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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.)

Pana, Illinois
Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.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

7

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1 JUDGE VON QUALEN: He is the Chief of the
2 Public Utilities Bureau. And we have Greg Rockrohr
3 who is a senior electrical engineer. We also have
4 Avery Bourne, the Representative from the 95th
5 District, has joined us this morning.

6 On April the 10th of this year Clean
7 Line filed a formal application asking the Commission
8 for a certificate to build a 600 kilovolt
9 transmission line across Illinois. The Docket Number
10 is 15-0277. That case is ongoing and is being
11 conducted in Springfield. Notice of the case was
12 sent to all landowners on the affected route. Some
13 landowners, as well as Clean Line, Staff of the
14 Commission and other interested entities are
15 participating in that docket. The deadline for that
16 case is November 21 this year.

17 Parties to the docket have filed
18 testimony. There will be an opportunity for cross
19 examination at the evidentiary hearing. After the
20 hearing, briefs will be filed, and I will prepare a
21 Proposed Order with recommendations for the parties'
22 review. The parties will have an opportunity to file

1 exceptions to the Proposed Order. Then the Order
2 will go to the Commission for a review. The
3 Commission will review the Proposed Order and the
4 record of the proceeding to determine whether or not
5 Clean Line has demonstrated that it meets the
6 criteria for a certificate in Illinois.

7 Today we are here to receive your
8 comments on the proposed line. The format will be
9 first Clean Line will give a short presentation as to
10 their proposal. Then we have lists of people who
11 wish to make comments. I will read the names off one
12 by one, and the persons who wish to speak will come
13 up and take the microphone and will have the floor
14 for three minutes.

15 One person can speak at a time. There
16 are people here with different opinions. Everyone is
17 to respect everyone's opinion regardless of whether
18 they agree with it or not. This is a chance for
19 everyone to have a moment.

20 No one will be sworn in. This is not
21 testimony, and there will be no cross examination.
22 We have a court reporter here who will record all

1 comments, and the comments will be placed in the
2 public record on e-Docket.

3 Some of you have presented comments in
4 written form. Those will be placed in the public
5 record on e-Docket as well. And if there are people
6 here who do not wish to speak today but do wish to
7 provide comments, you can go to e-Docket on the
8 Commission website, that is www.icc.illinois.gov
9 which is on the little green card that many of you
10 got, and there is a comment section there. Simply
11 hit that and enter the Docket Number, which is again
12 15-0277, and you can enter your comments there.

13 Alternatively, you can also call if
14 you wish. We have an 800 number. See if I can find
15 it now. It's (800) 524-0795. Comments can be made
16 that way, too.

17 After we have heard everyone speak,
18 and we will have time to hear everyone, there will be
19 a period for questions and answers. That will be an
20 informal period. The Commissioners will need to go
21 then. They are decision makers, so they don't answer
22 questions and they are not a part of the back and

1 forth discussion. Clean Line will be here,
2 representatives from Clean Line will be here, and we
3 will have Mr. Beyer and Mr. Rockrohr from Staff, if
4 there are questions for them.

5 So now would Mr. Lawlor --

6 MR. LAWLOR: Thank you. Good morning. My name
7 is Mark Lawlor. I am Director of Development for the
8 Grain Belt Express project. I want to thank you all
9 for coming this morning to provide your comments on
10 our proposal to bring low cost energy to Illinois. I
11 also want to thank Chairman Sheahan and Commissioner
12 Rosales for being here as well as Judge Von Qualen.

13 MR. BEYER: I have to ask. Can everybody hear?

14 AUDIENCE: No.

15 MR. BEYER: I don't know if it's this
16 microphone or if you just really need to be up close.

17 Thank you for responding.

18 MR. LAWLOR: Again, Mark Lawlor. I am Director
19 of Development. I thank you for being here to
20 provide your comments on this project. We take these
21 public meetings very seriously. We want to listen to
22 you and hear your questions about our project. Our

1 staff is available to speak with you one-on-one, and
2 we can review the proposed route with you and address
3 your individual concerns and parcels.

4 I would like to take the next few
5 minutes to first talk about why we are developing the
6 Grain Belt Express project and address some of the
7 common questions that we received.

8 The Grain Belt Express Clean Line is a
9 power line that will bring enough clean energy to
10 Illinois to power 1.6 million homes each year. We
11 are developing this project in Illinois because
12 Illinois consumers have a need for low cost clean
13 energy.

14 The Grain Belt Express will help to
15 modernize the electricity grid, and wind power
16 delivered by the transmission line will significantly
17 increase the amount of renewable energy available in
18 Illinois. All of this new low cost energy delivered
19 by the transmission line will increase competition in
20 the Illinois and regional electricity markets, which
21 can cause wholesale power prices to fall. In fact,
22 we project that prices will decrease in Illinois by

1 \$750 million in the first five years of the project's
2 operation, to the benefit of Illinois electricity
3 consumers.

4 In addition to these advantages, local
5 residents will also benefit from the \$700 million
6 infrastructure project that Clean Line will make in
7 Illinois. As you may have seen in the paper last
8 week, Clean Line will be paying about \$41 million to
9 central Illinois landowners and about \$33 million to
10 local services such as schools in central Illinois in
11 just the first 20 years.

12 As you can see, the board here on the
13 left, also which will be available in the back, shows
14 the payments' breakdown county by county. So, for
15 example, here in Christian County the county itself
16 will receive \$3.7 million in the first 20 years of
17 the project and landowners of Christian County will
18 receive about \$4.7 million. Additionally,
19 construction of the project is expected to create
20 1500 jobs during the project's three-year
21 construction period.

22 We recognize that we are introducing

1 new infrastructure, and any time there are new
2 developments, there are questions. I will address
3 some of the most common questions now. First, some
4 people are unsure of how Illinois will receive power
5 from the Grain Belt Express. Illinois utilities and
6 Illinois competitive retail electricity suppliers
7 will be able to purchase the power off the line.
8 Even in areas where retail electric providers do not
9 choose to directly purchase the energy delivered by
10 Grain Belt, Illinois consumers will still benefit
11 from the increased competition the project will bring
12 to the state and to the wholesale electric markets
13 because it will reduce overall market prices for
14 electricity.

15 Some have questions on the effect of
16 construction on farmland. Now, we worked really hard
17 to develop the Grain Belt route in a way that
18 minimizes impacts to existing land use, and we want
19 to thank the 3,000 of you who attended our 27 public
20 meetings and provided feedback on how to identify a
21 route that had the least amount of total impacts.

22 The middle poster, again that's far

1 away from some of you, but it shows the three types
2 of structures, and they will be available in the
3 lobby, that we propose to use in Illinois.

4 Now, Clean Line has entered an
5 agreement with the Illinois Department of Agriculture
6 to use single foundation monopole structures along
7 straight, non-turning portions of the line. In this
8 agreement Clean Line, and also in the easement, is
9 committed to mitigating potential impacts of the
10 construction of the power line including the
11 compaction of soil, repairing damaged drainage tile
12 if that were to occur, and additionally will
13 compensate landowners for any crop loss due to the
14 property damage or property damage that would result
15 from the construction or maintenance of the power
16 line for as long as the damage exists.

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

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

11 I would also like to note that some
12 people opposed to the project have used the phrase
13 "no eminent domain for private gain," and I would
14 like to address this directly. The gain of the
15 project will be the public gain, increased
16 competition in the electric sector and lower prices.
17 It is true that Clean Line is a private company, but
18 so is Ameren and ComEd and the many oil pipelines
19 that companies -- that receive approval from the ICC
20 on a regular basis.

21 In fact, our company uses a
22 shipper-funded business model called Merchant which

1 is identical to the business model of the pipelines
2 that are regularly approved as benefitting the
3 public. Again, the public benefits from lower prices
4 and more competition.

5 Another question that has arisen is
6 about the Missouri Public Service Commission decision
7 earlier this month. Now, Clean Line has multiple
8 options to pursue to obtain the requisite approval in
9 Missouri, including bringing a new case to the
10 Commission. We remain committed to moving the
11 project forward. I believe that the project is too
12 important to the future of Missouri as well as
13 Illinois to not pursue. The Grain Belt Express will
14 deliver meaningful benefits to Illinois consumers,
15 and we look forward to continuing our efforts to move
16 that project forward.

17 Now, finally, Clean Line will
18 compensate landowners fairly for an easement on your
19 property. We are not purchasing this land. We are
20 simply seeking an easement agreement that will allow
21 us to construct the Grain Belt -- will allow us to
22 construct and maintain the Grain Belt project. This

1 is the only thing that we can do on it. We cannot
2 sell the easement off for another purpose, and
3 farmers can still farm within the easement right up
4 to the base of the structures.

5 And the final poster over there shows
6 how we compensate landowners for these easements. We
7 will allow for payments for the land within the
8 easement up to 100 percent of market value based upon
9 recent sales in the county determined by an appraisal
10 firm.

11 Second, we will provide payments for
12 each of the structures. Landowners will have a
13 choice of a one-time upfront payment or annual
14 payment that will have a two percent escalator as
15 well.

16 And, finally, as I previously said, we
17 will also compensate for any damage that we may
18 cause.

19 Again, thank you for participating in
20 these hearings. We look forward to hearing your
21 comments at the end in the question and answer period
22 as well as one-on-one.

1 Thank you.

2 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Thank you, Mr. Lawlor. I
3 heard everyone say or I heard some people say they
4 could not hear. Did people hear my comments earlier?

5 AUDIENCE: No, not well.

6 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Okay. Let me just repeat
7 the basics of what I tried to say.

8 First of all, thank you very much for
9 coming. The Commission is very interested in your
10 comments here today. We have the Chairman, Chairman
11 Sheahan, is here with us today listening to the
12 comments, as is Commissioner Rosales.

13 For those of you who do not wish to
14 speak today, you can place your comments on e-Docket
15 by going to the Commission website. That website's
16 address is on the green card that Mr. Gough handed
17 you earlier.

18 We also have with us today your
19 Representative Avery Bourne.

20 So with that, each person will have an
21 opportunity to speak who signed up. During the time
22 that someone is speaking, everyone is to be silent

1 and listen to them and have respect for each other's
2 opinions.

3 With that, I will call the first
4 speaker who will be Patty Rykhus.

5 MS. RYKHUS: Can you hear me? My name is Patty
6 Rykhus. Last name is spelled R-Y-K-H-U-S, and I am
7 from rural Taylorville. I am a scientist and
8 business analyst by profession, but I am an
9 environmentalist and a farm girl by choice.

10 I have been weighing both sides of
11 this issue, and it has been an eye opening task for
12 me. It's been gut wrenching and soul searching.

13 I support the use of renewable energy,
14 and there is no doubt that our infrastructure needs
15 improvement and new growth, and I personally want the
16 option to use renewable energy. I want my
17 cooperative, electrical cooperative, Shelby Electric,
18 to be able to offer a renewable energy source like
19 projects that I have helped with in the Peoria area
20 where they can choose 100 percent renewable energy,
21 50 percent renewable or non-renewable energy. I've
22 studied the costs and the benefit to the consumers.

1 On the other hand of this issue,
2 farmland is disappearing at an alarming rate. I have
3 issues on landowner rights, and I respect farmers and
4 the jobs they do. As a landowner, I have been
5 crossed by electrical lines, natural gas pipeline and
6 have been hounded unrelentlessly (sic) by coal
7 companies looking to get rights beneath my property.
8 So I understand the issues of rural landowners.

9 When I look at this company, they are
10 doing a lot of things right. Their compensation
11 packages look fair. But maybe as they are crossing
12 here, they need to be a little more generous. I see
13 that this company is planning on using Illinois
14 products, wire, components, the IBEW is in support,
15 and I know they will also be using area truckers,
16 although in this area I am known for not supporting a
17 program just based on the temporary jobs.

18 I have been in these shoes before. I
19 came out in opposition to the Taylorville energy
20 center based on its business model even though it
21 promised jobs. I am going to come out in support of
22 Grain Belt Express. I think the positives outweigh

1 the negatives, although my heart breaks for the
2 landowners and their issues, and I urge this company
3 to deal with them, to respect them and to honor
4 farming and the people in central Illinois.

5 Thank you.

6 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Sharon Kleinik.

7 MS. KLEINIK: Sharon Kleinik, K-L-E-I-N-I-K.

8 Landowners, farmers and others who
9 oppose Grain Line, would you please stand up?

10 We are hardworking Midwesterners who
11 have good values, and we do not want our farmland
12 taken away from us. I am Sharon Kleinik of Christian
13 County, Illinois. I am a landowner on the proposed
14 route of Clean Line and treasurer of Landowners
15 Alliance of Central Illinois. I am 74 years old, and
16 I have spent too much time and too much money to
17 protect all of my farmland from a private entity to
18 get eminent domain to steal our land for private
19 gain.

20 We have paid for our land, we pay real
21 estate taxes every year, and now we are having to
22 spend more money to protect our land from billionaire

1 investors who say they want to own it. We do not
2 want to sell our land. If we wanted to sell our
3 land, we would call an auctioneer and have a sale.

4 I actually feel the ICC should not
5 even accept a petition from an entity like Clean Line
6 as they are not a public utility. Ameren is a public
7 utility, and they are supplying us with enough
8 energy. Therefore, we do not need Clean Line.

9 Clean Line has proposed going through
10 some of our farmland that this child will be a sixth
11 generation owner. We do not want Clean Line to mar
12 it.

13 Thank you.

14 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Clint Richter.

15 MR. RICHTER: Thank you for the opportunity to
16 speak. Before I start, I would like to mention that
17 in addition to the folks here who are in opposition,
18 there are -- the Shelby County 4H fair, there is
19 signatures of 80 people who weren't able to be here
20 today who would also like to express their
21 opposition.

22 My name is Clint Richter, C-L-I-N-T

1 R-I-C-H-T-E-R, and I am a landowner on the alternate
2 line proposed by Clean Line's Grain Belt Express. I
3 am strongly opposed to this project, and I feel that
4 the ICC should reject Grain Belt's request for a
5 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, and
6 certainly deny Grain Belt the right to exercise
7 eminent domain.

8 My family and I have a home along the
9 alternate line. The line will run 600 feet north of
10 our house through the middle of a heavily wooded area
11 that is a campground with existing structures. Some
12 of this land at one time was zoned for commercial and
13 was used for weddings, wagon rides and camp-style
14 cookouts. If the proposed line is built on the
15 alternate path, none of these commercial uses of that
16 land would be viable, if we were to choose to
17 exercise it. In addition, a significant portion of
18 the adjacent Hidden Springs State Forest will be
19 destroyed along with sensitive wildlife habitats
20 along the bank of Richland Creek.

21 Despite what Clean Line's PR campaign
22 suggests, I have yet to find a landowner in Shelby

1 County or elsewhere who is in favor of this project
2 or Clean Line's proposed compensation package. Our
3 land is simply not for sale. Just as Clean Line is a
4 business, we too have business interests in the land
5 that we own. We have the right to retain that land
6 for our own private use, whether it's farms, timber,
7 residential or otherwise.

8 Beyond the personal impact this
9 project has to my property, I have serious concerns
10 with the Grain Belt project as a whole. There is no
11 need to be served by building the Grain Belt Express
12 in Illinois. Our power grid in Illinois currently
13 meets required standards for the production of energy
14 from renewable energy resources, and Illinois already
15 has a competitive energy market.

16 The ICC just approved a new route
17 through central Illinois for Ameren's River project
18 which, even if Grain Line was a competitor in
19 Illinois, this would be in direct competition with
20 it. Despite what was just said, Illinois consumers,
21 I don't see we have a benefit from reduced rates as a
22 result of Grain Belt because this is a DC

1 transmission line. Without an AC converter station,
2 I don't believe you can access that energy. We were
3 told at the very beginning this would be a
4 pass-through for Illinois, essentially a large
5 extension cord without benefit to Illinois.

6 According to many on the east coast
7 where this energy is intended to be delivered, many
8 would actually prefer to develop their own renewable
9 energy sources, and they simply don't want midwest
10 energy from midwest wind power.

11 Clean Line Energy Partners and Grain
12 Belt Express is a private, for-profit, non-utility
13 company that has never built a transmission line of
14 any kind. They don't know what it will cost, they
15 don't have unlimited funds, and they don't have
16 signed agreements from wind farms.

17 As objections are raised, Clean Line
18 may give the appearance of addressing the concerns of
19 all who live here, but they are accountable to their
20 investors only. Making money for their investors is
21 their only goal; everything else is a means to an
22 end.

1 If there was a need in our community
2 for power, landowners would come together and support
3 that. There is no need here. This is a speculative
4 venture that's relying on taking land from landowners
5 and allowing Grain Belt and their out-of-state
6 investors to cash in.

7 Thank you very much. Appreciate your
8 time.

9 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Richard McWard.

10 MR. McWARD: My name is Richard A. McWard, M-C
11 W-A-R-D. I own farmland in Greenwood Township,
12 Christian County, Illinois, and manage my two
13 sisters' farms in Christian County, Illinois.

14 Our family has been involved in
15 farming in Christian County for 142 years. Our farms
16 receive utility service from Shelby Electric
17 Cooperative and Ameren Illinois, both approved
18 utility companies in Illinois.

19 One of the proposed routes for the
20 Clean Line Energy Partners Grain Belt Express goes
21 right through the middle of the 106 acre farm in
22 Greenwood Township, Section 19. This is a farm that

1 is very productive, and we have recently replaced the
2 tile on this farm to improve the draining
3 productivity. We do not feel it is justified, fair
4 or justified, that Clean Line Energy Grain Belt
5 Express is not a utility company, has not shown the
6 project is necessary, that the company is capable of
7 financing the proposed construction without
8 significant adverse financial consequence for the
9 company or its customers.

10 It should be noted that the customers
11 that benefit from this line are those in Kansas and
12 maybe east of the state of Illinois.

13 I am asking the ICC to consider the
14 potential impact on family farms like ours when the
15 only potential winner is profit in the short term for
16 Clean Line Partners and maybe a few people in one or
17 two other states, but not Illinois. Missouri Public
18 Service Company Commission has denied Grain Belt
19 Express application to construct this line. I hope
20 ICC will also see the correct decision is to deny
21 Grains Belt's application to construct this line in
22 Illinois.

1 Clean Line Energy Grain Belt Express
2 is not a public utility and, therefore, should not
3 have this project reviewed on an expedited basis.
4 The project is not needed to supply renewable energy
5 in Illinois nor would this project improve the
6 competitiveness of the Illinois electricity market.

7 As a family farm, we have seen many
8 changes in the last ten years from different
9 companies, one in eminent domain or a rider. We just
10 finished with a power line from Ameren, but also we
11 have pipeline, water line, power poles, etcetera.
12 All these cost us time and legal expenses. In many
13 of these projects the needs are shown in companies
14 that meet the state laws and ICC regulation.

15 In the case of Clean Line Energy Grain
16 Belt, this is not the case, and we need the support
17 and the help of the ICC to help Illinois farm
18 landowners. It should also be noted that the farm
19 landowners is the last to know about most of these
20 projects, and as a result we need and expect ICC to
21 make sure this company is and can be a public
22 utility, and that arena has had a long history in

1 making Illinois a place to be for the future.

2 Thank you.

3 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Gail Perry.

4 MS. PERRY: I want to thank the Commission for
5 allowing us to speak at this and give our opinion.
6 My concern is the fact that we have to be forward
7 thinking.

8 MR. BEYER: Excuse me. Could you state your
9 name?

10 MS. PERRY: Oh, I am sorry. Gail Perry,
11 P-E-R-R-Y. G-A-I-L is the first name.

12 MR. BEYER: Thank you.

13 MS. PERRY: Uh-huh. Forward thinking, and
14 realize the finiteness of fossil fuels and reliable
15 energy is the way to go. Okay. Renewable energy is
16 a good thing.

17 AUDIENCE: Louder.

18 MS. PERRY: Obviously, I am new at this. My
19 concern is the fact that we need to be forward
20 thinking and to realize the finiteness of fossil
21 fuels. And renewable energy is the way that we have
22 to go, and I think Clean Line is bringing this to

1 Illinois.

2 Now, I understand farm owners'
3 concerns, property owners' concerns. They are -- I
4 fully respect them and I understand them, but we have
5 to think of the greater good and not just what
6 affects us as individuals.

7 And the one thing that does concern me
8 when I see all this eminent domain, that people are
9 already looking at it with closed minds, and I hope
10 that they will open them and look at what this
11 company has to say, not only just about their
12 compensations but what do they intend to accomplish.

13 Thank you.

14 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Nancy Handegan.

15 MS. HANDEGAN: Thank you. My name is Nancy
16 Handegan, spelled H-A-N-D-E-G-A-N. I am and
17 attorney, but I am not here as an attorney today. I
18 don't practice in front of the ICC. My only
19 experience with the ICC was with my parents when
20 Ameren crossed a farm that my parents owned and as
21 the daughter -- myself as the daughter of a farmer
22 and as the granddaughter of a farmer who had to farm

1 around power poles.

2 I am not here today to talk about what
3 Clean Energy has promised. I am here just to talk
4 about the practical aspects that I deal with, with
5 the utility companies, after they have installed
6 power lines.

7 Last week Enbridge plowed under the
8 best six acres of soybeans I had grown in a long time
9 to lay a small pipeline, and it will be many years
10 before that land is fully productive again. Yes,
11 Enbridge paid us for the crops and Enbridge paid me
12 for the easement and Enbridge paid me for future crop
13 damages. But I didn't want the money at all, and I
14 am going to have to deal with it. There will be
15 subsidence, there will be time that it will need to
16 be repaired, and I am going to have to deal with
17 that.

18 I am also here for a landowner who
19 about a month ago called me because Ameren was going
20 to drill an eight-foot hole on his land and he said
21 they are not in the easement. I immediately called
22 the attorney for Ameren, and he said we are not going

1 to stop, we think we can do it. It violated the
2 existing easement that they had. So this landowner
3 had to hire me to go that afternoon, and I had to
4 drop everything in order to fight the stable of
5 attorneys that Ameren has. And Ameren -- I will give
6 Ameren credit; they have attempted to work with the
7 farmers, but they wouldn't stop drilling that hole.
8 And as it turned out, they were not in the easement
9 and they did not have the right to drill the hole.
10 But that meant I had to spend days dealing with this.

11 So Clean Energy makes promises. I am
12 simply here to explain to you today what happens when
13 you grant these easements. Farmers have to pay for
14 these things themselves. On Enbridge, they insist on
15 an arbitration provision in their easement. So down
16 the road if this is still on our land, we will have
17 to arbitrate and, unfortunately, we have to share in
18 the cost of arbitration. So all of these promises
19 that are made don't deal with the practical aspects
20 of what these farmers here today and what my people
21 will have to deal with for many years to come.

22 So I can appreciate you listening

1 today, and the Christian County Farm Bureau,
2 appreciates you listening. I know that the Christian
3 County Board chairman is here. They sent a letter to
4 you opposing the Clean Line, as did the Shelby County
5 Board and the Montgomery County Board. So we thank
6 you today for listening, and remember that this will
7 affect a lot of farms. My children will be the sixth
8 generation on our family farm. Don't burden them
9 with something which isn't going to benefit the
10 Illinois consumer.

11 Thank you.

12 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Natalie Locke.

13 MS. LOCKE: Natalie Locke, N-A-T-A-L-I-E
14 L-O-C-K-E. First off, I would like to say that three
15 minutes is nowhere near enough for me to explain
16 what's wrong with this project. I've got a letter
17 that I will submit in the public comments. My
18 written comments that I submitted at this hearing is
19 more extensive than this, and my testimony that I
20 entered into the record are what I would like the
21 Commission to know. It's your duty to oppose the
22 GBE.

1 My husband and I own property that
2 would be impacted by the proposed alternate route.
3 Our property is our life. We care for it as
4 carefully as we care for our children. We sacrificed
5 much in our lives to own our property. We didn't
6 inherit money, we didn't inherit the land, and we
7 didn't win the lottery. We meticulously saved and
8 planned for the purchase of our land from the day we
9 were married so that we could own the property.

10 If this transmission line is allowed
11 to be constructed, it will have permanent and
12 devastating impacts to our property. This is not
13 some perceived impact that an eminent domain
14 appraiser points out in this docket. It's a real
15 impact. Over five acres and nearly 14 percent of our
16 timberland will be permanently destroyed, gone
17 forever, never to be used for the reasons that we
18 purchased our property. We purchased our land solely
19 because of the timberland that was on it. We are not
20 farmers.

21 We have opposed this project because
22 of the dangerous precedents that will be set. Clean

1 Line is not a regulated public utility and cannot be
2 granted the almighty and fearful eminent domain
3 authority to take our property for their private
4 gain.

5 We are opposed to this project because
6 this is not a project that was proposed as necessary
7 and needed by MISO. We oppose this project because
8 it's a 780-mile long project. It is affecting 19,000
9 acres across four states. Not only has Clean Line
10 not proven the GBE line is needed, they haven't
11 completed a comprehensive environmental impact
12 statement under the National Environmental Policy
13 Act. We oppose this project because of land use
14 pollution, that is, the unnecessary use of greenfield
15 land is no different than land pollution from an oil
16 spill. The effects are the same. Previously
17 unimpacted, undisturbed land is unnecessarily
18 destroyed.

19 We are opposed to this project because
20 the company who has to form 14 LLCs for four
21 potential projects should be looked at as a shell
22 company, not a public utility and certainly not have

1 eminent domain authority.

2 We ask that you do not give them a
3 CPCN and do not give eminent authority to GBE, a
4 company that failed to prove that this project is
5 needed, failed to prove the economic feasibility of
6 this project, failed to prove this project will
7 result in lower rates for our consumers and failed to
8 conduct a comprehensive EIS. I would ask that you
9 give thoughtful consideration to this case and
10 consider that our private landowner rights should
11 only be taken under carefully limited circumstances,
12 and the GBE transmission line is not one of them.

13 Thank you for allowing me to speak
14 today.

15 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Jim Owens.

16 MR. OWENS: All right. Good morning. I am Jim
17 Owen, O-W-E-N-S, an operation manager --

18 MR. BEYERS: Spell your name.

19 MR. OWENS: O-W-E-N-S. Operation manager at
20 Southwire Company in Flora, Illinois. I've been with
21 Southwire Company for eleven years now. They have
22 been in operation since 1974, and we have been a long

1 term provider for area electric distributors such as
2 the Pike County Power Plant. We produce high quality
3 overhead line conductors, the backbone of the
4 electrical grid.

5 Southwire Company supports this
6 project. They proposed a 780-mile transmission line
7 that would deliver approximately 4,000 megawatts from
8 Kansas to Illinois and neighboring states. We
9 understand that Clean Line Energy proposed to invest
10 \$700 million in Illinois as a direct result of the
11 construction of the Grain Belt Express Clean Line
12 project. We also understand that Clean Line has
13 announced that it is committed to sourcing as many of
14 the materials and services as possible from local
15 companies in the project area.

16 We do know that Clean Line Energy has
17 signed a memorandum of understanding with Southwire
18 Company expressing its intent to acquire transmission
19 wire for this project from Southwire Company. We are
20 pleased to be chosen by Clean Line as a partner of
21 the Clean Belt Express Line -- excuse me, the Grain
22 Belt Express Clean Line project which proposes to

1 bring renewable energy to communities from the
2 southwest.

3 Southwire respectfully encourages the
4 ICC to approve the Grain Belt Express Clean Line.

5 Thank you.

6 JUDGE VON QUALEN: I am getting a little
7 concerned about the time here because we have a lot
8 of people who want to speak. I know people feel
9 passionate and want to clap afterwards, but the
10 actuality is some people will probably not be able to
11 speak if that happens.

12 I am probably going to be calling two
13 names at once, so if one could come to the podium and
14 the other one prepare to come to the microphone, we
15 can move a little quicker then.

16 Next is Lucy Gleespen. And after that
17 will be Joseph Gleespen.

18 MS. GLEESPEN: My name is Lucy Gleespen,
19 G-L-E-E-S-P-E-N. I do thank Judge Von Qualen, the
20 Commissioners and the Staff for this opportunity to
21 voice our concerns today.

22 When this process started, our family

1 had farms on all three proposed routes. After
2 dropping one of the routes, we still found ourselves
3 in both the primary and, our daughter's farm, on the
4 alternate route. The alternate route dissects our
5 daughter's farm diagonally in Montgomery County, and
6 the primary route follows our property for one mile
7 and will come within 450 feet of our house.

8 Farmers are agri-business people. We
9 deal with so many things that are not under our
10 control. We do the best we can because this is our
11 home. We feed the world and we employ people every
12 day of the year. We were here long before Clean Line
13 was even thought of, and we will be here long after
14 they leave. Farming provides the base for many
15 agricultural industries, and it accounts for one out
16 of every 17 jobs. So the ag business is good to
17 Illinois.

18 We are not confused or misinformed as
19 Clean Belt would like you to believe. We are very
20 informed and we fully understand this project. We
21 fully understand what eminent domain is. We are
22 protecting what is rightfully ours, our property

1 rights and our livelihood. This is our income, our
2 retirement, and income for future generations.
3 Farmers aren't against progress if there is a need
4 for it and if it is for the public good. Our farms
5 have utility poles, fiber optics, gas lines,
6 telephone lines, and water lines running through
7 them. There was a need for those, and they were for
8 the public good.

9 Once Grain Belt acquires the
10 easements, they will be sold over and over, leaving
11 the landowner not knowing who actually owns the
12 easement, only knowing that he is left to pay the
13 property tax and contend with the aftermath of
14 disruption that is left behind.

15 Considering the number of miles that
16 this project stretches across Illinois, there have
17 been few changes in the proposed route. We are not
18 trying to push it off on our neighbors. Grain Belt
19 is trying to pit the townspeople against the
20 landowner and neighbor against neighbor. This isn't
21 the objection of a few. It is the objection of many.

22 This line will simply cross Illinois

1 and possibly even back a few miles on the eastern
2 part of the state. The electric grid is not too
3 congested to serve Illinois. In fact, there is less
4 of a demand for energy now as we begin to use it more
5 efficiently. The Illinois River transmission line is
6 being built to accommodate the needs for Illinois.
7 Grain Belt is simply not needed here.

8 I am asking you to listen to the
9 people who live here, who will continue to live here
10 and contribute to the economy of Illinois. This is a
11 precedent-setting case. This is a private for-profit
12 company wanting to take easements of our land for
13 their own benefit, not for the good of the people of
14 Illinois.

15 I am strongly opposed to Grain Belt
16 Express. Please deny them a CPCN.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. GLEESPEN: Joseph Gleespen,
19 G-L-E-E-S-P-E-N. I'd like to thank the Commission,
20 the Staff and the Judge for the opportunity to hear
21 our concerns today.

22 In the eight months since we have

1 learned of Grain Belt Express, we have had very
2 little time to defend what is ours. We've had to
3 inform and be informed on the consequences if this
4 project goes through our state and our land. I am on
5 the primary route that will traverse one mile along
6 my property boundary and will come within 450 feet of
7 my back door. The alternate route will cut through
8 my daughter's farm diagonally.

9 I am still at a loss as to the benefit
10 to Illinois. As the Judge mentioned, it will only be
11 usable for five miles maybe. Grain Belt Express is
12 not a public utility. I was rather surprised at how
13 they filed it under Section 406.1 in Illinois since
14 they are not a public utility. This is totally in
15 disregard of the Section 406.1 of the statute. They
16 are a private entity taking private land, over 200
17 miles of easements. If I were purchasing the
18 property looking for a home, I would definitely want
19 to purchase the land at a significantly reduced cost.

20 It's the Commission's duty to the
21 citizens of the state of Illinois. This is taking of
22 other people's property. It has divided townspeople

1 against landowners for the sake of money. People who
2 own their property have a right to control it.

3 Thank you.

4 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Michael Deimel and next will
5 be Kendra Kleinik Davis.

6 MR. DEIMEL: Good morning. My name is Michael
7 Deimel, D-E-I-M-E-L, representing Hancock Carriers
8 Incorporated. Some of you may know this, some of you
9 may not, but Illinois is home to the (inaudible). It
10 is one of the few places in the world where they
11 live. That's what you call a fun fact.

12 Also a fun fact is the region has an
13 unemployment rate of 7.1 percent. At the present
14 time Hancock Carrier employs roughly 50 people. As
15 my partner in Southwire said, the Grain Belt project
16 will be able to help the unemployment in our
17 community by creating several jobs, not only truck
18 drivers but, through the workload, we will need
19 additional support for office help and dealer
20 maintenance.

21 In addition to adding new employees,
22 our workers in Southwire are from our communities,

1 too. Our workers will benefit local fuel providers,
2 local tire providers and local companies. This
3 partnership will also help our economics in the area
4 simply with the increase being generated by the added
5 positions.

6 I thank you for the opportunity to
7 speak to you this morning on the partnership. We are
8 honored to be involved in it.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. DAVIS: I am Kendra Kleinik Davis
11 K-E-N-D-R-A, Kleinik K-L-E-I-N-I-K, Davis D-A-V-I-S.
12 Thank you for visiting rural central Illinois to
13 learn about the impact Grain Belt Express will have
14 on the nine central Illinois counties and for the
15 opportunity to speak to you today.

16 This poster is a portion of our second
17 and third generation to farm in Christian County,
18 Greenwood Township, while the first generation
19 cleared the land for the farming. Generations four,
20 five and six are here with you today. Two of the
21 last three generations hold a Bachelor's of Science
22 degree in Agriculture. Agriculture is our life and

1 we have worked for Fortune 500 corporations, and we
2 have done this to take over our family farms.

3 Grain Belt Express would like to take
4 13 to 17 percent of the potential production out of
5 an 80-acre field along the transmission line. It
6 would cause widespread ramifications should it be
7 granted a CPCN. Landowners have built their lives
8 around farm income, and the community has built their
9 lives from our expenditures. It will deeply affect
10 the local communities in terms of jobs. The very
11 jobs landowners support today are banks, grocery
12 stores, WalMart, farm supply stores, hardware stores,
13 restaurants, insurance salesmen, attorneys,
14 physicians, nursing homes, assisted living
15 facilities, hair salons and barbers. These jobs
16 cannot be replaced by Clean Line's unsubstantiated
17 1500 positions that they purport and they flash in
18 front of the union employees. Illinois communities
19 have seen this before as they are left sitting on a
20 surplus of foreclosed homes due to projects of this
21 type. The short term jobs leave, and they leave
22 destruction in their wake.

1 Today we constantly hear our
2 government telling us Americans are not saving
3 enough. Corporate pensions are being pulled away.
4 Health insurance is heavily increasing, not only in
5 premiums but prescription costs. Individuals have
6 saved to invest in farms for their future and
7 retirement needs, paid taxes on the farmland, and now
8 the company wants to take it away. The landowners
9 have learned to budget on the farm income from year
10 to year. Lump sum or 20-year payments are not in the
11 best interest of the landowner or the community. The
12 landowners typically grew up learning to manage farm
13 income.

14 I have met with many farmers and
15 landowners over the years across Illinois, and more
16 times than I can count I have heard "Mother paid for
17 the farm with the hog checks." Those days have
18 passed, but those farms are now paying 3500 to 4,000
19 for grandmother in nursing homes.

20 Thank you.

21 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Bill Hoene and next will be
22 Don Antrim.

1 MR. HOENE: Good morning. My name is Bill
2 Hoene, H-O-E-N-E, and I am from central Illinois,
3 Effingham County, and I own all my land. And a lot
4 has not been said about the machines which is all our
5 farming equipment. GPS equipment comes with it. I
6 could not use it no more.

7 And like everybody else here it says
8 that it does not benefit Illinois any. And we have
9 got -- need to depend on Ameren, our own local
10 suppliers, to produce. They've got to do what they
11 need to do for our needs.

12 And everybody makes some real good
13 comments. Like when Grain Belt says they are going
14 to pay out \$7 million, but they don't have anything
15 on what the damages appear to be for the roads and
16 landowners. Every farm around it, what are they
17 going to do with the dirt when they dig them? They
18 ain't going to haul that dirt for 25 feet.

19 So I don't see it was necessary to
20 come through Illinois. If it was necessary, I
21 probably would support it. But it has no value to
22 us. It is just an extension cord running across our

1 state. And the environment impact, what they all do
2 to the timber and ground around those lines, they
3 could not maintain them very well. They spray them,
4 shut down let the road, everything else, and it isn't
5 good for wildlife.

6 That's all I have to say, and thank
7 you very much for listening to me.

8 MR. ANTRIM: My name is Don Antrim,
9 A-N-T-R-I-M. I live in southern Shelby County south
10 of Stewardson, Illinois, where I grew up. We've had
11 some great opinions today and we appreciate the
12 chance to speak to you.

13 We are a small farm. We are on the
14 main route. One of our concerns is the line comes
15 within just a few yards of our grain feeding
16 facilities so condensation is not appropriate, from
17 what I can understand.

18 I am like everyone else, you know, I
19 am very concerned about the health and safety aspects
20 of high voltage lines that close to our house. It
21 does affect the GPS equipment, just as Bill said.
22 Most of our modern equipment today has that kind of

1 setup, and it is very expensive.

2 I am concerned about my neighbors. We
3 don't have a lot of woodland on our particular
4 property, but my neighbors certainly do, and it is
5 devastating to lose that kind of land, because once
6 it's gone, it's gone and there is no coming back.

7 My second concern is this swath that
8 they are proposing to take 200 feet. It seems
9 ridiculous to me. First of all, I don't think they
10 need that kind of land, that kind of access. And,
11 secondly, across our small acreage it devastates the
12 entire use of our farm. To me, if this is a viable
13 project, why not build it closer to your customers.
14 My understanding is we have no supplier in Kansas and
15 no customer on the east coast at the present time.

16 As said before, I think the adversity
17 in money is pitting neighbor against neighbor which I
18 feel is extremely poor judgment. And I truly see no
19 need for this because it benefits nothing to Illinois
20 other than the income they generate one time. We are
21 talking about a lifelong investment in our farms and
22 in our families, and I see no need. And I would

1 appreciate a "no" vote when it comes to this
2 decision.

3 Thank you very much.

4 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Kely Mertz and next will be
5 Robert Guernsey.

6 MS. MERTZ: Kely Mertz, K-E-L-Y M-E-R-T-Z. I
7 am here on behalf of SWCA Environmental Consultants,
8 and that is my work. I am a senior biologist and
9 supervisor, and I am very much in support of this
10 project.

11 Our main point of the support is the
12 jobs this will either create or help to secure. We
13 have an Illinois office and this will secure
14 employment for our biologists, geologists, wetland
15 scientists, etcetera, that is in the Warrensville,
16 Illinois, office. It will be -- my duties at SWCA
17 revolve around making sure that this project is in
18 compliance with all environmental goals and
19 regulations and other components of state and federal
20 and local agency levels to make sure that natural
21 resources and cultural resources are preserved.

22 Clean Line has selected SWCA for our

1 expertise in this project, and this is very important
2 and substantial project for our company. SWCA is
3 headquartered in Phoenix, but we have offices
4 throughout the country, and we have recently made a
5 move into the Midwest. We have several offices here,
6 including one in Warrensville, Illinois. The Grain
7 Belt Express will support my company's current and
8 future health and our growth and will support
9 specifically our goal in providing environmental
10 compliance to projects in this region. Our intention
11 is to support new projects for our Warrensville
12 office as well as other offices in the future. The
13 Grain Belt Express project will put our staff and our
14 Illinois office to work, and for that reason we
15 support the project.

16 Thank you.

17 MR. GUERNSEY: I am Robert Guernsey. My wife
18 and I own the Dappert Farm.

19 MR. BEYER: Spell your name.

20 MR. GUERNSEY: G-U-E-R-N-S-E-Y. My wife and I
21 own the Dappert Farm, and it's a family farm my
22 wife's family has farmed for over 150 years, and we

1 intend to keep it that way. We don't live there now;
2 it's farmed by a neighbor, but it's very important to
3 us.

4 And I have seen no compelling reason,
5 no great good to justify all the pain that has been
6 described here this morning. We are strongly against
7 building this Grain Belt Express. It does not make
8 sense. And as an engineer, I've been looking at some
9 of those aspects.

10 I got my PhD from Washington
11 University. I've worked, taught physics. I worked
12 30 years at IBM in employing new technologies for
13 advanced computer systems. So I have some experience
14 in what it means to evaluate and deploy new
15 technologies. In this case I don't see a compelling
16 reason, a greater good, that is going to justify the
17 terrible losses that everybody is describing. I just
18 don't see it.

19 And what's very interesting to me is
20 the longer term of view, what is more in fact
21 important here. And what I mean is that how we
22 deploy wind power is changing. The Department of

1 Energy has just issued a report in May and that
2 report is called "Enabling Wind Power Nationwide."
3 And in that report, and let me quote, it says,
4 "Pursuing higher hub heights can truly enable them to
5 be deployed across all 50 states." This is a new
6 technology trend. I think this is a game changer. I
7 think this may make the Grain Belt Express obsolete.
8 So what a tragedy it would be to build this thing and
9 create all this pain, and then find that it wasn't
10 necessary.

11 So I am depending on your staff, on
12 you Commissioners, to really take that long term
13 view, to do that work to see this long term picture
14 and not let this tragedy happen.

15 Thank you.

16 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Curt Slipke. Next will be
17 Marilyn Kaufman.

18 MS. KAUFMAN: My name is Marilyn Kaufman,
19 K-A-U-F-M-A-N.

20 As many of the landowners along this
21 route, we have spent our lives, 53 years of marriage,
22 and money developing the land, hoping to make a

1 profit in most years. And we are the third
2 generation that has bought the property, and we hope
3 our children and grandchildren will continue to own
4 it and farm the ground.

5 We were completely against this Clean
6 Line Energy because of the many uses that they say it
7 can have, but it's not going to be true. It is our
8 understanding that Clean Line Energy is not currently
9 a public utility to serve with others, but rather a
10 corporation created to benefit them to make a clear,
11 large profit. We are not sure why eminent domain has
12 to even be considered as, again, this appears to be
13 for the abuse of their rights and, along with the
14 existing town, would cause an impact on the roads and
15 it will be hard to maintain with the few taxes that
16 we have.

17 I am going to cut this short because
18 there is other people. We believe or understand that
19 the CPCN they proposed has been voted down in
20 Missouri, and we are hopeful that Illinois will
21 follow and deny this proposal.

22 MR. SLIPKE: My name is Curt, C-U-R-T, Slipke,

1 S-L-I-P-K-E, one of the best Irish names you will run
2 across.

3 I work for a crane equipment company
4 in northern Illinois and we do several -- we are
5 involved with quite a few projects right now with
6 Commonwealth Edison, some agri people, on
7 transmission which seems to be an ongoing need all
8 over the country for power, lower priced power. And
9 when we come out to a lot of these construction
10 sites, move inland with our cranes and some
11 equipment, the amount of people that are watching us
12 environmentally, what we do, how we protect the land
13 with our equipment, and so much information is coming
14 up and the new products that are available now to
15 protect the environment from heavy equipment.

16 I was talking to people, developers,
17 today about some new type of matting system that
18 comes in that protects the ground a lot better than
19 wooden mats or plastic mats or anything else. You
20 can leave a nice -- the ground the way it was when
21 you showed up.

22 Anyway, we employ a lot of people, and

1 the people that we have employed hopefully around
2 here would benefit from this project. So I
3 understand everyone's concern being farmers. My
4 uncles have a history of weed farming in northwestern
5 Kansas, so I know what you guys are talking about
6 here, your concerns. But everything goes forward.
7 Everything in the country goes forward.

8 There is a need for this type of
9 investment on the private side because, unless I
10 forget, I think -- I believe that Ameren is a
11 publicly traded, Commonwealth Edison is a publicly
12 traded company. They are all out for profit. So if
13 someone is willing to invest money in speculation and
14 have the money to come through, and maybe let's say it
15 does, but everybody gets a plus-minus thought pattern
16 here.

17 But as far as what we see for
18 employment and taxes, keeping things busy in the
19 state of Illinois which is a pretty sad state of
20 affair right now, anyway, is all to a plus. So as a
21 supplier to this project, it definitely is always
22 good to keep the economy flowing, keep payments, keep

1 taxes coming in. So I do understands your side. So
2 me, myself and I am in favor of the project.

3 Thank you.

4 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Jim Vandenberg, Jr., and
5 then it will be Aaron Vandenberg.

6 MR. J. VANDENBERGH: My name is Jim
7 Vandenberg, Jr., V-A-N-D-E-N-B-E-R-G-H, Jr. I live
8 on the Christian County line south of Pana here, and
9 I am opposed to it.

10 I don't know about health reasons, but
11 it does cause more health reasons with stray voltage.
12 There is studies that prove that. And a lot of it is
13 cancer, and that's one thing I would not wish on
14 anybody. The last two years I went through it, and I
15 wouldn't wish anybody on it, especially children.

16 The company is not a trustworthy
17 company. I went to their meeting and, if you ask
18 them something they did not like, they would try to
19 blow you off, ignore you. The second meeting I went
20 to, I asked one guy about stray voltage. He said
21 there was none. I kept on him. He finally admitted
22 he was lying, that he would not talk to me no more.

1 Then Mr. Skelly came over to me and personally talked
2 to me, and I told him, I said, "Why do you want
3 this?" I said, "You have no customers out east.
4 They do not want your power. They want to make their
5 own power." He said, "They cannot make their own
6 power. The wind does not blow out east." Well, I
7 just heard on ABC there was some hurricanes on the
8 coast of Rhode Island, and I think Rhode Island is on
9 the east coast.

10 So then I went on, I went to the next
11 meeting, the third meeting. I did not go in. I sat
12 in my truck with my sign opposing it because I did
13 not want to listen to their lies. Well, I still
14 cannot -- Amy Kurt come out and talked to me. She
15 told me they were a public utility, which from what I
16 understand, if they are a public utility, we do not
17 need to have this meeting, do we? And it's a big
18 percentage of it is foreign-owned. I do not like
19 that.

20 And a lot of others around here are
21 opposed to it. But with the timing of this thing and
22 work obligations and medical, I've got at least five

1 out of my own immediate family, landowners, that did
2 not come to this meeting or were not notified. After
3 the last informational meeting, they come up with the
4 new alternate route that was never mentioned, and I
5 talked to several landowners on that route. They
6 have not received nothing from Clean Line.

7 So they are not a trustworthy company.
8 As far as I know, the Pana Township is still
9 opposing. Christian County Board is opposing. Farm
10 Bureau -- Christian County Farm Bureau oppose it, and
11 this is not a deal for clean power. This is greed.

12 Everyone here that has been for it or
13 almost everyone, well, not everyone, has some form of
14 profit to gain from this. They are looking to add
15 income from the job or to protect their investment.
16 And as far as paying the county, at the county board
17 meeting it was noted the money they were giving the
18 county could be rescinded at any time by either
19 party. So once they get in, what do you think Clean
20 Line will do? They will say, "No, we are not giving
21 you no money."

22 So I urge you guys to deny them a

1 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, and
2 tell them to put their money somewhere where it will
3 benefit people and it is wanted, not just benefit
4 their pockets.

5 Thank you for your time.

6 MR. A. VANDENBERGH: My name is Aaron
7 Vandenberg, A-A-R-O-N V-A-N-D-E-N-B-E-R-G-H. I am
8 here to oppose Clean Line and the Grain Belt Express
9 and all their other projects. Fifth generation
10 farmer, I just graduated from college with a degree
11 in agriculture management back at home. I was
12 running cattle, working for my dad. I am planning on
13 taking over the farm some day after he is ready to
14 retire, and here are some reasons why I oppose the
15 Grain Belt Express.

16 One, it would interfere with our daily
17 operations on the farm, and it also runs through my
18 family's other farm ground. We will have to farm
19 around the wires, guy wires, which will give us a
20 risk of injury, if we ever did have to have something
21 happen. The line will also go through our pasture
22 and we are already short on pasture. That will cut

1 back on our cattle. We won't have as many and that
2 is eating up on paying for our farm.

3 The soil compaction, they may pay for
4 it but that ain't the point of it. That soil will
5 never be the same, and it ain't about the money.
6 That is to provide a crop for me and you. That was
7 what the purpose of it was for.

8 And I am also quite concerned about
9 the voltage to come off these lines. I have seen
10 what it's like on the internet that show negative
11 effects to cattle, and I also have some reservations
12 about this.

13 Every meeting Clean Line has held
14 there is no one that can talk there. Well, anyway,
15 that tells you there is no support for it. The
16 opposition outweighs it. And Clean Line, well, might
17 think getting electricity across the country is a
18 good idea. Well, I hate to tell you, it ain't
19 because it is more important for us to make food for
20 the world. That's why we are farmers.

21 So I don't want them being on my
22 farmland and wasting it. That's not the point in it.

1 And I want to thank you, the ICC Staff, for letting
2 me speak and listening to everybody else on the
3 opposition of this project.

4 Thank you.

5 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Richard Bray and next will
6 be George Nuxoll.

7 MR. BRAY: Richard Bray, R-I-C-H-A-R-D
8 B-R-A-Y. Thank you for this opportunity.

9 I have farmland and private
10 environment threatened by this project. So do my
11 neighbors. I am a retired farmer and retired pilot.
12 In 1959 I flew F-86Fs in Korea. I left the Air Force
13 for a purchased farm next to dad's and a flying job
14 with the Illinois Air National Guard, but it was on
15 the farm where I had a life-threatening accident.

16 We farmers are very proud of our
17 world-class food production. We love our land and
18 our ability to raise production each generation.
19 Unfortunately, we farmers have a high accident rate.
20 We tend to be older than the average worker and our
21 seasonal pushes to plant and harvest find us working
22 long hours. In the rush seasons we often have to

1 hire inexperienced help.

2 We are not afraid of change. Granddad
3 had a six-foot wide planter and a 40-horsepower
4 tractor, while the present generation has 60-foot
5 planters, 75-foot when the marker is down, and
6 400-horsepower tractors. With huge transmission
7 poles across our fields and our wider equipment, our
8 dangers are greatly increased.

9 The proposed high voltage lines will
10 stop our, sometimes extremely important, aerial
11 spraying. We will be denied the benefits of new
12 technology like drones. Our GPS and computer
13 controls will be limited by the high voltage DC
14 transmission line.

15 We farmers welcome new technology and
16 new ideas, but we tend to not be reckless. We
17 realize, too, that eminent domain powers are at times
18 necessary. Please consider the failures, the Kelo
19 case where Susette Kelo and her neighbors had their
20 houses bulldozed so that Pfizer could put the land to
21 better use. Now, that was in the city of New London,
22 Connecticut. The company pulled out and left bare

1 ground behind. The city and all suffered from using
2 eminent domain as brute force.

3 Consider the Cape Wind project off the
4 coast of Massachusetts where the wind is strong and
5 constant, where public waters were leased to put the
6 wind farm. National Grid is one of the utilities
7 that once wanted to buy the power generated. Now the
8 utilities have backed out and the project is dead for
9 lack of clients.

10 Though I am 81, I'm a backup tractor
11 driver for my farm operator. And I hope you realize
12 you have to break some eggs to make an omelet. We
13 both hope you will not break eggs for a very likely
14 bad omelet.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. NUXOLL: My name is George Nuxoll,
17 N-U-X-O-L-L. I want to address a couple of issues
18 relating to the Grain Belt Express power line.

19 In a recent article in the Wall Street
20 Journal they talked about some things going on in
21 North Carolina and Kansas, two states of the 26 that
22 early on passed laws promoting green energy. I am

1 not opposed to green energy. I understand some day
2 we are going to run out of oil and coal. But the
3 North Carolina taxpayers now realize that the green
4 energy programs they were promoting for wind are not
5 that economically feasible. It's many times more
6 expensive than what it was originally explained to
7 them to be. They are now passing laws rescinding
8 those green energy statutes they had passed earlier.

9 That kind of flies in the face of what
10 the man said earlier about this being a cheap
11 electricity. I don't think it is. I think if we
12 read the news, we are finding out it is not cheap,
13 not that it couldn't be some day, but it is not now.
14 We already have wind farms in Paxton and Bloomington,
15 all across that part of the state. We already have
16 power lines running east and west, north of Sigel
17 where I live, which by the way the power line map
18 that I saw proposed by Grain Belt was about four or
19 five miles north of my house east and west. And I
20 will talk about some issues that deal with that.

21 When we lived in Mahomet, I lived near
22 a large transmission line, and we were not able to

1 use a television antenna. We couldn't use satellite.
2 We had to go to cable television because of the
3 interference from the power line. The power company
4 denied it, but when the people asked about it, the
5 satellite company said, no, we can't, we can't work
6 with this excess energy being put out of the power
7 line.

8 At that time I was a police officer.
9 Most occasions I could not use my police radio
10 anywhere close to my home because of the power lines
11 that ran close. At that time that was really old, so
12 that was prior to cell phones, but we did have some
13 of the cordless phones. They wouldn't work. We
14 couldn't get one of those. So no matter what they
15 say about these power lines, they do put out some
16 excess signal and excess electricity that does affect
17 things. We have noticed this in our travels with our
18 cell phones, with our GPS and with our radio. If we
19 drive under one of these, we lose our signals.

20 The last thing I would like to talk
21 about is their statement about using local
22 contractors. I hope that if the FCC grants them

1 permission or the Illinois Commerce Commission grants
2 them permission, they put some stipulations in there
3 because I see a lot of word use like "when possible,"
4 "if we can," "whenever possible," "we hope to." I
5 don't see anyplace where they say we are going to use
6 local products or local contractors. I suspect they
7 are going to use whatever is cheapest. And if they
8 find cheap new hire, that's what they are going to
9 use. And if they can get cheaper contractors out of
10 Tennessee, that's who they are going to use.

11 Thank you.

12 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Colleen Nuxoll and next will
13 be Denny Bauman.

14 MS. NUXOLL: Thank you for the opportunity to
15 address the Commission. My name is Colleen,
16 C-O-L-L-E-E-N, last name Nuxoll, N-U-X-O-L-L. And I
17 am here to represent the Incorporated Town of Sigel,
18 Illinois, which is at the southern part of Shelby
19 County. I am and have been a trustee for the past
20 four years with the Incorporated Town of Sigel and
21 was asked to represent them in opposing Grain Belt
22 Express.

1 The Incorporated Town of Sigel has
2 approximately 400 full time residences. We are a
3 very rural community and would be severely impacted
4 by Grain Belt Express' lines. We, the Incorporated
5 Town of Sigel, and I will hand you a map that shows
6 where we are, the Town of Sigel would be not able to
7 grow should Grain Belt Express be allowed to put
8 these lines in. We are hampered by I57 on the east,
9 by cemetery and sewer property on the west, by the
10 county line which is less than a quarter mile in
11 fact, and Grain Belt Express' lines which would be
12 less than a quarter of a mile to the north. North
13 would be the only logical place should our town
14 decide to grow.

15 We are a farming community. The
16 entire community depends on the farmers who are able
17 to farm their land. The decreased crop that would be
18 available under these lines would severely impact the
19 economy of the farmers in our area. There would be
20 also the inability of crop dusting within the limits
21 around these lines. And anybody that lives in rural
22 communities knows that they can't get in any other

1 way to prevent insects and fungus, etcetera, except
2 crop dusting. I believe in our area we have crop
3 dusting from morning until night.

4 Also livestock and pets, we are
5 concerned about the health and the wellbeing of the
6 animals in our area, not only the farmers' animals
7 but we have a lot of deer farms. We have a lot of
8 wildlife. Farmers need to be able to make the best
9 use of the very fertile and productive land that is
10 available in our area. This would be impeded by
11 taking the acreage that would be gobbled up by the
12 opposition. Estimates show that more cropland is
13 needed to feed our nation, not less.

14 The health impact of the overhead
15 lines concerns me a great deal. I am a nurse
16 practitioner. The radiation of those lines is a
17 great concern, even people with pacemakers or
18 defibrillators. We were talking about the crop
19 dusting.

20 The energy, I also have a copy of an
21 article in the Wall Street Journal the 11th of July
22 which I will submit to you indicating that the people

1 in Kansas, North Carolina, a lot of different places,
2 have asked that their regular renewable energy source
3 guidelines be scrapped because they are unable to do
4 it, it's not necessary, and they want out of this
5 project.

6 And I thank you very much for your
7 consideration.

8 MR. BAUMAN: Hello, my name is Denny Bauman,
9 D-E-N-N-Y B-A-U-M-A-N. I am not a landowner to
10 speak in front of crowds here, but I feel that if you
11 are not part of the solution, you are part of the
12 problem.

13 So having said that, I want my -- I
14 have been on the school board here in my little town
15 of Nokomis for ten years, and I mention that because
16 I feel that my ideas, thoughts, are in line with the
17 community. Having said that, and I don't say that I
18 am a crybaby, I am just saying that that's the way I
19 view it.

20 In this case, two words I might
21 express since I have been involved with the school,
22 one of our major problems along with everything else

1 is bullying. Bullying is a major problem in school.
2 And I feel GBE is in fact the bully in this
3 situation, and I ask the ICC not to be a part of
4 that. The landowners have something they have won,
5 they have earned, and GBE is bullying their way to
6 get it. It's no different than the bullies in
7 school. And they really -- GBE does not have the
8 best interest in us, the farmers or the receivers.
9 The only thing they are after right here is money.
10 That's all they want.

11 And then on a personal note, the
12 second point is I have a hobby, and that's something
13 with my son. I am sure you guys all have hobbies,
14 whether it be fishing, golfing, watching TV or
15 whatever. Well, the proposed line is going to take
16 away what little hunting ground I had. So that would
17 be no different than somebody coming into your house,
18 taking your TV, taking your golf clubs, taking your
19 fishing rods, and saying you can't do that no more.
20 That's what's going to happen to me, and it's going
21 to happen for future generations forever and ever to
22 come.

1 So please we would ask you to keep GBE
2 from strong-arming the landowners and taking what's
3 earned with hard work and sweat. So I appreciate
4 that.

5 And one more thing is our school board
6 has discussed the possibility of GBE donating money
7 to our district, and it was unanimously decided by
8 the board to direct the superintendent not to accept
9 any money from GBE.

10 Thank you.

11 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Charles Fuyy, F-U-Y-Y, and
12 the next one will be James Wesselman.

13 MR. FURR: My name is Charles Furr, F-U-R-R.

14 JUDGE VON QUALEN: I am sorry.

15 MR. FURR: I want to take a short bit and
16 express my opposition as a landowner to the Grain
17 Belt Express wanting to build a line on the two farms
18 that I own in Shelby County.

19 First of all, both farms have been in
20 our two families for many, many years. My family
21 farm is 71 acres and is a centennial farm, been in my
22 immediate family since 1899. My son lives on it now

1 and farms it now and will be the next owner of my
2 land. My great grandfather bought it in 1899, so
3 this farm means a lot to me since all five
4 generations lived on it and also farmed it.

5 The other farm my wife and I own is
6 just one mile away, and it is 97 and a half acres.
7 She is the third generation of her family to live on
8 it and farm on it. Her grandmother purchased it in
9 1920, so both have been in our family for a long
10 time.

11 Both farms already have a large Ameren
12 high voltage twin-pole line across them, creating
13 structures to farm around. Therefore, we do not need
14 Grain Belt Express coming through and making matters
15 worse. One line for a farm is definitely enough.

16 On my family farm I have two fields,
17 both one-quarter mile wide, separated by a timber.
18 The Ameren line crosses right in the middle,
19 splitting it, making it impossible to do aerial
20 applications plus having to farm around the
21 structure, too.

22 Grain Belt Express is wanting to go

1 across my other field near the middle, splitting it,
2 and just doubling the problems. This thing of them
3 going down property lines and road right-of-ways is
4 definitely not what they want to do on my farms. My
5 adjoining landowner and I sent them a map of how they
6 could run their line down the side of my field and
7 his field, and they ignored it.

8 My wife's family farm, we have one
9 40-acre field which is a quarter mile wide and it is
10 split in half with the Ameren twin pole line,
11 stopping aerial applications on it plus structures to
12 farm around. The other 57 and a half acres on her
13 farm is a half-mile wide, and Grain Belt is wanting
14 to cross it. It would be creating the same problems.
15 We sure don't want the second line when we already
16 have one line on both farms. They are wanting a
17 total of three-quarters of a mile right-of-way on our
18 two farms which would amount to 18 acres they want to
19 control. We are not doing this for anybody,
20 especially anyone that is not a public utility, just
21 somebody wanting to make money with it.

22 To start with, the line is not needed.

1 There is nobody that doesn't already have
2 electricity. If they want wind farm-generated
3 electricity, then let them build their own and use
4 them over there and save the cost of the line. Let
5 us continued growing food with the farmland, which it
6 is always needed to feed the world in years to come.

7 Another reason I don't want this line
8 is it will devalue land, and I doubt very much if our
9 taxes will drop. Also, in the last issue of the
10 Illinois Field and Bean Magazine put out by the
11 Illinois Soybean Association, there was an article
12 written by Gary Schnitkey, a well-known University of
13 Illinois ag economist, that states obstructions in
14 fields, such as poles, has an effect on rent
15 negotiation. Although my farm is not for rent, I
16 urge the ICC to turn down the Grain Belt Express
17 project, and one power line crossing my two farms is
18 enough, and I feel most landowners feel the same.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. WESSELMAN: Hello. I am James Wesselman,
21 W-E-S-S-E-L-M-A-N, is the name and pretty much
22 everything has been said that I want to say. But I

1 guess I will say I am a landowner, almost everything
2 I own. Although this power line is not going to
3 cross my power line, I am going to be able to see it.
4 That's not for me.

5 We need food. You are going to lose a
6 lot of farm ground and environment. Always want
7 clean air; you are going to remove all the timber.
8 We need timber to clean the air, trees.

9 That's pretty much what I have got to
10 say.

11 Thank you.

12 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Robert Anderson and then
13 Steven Anderson.

14 MR. R. ANDERSON: My name is Robert Anderson.
15 I live over in the Strasburg area, and I want to
16 thank everybody for the opportunity to speak today.

17 I have several questions I want to
18 discuss very briefly that have been discussed here,
19 so I will not repeat the details about them. Each of
20 them talk about land values, and I know enough has
21 been said about that already.

22 My concern about this is should this

1 property or should this line be built, where does all
2 the dirt and rocks and subsoil go. I've been told it
3 would be hauled away, supposed to be hauled away.
4 I've been told it is to be spread on top of the dirt,
5 so clearly in those situations the land is such a
6 problem because they are not farming. Subsoil,
7 that's up on top. I did a brief calculation. I
8 think from my calculation, based on the size of your
9 truck to haul it away, each of those poles may take
10 somewhere around 90 or 95 truckloads to put in place,
11 so that's either going to take a lot of toll on the
12 roads or compaction in the field.

13 The next topic I want to just briefly
14 mention is what if this property is abandoned at some
15 point in time. And I have asked my question several
16 times, oh, don't worry because it will never be
17 abandoned. And if it was abandoned, you can have the
18 steel taken down and sold and make a lot of money.
19 So we understand that there will still be concrete
20 left in the ground and the cost of taking that down
21 may well be more than what it's worth.

22 Let me give you another sample of not

1 anticipating demolition. Several years ago a
2 railroad track was abandoned. Of course, the
3 railroad took all the iron, left all the rock and all
4 the dry shed, the compacted land, for the farm owner
5 to take care of.

6 The next two topics I want to talk
7 about briefly is the values of maybe surrounding
8 land. Because having been in the real estate
9 business for many years, any real estate where people
10 live near a site of power lines, it devalues the
11 property as a residential property. Also, there is
12 electric to magnetic field health benefits that we
13 discussed earlier. We were talking about that. I
14 know there is maybe with the county, the county will
15 get a lot of money, but for that the property values
16 would be devalued and your taxes would become less.

17 Another problem I asked about was
18 insurance liability for the farmers. Because if
19 somebody happens to hit a pole by accident with one
20 of their machinery, I believe the Grain Belt said he
21 would be responsible for all that. So if your
22 machine hits the bolt and it comes down and it causes

1 damage on your property, have you been able to get an
2 insurance company to quote what it would cost to get
3 that insurance?

4 MR. S. ANDERSON: Okay. Steve Anderson,
5 A-N-D-E-R-S-O-N. That was my father, Bob. Thank you
6 for listening to us today.

7 As a taxpayer, I am a voter down here.
8 I also live in Stewardson. I am infrastructure. I
9 spent some time in India. When the power goes out
10 and it is 122 degrees Fahrenheit, you know that. I
11 do want to say, however, our infrastructure is not
12 adequate. You can have clean power without this
13 line. You can move power without this line. There
14 is a line a half a mile north. It just runs through
15 this area. I have got a couple of engineer degrees
16 along the way from U of I. You have a lot of lines
17 off of this pile, so you shove through this process.
18 But there is not enough money for the existing power
19 company to put in new lines on the existing
20 infrastructure that they have. I really don't
21 understand the inadequacy when it comes to issuing
22 this Certificate for Public Need under the current

1 power infrastructure. They only discussed that, for
2 instance, here in Illinois.

3 Also, I think a lot of people talk
4 here about eminent domain rights if something goes
5 through. I am concerned. I am a young guy. There
6 are a lot of people who are young. There are many
7 people here who are worried about preserving the
8 value of the land. You know, I am not worried about
9 reimbursement. I am young; I am going to be paying
10 out for 50 years. I am concerned with that.

11 So and also just one final, Grain Belt
12 talked about the power of the market and the lower
13 energy rates. I believe in a free market. I believe
14 in free competition. I think that's fantastic. But
15 if this is the case, why are you talking about going
16 out east as opposed to the utility going out and
17 opening in the free market.

18 Thank you very much.

19 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Greg Brotherton and after
20 that Susan Cowles.

21 MR. BROTHERTON: Thank you. You know, when we
22 came in today, we had this -- oh, I'm sorry, Greg,

1 G-R-E-G, last name Brotherton, B-R-O-T-H-E-R-T-O-N.

2 As I came in today, there were two
3 lines, one in favor, one against. There wasn't any
4 line for someone in the middle. To be honest with
5 you, that's where I am, kind of in the middle. The
6 bottom line is for the greater good, several times.
7 As the mayor of the city of Taylorville, that's what
8 I probably look for, the greater good. If this
9 project, as Grain Belt claims, does everything it
10 says, if the need is there, then I will cross the
11 border. We can use extra jobs, whether they are
12 temporary or not. We can use extra that. We can use
13 infrastructure. Would the county want the money? I
14 guarantee they would call and tell you, yes, we need
15 money. Every municipality around the state would
16 say, yeah, we can use more revenue. Again, that's
17 not the bottom line.

18 I want this to be a win-win situation.
19 I can support this project if everything I understand
20 is true, and if there truly is a greater good for
21 everyone. If for some reason something isn't true or
22 they go back on their promises, then there should be

1 a reckoning and reprimanded very severely, and I
2 would like to see that done.

3 But the other folks, I feel sorry for
4 them. You know, I used to be a Star Trek fan, and
5 Mr. Spock once said, "The needs of the many
6 outweighed the needs of the few, unless you happen to
7 be one." Few, you don't like to hear that thing.
8 But I am hoping that that's the case here, that what
9 they are promising is a benefit to all. And if so,
10 then I stand in support of.

11 Thank you.

12 MS. COWLES: Thank you, Chairman Sheahan and
13 Commissioner Rosales for giving us the opportunity to
14 comment. Susan Cowles, S-U-S-A-N C-O-W-L-E-S.

15 I live in Springfield. My family has
16 owned land in Macoupin County for decades and will
17 continue to do so for decades to come. As such, I do
18 have a vested interested the proposed Grain Line
19 Express line. Structures of this line would destroy
20 thousands of acres of Illinois farmland, leaving it
21 completely unprotected. If representatives of Clean
22 Line are here, they are knocking on our door, they

1 are preaching economic development, prosperity and
2 jobs.

3 And, frankly, I am mad. I am mad
4 that, if you approve this project, my family and
5 other landowners will be at the mercy of private
6 investors, and these investors will be using our area
7 and government in an attempt to devalue their land
8 while lining their pockets. We've been told about
9 the greater good. I have a problem understanding
10 where greater good is when there are so many people
11 that will be adversely affected.

12 The people that are past are not
13 served by this project. My grandfather worked his
14 whole life to leave a legacy for his family. To you
15 our farm is a square of platinum, but to us it's
16 where we drive, where we celebrate Easter dinner. To
17 feel you knows what's best for our piece of property
18 is complete ridiculousness.

19 The citizens of Illinois have not
20 asked for this energy, don't need this energy and
21 will not benefit from this energy. The people of
22 tomorrow are not served by this project. The

1 proposed transmission lines will create health
2 hazards for generations. Dozens of published papers
3 have linked power lines and rare cancers and
4 diseases.

5 As officials on this Commission, you
6 have a great responsibility to, and I quote, "pursue
7 an appropriate balance between the interest of
8 consumers and the existing emergency service
9 providers to ensure the provision of adequate,
10 efficient, reliable, safe and least-cost public
11 utility service." I assert there is no balance in
12 this issue. The people of Illinois should not have
13 to bear the burden of this project, and I urge you to
14 vote against the proposed Grain Belt Express
15 transmission line.

16 Thank you.

17 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Philip Schneider and next
18 will be Aaron Huffmaster.

19 MR. P. SCHNEIDER: Thank you for allowing me to
20 speak. Philip Schneider, Philip, one "L",
21 S-C-H-N-E-I-D-E-R. Thank you for allowing me to
22 speak today.

1 I'm a fifth generation farmer. My
2 family farmed in our family for 140 years. I am
3 concerned with the eminent domain rights. I am
4 appalled that a private company, not a public
5 utility, is being allowed and afforded the
6 convenience of taking the land, which is what this
7 is. That's what this conversation is going to break
8 down to.

9 This line cuts right through the very
10 heart of what's taken 140 years to not only build but
11 to preserve. Our own land is not for sale. We don't
12 want to live and work around this. From where my
13 farm is, I can look north and I can see the family
14 homestead. Right now there is no 110-foot pole or
15 140-foot pole. It's ours. Put it together.

16 And too many people, I think as part
17 of this being lost in this conversation, is those who
18 live and work around this. Seeing that pole would be
19 a daily reminder that you were pushed around on your
20 own home by people who don't have to live around it,
21 didn't buy the land, haven't maintained it. It's not
22 just soil and dirt to us. It's our home and dreams,

1 and it will continue to be so for much longer.

2 There is quite a few people here that
3 have stated that it would be good for their company,
4 maybe their municipality. But for those of us who
5 actually own the land and who live there, it's all
6 loss from where we stand. Now, our land is not for
7 sale.

8 Thank you.

9 MR. HUFFMASTER: Thank you. My name is Aaron
10 Huffmaster, H-U-F-F-M-A-S-T-E-R, and I want to thank
11 this group for coming today and letting us speak our
12 mind. And I really don't have much more to add
13 because so many people have expressed the opinions I
14 had.

15 You can tell by the color of my shirt
16 which side I am on. And I just remember that, as
17 farmers, we are a very small percent of the
18 population. You can find 99 people that want this
19 project and one percent, one person, we are farmers,
20 one percent, one and a half percent of the
21 population. We don't have that large a visibility
22 any more. So you are going to hear a lot of other

1 people.

2 And that's all I have really been
3 wanting to say. And I think your compensation
4 package, if this would happen, there is only -- I'd
5 love to make investments like that to buy property
6 for that kind of price when it's worth a lot more,
7 and that's all I really want to say.

8 Thank you.

9 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Byron Schneider and the next
10 name I am not sure. Bill Arkebruer?

11 MR. B. SCHNEIDER: My name is Byron Schneider,
12 S-C-H-N-E-I-D-E-R. I want to thank you for this
13 opportunity to speak.

14 A lot of this is about property
15 rights, how we are going to view property rights in
16 the state of Illinois, not just on this project but
17 on many projects coming along. It's been said about
18 bullying, about the taking of private land. That is
19 exactly what this is. We do not want to sell it. We
20 don't want it taken.

21 Today I am in the barrel. It is my
22 property. It is my 140-year old farm that is being

1 taken or portions of it or the value of it or my
2 ability to use it. Tomorrow it could be something
3 near you.

4 Others have talked about the health
5 hazards with this thing. Ask yourself as a legacy,
6 as an owner, how do you feel about this. Would you
7 want to live close to this? Would you want somebody
8 that you love living close to this?

9 I think that there is a lot of good
10 things about this that need to be explored more than
11 what they have been so far. The man who was up here
12 who was a police officer, he talked about the
13 impudence of his signal for such things as 9-1-1,
14 emergency, fire. These things can't get to us. This
15 line will be within a quarter mile of my house.

16 There is the GPS signal that all
17 farming machinery runs off of nowadays. If that is
18 jeopardized, that will severely affect the value of
19 this property.

20 Such things as simple as the internet.
21 I use the internet virtually every day in my business
22 of agriculture. We finally have received decent

1 internet service out in the country. If that is lost
2 because of this, that will severely set back my
3 personal farm.

4 There are so many -- I am opposed to
5 this on so many levels. My farm, 1874, it was
6 prairie grass when my great, great grandfather came
7 here. Things such as World War I, World War II,
8 Korea, Vietnam, my personal farm has sent men to
9 fight for this country in every single one of those
10 wars. There is drought, there is disease, there is
11 pestilence, there is economic reversal, and there has
12 been untimely deaths on my farm. It has survived all
13 of this for all of these years, and I pray that it
14 can survive the Clean Line.

15 Thank you very much.

16 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Well, there is a Bill here
17 from Palmer. You'll be next. In the meantime Jim
18 Leitner and then Michael Buchanan.

19 MR. LEITNER: Hello, my name is Jim Leitner,
20 L-E-I-T-N-E-R, and thanks to the Commission for this
21 forum. Appreciate it.

22 I am here, not unique in the way of

1 landowners because I am one. My wife and I, we
2 reside in Alhambra, Illinois, and we have a farm in
3 Greene County, a 490-acre tract. The proposed
4 primary line comes through our farm and makes a right
5 angle turn. We purchased our farm, like many in this
6 room, with blood sweat and tears, and we took our
7 stewardship responsibility seriously. We enlisted
8 state biologists, weighed against private biologists.
9 We planned and achieved optimum wildlife habitat on
10 our farm. We were awarded 2010 Landowner Wildlife --
11 Wildlife Landowner of the Year. Our decisions have
12 been balanced against money to achieve this goal.
13 Without a doubt, granting this today would cause
14 irreversible loss of wildlife and habitat.

15 I also challenge this veil of clean
16 energy, and if you examine what is actually happening
17 with these mills, windmills that have birds cut up on
18 a wind farm out in Kansas. Technology is changing.
19 We haven't had blackouts here on a daily basis. We
20 have an infrastructure and we have a system. I am
21 hoping that this is not part of that system.

22 Thank you.

1 MR. BUCHANAN: My name is Michael Buchanan,
2 M-I-C-H-A-E-L B-U-C-H-A-N-A-N. I am a resident of
3 Shelby County.
4 Illinois Commerce Commission Staff,
5 Commissioners and Administrative Law Judge Janis Von
6 Qualen, thank you for coming today, this morning, and
7 allowing us to voice concerns for the proposed Grain
8 Belt Express Clean Line. As a landowner making a
9 living through the land, it is becoming more
10 difficult to run my business without interference of
11 outside interests who either want to build a pipeline
12 or a power line. I have dealt with Enbridge
13 Pipeline, and now Grain Belt Express Clean Line
14 proposes to cross two of our farms identified as
15 their primary route.

16 The proposed right-of-way will impact
17 18 acres of our farm and also impacts drainage on the
18 surrounding acreage, assuming a 200-foot width
19 corridor. Grain Belt Express documents lead the
20 public to believe that the company is following
21 boundary lines which in our case is false. Both of
22 our affected farms would be cut in two and would

1 disrupt our farming patterns.

2 Lawlor testifies on behalf of Grain
3 Belt Express Clean Line, LLC, I think he said 7.0,
4 line 522, Grain Belt Express is not requesting
5 condemnation authority at this time. Line 525 and
6 following, "Grain Belt Express will not seek
7 condemnation authority on a parcel unless and until
8 it has exhausted reasonable efforts to acquire a
9 transmission line easement through a voluntarily
10 negotiable agreement." From this statement it is my
11 opinion Grain Belt Express will use legal means to
12 condemn land at some point down the road when dealing
13 with landowners.

14 This project will reward investors who
15 will build wind turbines in Kansas. Grain Belt
16 Express will make multimillions from developing the
17 corridor. Illinois landowners are being asked to
18 take one for the team and allow it yet another
19 easement or corridor across the farm, this time
20 delivering electricity to Indiana.

21 GBE contends that added electrical
22 generation will make our electrical rates cheaper in

1 Illinois. A bigger reason this project has legs is
2 the government is requiring green energy and is
3 providing tax credits to these types of projects.
4 Will this project survive without federal tax credits
5 in a competitive environment? Illinois is nothing
6 more than a convenient corridor allowing out-of-state
7 investors to profit from our land. And if we don't
8 want to sell our land for an easement, we come in
9 second.

10 Grain Belt Express is looking for a
11 Certificate of Public Convenience under Section
12 8-406.1. Grain Belt Express wants to be recognized
13 as a public utility, which they are not. Grain Belt
14 Express Clean Line is not a public utility. I am
15 opposed to this project. I urge the Illinois
16 Commerce Commission to reject any and all attempts by
17 Grain Belt Express Clean Line to obtain eminent
18 domain in this project.

19 Respectfully, Michael Buchanan.

20 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Ronald Auld and Joseph
21 Gasparich.

22 MR. AULD: My name is Ronald Auld, A-U-L-D.

1 Jobs for Illinois residents is the reason I support
2 the Grain Belt Express Clean Line project. I am
3 personally involved with these projects. They are
4 the right-of-way industry.

5 As a certified general real estate
6 appraiser, I manage a right-of-way acquisition team.
7 I have personal connections to the jobs that a
8 project this size creates. Our company's experience
9 on working on these types of projects is that
10 Illinoisans are afforded quality jobs in these.

11 I also understand the impact of
12 constructing transmission lines. Being an Illinois
13 landowner and involved in a family farming operation,
14 I believe that with proper planning with each upgrade
15 to electric infrastructure that this project will be
16 a benefit to the greater good of Illinois residents.
17 I encourage the ICC to approve the Grain Belt Express
18 Clean Line project.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. GASPARICH: Thank you for allowing us to
21 speak. My name is Joe Gasparich, as in
22 G-A-S-P-A-R-I-C-H, and we got pretty close which is

1 doing pretty well, aren't we? I am with the
2 Montgomery County Board, and I want to clarify the
3 position of the Montgomery County Board on the
4 request for this project.

5 As was stated earlier that the Grain
6 Belt Express would not seek eminent domain rights
7 across the state of Illinois, that would be in
8 opposition to what has happened in other states where
9 they have indeed asked for that. At the full board
10 meeting February 2015 this year, the Montgomery
11 County Board expressly put forth a non-opposition
12 vote, that this should not be a situation where these
13 folks be given eminent domain to the landowners.

14 The other thing that's come up in the
15 Montgomery County Board on this issue is, if
16 construction were to occur, there would be
17 substantial damage to county and to township roads.
18 We have an agreement which we are working on which,
19 again, if this project would go forward, we would
20 want to make sure that's signed because this would
21 cause a lot of damage to roads. And as I am sure you
22 folks are aware, there has been a reduction in

1 funding, even our road funding, this year which is
2 sure to cause a lot of problems.

3 On a personal note, there is two
4 things I am concerned about. One, I am a biologist
5 by trade. I am a little concerned about the RFE of
6 these lines which was discussed. Now, this is a
7 situation where you look at those articles come from
8 whichever side of the fence you are. If you are a
9 proponent of this project, you find that that the RFE
10 interference is negligible. If you are opposed to
11 this project, you would have material on the internet
12 that would certainly indicate that this would be a
13 substantial problem for those living near it.

14 And the last thing I would state, as a
15 fire chief I am a little concerned -- which has not
16 been discussed, concerned if there is a catastrophic
17 failure in one of these lines, the 600,000 volt lines
18 of DC power. If that hits the ground, what would be
19 the effect of radiated emission carrier of that
20 energy and what would it do to structures and people
21 that would be about. That needs to be looked at
22 before anything is done here. This is DC voltage.

1 This is a relatively new process. If you go look at
2 some of the articles, opinions, most of what you see
3 is not DC but AC. This is a different line so there
4 is different problems. The line goes across Illinois
5 and there is very few places where the line has sort
6 of a breaker, if you will. So the 600,000 volts
7 going into the ground, this could cause a real
8 substantial problem in that area. That needs to be
9 researched, I think, before this project moves
10 forward.

11 Thank you.

12 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Corey Stone and then Ed
13 Murphy.

14 MR. STONE: Thank you. My name is Corey Stone,
15 C-O-R-E-Y S-T-O-N-E. I am a business representative
16 for IBEW Local 51, Springfield, Illinois. I am here
17 to support the Clean Line project. Clean Line has
18 committed the IBEW to work the majority of this work
19 to build through the heart of our jurisdiction. Our
20 members are anticipating, you know, having to have a
21 chance to bring clean energy into Illinois with a new
22 and reliable structure.

1 I think -- obviously, I am not going
2 to go over the same thing that everybody has hit on.
3 I think the revenue that would come to Illinois from
4 this project, the community said it best. Our
5 members being in those communities, spending money on
6 a daily basis, is something that would be beneficial
7 to everyone.

8 The safety concerns I understand.
9 I've been a lineman for 25 years. I have done this
10 work on daily basis. I've had it in my hand. I
11 mean, I get effects. I won't dispute that there are
12 effects of it. I just want you to know that our
13 members are highly trained. Safety is their number
14 one concern. Their safety brings the safety back to
15 the community. We are not going to do anything
16 that's going to jeopardize anyone's safety.

17 I will say I am impressed by the Grain
18 Line meetings. I appreciate the process that this
19 takes place under, that both sides have the
20 opportunity to express their concerns, you know,
21 these kind of meetings that are giving you a chance
22 to be heard. I appreciate the new technology that

1 they are looking into, trying to reduce the footprint
2 of the impact.

3 I am also a small farmer. My whole
4 family farms. I am from Macon County, west central
5 Illinois. I do understand this. I don't want one in
6 my yard, so I am not going to tell you exactly how I
7 feel about that. But the last year we have had the
8 proposed route right in my yard, and I have had the
9 neighbors, all farmers, battle each other, trying to
10 get their farm off this wind farm.

11 And I think I am going to step away
12 from a business representative and say this as a
13 citizen. I see this everyday, but you are creating a
14 real problem with the generation that we have in the
15 state. We are going to find out this fall when we
16 start looking at the nuclear plants and stuff how
17 much effect that's going to have. Everyone knows
18 what supply and demand does on costs. Bringing clean
19 energy into the Midwest from an area that the wind
20 energy is more profitable and easier to produce is
21 not a bad deal. I mean, we have to look at this
22 generation of power we are going to create here in

1 the next few years if we don't do something.

2 Like I said, I just think we are going
3 to lose this capacity. The last thing we need to do
4 is end up in supply and demand. And you think we are
5 not there, look at our infrastructure. We have spent
6 a lot of money rebuilding it, but our capacity of
7 generation between the nuclear and the coal plant,
8 everybody is putting forth energy. We have got to do
9 it.

10 So thank you. Thank you for your
11 time.

12 MR. MURPHY: Hi, my name is Ed Murphy,
13 M-U-R-P-H-Y, and I believe that Murphy is the number
14 one name in our area. So I am the fourth -- fifth
15 generation farmer on a farm. I do not believe that
16 we need this project. Okay. I was -- I have always
17 been taught and brought up that you need to leave
18 things better than what you found them, and we've
19 always tried to do that. I think I've made constant
20 improvements to the farm and to the surrounding
21 community.

22 I do not think that this Commission

1 should be granting Clean Line eminent domain, you
2 know, take something that is private away from
3 somebody and is not a public utility. We had a
4 number of -- you know, there is one going through it.
5 I don't think anybody would ever object to something
6 that is going to benefit people. This is not really
7 going to benefit the people of Illinois. I believe
8 this is going to be going to out of state, and the
9 people of Illinois cannot benefit from any
10 electricity from this power on it.

11 You talked about jobs. Well, the jobs
12 I see with these people all moving through, you know,
13 with the company. I see trailer parks that don't
14 have a soul in them today. And when a project like
15 this comes, the trailer parks are loaded full of
16 people that follow these projects. Very few people
17 from Illinois is hired to work on these projects.
18 There is some truck drivers and there is some low
19 paying jobs but not any high paying jobs.

20 We also thought on the job issue,
21 since you have -- you say you want to bring this
22 clean energy in here in Illinois, we have large

1 underlying coal fields. You want to eliminate the
2 jobs that we have that now people are working. Both
3 you or our neighbors are working in the power plant
4 or working for the local coal mine to provide the
5 energy. I know it is not a dream, but we have
6 invested a lot of money in putting scrubbers and
7 everything else in to burn Illinois coal.

8 Thank you.

9 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Bob Walk and Glenna Taylor.

10 MS. TAYLOR: Thank you. G-L-E-N-N-A

11 T-A-Y-L-O-R. And I want to thank you for the
12 opportunity to speak as we all have, to come and to
13 share our thoughts.

14 The other thing, as I sat listening,
15 and I have listened and I have taken notes and I have
16 learned a lot, I want to applaud the people who cared
17 enough to step out of their comfort zone and to come
18 and testify. It shows how passionate we believe and
19 what we feel it is. A recent newspaper headline
20 written in large font and using bold print "Wind
21 Power Line Could Mean Billions to Landowners," the
22 local television stations have been flooded with ads

1 promoting Clean Line and the astounding prosperity it
2 promises to bring to our area. It is understandable
3 that the company would make every effort to
4 accentuate the positive.

5 My question, how much, if any effort,
6 has been made to explore, address and reveal the
7 unintended consequences or ramifications of this.
8 And if the company is driven by the noble mission of
9 reducing electric rates and making sure that electric
10 rates are the lowest possible, second question, why
11 has the threats of using eminent domain become such a
12 frightening specter.

13 I urge the Illinois Commerce
14 Commission to oppose Clean Line Express' incursion
15 into our state, our county and our private property.

16 Thank you.

17 MR. WALK: Bob Walk here for Sigel. Sigel is
18 in the southeastern corner of Christian County. I
19 appreciate the Illinois Commerce Commission here to
20 listen to us, our concerns and things. There is so
21 many things that I don't need to repeat that a lot of
22 the other people brought up. I will say that I am a

1 landowner with the area and an area farm operator and
2 have about 160 dairy cattle now, and the proposed
3 line is going to go about 400 feet from the dairy,
4 and dairy cattle do not like stray voltage. So I am
5 very opposed to this thing.

6 Thank you.

7 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Tim Ryan and John Braun from
8 Mattoon.

9 MR. RYAN: Hi, there, my name is Tim Ryan. I
10 work for Laborers International Union of North
11 America. These last meetings we've represented
12 roughly 50,000 members across our ten-state region,
13 the majority of those being in Illinois.

14 I am a fifth generation laborer, so I
15 was born into the movement and so will my kids after
16 me because they have no choice where they get to
17 work.

18 So we strongly support this project
19 for several reasons, one, the jobs. As you've heard,
20 1500 jobs are proposed to be created. And I've heard
21 the word "temporary" thrown around a lot. In our
22 line of work temporary is what we do. We work until

1 out of work. We are the only profession that works
2 hard to put ourselves out of work, so we can move on
3 to the next job after that. That is what we do.
4 That is what we know. When we do a project, we know
5 we do not have permanent employment.

6 The second thing is we support this
7 project because of the revenue that will be generated
8 for the communities. It is said that \$33 million is
9 going to be generated to go directly into the
10 Illinois communities. As everyone knows, the budget
11 in the state are being cut, and there is not enough
12 money for schools, for public road programs, and this
13 project can help fund those projects. Way down in
14 Macon there is a brand new school that is being
15 built, and that could happen here if this line be put
16 into the profit.

17 Finally is the utility rates. No one
18 can argue if they want lower utilities rates.
19 Everybody wants their utility rates to go down, and
20 as it says in the handout, they are projecting that
21 within the first five years that the utility rate
22 will drop by \$750 million. Obviously, this is all

1 speculative and we have to wait and see what happens.
2 But as everyone said, you have got to elevate this
3 business and back them. The jobs that are being
4 created, the revenue and the savings on utility rates
5 are why we strongly support this project, and why we
6 encourage the ICC to bring it to fruition.

7 Thank you.

8 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Mark Schweizer, then Ken
9 Hoene or Haene.

10 MR. SCHWEIZER: Mark Schweizer,
11 S-C-H-W-E-I-Z-E-R. I had a speech prepared here to
12 say but everything has been said that I really wanted
13 to say.

14 I just would like to make a little
15 analogy. See, like your wife has a nice garden and
16 your neighbor puts up a skyscraper and shades her
17 garden. What does that do? Think about that for a
18 minute. That's the way it is happening to our farms
19 here.

20 We have got farms that we have worked
21 on, you know, improved. My father is 89-years-old.
22 He is out there everyday mowing the lawn and making

1 his farm look nice. He is really proud of that
2 thing. If we have this monstrosity looking at us
3 everyday out our back door, it is not going to be a
4 very pretty sight.

5 The main thing is that it needs to
6 have a need to be there, and it doesn't have a need.
7 They haven't proven that, yet. I don't think they
8 ever will. We heard some good comments about Ameren
9 and other lines that are through here that can take
10 care of everything we need here. Everybody here has
11 electricity. I don't see where they are going to run
12 out.

13 I have a wind turbine myself. It's
14 120-foot tall and takes care of my family and
15 whatever I need around the home most of the time. I
16 am a grain farmer. It doesn't take very many drawing
17 stages, but most of the time it takes care of me
18 pretty good.

19 I am not hurting my neighbor by doing
20 that. This is going to be a hurting everybody that's
21 in light of sight or has these in their back yard.
22 It's not going to be a good thing. I urge you to

1 vote against the GBE.

2 MR. HOENE: Thank you, Judge. Thank you,
3 Mr. Sheahan and Mr. Rosales, for being here and
4 allowing all of us to voice our opinion. I'm a
5 consulting forester and land forest landowner. My
6 name is Ken and it's Hoene here. The other Hoene
7 talked about forest land as well. My name is Hoene,
8 H-O-E-N-E.

9 I run a timber service incorporated
10 which is a 40-year-old forestry business in the state
11 of Illinois. My job over that time frame has been
12 sustained by one thing, that is making the timberland
13 resources here in Illinois as valuable as we possibly
14 can by nurturing them, growing them and also by
15 harvesting. So I am not just an environmentalist.
16 We are a full service, a service to provide
17 landowners in making very wise decisions about the
18 sustainability of their forests.

19 In Illinois we have only four million
20 acres of forestland due to the privatization of
21 roads, ditches, houses, everything else that tries to
22 utilize forestland for other than forestland use. My

1 point is, in going through an easement of forestland
2 where a pipeline or a power line goes through, one
3 thing I want to say is, it's a permanent, forever
4 land use change. There is no productivity off of
5 that ground ever allowed again. There is no way you
6 can change that because of the compaction and the
7 movement of the soil.

8 Everybody talks about their 140-year
9 old farm. Well, I have a 140-year-old forest that's
10 going to be affected. So it is a permanent change.
11 It's not like in the country in 50 to 100 years they
12 will grow back, they are growing again. That's an
13 impossibility.

14 So there is a lot of people here that
15 are going to be impacted by this forestland use that
16 is not of their own volition. They have no power to
17 change that so far, if this is granted, so. I really
18 strongly voice my objection to this company being
19 given utility status or given the right to eminent
20 domain.

21 I want to say one other thing. In
22 southern Shelby County about ten years ago, 10 or 15

1 years ago, a power plant was built north of our old
2 farm in Sigel Township, about two miles north. The
3 power plant is called Reliant Energy. There is also
4 one called Holland Energy in southern Shelby County.
5 The plant has changed hands around four times, so
6 there is new owners. The plant promised to pay the
7 city to go to the school district moneys every year,
8 those taxes that everybody hears and talks about.

9 The first year they sent money to the
10 local schools. That was fine; everybody thought it
11 was great. The following year the school district
12 was told it had to pay it back. I believe that
13 happened in southern Shelby County as well. Shelby
14 County taxpayers were forced to give this money back.
15 Their lawyer representing the power plant proved that
16 the plant was horrible. How he could do that, I
17 don't know. But he proved it was horrible, so the
18 issues was the taxes -- it did not form a tax base
19 that we could get tax revenue off of.

20 I think that's very important because
21 there are ways that these companies that we do not
22 know and understand are able to use the law to usurp

1 all of our individual rights. So that's all I really
2 wanted to say today.

3 Thank you very much.

4 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Barbara Nowack and then it's
5 Peggy and Richard Hammond.

6 MS. NOWACK: Good morning. I am Barbara
7 Nowack, N-O-W-A-C-K, and just to give you a little
8 bit of my background, I am former executive director
9 of the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Society and
10 also a former manager at the Illinois Rural Electric
11 Cooperative in Winchester, Illinois. So I have a
12 little mixed background in ag and in power.

13 But today I am representing Blake
14 Engineering which is a small windmill business
15 located here in Illinois, and we don't have a
16 contract with Clean Line, but I felt that we should
17 give our representation of what we feel about this
18 industry.

19 My whole quiddity is to find new
20 opportunities in the industry. When first hearing of
21 the Clean Line project, I began to do extensive
22 research on both the company and the technology

1 itself. I found the company is highly regarded in
2 its history with its clients and employees. The
3 project itself appears to be well-planned and capable
4 of benefitting the citizens of Illinois. They are
5 providing employment opportunities which would give
6 the economy a much-needed boost as well as reducing
7 our energy costs.

8 Therefore, based on my research and
9 the information presented at the Grain Belt public
10 meetings and our own experience in the planning,
11 designing, environmental analysis, and construction
12 of infrastructure improvements, I humbly submit that
13 ICC support the Grain Belt Clean Line energy project.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. HAMMANN: My name is Peggy Hammann, that's
16 P-E-G-G-Y, Hammann H-A-M-M-A-N-N. My husband is
17 Richard Hammann, same last name. And when I signed
18 the form, I didn't realize I was signing a form that
19 we wanted to offer comments. However, we own ground
20 in Macoupin and Montgomery Counties, and the
21 alternative route or the proposed route affects us,
22 terribly in the Montgomery County area and then still

1 does in Macoupin.

2 We oppose the consideration of giving
3 them the company access. We have been married 43
4 years. We started with zero. We now own 1700 acres,
5 and it's been doing without a lot of things that
6 people think is a necessity, and we just have said,
7 you know what, I don't need this anyway, I don't want
8 to spend money on it.

9 I'm going to let my husband speak.
10 He's got an opinion about what this whole project is
11 about, and we will be done. But thank you for
12 hearing us today.

13 MR. HAMMANN: Me and my wife was married in
14 1972. In March of '72 we bought a trailer and it
15 burnt flat to the ground. Our boys made this
16 comment, if it wasn't for my bad luck, I wouldn't
17 have any luck at all. But right now we own all these
18 acres, and we are here to try to protect them.

19 We have also got two boys and four
20 grandchildren. We are about probably seven
21 generations of farmers in my area, in my personal
22 family.

1 I personally think this is nothing but
2 a land grab, and I really do believe that. Why
3 wouldn't you build a wind turbine where you need the
4 power instead of in Kansas all the way to the east
5 coast. Me and my wife, we haven't gone on a trip,
6 but we have been on a mission for about the last
7 three weeks. We went 3500 miles and checked all the
8 farm ground in the surrounding states, and there
9 wasn't a state -- we were in Iowa, we were in
10 Wisconsin, we were in Indiana, Ohio, Missouri. I
11 never was in a state that didn't have a wind turbine,
12 if not fields of them, and half of them weren't even
13 running. That's a fact.

14 If they get this easement that they
15 are seeking and they start this project, and let's
16 suppose they get about maybe a third of the way into
17 it and they file bankruptcy, where does that leave
18 us? Seriously, where does that leave us?

19 For my grand kids, for my sons, please
20 vote no. I would really, really, really appreciate
21 that. And for all the citizens that are here and the
22 farmers that are here, vote no, please. That's all

1 I've got to say.

2 Thank you for your consideration.

3 JUDGE VON QUALEN: I understand Representative
4 Davidsmeyer is here. Does he want to speak?

5 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIDSMEYER: I was actually
6 with you in Pittsfield last night and I appreciate
7 coming there. I appreciate you being here and
8 listening to what everybody has to say. I chose not
9 to speak last night. I didn't want to give away the
10 process. I wanted the people that are directly
11 affected to be heard. But in the last few years -- I
12 have been in for about two and a half years, and in
13 the last two years I've had the Ameren project, I've
14 had Future Gen, I've had now the Grain Belt Express,
15 the Dakota Acces Pipeline, so I've had a lot of
16 things coming through my district so I've been
17 affected by a lot of these.

18 One of the gentlemen earlier was
19 talking about farmers are only one percent of the
20 population, which to me that means 99 percent feel
21 unaffected by these issues. And I think farmers
22 really kind of stay to themselves, they take care of

1 themselves, they don't ask for help from anybody and
2 especially government. They want the government to
3 stay out of their lives and vice versa. When we talk
4 about this project, I want you to understand that we
5 talk about jobs and things like that that are here on
6 short term. But these are going to be affecting
7 these people for generations and generations.

8 When we talk about the expedited
9 process, I want to clarify some legislative intent.
10 I talked to -- I was not in when the expedited
11 process came through, but I talked to my predecessor,
12 I talked with a number of people that were in when it
13 came through, and the original intent for that law,
14 from my understanding, is that it gave an expedited
15 process for a small infrastructure improvement, not a
16 major 750-mile long transmission line. So my concern
17 is that we are trying to speed up a 750-mile line in
18 a 180-day process, and this is what you are stuck
19 with.

20 I would also argue, you know, we are
21 talking about public utilities, public utilities.
22 And I think we have to get back to that; we have to

1 define the definition and really come up with a true
2 definition of a public utility. I think that the
3 Farm Bureau and the Attorney General, whom I don't
4 often agree with, but I think we can come together on
5 this and agree that the definition of public utility
6 is the ones that have been here that have been
7 providing public service for a long time.

8 I also come because a lot of what I
9 heard last night and this morning is that people feel
10 like they are fighting an uphill battle. They come
11 here because they want to be heard. They don't just
12 want to be heard, but they want to be listened to and
13 understood. And it's hard to put yourself in
14 somebody else's shoes if you have never farmed or if
15 you have never been affected by these large projects.
16 But I want you to take some time just to put yourself
17 in their shoes and say this does affect my daily
18 life, not only my daily life but the life of my
19 children, my grandchildren and on and on for
20 generations. I want to make sure that this isn't a
21 pre-determined decision, that this isn't just a dog
22 and pony show, that we are really listening to

1 people. And I am not up here to lecture you as a
2 politician or whatever; that's not what I do. But I
3 really want to make sure that we are taking this to
4 heart, that we really understand how people are
5 affected by these projects.

6 Like I said, I have had a number of
7 them come through. There is a need for
8 infrastructure improvement, and I understand that.
9 But we have to determine that we need it. That's
10 your job, that's a tough job, but I hope that you
11 will take all this to heart.

12 Thank you.

13 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Thank you. I have come to
14 the end of my list. I know there is a couple names
15 that I butchered so bad that you may be sitting out
16 there, thought you were going to speak. If you are,
17 please come forward now. Otherwise, we have gone way
18 past the time that we thought he would spend.

19 But thank you very much for all your
20 comments. It's been very helpful. It's been very
21 enlightening, I know for me, and we appreciate the
22 time and the respect that you have shown to everyone

1 who spoke today. This is a very difficult and hard
2 task that we have to make a decision about this.

3 Now, if there is anyone else who
4 wishes to speak, we can do that very quickly. You?

5 MR. ELLIOTT: Members of the Commission, ICC, I
6 think --

7 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Your name?

8 MR. ELLIOTT: Garry Elliott, E-L-L-I-O-T-T.

9 I think just a couple men before me
10 mentioned this is all about electricity. I believe
11 it's about a land grab. I'm concerned about what
12 this easement opens up. It is unacceptable acreage,
13 and 18 acres in a mile is way too much for a power
14 line. I wonder if this easement might open up an
15 area for a row of FEMA trailers or a marijuana field
16 or an opium field. Neighbors, please consider there
17 may be a Muslim mosque on the corner of your farm
18 tomorrow morning.

19 That's all I have to say.

20 JUDGE VON QUALEN: Thank you all, again. I am
21 sorry, I don't believe we have any time for the
22 question and answer period. We have kind of -- we

1 are going to be racing to our next event. But I am
2 sure that Grain Belt would be around another time or
3 maybe they will stay a little longer to answer
4 questions.

5 Thank you -- oh, Representative
6 Bourne.

7 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: On behalf of the Commerce
8 Commission, I just want to thank all of you for
9 participating. My wife's family are grain farmers in
10 Minnesota, just south of Rochester, Minnesota, so I
11 certainly understand your perspective.

12 Commissioner Rosales and I can't
13 participate in the Q and A legally. We are here just
14 to listen. So we have been very quiet, but I hope
15 you have noticed we are paying attention; we are
16 listening. But we are not legally allowed to engage
17 in a Q and A. So we are going to leave, but we will
18 let Representative Bourne speak, and again thanks for
19 being here.

20 REPRESENTATIVE BOURNE: I won't make you look
21 at my back side, so that will be good. I am Avery
22 Bourne. I'm a new state representative for the 95th

1 District which we are all sitting in. So I
2 appreciate you all coming from outside of Christian
3 County, if you are, to make the trip here and have
4 your voice heard. This is truly the democratic
5 process at work, so I appreciate it.

6 When I came in five months ago, this
7 was the number one issue that was talked about even
8 in such a difficult situation with state government.
9 It wasn't the budget. It wasn't pension reform. It
10 wasn't what we are going to do for school funding.
11 It was how are we going to protect our land rights
12 and how are we going to protect these farms that have
13 been in our families for years. And so much of it
14 came forth to me and it was the topic of every
15 pancake breakfast and every fried chicken lunch, that
16 I typed a resolution asking the ICC to take a very
17 strong look at this application and only approve it
18 if they could show convincing proof that there was
19 more benefit to Illinois than detriment. And,
20 unfortunately, that resolution didn't even get out of
21 the Rules Committee because that's what happens when
22 you write on things that are controversial.

1 But I will say that I might be new to
2 politics and I might be new to Springfield, but I am
3 not new to farming. My family has been farming in
4 Christian County since the end of the Civil War, and
5 I know personally what it is for families to toil for
6 years and years to improve the land and how difficult
7 it is to make that change once the land has been
8 degraded, and you lose a lot of those years and years
9 of working.

10 And so I would say again thank you so
11 much for being involved in the process. Let me know
12 if I can be a resource for you, and I appreciate you
13 standing up and having your voice heard because so
14 often downstate, I think, isn't heard. And I think
15 so often even within that small minority of downstate
16 being heard, people in rural communities are heard
17 even less. And people who don't even live in
18 communities, like I never lived in town, are heard
19 even less. So thank you so much, and I appreciate
20 your attendance and your patience. I am telling you
21 that because I am very proud of all of you.

22 PUBLIC FORUM COMMENT SESSION CONCLUDED AT 12:20 P.M.

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

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Carla J. Boehl, a Certified Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for said County and State, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript contains a true and accurate translation of my shorthand notes referred to.

Given under my hand and seal this 12th day of August, A.D., 2015.

My commission expires April 13, 2019.

Carla J. Boehl

Certified Shorthand Reporter
Lic. # 084-002710
Notary Public