

Guest Commentary: Landman Opposes Clean Line Proposal

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Corrections

Julie Morton is an independent landman, who has been in the oil and gas and right-of-way business for 33 years. She wrote a guest column about her opposition to the Clean Line project that appeared on page 4A in Monday's edition. Her name was incorrect.

I am writing regarding the Department of Energy's draft Environmental Impact Statement about Clean Line Energy. Clean Line proposes a 700 mile, high-voltage, DC electrical transmission line across Arkansas, Oklahoma and Tennessee.

Clean Line claimed that 5,000 jobs would be created by this construction. The EIS states that 965 temporary jobs would be created and only 26 percent of those would be local hires, divided among the three states. Considering the miles of line to be constructed in Arkansas, this equates to about 100 temporary jobs. The EIS states that no more than 27 permanent jobs will be created in Arkansas. For that, we will give up about 8,000 acres.

Clean Line claims there will be no reduction in property values from this line. When buying rights-of-way, the established method is to obtain an appraisal showing the property value of lands with and without similar easements. The reduction in the property value is the determining factor for the price of the easement. These towers are 200 feet high, the approximate height of a 20 story building. They will be visible for miles, affecting not only the properties on which they stand, but those surrounding them. These encumbrances will affect current value and future sales values.

Clean Line has stated to county officials in Arkansas and Oklahoma that there will be millions of dollars in tax revenues generated by this line. It is possible that Clean Line will qualify for tax exempt status in both states. If so, your county will see no tax increase. Instead there will be a reduction in the tax base due to decreased property values.

Clean Line states that there is no health risk from these lines. The EIS states repeatedly that, based upon the studies available, no conclusion about the health risks can be drawn. Certain studies have shown that the greatest increase of illness is in childhood leukemia. What price do you put on the wellbeing of your children and grandchildren?

Clean Line states that there is no risk to endangered species by this line. The EIS states that 31 species of federally protected and proposed species may be affected by this project. Clean Line has filed a mitigation plan to reduce the effect on our environment, but the details of that plan are not known. According to the EIS, woodland habitats will be lost forever.

Clean Line has no contracts to serve any customers in Arkansas or Oklahoma. No matter how much electricity you "could" deliver, if there are no customers it is a moot point. They have no contract with the Tennessee Valley Authority, the federal agency who has agreed to transport the electricity to end users on the East Coast. And there are no end users at this time. There is no need in Arkansas for an additional supply; we have an oversupply.

The DOE has spent \$168,000,000 tax dollars on demonstration projects in the Atlantic Ocean bringing the electricity off the coast to serve the very customers Clean Line says they "need" to serve. These projects have wide support from the governors on the East Coast who want to have their electricity generated locally. The DOE found that the wind blows more consistently and stronger over water than land.

The DOE is considering partnering with this private, for-profit corporation to use eminent domain to take our land. This law has never been used before, and we are being used as guinea pigs. This is a slippery slope down which the bureaucrats and the investors in this project from New York and Great Britain are taking our country. Will our private property rights eventually disappear and corporations control all the land in America? I urge you to attend the upcoming DOE meetings in your area and express your concerns. Also, write your federal legislators. They are the only ones who can change this law. The people's voice must be heard if we are to protect our freedom and our way of life. For more information visit the Facebook pages for [Arkansas Citizens Against Clear Line Energy](#) and [Block Plains and Eastern Clean Line: Oklahoma](#).

To read the entire EIS go to [PlainsandEasternEIS.com](#).

Julie Newman, an independent landman, has been in the oil and gas and right-of-way business for 33 years. She acquired both pipeline and power line rights-of-way and bought electrical transmission line right-of-way for a major electrical utility company serving Arkansas and Oklahoma. She worked on the Ozark Gas Pipeline and many other pipeline projects in Arkansas and Oklahoma.