17 border, reducing the options for a river crossing.

18 Undeveloped land is obviously valued  
19 by the government, and we private landowners like it,  
20 too, and resist imposition of projects such as this.

21 Thousands of people each year travel  
22 to Pike County either for hunting or for retreats at

1 our fine lodges. To them this is fly-over country.  
2 They discovered they like our bucolic setting. They  
3 travel across Pike County to visit Mark Twain  
4 attractions or simply to see the river. Having high  
5 voltage lines set against the horizon would diminish  
6 our appeal. I urge you to deny the application.

7 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Robert Legate.

8 MR. LEGATE: Good evening. My name is Bob  
9 Legate, that's L-E-G-A-T-E. My wife and I, including  
10 our family, are landowners in Pearl Township. The  
11 current Grain Line initiative has identified our  
12 property as one of the many farms that are being  
13 impacted by this proposed project. I am here this  
14 evening to express my opposition to this Grain Line  
15 initiative. My opposition is representative of my  
16 family and our impacted neighbors. To that end, I am  
17 here to express hope that the voice of those in  
18 opposition of this project will truly be heard.

19 Unfortunately, the reality of our  
20 current times is that moments such as this are  
21 utilized to simply go through a motion, with the end  
22 result still occurring despite much opposition. We

1 have remained vigilant and continued to attend the  
2 various meetings concerning this project. To that  
3 end, we continue to hear much opposition with regard  
4 to the Grain Line project in Pike County, Illinois.  
5 I would hope this time in this hearing that our  
6 voices are truly being heard, and this project will  
7 be stopped from entering Pike County, Illinois.

8           It is unfortunate that we have to  
9 utilize our time and resources to protect our  
10 investments and the land that we love. However, in  
11 the spirit of progress, it's times like this that we  
12 are truly able to band together to support one  
13 another. I'd like to believe that the opposition  
14 expressed by the Pike County community makes it clear  
15 that this community is bonded together to adamantly  
16 stop this project. While my position is genuinely  
17 focused on opposing this project from entering our  
18 property, I think my better support as a taxpaying  
19 citizen of Pike County is best expressed in  
20 supporting our neighbors equally impacted along the  
21 other proposed route. Rather than allow this project  
22 to create a divide between neighbors, I personally

1 believe this is an opportunity for us to bond  
2 together.

3                   During early meetings with Grain Line  
4 representatives, specifically in conversation with  
5 John Kuba with that organization, I was assured that  
6 our voices would be heard, and that our input would  
7 be genuinely taken into consideration. So that at  
8 the end I expressed written communication with Grain  
9 Line leadership, expressing my specific concern with  
10 how this project would negatively impact our  
11 particular area.

12                   I was told at that time that my  
13 presented information made a clear point of how this  
14 initiative was negatively impacting our farm and  
15 should be prepared to equally present this  
16 information at some point in the future with the ICC  
17 representatives. Hence, I would welcome contact from  
18 the ICC to further express my displeasure with this  
19 project. I would also hope that this venue this  
20 evening makes it clear to those continuing to pursue  
21 this project that the time has come for this project  
22 to be cancelled from entering Pike County.

1                   In addition, I would also hope that  
2                   those spearheading this project understand the  
3                   passion and commitment that we have as landowners to  
4                   provide responsible stewardship of our farms, not  
5                   only for now but those family members that will  
6                   follow us in maintaining our property.

7                   Thank you for your time and  
8                   consideration as we equally try to maintain the  
9                   uniqueness of our property and seek our preservation,  
10                  rather than being sacrificed in the name of progress.

11                  JUDGE VON QUALEN: I have come to the end of my  
12                  list. Is there anyone else who intends to speak  
13                  tonight? With that then -- yes.

14                  MS. SACK: I'd like to speak.

15                  JUDGE VON QUALEN: All right.

16                  MS. SACK: Susan Sack, S-U-S-A-N S-A-C-K.

17                  I have been following the Clean Line  
18                  Company for over three and a half years as they have  
19                  tried to push across multiple states for their  
20                  200-foot easement land grab. Arkansas has testified;  
21                  Arkansas is against them. Missouri Public Service  
22                  Commission is against them. I do hope you look at

1 what has come out in the findings in Missouri and  
2 Arkansas and other groups that have had to weigh  
3 whether this company deserves to be given the  
4 opportunity to become a public service utility.

5                   According to your own ICC Staff member  
6 Zuraski, it was noted that this company, Clean Line,  
7 has insufficient funds to support their projects.  
8 They would be more likely to seek raises through some  
9 sort of FERC approval-based recovery mechanism as  
10 described by the Rock Island Clean Line witness  
11 Skelly in their December ICC hearings of 2013.

12                   Also during those ICC hearings in  
13 2013, Clean Line had Winters (sp) from National Grid  
14 stand before you and tell the judge at that time that  
15 they have an option to purchase any of the Clean Line  
16 project prior to construction of any transmission  
17 line. So all the promises we are hearing of jobs  
18 from Clean Line, do they last if National Grid  
19 purchases as they have the option to purchase? These  
20 are all things that need to be considered.

21                   Your own ICC Staff member Zuraski on  
22 page 14 of the Docket 12-0560 said of Clean Line's

1 business plan, "The more imprudent, inefficient,  
2 costly, wasteful RICL is assumed to be, the greater  
3 the benefit that would be computed by Dr. Loomis'  
4 business plan model."

5           Knowing their history with the ICC in  
6 their previous hearing, hearing that they have --  
7 National Grid has the option to purchase them,  
8 hearing the fact that their business plan was torn  
9 apart by your own ICC Staff, it amazes me that we are  
10 standing here now trying to decide if Clean Line  
11 should get the necessity public -- whatever it is.  
12 This situation, it -- clearly, the company has not  
13 shown itself to be worthy.

14           They are now seeking federal eminent  
15 domain through Arkansas and Missouri, and you need to  
16 confer with the people of the state of Arkansas and  
17 Missouri and their public bodies that make the  
18 decisions and look at some of the testimony that's  
19 been revealed, if possible, through those cases, and  
20 I think you will see, as we see, it's not just about  
21 our private land. Yes, we all hold our land dearly,  
22 but this is about a private company using private

1 individuals to make a profit for themselves, and  
2 there is no need for this line to be built, as  
3 Missouri and Arkansas both decided.

4 Thank you.

5 JUDGE VON QUALEN: I would like to thank you  
6 all for coming tonight. It's a very good turnout and  
7 we appreciate all the comments that were made. Thank  
8 you especially for those of you who came up to the  
9 podium, took the microphone and told us your opinions  
10 and thoughts on the matter. And I thank all of you  
11 here for the attentiveness and civility with which  
12 everyone was treated, although the subject is quite  
13 difficult and contested.

14 With that, this concludes the comment  
15 session this evening.

16 PUBLIC FORUM COMMENT SESSION CONCLUDED AT 6:45 P.M.

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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
 ) SS  
2 COUNTY OF MACOUPIN )

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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I, Carla J. Boehl, a Certified Shorthand

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Reporter and Notary Public in and for said County and

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State, do hereby certify that the foregoing

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transcript contains a true and accurate translation

9

of my shorthand notes referred to.

10

Given under my hand and seal this 10th day of

11

August, A.D., 2015.

12

My commission expires April 13, 2019.

13

14

*Carla J. Boehl*

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Certified Shorthand Reporter

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Lic. # 084-002710

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Notary Public

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