

## Missouri Century Farm owner fights eminent domain

Updated: 2014-10-28 13:14:40 Joplin Independent

***A high voltage tower, part of the proposed [Grain Belt Express Clean Line](#) that is considering several routes across the state of Missouri, could be located just 400 feet from the front door of a [Century Farm](#) on Route 24 in Brunswick, Missouri. Tina Marie Reichert is questioning awarding the right of eminent domain to a private equity company.***

***Here are her words:***

“Not in my front yard!” was our initial response to the proposed Grain Belt Express Clean Line. My name is Tina Reichert, and our centennial farm has been in the Reichert family since 1872. My husband, Matt, is a fourth generation farmer and our youngest son, Gabriel, would like to carry on this rich family farming tradition. Farmers are passionate about their land. You could say, “Dirt runs in our veins.”

In addition to our farming operation, our family has had the privilege to share our rich heritage for the past 20 years with our [Sycamore Valley Farm Bed & Breakfast](#) guests. Guests from all over the world have wandered the rolling hills of our northern Missouri farm, shared our agricultural lifestyle, and experienced a slice of rural America.

This Grain Belt Express project will require a 200’ wide easement cut across not just our farm but our beautiful state. A 600+kV high voltage direct current (HVDC) line will be suspended from a combination of 110’ tall monopoles and 150’ tall lattice structure towers which will snake its way through the clear-cut landscape. This is the question we all need to answer: Should a private equity company be allowed to exercise eminent domain to force landowners to enter into easement agreements?

This threat is having a dramatic impact on our lives. I find myself struggling with resentment and anger but know that I am called by God to love, even when I feel threatened, the quote of [Fr. Robert Sirico](#) is a good reminder for me, “We must be ruthless with ideas, but gentle with people.” Attack the issue not the individuals. The issue is property rights!

I invite you to join our family and other landowners to stand on the truth that our rights to own private property and the responsibility to be good stewards comes from God, not the state. Ownership of private property is the very

foundation of our freedoms and should be protected at all costs. We have taken a stand against some very wealthy individuals who are politically connected and have tremendous power and influence. It is not my intent to villainize these individuals nor give the impression I am against wealth or capitalism. What I am against is the misuse of power, influence, and money. an approximately 750-mile overhead, direct current transmission line that will deliver wind energy from western Kansas to utilities and customers in Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and states farther east. We are praying for a great public outcry against this gross violation of private property rights. The proposed transmission line is a land grab by a private equity company for personal profit. If this can happen to farmers for a HVDC transmission line, it can happen to any landowner, perhaps even you. No one's private property will be safe from developers promising economic development, jobs, and increased tax revenues.

Our elected and appointed officials have the responsibility to institute justice by protecting the private property rights and freedoms of all its citizens. Please contact your elected officials and the [Public Service Commission](#) . Politely ask them to protect private property rights by denying the power of eminent domain to Grain Belt Express Clean Line. Remind your state legislators to uphold their 2006 legislation (HB 1944) passed to address similar overbearing misuses of eminent domain stemming from the 2005 Supreme Court ruling related to Kelo v. City of New London, Connecticut.

We must stand together to protect property rights for all by stopping this dangerous precedent. It is sure to open a Pandora's Box in the state of Missouri. We have been told that we cannot succeed in this battle. However, we are sure to fail if we do not try.