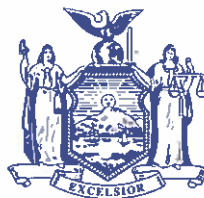


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THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



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Senator, 41ST District

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December 16, 2015

Honorable Kathleen H. Burgess
Secretary to the Commission
New York State Public Service Commission
Three Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12223-1350

Re: Case 12-T-0502 – Proceeding on Motion of the Commission to Examine Alternating Current
Transmission Upgrades, et al.

Dear Secretary Burgess,

I am writing to express my concerns—concerns which are shared by many other residents of the Hudson Valley—about the Public Service Commission’s recommended course of action for New York’s “Energy Highway.”

I have been elected to represent and serve the people of the 41st Senate District and as such, I approach the issue of the “Energy Highway” by asking how this is going to benefit the towns impacted by the obtrusive towers and lines proposed to dominate our landscape in Northern Dutchess County. The answer is, there is no apparent benefit. The plan for the “Energy Highway” won’t lower our local utility costs, it won’t raise our local property values and it won’t add to the aesthetic beauty of our natural landscape. In essence, this proposal would have Dutchess County residents accept transmission lines that won’t serve them at all.

We in New York should be at the forefront of innovating new ways to bring energy to our citizens, and I simply cannot understand why we would commit ourselves to the same energy infrastructure we have been using for as long as any of us can remember. Governor Cuomo says he wants to Reform the Energy Vision, but this looks like we are going to repeat the energy vision.

New York’s REV Initiative has some bold and admirable goals. However, when I look at the goals of moving towards distributed energy resources like micro grids and roof-top solar panels, and then I see the plan to invest over a billion taxpayer dollars on exactly what New York is trying to move away from, I cannot help but wonder how that is consistent with what New York is trying to do.

My biggest question is, has New York been considering the wishes of the Hudson Valley’s citizens (those citizens whose property will house these transmission lines)? The Dutchess County Legislature wrote the Public Service Commission a letter requesting that they reconsider their decision to drop Boundless Energy’s proposal to use the existing transmission lines while saving taxpayers money compared to other proposals. I sincerely hope that you are genuinely considering their request. It can be easy for those whose properties are not impacted by the power lines to ignore how their power is getting to them, but it

will not be so easy for my constituents and neighbors who have to live with these towers and transmission lines in their yards and neighborhoods.

Furthermore, all of this assumes that there is a transmission problem that we need to address. Our very own Gidon Eshel, a research professor of Environmental Physics at Bard College, has looked into this issue of power congestion. According to Dr. Eshel, there is no evidence that downstate needs increased transmission capacity from upstate, even under “pessimistic” assumptions. It does not make sense that we would burden our taxpayers, to the tune of more than a billion dollars, to solve a problem that does not exist with a solution that holds us back from modernizing where we get our power. Not only is it going to cost us in terms of tax dollars and commit us to soon-to-be outdated technology, but it is likely to hurt our local economy.

The scenic Hudson Valley has been growing, largely on the back of the tourism industry. Our region has been seeing economic growth with the creation of new jobs and bringing money into our towns and cities. Our fear is that bigger and taller towers are going to detract from our region’s natural beauty and not only stop this much needed growth, but reverse it entirely. I find it hard to believe that the best and only solution to alleged power problems is simply to build bigger and taller towers. That cannot be the approach New York takes for all of our problems—to do the same old thing, only bigger, both in terms of size and cost.

If the Public Service Commission ultimately decides that we need to go ahead with increasing our current transmission capabilities from upstate to downstate, then they at least need to do so while keeping in mind the concerns of the residents who will be seeing these towers every day. I understand that it takes a lot to power the city that never sleeps, but it is equally important that we keep Hudson Valley beautiful.

We look forward to working with the Public Service Commission, as well as members of the Hudson Valley communities, to find a solution that can work for everyone.

Sincerely,



Sue Serino
New York State Senator
41st District

CC: Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, New York State Governor
Audrey Zibelman, Commissioner, Public Service Commission
Hon. Judge David Prestemon, Administrative Law Judge, Public Service Commission
Thomas Congdon, Chief of Staff, Public Service Commission