

THE DELAWARE RIVER IS UNDER ATTACK, AND SO IS NEW YORK'S ENERGY FUTURE

A privately-held company whose owners choose to remain anonymous and whose books are closed, is filing for permission to appropriate the railroad right-of-way in the Delaware River Corridor as part of a 200 mile string of giant (twelve story high) power lines carrying four hundred thousand volts of high density direct current from Oneida to Orange county.

OBJECTIVES: WHAT YOU WANT

1. You want the state to deny NYRI a “certificate of environmental compatibility and public need” in accordance with Article VI, Subchapter G 85.2+ of the NY State public service law enabling them to emplace their proposed power lines along the Delaware River corridor.
2. You want the DOE to reject NYRI's request for early designation of a National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors (“NIETC”) pursuant to Section 1221 (a) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 along the proposed routes in the Upper Delaware River Valley Region.
3. If you're not sure what you want yet, please ask your legislators for a moratorium on NYRI's plans to install 200 miles of power lines through New York State until people have a better idea of what they're getting into. But be careful: After one year, if no decision has been made about where to put the lines, the DOE can make it unilaterally.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ACHIEVE YOUR OBJECTIVES:

1. Write or call legislators. Pick a point you care about. Use your own words.
2. Notify Summer people, or people who are away, and sent them the information packet (URL HERE) at <http://www.udpc.net> and these talking points
3. Contact friends and neighbors and let them choose one or two talking points to write about.
4. Think of anyone you know who might be influential in this fight – big Bush, Santorum, Giuliani donors, well-connected summer camp parents, people with impressive credentials, groups interested in decentralized energy planning and good government, anti-takings people and organizations, greens, animal lovers, hunters and fisherpeople, people in local real estate, religious leaders whose congregations depend on the scenic beauty of “God's country,” etc. Give them a call and find out what they're doing to stop NYRI from destroying the river corridor, and encourage them to do more.

TALKING POINTS

When you write or call Schumer, Pataki, the newspapers, etc.(see below) Say how

you've learned of plans to run a 200 mile-long high wattage power line (115 feet high, 400,000v HVDC, one every 800 feet) through 73 miles of the Delaware river corridor. Tell them that you're deeply concerned...

MANNER OF ADDRESS

Pick one of the following points, two at most, and keep it short and civil in tone

THE RIVER ROUTE IS LEGALLY OBJECTIONABLE; THE URGENCY OF PLACING POWER LINES ON IT IS BASED ON FLAWED RATIONALES

The Delaware River is covered by federal law (The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act <http://www.nps.gov/rivers/wsract.html>) to protect it from exactly this sort of use - high tension overhead electrical wires. In permitting the towers, the DOE would be over-riding existing law unnecessarily: A route along highways would not require over-riding national law in the same way.

NYRI argues that by using railroad rights-of-way it will avoid costly property fights, saving time and money. But the rights-of-way that NYRI plans to use are not wide enough to fully accommodate the towers (the towers need 230 feet of clearance), so that, to adopt this route, private property and public access roads will have to be seized by the DOE in the name of a "national interest."

Is this project really in the national interest? (see "BAD PLANNING" and "NATIONAL SECURITY" and "DEPENDENCY ON FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS" below). Is the "crisis" that NYRI cites as the justification for over-riding the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act a real crisis, or a manufactured one? Both major brownouts of the past decade, here in the east and in California, were not the results of under-supply, but of mismanagement, over-centralization and failures to design systems that can balance periods of peak demand with periods of over-supply.

Much more consideration should be given to whether or not a massive project of this kind is indeed in the national interest.

POLITICAL DAMAGE

It wouldn't hurt to mention the Delaware Water Gap, and the enduring hatred for anything and anyone associated with takings in the region (takings are when govt appropriates your land for "greater good." Libertarians and true conservatives loathe takings.

Even when NYRI doesn't actually appropriate property, if the government grants NYRI, or any related company, the right to despoil the beauty and wholesomeness of the region or the stability of its ecosystem, it will render it useless and valueless, a form of takings.

ECONOMIC DAMAGE

This region is economically fragile. It makes its living on tourism, fishing, boating, summer camps and second homes. It will be devastated if the cables go overhead, leaving the entire area basically nothing to sell and creating a wasteland out of a precious natural resource.

BAD PLANNING

In making its case for the urgency of its power line project, NYRI (www.NYRI.us) claims that most benefits of energy efficiency have been realized in the Northeast and that demand is expected to grow greatly in the next ten years. But in fact, most breakthroughs in energy efficiency here are in their infancy. According to some experts, energy use could even decline in the next 10-20 years without impeding development. Projections made about New York City's energy use in the energy-conscious 70's overestimated the city's needs by 25%. The projected estimates currently in use most probably do worse. Green building techniques like heat-exchange systems, siting, solar panels, etc. -- plus innovations in automotive design and lighting, in self-powering electronics gadgets and in new energy storage systems like fuel cells can all drastically reduce energy needs – and should. The NYRI power towers – projected for 2011, but more realistically not to be expected before 2016-18, are white elephants in the making, an investment in soon-to-be-obsolete technology. They will despoil our landscapes and displace more people than a natural disaster -- in vain.

NYRI's estimates don't seem to take into account the likely acceleration of innovation and production of alternate energy sources, cleaner fuel processing and energy use-reduction technologies.

The company's best sell is that the power lines will enable clean energy from the Northwest portion of the state to be shipped to the Southeast. But they aren't obligated to do this, and this selling point might prove chimerical. Where are those clean energy plants? Does NYRI already own wind farm sites, or will each one mean a protracted local battle, and more "takings"? Isn't it more likely that the company, which is most closely connected to oil and gas interests in Canada and through Giuliani's law firm in Houston, will simply use their new conduits to connect more conventional fossil fuel-guzzling, generators into the grid?

UNDERMINING OF ENERGY CONSERVATION POLICIES

Some say that for the US to minimize its dependency on unstable regions, and for the world's climate to have a chance to stabilize, energy use must actually decline over the

next decades, and energy sources become more local, not less so, reducing the energy used for delivery... If true, this makes the entire NYRI project strategically counter-productive, and arguably not in US interests. Government support at this critical juncture should be going towards projects that minimize energy needs -- see above -- rather than encouraging cities to gorge themselves via an enlarged, expensive pipeline.

ECO DAMAGE

Regulations require that the 230 foot corridor the towers require has to be denuded of vegetation. This means a substantial reduction in local habitat for birds, animals, and the insects they feed on.

If it is done at all, it should be buried underground, and carefully, so as not to disturb the habitats of eagles, trout and other, less glamorous but equally ecologically necessary wildlife.

The tracks just below Lordville are one of the last redoubts in this region of the threatened Timber Rattler and there are a host of other species here whose toehold on habitat is minimal. (The more carefully NYRI must build it, the more expensive it is and the less economically viable).

ENERGY DEPENDENCY ON UNTRUSTWORTHY PARTIES

NYRI is a privately held, closed corporation. Its owners "do not wish their names known." Their books are closed. Their records and policies have no transparency. They could be Saudis, Dubai or Enron types. They could even be great Americans who one day **sell** to Saudis or Dubai or Enron types. The point is, we can't know who they are, or what they're doing, or for whom. To put a sizeable portion of the Northeast's urban grid in the hands of such a company is to give them a virtual chokehold on the nation's economy. There will be no way to prevent them from price gouging, and any attempt to prove that they have, or punish the guilty will be time-consuming and expensive. The sort of ownership structure NYRI proposes -- like Enron's politically connected den of cronies -- is anti-democratic, inimical to a competitive free-market, and will give private ownership of public works a bad name.

NATIONAL SECURITY

There have been numerous articles in the press lately about how impossible it is to secure railroads against terrorist attack. The yards and tracks are too big and sprawling to guard or make inaccessible to mischief. An energy grid of the type NYRI proposes suffers this same problem squared. If built as now designed, one tornado, one bomb, one bullet will be able to shut down the Northeast. The only way to protect the urban Northeast's

electrical grid from destructive acts of man and God is to decentralize both supply and delivery. Connecticut is choosing “distributed generation” as its primary strategy for dealing with peak demand and other potentially crippling defects in the grid. In this age, it's the only sane way to go.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

Nobody has yet conclusively proven that the Electromagnetic Fields (EMFs) we experience when we live near high voltage power lines causes cancer in adults, although leukemia rates in children have proven to be somewhat elevated. But there are still well-credentialed scientists like David Carpenter, Dean of SUNY's New York School of Public Health, who believe otherwise. To learn more, start here:
http://www.mercola.com/article/emf/emf_dangers.htm

SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE USES OF THE RAILROAD CORRIDOR

A better use of the railroad corridor would be silent, modernized trains, like monorails, that could reduce dependency on gas engines until such time as they are replaced by something more efficient, or below-ground fiberoptic cabling systems that open the entire area to high speed Internet access, a river-powered network of energy generators that could supply local needs without burning fossil fuels, or hiking trails that would support the tourism industry.

SELF-IDENTIFICATION

When you write to people, make sure they know you live in the state. Use your local address. (New York City votes are assumed liberal, and no one has to do much to keep 'em that way, but it's okay to say that you often work in the city, so that they understand that you have a stake in urban development as well, and aren't just another rural city-hater).

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Start out saying exactly what you want (“Don’t allow NYRI to put power lines along the Delaware,” or “Stop the power lines,” Or “Don’t let NYRI put power lines along the Delaware unless they bury them,” or “We need a moratorium to keep NYRI and the DOE from rushing us into an energy policy that isn’t good for the state.” Or whatever.)

Pick a point that means something to you. Use your own words and tell your own story. “I have a young child, and we live 50 feet from where ...etc.” Or “I’ve been fishing the Delaware ever since my Dad first took me there in ’37.” Or, “My parents had a house in the Delaware Water Gap, back when...” Etc.

Letters to newspapers should be 250 words or less.

Op Eds should be about 700 words. Call the publication to find out its length requirements.

Letters to legislators, unless you are an expert, should be one page, maximum.

Put your full address and a phone number on all communication -- including e-mail.

Written letters are believed to be far more effective than e-mail. So are calls.

Individually written letters, custom worded, are vastly more effective than petitions.

Giuliani's law firm is handling this for the NYRI. Giuliani would not normally be associated with a takings project on his home turf, but he seems to be courting Bush's support for 2008. The owner of the RR, Walter Rich, is a big Bush supporter. NYRI, whomever its owners, is a very politically connected company, with tentacles into the DOE. So, if you are, or know, any big Bush supporters who love the area -- fly fishermen, local businessmen and developers, lawyers, investment brokers -- please try to persuade them to speak to the right people and urge them to stop NYRI's bid for a National Interest Energy Corridor (NIEC).

Giuliani's contact info in his New York office at Bracewell Giuliani, a Houston lawfirm that specializes in big gas, oil and transmission-line deals (and nary a wind farm in sight):

T: rudy.giuliani@bracewellgiuliani.com
212.508.6102

F:
212.508.6101

If you were thinking of voting for him in '08, please let him know that you, and everyone in your church, is reconsidering.

Please act quickly. Don't put this off. NYRI is counting on pushing this through before opposition builds.

Stop NYRI - Write Your Representatives!

State Assembly 98th District - Aileen Gunther (D-Forestburgh)
20 Anawana Lake Road, Monticello 12701
845/794-5807; 845/342-9304; 518/455-5239
gunther@assembly.state.ny.us

NYS Public Service Commission - Mr. David Flanagan
Office of Consumer Services
The Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 1223-1350

Senator Thomas K. Duane - 27th State Senatorial District

494 8th Avenue Suite 503
New York, N.Y. 10001
(212) 268-1049 email: duane@senate.state.ny.us

Governor - George E. Pataki (R)
Office: State Capitol, Albany 12224
Telephone: 518/474-8390; Fax: 518/474-1513
email: gov.pataki@chamber.state.ny.us

United States Senate - Charles Schumer (D)
Local office: 757 Third Avenue, Room 17-02, New York 10017
Washington office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
Telephone: 212/486-4430; 202/224-6542; Fax: 202/228-3027
Online contact: www.senate.gov/~schumer/webform.html

Hilary Rodham Clinton (D)
Local office: 780 Third Avenue, Suite 2600, New York 10175
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Telephone: 202/224-4451; 212/688-6262
Fax: 212/688-7444; 212/223-8496; 202/228-0282
Online contact: clinton.senate.gov/email_form.html

House of Representatives - Maurice D. Hinchey (D-Saugerties)
Local office: 291 Wall Street, Kingston 12401, and City Hall, 3rd fl, 16 James Street, Middletown 10940
Washington office: 2431 Rayburn, House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
Telephone: 845/331-4466; 845/791-7116; 845/344-3211; 202/225-6335
Website: house.gov/hinchey

State Senate - John J. Bonacic (R-C-Mount Hope)
Local office: 279 Main Street, Suite 202, New Paltz 12561
Albany office: Room 815, Legislative Office Building, Albany 12247
Telephone: 845/255-9656; 518/455-3181; Fax: 845/2559262; 518/426-6948
email: bonacic@senate.state.ny.us

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau - Bernadette Castro, Commissioner
Peebles Island, P.O. Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188
518 237-8643

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P.O. Box 326 Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania 18977-0326
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