

Protect Fauquier

Protect Fauquier
7020 Beaconsfield Lane
Warrenton, VA 20187
October 23, 2023

Mr. David Souder, Chairman
Transmission Expansion Advisory Committee
2750 Monroe Blvd
Audubon, PA 19403

Dear Mr. Souder:

For over 50 years, the residents and elected officials of Fauquier County have worked to protect this scenic, rural, agricultural county from the rampant development, commercialization and sprawl that has afflicted much of northern Virginia. We cherish a way of life and a landscape that sets this county apart, that supports farming, equine activities, tourism, and wineries. We long ago embraced land use and adopted policies that concentrate growth in service districts and protect open space and rural areas. Over the decades we have fought fiercely to protect these policies and attributes.

We write today to put all of PJM on notice that if you seek to inflict new transmission lines on Fauquier County, primarily to serve the explosive growth of data centers in neighboring counties, we will resist massively, and as long as it takes.

We are "Protect Fauquier," a grassroots organization of 1500 residents of Fauquier County, from all walks of life. We work in close partnership with the Piedmont Environmental Council, Citizens for Fauquier County, Protect Catlett, and other organizations to prevent the infringement on our land use policies and to prevent new transmission lines and inappropriate data centers that would degrade a special landscape and way of life. We value a close working relationship with our County Board of Supervisors and Delegate Michael Webert, our senior representative to the state legislature in Richmond.

We have seen the new transmission route proposals PJM recently solicited, which PJM has acknowledged are primarily to serve data centers in Loudoun and Prince William County. We have been watching as you have begun to create a "short list" of projects to advance – and also as you have shifted some proposals to a "supplemental" list for individual utilities to advance separately. We oppose all new transmission lines, whether on your short list or on a "supplemental" list.

Our opposition goes far beyond NIMBYism. Our opposition is rooted in a collective sense of place and history. It is rooted in a deeply felt respect for scenic beauty and a way of life that is increasingly rare. And it is rooted in preserving an economy that is based on tourism, wineries, horses, and agriculture, which is important to the economy Virginia as a whole.

We also resist the rush to accommodate the explosive growth of data centers in northern Virginia and now spilling over into the rest of Virginia. We are well aware that the transmission lines you propose to build are but the first salvo, because data center electricity demand is expected to double or triple in the next 5-10 years. We are drawing the line now, to prevent this. If other counties wish to endanger our electric grid and load themselves up with data centers, let them bear the brunt of new transmission lines. Do not run transmission lines through our county, a county which has taken a much more prudent path, by limiting the number of data centers and their impact on our electricity grid, along with the other adverse environmental and community impacts they bring.

We have already begun public meetings to build large scale resistance. We are reaching out to other organizations to join us. And we are in close communications with our County Board of Supervisors, Delegate Weibert, and others, so that we will have a unified opposition.

In short, our message is that if you move forward with transmission line proposals in Fauquier County, either new transmission lines or significantly expanded right of way, you will meet a determined, well-organized, and total resistance, for as long as it takes.

Sincerely,

The Executive Board of Protect Fauquier

Mike Fultz

Cindy Burbank

Denise Schefer

PJ Leary

Cc: Fauquier Board of Supervisors: Chris Butler, Rick Gerhardt, Holder Trumbo,
Mary Leigh McDaniel, and Kevin Carter
Delegate Michael J. Weibert
Piedmont Environmental Council
Citizens for Fauquier County
Protect Catlett
Fauquier Chamber of Commerce