

Residents claim proof of power line health risks

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POSTED: 07:00 PM CDT May 29, 2014

RANDOLPH, Co. -

Randolph County residents are fighting the Grain Belt Express Clean Line in Mid-Missouri claiming there is proof high voltage power lines are a health risk.

The power line, more than 700 miles long would run from Kansas to Indiana, passing through northern Mid-Missouri.

The project promises to provide clean and affordable wind energy.

However, some residents in Chariton, Randolph and Monroe counties are worried about their property values, crop irrigation, and adverse health effects.

Dennis and Laurie Smith live on an 80 acre farm in Randolph County.

A Grain Belt Express Clean Line structure would be right in their backyard.

Dennis is a physician in Moberly.

He was immediately worried about the health effects and started researching.

"It did take me probably 30 to 40 hours looking at medical research before I started seeing a common link related to this study," said Smith.

He found BioInitiative, a collection of more than 1,800 studies from 10 countries on electromagnetic radiation.

His biggest concern, childhood leukemia.

"For children who were raised for their first five years of life within 300 meters have a lifetime risk that is 500 percent higher for developing some kinds of cancer," said Dennis, as he read directly from the study.

Also according to the same study, breast cancer risks also increase.

Grain Belt Express officials do admit their lines will create electromagnetic fields, but say no more than what occurs in the natural environment.

However, Smith says the studies the company cites are outdated.

"The agencies the Grain Belt quoted have now changed their stance on this as well," said Smith.

ABC 17 News did reach out to Grain Belt Officials, but have not heard back.

"If the line went in here now knowing these dangers are not just perceived but are real.. We won't ever go back on that property again," said Laurie Smith.

The Smith family has sent the BioInitiative study to the Missouri Public Service Commission so they can be aware of the health issues before making the final decision on whether or not the Grain Belt Express Clean Line will run through Mid-Missouri.